

Reader's Digest

NOVEMBER 2018

New
PUZZLE
Section
p. 126

JOKES!

The Funniest
Since the Internet

THE NICEST PLACES in America

Bonus Cover on Back!

Stop Your Home from Spying on You

An RD ORIGINAL

A Miracle Thanksgiving

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Boost Your Creativity

From THE CUT



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Arthritis Relief Secrets

By SARI HARRAR



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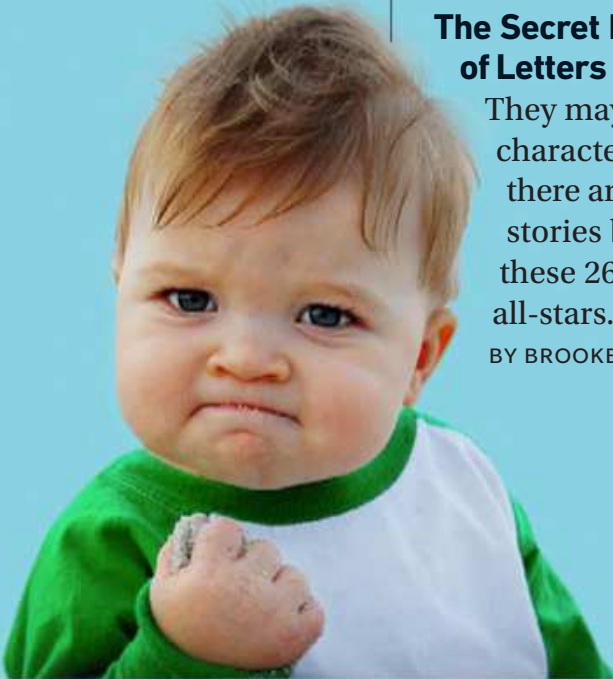
Lost in the Pacific Woods

She set out to scatter her husband's ashes in a national park. Would she make it out alive?

BY TOM HALLMAN JR.

ON THE COVER: JEFF MINTON (GRUMPY CAT); SHUTTERSTOCK (MOUSE) **ON THE BACK COVER:** PHOTOGRAPH BY AMANDA FRIEDMAN; FASHION STYLIST: DIANDRE TRISTAN; MAKEUP STYLIST: ELENA GEORGE; HAIR STYLIST: PETULA SKEETE

COURTESY LANEY GRINER



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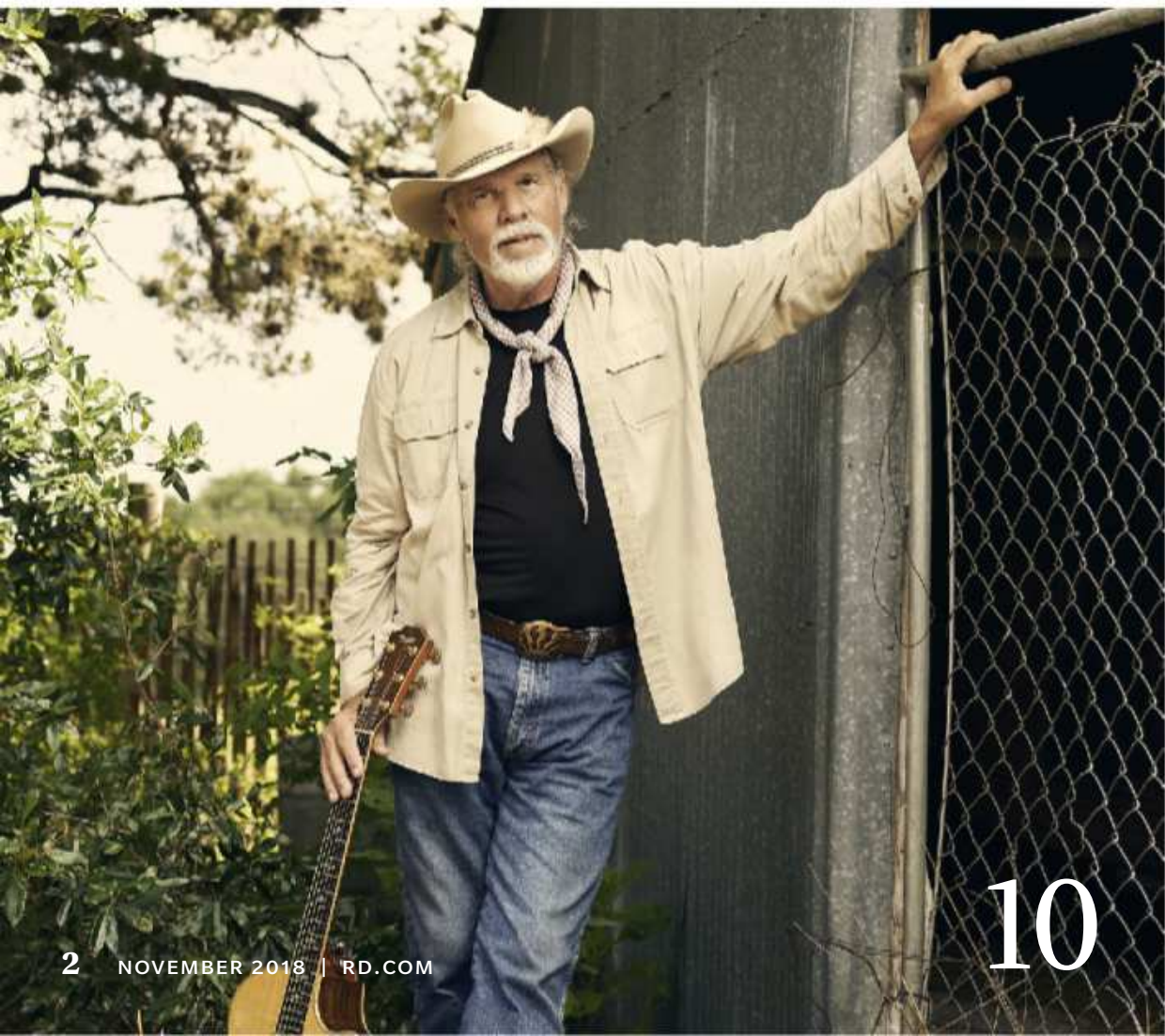


ILLUSTRATION BY JOHN CUNEO. PHOTOGRAPH BY BRET HARTMAN

Lost in the Medicare maze? There's still time to pick a plan.

Medicare Open Enrollment ends December 7th. With helpful people, tools and plans — including the only Medicare plans with the AARP name — UnitedHealthcare® can help guide you through the confusion. Find the Medicare plan for you at **UHCmedicare.com** or call UnitedHealthcare at **1-877-497-5255, TTY 711**.



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FROM LEFT: HORTIMAGES/SHUTTERSTOCK; ERMOLAEV ALEXANDER/SHUTTERSTOCK; ILLUSTRATION BY SERGE BLOCH



SWEET RAISINS

CRUNCHY BRAN FLAKES

PLOT TWIST
WE ADDED BANANA SLICES



DEAR READER

Back to the Future

THE OLDER I get, the truer the phrase “Everything old is new again” gets. By now, looking for a new wardrobe, I can’t do much better than finding a classic pair of jeans and making sure they fit.

Similarly, to update a 96-year-old institution such as *Reader’s Digest*, we knew we needn’t reinvent the wheel. Better to walk down the hall to the magazine’s windowless archive and steal inspired old wheels.

That really is how we created the updated version of the magazine you’re reading now. Working through the dusty stacks, creative director Courtney Murphy came upon a 1951 issue with a border around the headlines (shown above, left) that felt intelligent and approachable in its midcentury design. She played with it a bit and turned it into the frame that surrounds the names of all our departments—a gift from *RD* from nearly 70 years ago.

Imagining a new food section, we turned to the 1960s-era series *I Am*



Joe's Body (above right), which was written from the perspective of Joe's (or Jane's) spleen, heart, and 34 other body parts. Clever and deeply researched, it was curiously hard to put down. *I Am the Food on Your Plate*, on page 45, lifts the format into the 21st century, with a food narrating its science and history.

You'll find reclamations everywhere: To buttress our health coverage, we simply added a page to the 56-year-old *News from the World of Medicine*; to judge our Nicest Places search, we turned to a 2013 cover story featuring America's most trusted newsperson: Robin Roberts.

If we've done our recovery work well, *RD* is better today for inviting back the best of yesterday. Enjoy the new look, and please tell us what you think.

Bruce Kelley,
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

Write to me at
letters@rd.com.



FROM TOP: PHOTOGRAPH BY MATTHEW COHEN. PHOTOGRAPH BY MIKE MCGREGOR

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50 Ways to Get Smarter About Your Brain

Your article stated that you have more than five senses. It reminded me of when I was teaching my daughter about the senses, and she said there were six. I went through the five senses, and she said, “No, you missed one: the sense of humor!”

—EMILY MURPHY *Kingwood, Texas*

The Power of Fake Pills

The article affirmed what many moms and kids know: that applying the healing salve of a kiss to a child’s paper cut or skinned elbow or knee really works!

—TERI ISMAIL
Tallahassee, Florida

Wake Up Smarter

So the sounds of a waterfall or heavy rain are supposed to help me sleep? No, but they do give me a lot of

exercise going back and forth to the bathroom. And back. And forth. And back. And forth. Maybe all the walking is supposed to tire me out.

—SHARI PRANGE
Bonny Doon, California

Everyday Heroes

After reading “The Five-Fingers Club,” I was reminded of several pro athletes who had one arm/hand: Boid Buie, a Harlem Globetrotter; Ellis

Jones, an NFL lineman; Tom Dempsey, a kicker with the New Orleans Saints, who was born without toes and fingers on his right foot and hand; and MLB players Pete Gray and Jim Abbott. Young athletes should receive all the encouragement in the world to play sports and attempt other feats. The lack of a hand should not stop them.

—ANDY PITTMAN
College Station, Texas

Fascinating Facts About Unseen Cities

I wonder whether anyone has ever used lidar to look for Atlantis, the fabled island that is said to have sunk to the bottom of the Atlantic Ocean. There’s always a possibility of a myth becoming an actuality!

—SUZANNE EVANS
San Jose, California

A Football Family Lets Go of a Dream

I can’t help but wonder about the coach of the opposing team and the referee. Seems they both bear some

responsibility for 11-year-old Brogan Callaghan's brain injury during a football game. The coach shouldn't have condoned his player's illegal hits, and the ref should've called it the first time it happened. My sympathies to Brogan and his family.

—WENDY STEELE
Chelsea, Alabama

Your True Stories

Your story of the lost wedding ring was very close to what happened to me. One day, I saw that the diamond was missing from my engagement ring. I was sure we were going to have to get a new stone. Well, lo and behold, the next day I was vacuuming, and what did I see on the carpet? Yes, my diamond—and it is a small one. The jeweler set it with a new prong, and I still have my original ring. This year, it is 53 years old.

—SYLVIA STRICKLAND
Goose Creek, South Carolina

This Smartphone Feature Could Save Your Life

If only more people would use the Medical ID feature, first responders could do their jobs more effectively. It would save lives and relieve pressure on family members to remember important information in a desperate, emotional situation. I have used Medical ID for two years and always update the information when changes happen.

—JANET LITTLE
Gahanna, Ohio

LOOKING
FOR
LAUGHS!

WE LOVE YOU, MOM, but sometimes you make us blush. Got a funny “mom-apropism”—something your mother never should have said but did? Share the story at RD.COM/MOM, and we might publish it.

BRAIN GAMES

◆ I really liked Word Sudoku. It made me strategize as if I were doing regular sudoku—which really makes your brain work.

—Victoria Pruden
OWENSBORO, KENTUCKY

◆ Lost Time was so easy that I thought maybe my answer was wrong, although it wasn't.

—Mary Hartshorn
WESTERVILLE, OHIO

◆ Do I need to turn in my genius card? In Counting Digits, I'm pretty sure the digit 5 occurs 19 times in the numbers 1 to 100, not 20 as you stated.

—Kathy Sevy
PECULIAR, MISSOURI

FROM THE EDITORS

The digits question tricked many of you. It asks how many times “the digit” 5 occurs, and the correct answer includes both 5s in 55.



EVERYDAY HEROES

*This musician calms the dying
and soothes their families*

Love's Last Refrain

BY *Jen McCaffery*

WHEN FREDDIE FULLER arrived to perform in the hospital room in Temple, Texas, Pam Golightly worried it was already too late. Her stepfather, Dennis Strobel, was dying.

At 88, Strobel had just been moved to the palliative care unit. After spending five days by his side, Golightly could tell that something had changed in the Korean War veteran. He had become agitated, and a nurse had told her Strobel's time was near.

"You're probably wasting your time," Golightly told Fuller.

But Fuller, wearing a cowboy hat and toting a Taylor acoustic guitar, shared with her what medical professionals had told him time and time again over the years: Hearing may be the last sense to go.

"Let me go in and play," Fuller said. "It's as much for you as it is for him."

Fuller, 68 and a full-time musician, is known professionally as the Singing Cowboy. With two albums, the country and folk musician has performed all over the United States, as well as overseas for American troops. He also delights schoolkids

**“Oddly enough,
I feel comfortable
around people at
the end of their
life,” says Fuller.**



with a one-man show called "History of the Texas Cowboy 1850–1900."

Growing up in Salado, Texas, Fuller heard gospel music all the time from his mother. She even sang as she hung clothes on the line. And she encouraged her young son's musical talent.

When she was dying of cancer, in 1987, he put their love of song to its greatest use. He would crawl into her hospital bed with his guitar and sing her favorites: "Amazing Grace," "Just a Closer Walk with Thee," and "I'll Fly Away." His mother seemed to relax, a peaceful look crossing her face.

"That moment allowed her and I to connect like we used to when I was singing as a kid," Fuller recalls. It emphasized to him the power of music. Consciously or subconsciously, people allow it to go to deep, sacred parts of their hearts and souls, Fuller believes.

So when he heard about a non-profit organization called Swan Songs, he gave them a call. Since 2005, Swan Songs has arranged more than 800 free musical last wishes—bedside performers from bagpipers to mariachi bands—at hospitals, hospices, and private homes in and around Austin, Texas. Fuller signed up on the spot.

Since then, he has performed

dozens of musical vigils. Sometimes they're almost festive, with terminally ill people surrounded by family, including one patient who sang along and danced gingerly with her walker. Other times, they're quieter, as Fuller's experience with his mom was. And sometimes they feel a bit like a miracle.

That was the case with Golightly's stepfather. He enjoyed country music, and Swan Songs sent Fuller. When Fuller arrived at the hospital that day last February, Strobel seemed ready to say goodbye. Golightly and her sister, Paula Guerra, watched their stepdad's every breath, each holding one of his hands. Fuller played some Willie Nelson, Merle Haggard, and Jackson Browne songs. After 45 minutes, Golightly asked for just one more song. Fuller chose "Love, Me," a country ballad by Collin Raye. "I played the last song, sang the last note, and hit the last guitar chord, and he took his last breath," Fuller says.

"She, her sister, and I looked at one another, saying: 'Oh my gosh, we just experienced one of the most magical moments in our lives.'"

"It was a gift for us all," Golightly says of Fuller's singing. "At a really sad time, it was beautiful." **R**



Take the First Step

A person who is not afraid of looking like a fool gets to do a lot more dancing.

MARGARET RENKL, WRITER

A White Knight in the Aisle Seat

BY *Andy Simmons*

SOON AFTER Savannah Phillips got buckled into her window seat on a United Airlines flight from Oklahoma to Illinois this past May, she glanced over at her seatmate. He was in his 60s, wore bright yellow sunglasses, and was busy texting. The font was unusually large and the screen was bright, making it easy for Phillips to read what he was tapping out: “Hey Babe, I’m sitting next to a smelly fatty.”

“It was like confirmation of the negative things I think about myself on a daily basis,” the 33-year-old mother wrote in a Facebook post after the flight. Soon tears streamed down her cheeks as she hugged the cabin wall, trying to make herself as small as possible.

Sitting a row behind them and across the

aisle was Chase Irwin, a 35-year-old bar manager from Nashville, Tennessee. He could see the man’s texts, too—and he could see Phillips. “I noticed [her] looking at his phone,” Irwin told wsmv.com. “I was sick to my stomach. I could not have this guy sit next to her this whole flight and her thinking he’s making fun of her,” he told Nashville’s NewsChannel 5.

In an instant, Irwin had unbuckled his seat belt and was hovering over the texter. “Hey, I need to talk to you,” Irwin told him. “We are switching seats—now.” When the texter asked why, Irwin said, “You’re texting about her, and I’m not putting up with that.”

The texter acceded quickly. Irwin took his place next to Phillips and was soon cheering up his new seatmate.

“He encouraged me not to let that guy get to me and that everything was going to be fine,” Phillips wrote. And he was right. She and Irwin spent the rest of the flight chatting like old friends.

With her faith in humanity restored, Phillips wrote on Facebook, “The flight attendant told him that he was her hero. He wasn’t *her* hero—he was mine.” **R**



“You’re not crying the rest of the flight,” Irwin (bottom) told Phillips (top).



The GRAND NATIONAL TURKEY CALLING CONTEST

JESSE MARTIN, age 36,
Mount Sterling, Kentucky



Why did you take up turkey calling? I was about ten, and my aunt and uncle had some turkeys out in the yard. I got obsessed with trying to sound as much like a real turkey as I could. I've practiced three hours a day for the last twenty-some years.

For people who have never heard you—or a turkey—can you describe a call? *Kee* is a sound the turkey makes when it has been separated from the flock, kind of like a kid at Walmart screaming for his mama. They

cluck and purr when they're eating their favorite foods and they're happy. Every hen sounds different, just like humans.

And you do this all just with the sound of your voice? No, you place what's known as a call in your mouth. It contains latex, and the tension is what will make it sound like different turkeys. The tighter you stretch the call, the higher the pitch. Looser tension will sound like an older hen.

Why do you think you won? The judges said it was the most realistic they'd ever heard. You need to be your own hen, not like somebody else. That was my tenth Grand National, and I finally won. It was a dream come true.

*The National Wild Turkey Federation's Grand National Calling Championship is held every February. There are nine divisions, including owl hooting and a team challenge. **R***

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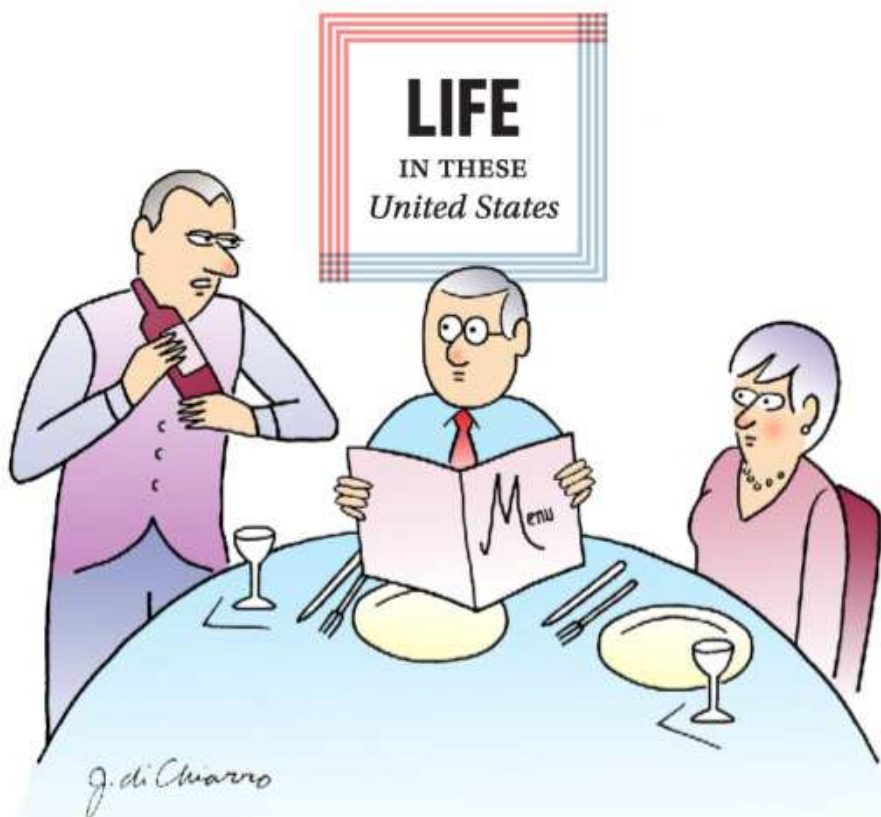
(1) Battery duration times are based on new, fully charged batteries used with a new SimplyGo Mini system. Battery duration times will degrade with battery age, environmental operating conditions, use over time, and operational condition of the concentrator.

(2) Pulse setting of 2 at 20 BPM



innovation  you

*Ventilators and oxygen
†Philips Respironics



“Here’s the wine you mispronounced.”

The other day I got carded at the liquor store. While I was taking out my ID, my old Blockbuster card fell out. The clerk shook his head, said, “Never mind,” and rang me up.

—ANDREA PRICE *Grafton, Wisconsin*

My friend Garrick had the solution to forgetting his wife’s birthday and their wedding anniversary: He opened an account with a local florist and provided it

with both dates as well as instructions to send flowers and a card signed “Your loving husband, Garrick.”

For a few years, it worked. Then one day,

Garrick came home on their wedding anniversary. He saw the flowers on the dining room table and said, “What nice flowers. Where did you get them?”

—YEFIM M. BRODD
Kirkland, Washington

Every class is drama class when you’re in high school.

—[@TIMOTHYBIRD186](#)
(Timothy Bird)

Pretty much the most frightening part of my day is when I get a notification that my mother has tagged me in a post on Facebook.
—[@CULTUREDUFFIAN](#)

Spotted on a Laundromat corkboard: “Please keep clothes on while doing laundry.”
—SUE CONNOR
Roseburg, Oregon

Marriage is just your spouse perpetually standing in front of the kitchen drawer or cabinet you need to open.
—[@COPYMAMA](#)

I was waiting at a small train station when a man put up a sign regarding my train: “30-Minute Delay.”
“What happened?” I asked.
“The train went

GOT A FUNNY STORY about friends or family? It could be worth \$\$\$.

For details, go to [RD.COM/SUBMIT](#).

off the rails,” he said.
“How long will that take to fix?”

“Quite a few hours.”
“So why put up a sign saying it would take 30 minutes?”

“It’s the only sign we have.”
—JAMES JOY *West Hartford, Connecticut*

At our weekly Bible study, the leader asked an elderly gentleman, Walt, to open the meeting with prayer. Walt did so in a soft voice.

Another man, straining to hear, shouted, “I can’t hear you!”

Walt replied, “I wasn’t talking to you.”
—RICHARD STEUSSY
Novato, California

My wife just said “That’s definitely your daughter” after our three-year-old muttered incomprehensible gibberish, laughed out loud, and said very proudly, “I made a funny joke!”

—[@SPENCERHH](#)
(Spencer Higgins)

ZZZZZZZZZZIP IT!

A woman finds herself constantly awakened at night by her boyfriend talking in his sleep. So since she’s up, she decides to record what he’s saying. Here are some of his midnight ramblings:

- ◆ “No, octopus, you can’t do that!”
- ◆ “Spaghetti is hair for meatballs.”
- ◆ “Where are my pancakes, penguin?”
- ◆ “I won’t. The toilet said no.”
- ◆ “Butterfly, you made a mistake walking in front of me.”
- ◆ “But I wanna be Mary Poppins.”
- ◆ “Do you know where the TV remote is? No? I’ll just ask the duck.”

—BOREDPANDA.COM

What’s the craziest thing you’ve ever heard someone say in his or her sleep? Tell us at [RD.COM/SLEEPTALK](#).



DON'T LET YOUR BLADDER

ALWAYS STOP YOU FROM

SEIZING THE MOMENT.



Ask your doctor about Myrbetriq® (mirabegron), the first and only overactive bladder (OAB) treatment in its class.

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.

TAKE CONTROL OF YOUR OAB SYMPTOMS BY TALKING TO YOUR DOCTOR ABOUT MYRBETRIQ TODAY.

USE OF MYRBETRIQ (meer-BEH-trick)

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

IMPORTANT SAFETY INFORMATION

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



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IMPORTANT SAFETY INFORMATION (CONTINUED)

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

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

Before taking Myrbetriq, tell your doctor if you have liver or kidney problems. The most common side effects of Myrbetriq include increased blood pressure, common cold symptoms (nasopharyngitis), dry mouth, flu symptoms, urinary tract infection, back pain, dizziness, joint pain, headache, constipation, sinus irritation, and inflammation of the bladder (cystitis).

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.

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



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

Brief Summary based on FDA-approved patient labeling

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

What is Myrbetriq (meer-BEH-trick)?

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

- Urge urinary incontinence: a strong need to urinate with leaking or wetting accidents
- Urgency: a strong need to urinate right away
- Frequency: urinating often

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

Who should not use Myrbetriq?

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

What should I tell my doctor before taking Myrbetriq?

Before you take Myrbetriq, tell your doctor about all of your medical conditions, including 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. Talk to your doctor about the best way to feed your baby if you take Myrbetriq.

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

Tell your doctor if you take:

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

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 chew, break, or crush 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	• dizziness
• common cold symptoms (nasopharyngitis)	• joint pain
• dry mouth	• headache
• flu symptoms	• constipation
• urinary tract infection	• sinus (sinus irritation)
• back pain	• inflammation of the bladder (cystitis)

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.

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.

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).

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).

Marketed and Distributed by:

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Northbrook, Illinois 60062



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QUOTABLE QUOTES

**Anything sweet, really sweet, that I have
was nothing that I planned.**

—Sandra Bullock, ACTOR

I tell every child I meet, “You have greatness inside you, and your job is to figure out what that is, dig it out, and give it to the world.”

—Henry Winkler, ACTOR

Beware of monotony; it's the mother of all the deadly sins.

—Edith Wharton, NOVELIST

People are readily identified as being left-brained or right-brained, but I want to be identified as using my entire brain.

—Mae Jemison, ASTRONAUT

Success is how high you bounce when you hit bottom.

—George S. Patton, ARMY GENERAL

I picture each day as if it were a happy dog looking at me. I may not be in the mood, but the dog always wants to play. Trust the dog.

—John Patrick Shanley, PLAYWRIGHT



BULLOCK

WINKLER

PATTON

JEMISON

An acquaintance is a person we know well enough to borrow from but not well enough to lend to.

—Ambrose Bierce, WRITER

People are like stained glass windows. They sparkle and shine when the sun is out, but when the darkness sets in, their true beauty is revealed only if there is light from within.

—Elisabeth Kübler-Ross, PSYCHIATRIST

At this stage of life, I sort of go, “OK, I won’t scream at you. I’ll just talk to you loud.”

—Miranda Lambert, SINGER

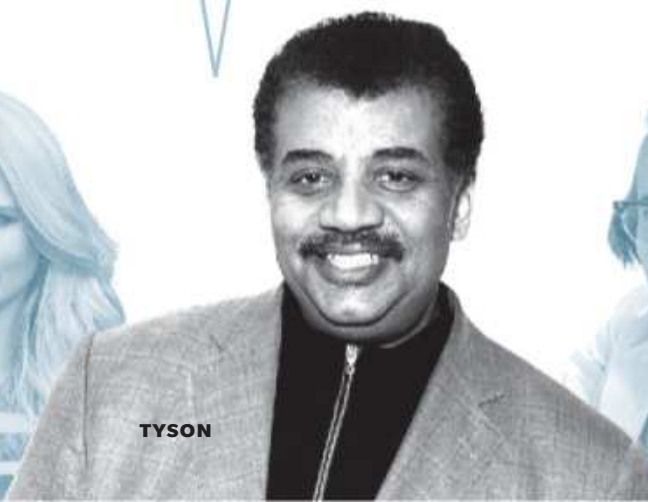
POINT TO PONDER

If you’re a child, you are curious about your environment. Period. You’re overturning rocks. You’re plucking petals off flowers, and you’re doing things that create disorder. Then what do adults do? They say, “Don’t pluck the petals ... Don’t play with the egg.” Everything is a don’t. We spend the first year teaching them to walk and talk and the rest of their lives telling them to shut up and sit down. Get out of their way!

—Neil deGrasse Tyson, ASTROPHYSICIST



LAMBERT



TYSON



KÜBLER-ROSS

HOW TO

Keep Internet Spies Out of Your Home

“Smart” devices equipped with cameras and microphones can be easy targets for hackers

BY Marissa Laliberte



For a nervous first-time mom, the new Wi-Fi-connected baby monitor seemed like a godsend. Jamie Summitt was thrilled that the system let her use her phone to watch her son, Noah, and even control the camera angle in case the baby moved. Her husband and sister-in-law could operate the monitor with their phones too. What none of them realized was that they were not the only ones who could watch.

One night, all three grown-ups were sitting together in the Summitts' South Carolina home when Jamie noticed that the live video was panning around the baby's room. That's odd, she thought, since none of them were touching their phones at that moment. Then the camera stopped and refocused—on the exact spot where she usually breast-fed. Jamie was confused and wondered whether there was a bug in the monitor's software. Then she realized the uglier truth: Someone else was controlling the camera. She unplugged the baby monitor and called the police. "It makes me kind of sick to think what kind of stuff the person may have seen, and he still could be out there," Jamie told ABC News. "I'm supposed to protect my son, and I feel like I failed him."

Smart gadgets are all about convenience, allowing you to control household devices (thermostats, doorbells, refrigerators, coffee makers, and slow cookers) with your phone or computer, or turn on lights or music with your voice via an Amazon Echo or

Google Home. But that convenience can make you easy prey for hackers. Whenever you connect to the Internet, a door opens just a crack, enough that hackers can get through, and smart devices don't always do a good job of keeping the interlopers out. "One of the biggest issues is that these device makers are really thinking about security second," says Andrew Newman, founder and CEO of Reason Software Company. Security breaches are rare, but tech experts fear that as these gizmos become more popular, they'll also become bigger targets. The time to protect yourself is now.

SMALL ELECTRONICS AND ROUTERS

MOST SMART DEVICES require passwords, but a weak one isn't hard to crack—assuming you've set one in the first place. Hackers can use Google-like search engines to find out which gadgets might not be password protected. They can simply enter a specific type of device (say, security cameras), and the search engine will

pull up a list of those that are potentially unprotected.

But when it comes to breaking into your devices, the real firewall—and potential weak link—is your router. Because it's connected to every on-line device in your home, hacking your router is like picking the lock on your front door. Once inside, thieves can control any connected smart gadget, including its cameras and microphones.

Your router can be easy to crack if you don't change its default password; some tech-support websites list common preset passwords for most router brands and models.

Protect Yourself Changing the default settings on your devices and your router to include strong, unique passwords is essential. Try taking a phrase you'll remember (“four score and seven years ago”) and using its initials (*fsasya*) as a start, and then mix in capital letters, numbers, and symbols. Another safeguard: An attacker who gets to your router won't be able to access the devices if they're turned off, so plug them into a surge-protector strip and shut off the power strip when you aren't using them. It also doesn't hurt to physically block any prying eyes in case they do manage to get through your security. A piece of tape or sticky note over a camera you aren't using will do the trick. Of course, the one surefire way to protect yourself is to avoid these



gadgets altogether. “If you don't really need to have a smart device at this point, don't buy one,” says Yotam Gutman, vice president of marketing for SecuriThings.

HOME ASSISTANTS

DANIELLE, A RESIDENT of Portland, Oregon, was surprised to get a call from one of her husband's employees in Seattle who said he'd received a recording on his phone of the couple chatting in their home. They thought their Amazon Echo—a voice-controlled gizmo that can be programmed to adjust your thermostat, lights, and more—had been hacked. But Amazon investigated and discovered that the incident had come about by accident. The device


doesn't take commands until it hears its "name," Alexa. Somehow, this Alexa thought it had heard its name, then further misinterpreted the conversation as instructions to record and send audio files to a contact in Danielle's husband's phone—the employee who received the recording. "With smart devices, we tend to forget they're there. But they're there to record us and collect data—that's the business model," says Gutman.

Protect Yourself The odds of home assistants accidentally recording conversations are low, experts say, and the devices should ask for confirmation before sending information to a third party. But if its volume is low, or if you can't see the lights on the device that alert you that it has been activated, you might not realize it is engaged and potentially misunderstanding what it's hearing. Keep the volume up and the speakers visible to minimize any potential issues.

DOOR MONITORS

SOMETIMES BREACHES IN privacy are personal. Jesus Echezarreta has a smart doorbell that sends live video of his front door in Miami to his phone

when it senses motion or someone rings the bell. You need a password to connect the doorbell to your phone, and Echezarreta had shared his with his boyfriend. Echezarreta changed the password twice after they broke up, so he was shocked when he got e-mails from the ex criticizing his comings and goings from his own house. It turns out the ex was watching Echezarreta through the device: The security settings (which have since been updated) didn't disconnect users after a password change. The ex-boyfriend had never logged out of the doorbell's app, so he never lost his connection to it.

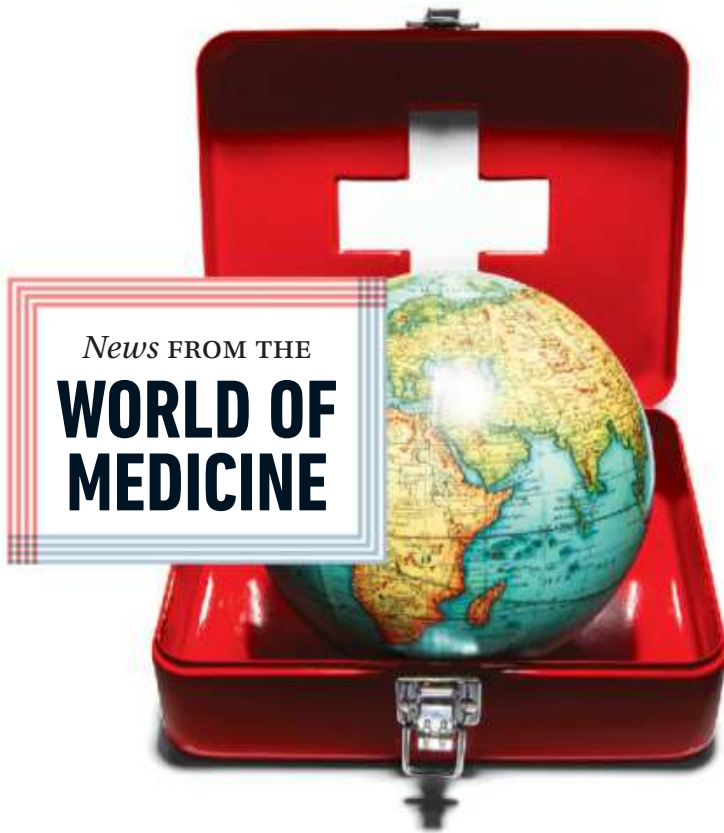
Protect Yourself When shopping for smart devices, look for models that allow multiple users. All users will have their own log-ins, and you can delete individual accounts if you ever need to. As an extra precaution, you can also put the device through a factory reset to delete all the data, including passwords. No matter what, check in periodically to see whether there's a software update for the device. If a vulnerability gets patched, you'll stay one step ahead of the hackers. 



On the Other Hand

Watching a teenager on his smartphone, I realized that the idiom "all thumbs" might be doomed.

CALVIN TRILLIN, WRITER



News FROM THE
**WORLD OF
MEDICINE**

WHY VEGETARIANS SHOULD ADD IN B12

In a National Institutes of Health study, vegan and vegetarian participants tended to score higher than meat eaters on a depression-measuring scale. While the results don't prove causality, it wouldn't be surprising if nutritional shortfalls were to blame, the researchers said. In particular, vegetarians and vegans are often low in vitamin B12, and animal products are the only natural source of this nutrient. However, it's possible to reach the recommended levels by taking supplements or by eating fortified foods such as soy milk and breakfast cereal.

Air Pollution Can Harm Your Kidneys

Polluted air has long been linked to major health conditions such as heart disease, stroke, cancer, asthma, and chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD). A new study based on data from nearly 2.5 million people now adds kidney disease to the list. According to the researchers, the adverse effects increase as pollution levels increase, but even relatively low amounts of particulate matter (which can include bits of dirt, dust, smoke, and soot) may increase the risk of chronic kidney disease and ultimately contribute to kidney failure. If you live in an area with poor air quality, be on the lookout for early signs of kidney disease. They include foamy or bloody urine, itchy skin, puffy eyes, muscle cramps, unusual fatigue, and swollen feet, hands, or ankles.

New Smart Hearing Aid in the Works

Researchers at New York's Columbia University Fu Foundation School of Engineering and Applied Science are developing a high-tech hearing aid that can help people focus on a single voice in a noisy restaurant or any other setting that's packed with competing and overlapping sounds. The hearing aid works by monitoring the brain activity of the user to determine whether he or she is conversing with a specific speaker; it then automatically picks that person's voice out of a mixed audio feed and amplifies it. In a recent trial, almost all the subjects found the device helpful and wanted to continue using it beyond the test.

PHOTOGRAPH BY MATTHEW COHEN



DIABETES MEDS CAN COMBAT OSTEOPOROSIS

Because type 2 diabetes affects bone metabolism, it's not uncommon for people with the illness to develop osteoporosis. In fact, many medications treat both diseases. Researchers in the United Kingdom and Greece found that metformin, sulfonylureas (such as Glucotrol), DPP-4 inhibitors (such as Januvia and Onglyza), and GLP-1 receptor agonists (such as Victoza and Trulicity) work best to help strengthen bones *and* control diabetes. If you suffer from both conditions, ask your doctor which of these drugs is best for you.

Dim Light Could Make You Dim

Working in a poorly lit office isn't just depressing—it may actually make you dumber. In a study from Michigan State University, Nile grass rats who spent their days in dim light did not do well on spatial learning tasks and showed a 30 percent decrease in the number of dendritic spines, the connections that allow neurons to communicate. Rats who were exposed to bright light, though, improved their performance. The study's co-author noted that this is “similar to when people can't find their way back to their cars after a few hours in a movie theater,” suggesting that light levels might have the same effect on us. Luckily, when the dim rats were exposed to bright light again, their brain capacity recovered fully.

ON THE HUNT FOR THE “SUPERAGER” GENE

EVERYONE EXPERIENCES some cognitive decline as they get older, but how is it that some people seem to suffer little memory loss even decades after middle age?

Dubbed “superagers” by scientists, they are the 80-somethings who scored as well as the average 50- to 65-year-old on certain memory tests and at least average for their age in other assessments of brainpower. Research has found that superagers have fewer beta-amyloid plaques and neurofibrillary tangles, both of which are associated with Alzheimer’s disease. Now a new study indicates that one reason why is genetic.

When scientists sequenced the genomes of 56 superagers, they found one gene, called MAP2K3, had changed more in their brains than is typical. The findings suggest that “superagers may have higher resistance to age-related cognitive changes” than the normal aging population, said the study’s lead author.

Does that mean you might as well abandon the healthy lifestyle choices—eating well, exercising regularly, avoiding stress and cigarettes—that have long been associated with stronger aging brains? Certainly not. What this new research indicates is that therapies targeting the MAP2K3 gene could reduce age-related memory decline for everyone one day—including people with Alzheimer’s.



Viagra May Reduce Colon Cancer Risk

In an animal study, a small daily dose of the popular male impotence drug Viagra reduced the formation of cancerous polyps in the colon by 50 percent. Viagra raises levels of a substance that helps intestinal cells form a physical barrier against bacteria and other foreign elements. More research is needed to determine whether the same effect would be seen in humans.

Tears Help Diagnose Parkinson’s

Researchers found that tear samples from people with Parkinson’s disease had higher levels of a toxic form of a protein called alpha-synuclein than those from healthy individuals. This discovery might one day allow doctors to diagnose—and even treat—Parkinson’s before symptoms appear. **R**



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YOUR TRUE STORIES

IN 100 Words*

Ask Your Father

When our three children were young, I would put them to bed, hear their prayers, kiss them good night, and then whisper in their ears, "If you need anything, call Daddy." In the middle of the night, we would hear a little voice saying, "Daaaaddy." My husband would hit the floor to see what his little darling wanted. I would cover up my head and smile. When they got older, I told my husband what I had done, and he said, "All those years, I thought our kiddos liked me better."

—Helen Sparks
OKLAHOMA CITY, OKLAHOMA

TO READ MORE true stories and to submit your own, go to RD.COM/STORIES. If your story is published in the magazine, we'll pay you \$100.

Guess You're Not from Around Here

After a trip to Las Vegas, some friends gave me a novelty UFO driver's license issued by Area 51. It included a photo of an alien. I enjoyed carrying it in my wallet. One day, I was pulled over. I handed the officer my license and waited as he went to his car. That's when I looked and saw my driver's license still in my wallet. I had given the officer my UFO license. Fortunately, he told me this had made his day—and he let me go with a warning.

—DONALD BRYNELSEN *Schaumburg, Illinois*



The Donkey Hug

IN 2009, I rescued a skittish donkey. Bo came from a nearby cattle ranch and now lives peacefully on my ranch in the Bitterroot Valley of Montana, along with another donkey, three horses, and two dogs.

But the key to Bo's successful rehab from nervous rescue to happy ranch animal wasn't anything I did. It was my grandson, Dylan.

**Sometimes 100 words just isn't enough!*

When he was just shy of four years old, Dylan came with his parents to spend the Fourth of July with me on their way to Canada for a vacation. Bo kept his distance from the grown-ups, but he displayed an unusual fascination with Dylan. So we decided to introduce them.

“Move slowly, keep your arms down, be quiet, and stoop down sometimes,” I told my grandson.

Dylan cautiously approached Bo, step by step, holding a soft rubber currycomb. Bo held his ground, but he seemed intrigued by this little visitor. Dylan rubbed Bo’s shoulders and neck softly with the comb, removing remnants of his thick winter coat.

It’s hard for an almost four-year-old to stay still for long, and impulse overcame restraint. Dylan made one quick move, and Bo scampered off. But Bo and Dylan were not ready to give up. Dylan approached again. To witness a preschooler learn to control himself in such a short time was amazing.

As we watched, true love developed between this once distrustful donkey and a gentle boy. Over the next few days, Bo let Dylan throw his arms around his neck, pet his legs, hold his head in his hands, and pat his cheeks. And Dylan felt free to sit at Bo’s feet while Bo carefully nibbled his shirt collar and hair and rubbed Dylan’s back with his bristly chin.

Just as Dylan had earned Bo’s trust, Bo showed restraint with Dylan. He hugged Dylan—yes, a donkey *can* hug—without knocking him off balance.

They met again one week later as the family passed through on their return trip. It was almost dark, but Dylan and his dad trekked to the far reaches of the pasture. Bo came to meet them enthusiastically. He is now a changed and trusting donkey.

And Dylan is a miracle worker.

—JUDY MOORE *Florence, Montana*,
FROM COUNTRY MAGAZINE

A Mental Exercise

Having recently joined a large fitness center in a new area, and being 76 years old, I was concerned that after my workout I would forget which was my locker. On my first day, as I placed my things in the locker, several women were engaged in casual conversation around me. Afraid I’d be distracted and not remember my spot, I said my number—“I’m 86”—in what I thought was a whisper. Apparently it was louder than I realized, as conversation stopped and several voices called out, “You certainly look good for your age!” [®]

—Michelle Gabriel
SAN RAMON, CALIFORNIA



LAUGHTER
THE BEST *Medicine*



“Yes, I’m sure the eggs have gone beyond their expiration date.”

A linguistics professor is lecturing his class. “In English,” he says, “a double negative forms a positive. However, in Russian, a double negative remains a negative. But there isn’t a single language, not one, in which a double positive can express a negative.”

A voice from the back shouts out, “Yeah, right.” —VIRALNOVA.COM

My granddaughter wanted a Cinderella-themed party, so I invited all her friends over and made them clean my house. —[@IGREENMONK](#)

A man’s bragging about his promotion to vice president got so out of hand even his wife was annoyed. “Look, being a vice president isn’t that special,” she said. “They even have a vice president of peas at the supermarket!”

Not believing her for one second, the man called the supermarket and demanded, “Get me the vice president of peas!”

The clerk replied, “Fresh, canned, or frozen?”

—Submitted by
NORMAN MIDDLETON
Beech Grove, Indiana

Four quick jokes that might take some time (and/or Googling) to get:

- ◆ Why is *o* the noisiest vowel? All the others are in audible.
- ◆ “Have you any two-watt bulbs?” “For what?” “That’ll do. I’ll take two.”
- ◆ Who is this Rorschach guy? And why does he

FROM TOP: 'AN OLD WOMAN,' QUINLEN MASSYS/THE NATIONAL GALLERY. 'PENITENT MAGDALENE,' ARTEMISIA GENTILESCHI/ COURTESY ART HISTORY CAPS. 'PORTRAIT OF EMPEROR RODOLF II,' GIUSEPPE ARCIMBOLDO/COURTESY ART HISTORY CAPS

I approximated the Black Friday experience at home by hurling myself into a wall a number of times and then ordering online.

—KUMAIL NANJIANI, *comedian*

paint so many pictures of my parents fighting?

◆ What do you get when you cross a joke with a rhetorical question?

The crowded diner had a sign reading, “Not responsible for personal items.” So Larry kept checking on his belongings. Finally his pal said, “Larry, you’re driving me nuts. Stop watching our coats.”

“I’m only watching mine,” Larry said. “Yours was stolen a half hour ago.” —JEWISHMAG.COM

There’s literally no way to know how many chameleons are in your house.

—@MEGANAMRAM

Eight comedians are in a bar telling jokes. “Twelve!” one of them says. The others burst

out laughing. “Four!” shouts another, again cracking up the others. When a third hollers, “Twenty-two!!!” forget it, they’re all guffawing. Except the bartender.

“What’s so funny about just calling out numbers?” he says.

“We all know the same jokes, so we gave them numbers,” says the first comedian. “To save time, we just shout out the numbers.”

The bartender decides to try it and yells, “Six!” A dead silence falls upon the bar. “Why didn’t I get any laughs?” he asks.

The comedians shrug. “You didn’t tell it right.” —VIA FRIARSCLUB.COM

GOT A FUNNY JOKE? *It could be worth \$\$\$.* For details, see page 4 or go to **RD.COM/SUBMIT.**

CLASSIC ART GETS INSTAGRAMMED



“How I think I look when someone tells me I look tired.”



“When you realize it’s only Tuesday.”



“Actual photo of me after I drink a smoothie.”

—INSTAGRAM.COM/ARTHISTORYCAPS

LIFE WELL LIVED

A third-grade class knows exactly what will brighten an older neighbor's holiday meal—and it isn't a roast turkey

Thanksgiving for the Soul

BY *Patricia Sherlock*

FROM **GUIDEPOSTS**

IN OCTOBER, I told the eight-year-olds in the religion class I teach in Pompton Lakes, New Jersey, about my plan. “I’d like all of you to do extra jobs around the house to earn some money,” I said. “Then we’ll buy food for a Thanksgiving dinner for someone who might not have a nice dinner otherwise.”

I wanted the children to experience Acts 20:35—that it’s more blessed to give than to receive. I wanted them to understand that religion is more than nice theological ideas; that people somehow have to make it come alive. I hoped they could experience a sense of their own power to effect change.

Early in Thanksgiving week, the boys and girls arrived in class clutching

their hard-earned money. They had raked leaves, set tables, washed dishes, helped with younger siblings. And now they couldn’t wait to go shopping.

I supervised while they darted up and down the supermarket aisles. At last we headed toward the checkout, pushing a cart filled with turkey and all the trimmings. Then someone spotted a “necessity” that sent them racing.

“Flowers!” Kristine cried. The group hurtled toward the holiday plants.

I made a pitch for practicality. It was more sensible to use any extra money to buy staples that could be stretched into meals. After all, I pronounced, “You can’t eat flowers.”

“But Mrs. Sherlock,” came the resounding wail, “we want flowers.”



BUZELLI

Defeated, I looked at the array before us, mostly good-sized plants in shades of rust, gold, and burgundy. But stuck in the middle of the display was a pot of preposterously purple mums. "She'll like this one," the children agreed, and plopped the purple plant into the cart.

An agency had given us the name and address of a needy grandmother who had lived alone for many years. Soon we were bouncing along a rutted road to her house. The atmosphere in the car was definitely not spiritual. "You're squishing me!" one

The woman brightened. She told the children about the animals that lived close by, about the birds that flocked to the bread crumbs she put out. "Maybe that's why the Lord sent me this food through you," she said. "Because I share my food with the birds."

We returned to the car. As we fastened our seat belts, we could see the kitchen window. The woman inside waved goodbye, then turned and walked across the room, past the turkey, past the trimmings, straight to the chrysanthemums. She put her face

"SHE'LL LIKE THIS ONE," THE KIDS AGREED AS THEY PUT THE PURPLE PLANT INTO THE CART.


voice announced. "I think I'm scared of strangers," said another. Between the squirming and giggling and punching, and those ragamuffin purple flowers, I wasn't sure that any lesson about giving and receiving was getting through.

We finally pulled up in front of a small bungalow tucked in the woods. A slightly built woman with a weary face came to the door to welcome us.

My little group scurried to get the food. As each box was carried in, the old woman oohed and aahed—much to her visitors' pleasure. When Amy put the mums on the counter, the woman seemed surprised. She's wishing it was a bag of flour, I thought.

"Do you like it here?" Michael asked. "In the woods, I mean."

in their petals. When she raised her head, there was a smile on her lips. She was transformed before our eyes.

The children were quiet. In that one brief moment, they had seen for themselves the power they possessed to make another's life better. And I had seen something too. This wonder had been wrought not by adult practicality but by youthful exuberance. The children had sensed that sometimes a person needs a pot of funny purple flowers on a dark November day. 

THIS STORY *originally appeared in the November 1986 issue of Reader's Digest.*

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1. Maselli DJ, Amalakuhan B, Keyt H, Diaz AA. Suspecting non-cystic fibrosis bronchiectasis: What the busy primary care clinician needs to know. *Int J Clin Pract.* 2017;71(2):e12924.

2. Martínez-García MA, de la Rosa Carrillo D, Soler-Cataluña JJ, et al. Prognostic value of bronchiectasis in patients with moderate-to-severe chronic obstructive pulmonary disease. *Am J Respir Crit Care Med.* 2013;187:823–831.

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WE FOUND A FIX

9 TRICKS TO
*Improve Your Life**



1

Charge Your Phone Faster

TECHNOLOGY To boost your battery more quickly, turn on airplane mode. That pauses your phone's "background noise" (such as random notifications and GPS roaming), which tends to drain the battery. The extra juice won't be much, but when you're in a hurry, every little bit helps.

** From RD.COM reporting*

2

Save a Tooth That Has Been Knocked Out

HEALTH If a permanent tooth is accidentally knocked out of your mouth, don't panic. Pick up the tooth by the crown (the chewing surface), gently rinse off any debris, and stick it back in your mouth if you can. If not, put it in a cup of milk (not water!), and get to a dentist as soon as possible so it can be reimplanted.



3

Stop Fido's Chewing

PETS Got a dog that won't stop chewing on its tail, paw, or fur? Paint the spot with myrrh oil, available at drugstores. The horrible taste will discourage the chewing.

4

Use a Makeshift Humidifier in Your Hotel Room

TRAVEL The air in hotel rooms can be very dry. If your room has a kitchen area, fill a teakettle with water and heat it on the stove. Let the steam escape into the room until almost all the water has evaporated. This can help relieve coughs, stuffy noses, and other symptoms of colds and allergies.

5

Cut Down on Added Sugar

COOKING "The average adult in the United States consumes almost three times more added sugar than is recommended," states Erin Palinski-Wade, RD, author of *2-Day Diabetes Diet*. "When preparing a baked goods recipe, swap out the sugar for pureed prunes. This cuts out the added sugar while increasing both the fiber and nutrient content of the recipe."

6

Save on a Sam's Club Membership

SHOPPING If you have a friend with a Sam's Club membership, ask whether you can become an add-on cardholder on his or her account. That way, you get all the perks at a discounted price of \$40 a year, down from \$100 annually for a Sam's Plus membership and \$45 for a regular membership.

7

Stay Awake After That Big Thanksgiving Dinner

FOOD Forget what you've heard about how the tryptophan in turkey makes you sleepy on Thanksgiving. In fact, the protein in turkey (as well as in chicken and steak) signals the brain to produce dopamine, the "motivation molecule" that gives you energy. So what really makes you sluggish after a big meal? The massive portions you just gobbled down.




8

Detox Your Dryer Sheet

CLEANING Manufacturers of fabric-softening dryer sheets aren't required to identify their fragrance ingredients as of yet, and there are at least 3,000 they could use—some of which are safe and some of which are not. Even unscented sheets might contain toxic chemicals, but a fragrance-free version can reduce your chance of exposure. If you really want to add a scent to your clothes, put a few drops of your favorite essential oil on a tennis ball and throw that in the dryer.

9

Defrost Your Windshield—Fast

AUTO Because rubbing alcohol doesn't freeze until it reaches -127°F , it makes a great defrosting solution. Make a mixture that's one third water and two thirds rubbing alcohol, and put it in a spray bottle. A few spritzes on an icy windshield will help you see clearly in no time. You can also use it on your car's door handles if they are frozen shut. 

Ask the Expert

COCHLEAR IMPLANTS – LIFE BEYOND HEARING AIDS

Straining to hear each day, even when using powerful hearing aids?

Feeling frustrated and sometimes even exhausted from listening? Whether it happens suddenly or gradually over time, hearing loss can affect you physically and emotionally.

Cochlear implants work differently than hearing aids. Rather than amplifying sound, they use state-of-the-art electronic components and software to help provide access to the sounds you've been missing.



Dr. Thomas Roland, a cochlear implant surgeon and medical advisor to Cochlear, the world leader in cochlear implants, answers questions about cochlear implants and how they are different from hearing aids.

Q: How are cochlear implants different than hearing aids?

A: Hearing aids help many people by making the sounds they hear louder. Unfortunately as hearing loss progresses, sounds need to not only be made louder but clearer. Cochlear implants can help give you that clarity, especially in noisy environments.¹ Hearing aids are typically worn before a cochlear implant solution is considered.

Q: Are cochlear implants covered by Medicare?

A: Yes, Medicare and most private insurance plans routinely cover cochlear implants.*

Q: What does a cochlear implant system look like?

A: There are two primary components of the Cochlear™ Nucleus® System, the implant that is surgically placed underneath the skin and the external sound processor. Cochlear offers two wearing options for the sound processor, one that's worn behind the ear—similar to a hearing aid, the Nucleus® 7 Sound Processor—and the Kanso® Sound Processor which is a discreet, off-the-ear hearing solution that's easy to use. The Cochlear Nucleus System advanced technology is designed to help you hear better and understand conversations.

Call **800 610 4901** to find a Hearing Implant Specialist near you.

Visit **Cochlear.com/US/Rdigest** for a free guide.

¹ The Nucleus Freedom Cochlear Implant System: Adult Post-Market Surveillance Trial Results. 2008 June.

* Covered for Medicare beneficiaries who meet CMS criteria for coverage. Contact your insurance provider or hearing implant specialist to determine your eligibility for coverage.

I Am THE
**FOOD
 ON YOUR
 PLATE**



Cranberries
**A Healthy
 Fruit
 Celebrates
 Its Holiday**

BY *Kate Lowenstein*
 AND *Daniel Gritzer*

A CRANBERRY LIKE me thinks of itself as the self-sufficient type. Millennia ago, as one of a handful of fruits native to North America (along with blueberries and Concord grapes), I eked out an existence in the sandy, acidic, waterlogged soil of glacier-formed bogs and other inhospitable spots in the continent's colder regions. In an environment that many plants would have found impossible, my shrubby vines flourished, my little green fruits turning white, then pink, then red as autumn deepened toward winter.

Native Americans picked my wild berries, eating them dried with deer meat, mashing them into antibacterial poultices for wound healing, and transforming the red skins into dye. When the Europeans arrived, my vitamin C helped them avoid scurvy.

Even after I became a cultivated crop (circa 1816), better-nourished modern humans benefited from the antioxidants in my skins and flesh, which offer anticancer, anti-heart disease, and antibacterial properties. I also help prevent urinary tract infections, thanks to my unusual abundance of chemicals called proanthocyanidins, which keep bacteria from sticking to the tract's inner surface.

Despite these attributes, my fame could have remained limited. After all, my raw flesh is an acquired taste, to say the least—so tart and tannic that it takes more than a small amount of sugar to make me palatable. I might



have been a mere novelty that shows up at the farmers market for a short season—the way, say, gooseberries or fiddlehead ferns do, stumping home cooks unfamiliar with how to incorporate them into a meal.

But in 1863, when President Abraham Lincoln was desperate to offer his war-torn country a small note of unity, he declared Thanksgiving a holiday (before then, it had been celebrated irregularly, on different days in different regions). When Gen. Ulysses Grant ordered Thanksgiving dinner for the troops the following year, he put cranberry sauce on his precedent-setting menu. With that, my place on the holiday table was cemented. I can only imagine what would have happened had he picked applesauce instead.

My sauce, by the way, nicely illustrates my self-sufficiency: Many other

THE SIMPLEST SAUCE RECIPE

Put your cranberries in a lidded pot. Add half an inch of water at the bottom, then a generous dose of sugar—one cup per 12-ounce bag of cranberries. Put the lid on and bring the water to a boil; when the steam starts to break things down, uncover the pot and stir occasionally. Cook until the sauce is at your desired consistency: If it gets too thick, add water; if it's not sweet enough, add sugar; if it's too sweet, add lemon juice at the end to balance. Season with a pinch of salt. To get fancier, start the cooking process with orange peel that you remove later, or add grated or finely minced fresh ginger. You can also sprinkle in cinnamon, clove, star anise, or tarragon, or spike the sauce with jalapeño or hot red chili pepper.

fruits require careful additions of pectin and acid to properly render them into jams and jellies—which is what this “sauce” really is—but I already contain enough of those two things. So with only water and sugar, any kitchen rube can easily cook me into a condiment that adds zing to an otherwise heavy holiday meal. I am the training wheels for the novice jam maker.

For decades, I enjoyed the spotlight during those six holiday weeks when 95 percent of cranberry sales took place. That would have been my lot forevermore if it hadn't been for the great cranberry scare of 1959, when the federal government announced that a crop from the Pacific Northwest had

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*25% off of \$99⁹⁹ MSRP is only valid for new lines of service. Offer valid 10/28/18 through 12/29/18. ²Monthly fees do not include government taxes or assessment surcharges and are subject to change. Plans and services may require purchase of a GreatCall device and a one-time setup fee of \$35. 5Star or 9-1-1 calls can be made only when cellular service is available. 5Star Service tracks an approximate location of the device when the device is turned on and connected to the network. GreatCall does not guarantee an exact location. Car charger will be mailed to customer after the device is activated. Jitterbug, GreatCall, and 5Star are registered trademarks of GreatCall, Inc. Copyright ©2018 GreatCall, Inc.

been contaminated with a weed killer. With Thanksgiving two weeks away, my annual cameo was in grave danger. The two people running for president, Richard Nixon and John F. Kennedy, appeared before the press to sip my juice and eat my sauce in an effort to assuage the nation's jitters. "Well, we have both eaten them, and I feel fine," Kennedy said, continuing drolly, "but if we both pass away, I feel I shall have performed a great public service by taking the vice president with me."

Sadly for me, the damage had been done. Even President Dwight Eisenhower skipped cranberry sauce that year. He ate applesauce instead.

The scare woke up the cranberry growers, the majority of which were (and still are) part of a cooperative of hundreds of small farms called Ocean Spray. There was a clear need to diversify, so Ocean Spray started promoting the cranberry in forms unconnected to the holidays. That's how cranberry juice cocktail, cran-apple juice, cran-grape juice, and eventually a

dried-cranberry snack called Craisins took off. The ubiquity of these products transformed me from a holiday specialty to a year-round staple, landing me in granola bars, boxed cereals, and even cocktails such as the cosmo.

My unlikely success story isn't without its kinks. There's currently a serious oversupply of cranberry crop, due to Americans buying less juice. And climate change is rendering the warm days and chilly nights of a northeastern autumn closer to a thing of the past. When temps aren't cool enough at night, I don't ripen as effectively.

Am I self-sufficient enough to weather changing market demand and shifting climate conditions? Only time will tell, but if you put your money on a persevering sourpuss that has overcome its share of challenges, I wouldn't blame you for a minute. **R**

Kate Lowenstein is the editor-in-chief of Vice's health website, Tonic; Daniel Gritzer is culinary director of the cooking site Serious Eats.



How Swede Is It?

Pop quiz: Which of these three didn't originate in Sweden?

1. ABBA. 2. IKEA. 3. Swedish meatballs.

The answer came in this tweet from none other than the Swedish government:

"Swedish meatballs are actually based on a recipe King Charles XII brought home from Turkey in the early 18th century. Let's stick to the facts!"

The truth dismayed many Swedes, including one who tweeted in response, "My whole life has been a lie."

LAUGH LINES

Tired of boiling water every time you make pasta? Boil a few gallons at the beginning of the week and freeze it for later.

—[@swaglordpat](#)

Cooking tip: Quickly slice a block of cheese by throwing it through a harp.

—[@markleggett](#)

Cooking tip: If you put too much water in your rice, toss a few phones in there.

—[@UniqueDude2](#)

I hate cooking, but I am excited to debut my cookbook, *Toast on a Paper Towel, 365 Ways.*

—[@LizHackett](#)

I tell people that the secret ingredient in my cookies is "love," but it's actually "floor."

—[@ughrevolution](#)

Fill your coffee maker with cake mix for an amazingly delicious yet entirely unexpected Thursday morning.

—[@8989belinda](#)

Cooking Hacks for Hacks

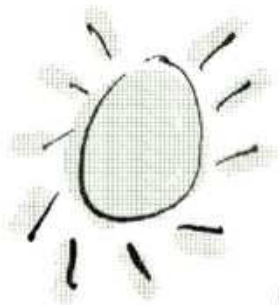


ERMOLAEV ALEXANDER/SHUTTERSTOCK

13 THINGS

Surprising Innovations from World War I

BY *Jacopo della Quercia*



1 Daylight Saving Time

The idea of fiddling with the clock has been around since antiquity, but it was not until World War I that governments around the globe officially adopted daylight saving time. Why? To conserve resources such as fuel and extend the workday for the war effort. The Germans and Austro-Hungarians did it first, in 1916, and the Allies followed shortly after. To clear up confusion about the concept, the *Washington Times* used a comic strip to explain the first “spring forward” in the United States in 1918.

2 Wristwatches
Timepieces known as wristlets were sold during the 19th century. However, they failed to take off with men until World War I demonstrated their superiority to pocket watches in battle—particularly for military leaders who were coordinating precision attacks. By the war's end, an entire generation of young men either had a wristwatch or wanted one for Christmas.

3 Blood Banks
Blood transfusions date back to the 1600s, but doctors rarely performed them before World War I, when they were accomplished by transfusing blood directly from one person to another. Capt. Oswald Robertson, a U.S. Army Reserve doctor consulting with the British army, recognized the need to stockpile blood before casualties occurred. In 1917, he helped establish the first blood bank on the western front.

4 Hollywood
With so much of Europe in the line of fire, the European film industry had to scale back dramatically. That opened the door for the Americans. Hollywood was still in its infancy, but its studios soon made fortunes producing wartime propaganda. The war itself provided material for countless movies in the 1920s and '30s, including *Wings*, the winner of the first Academy Award for Best Picture.

5 Trench Coats
While Charles Macintosh invented weatherproof outerwear about a century before World War I, Burberry and Aquascutum modernized the design to keep British officers warm and dry. Today, many trench coats (yes, that's why they're called that) come with flaps and rings that were originally created for securing pistols, map cases, and even swords.

6 Zippers
Originally known as a slide fastener, the zipper wasn't mass-produced until World War I, when the U.S. military requested them for flight suits and money belts, which were a necessity for U.S. sailors because their uniforms didn't have pockets.

7 Women's Suffrage
Suffragists had won victories throughout the western United States by 1917, but their support for and involvement in the war effort advanced their cause considerably. With the endorsement of President Woodrow Wilson, the Nineteenth Amendment to the U.S. Constitution was ratified in 1920.

8 Disposable Sanitary Pads
Made from wood pulp, the Kimberly-Clark company's "cellucotton" became a staple in military hospitals as a more absorbent and

less expensive alternative to cotton bandages. When the war ended, the company's executives learned that Army nurses had used cellulose cotton as sanitary napkins, and an affordable new product was born.

9 Plastic Surgery
World War I left thousands of men scarred and maimed. British army surgeon Harold Gillies and his colleagues performed more than 11,000 operations, mostly on soldiers suffering from facial wounds from gunshots. Gillies was knighted for his efforts and ultimately became known as the father of modern plastic surgery.

10 Drones
It's hard to imagine drones in the skies just 15 years after the Wright brothers' first

flight at Kitty Hawk, North Carolina. Nevertheless, when the U.S. Navy tested the first Curtis N-9 Aerial Torpedo on March 6, 1918, unmanned aircraft became a reality. (Alas, the nation would have to wait almost a century for drones that could deliver pizza.)

11 Soy Dogs
In 1918, in Cologne, Germany, Mayor Konrad Adenauer applied for a patent for his novel way of preserving meat: mixing sausage with soy flour. Although not strictly vegetarian, the method had staying power. Soy products are now a multibillion-dollar industry in the United States alone.

12 Pilates
After World War I broke out, circus performer

Joseph Hubertus Pilates was interned for being a German national. He used the time to perfect an exercise routine he'd developed that involved rigging springs to hospital beds, according to the Pilates Foundation. Today, millions of people practice Pilates in studios around the world.

13 Modern Passports
In hopes of restoring tourism throughout Europe, the League of Nations issued guidelines for uniform passports in 1920. The standard documents were to include a cover embossed with the issuing country's name and coat of arms—the same basic look they have today in most every country, including the United States. 



Let's Not Sugarcoat This

Of all the bears that could kill me, the gummy has come the closest.

 @JIMMYBAUER

Do You Suffer From:

- Plantar Fasciitis
- Heel Spurs
- Heel Pain
- Back/Knee Pain
- Diabetes
- Arthritis
- Joint Pain
- Neuropathy



Nicole S.

I have terrible plantar fasciitis. I got a pair of Gravity Defyers to try and to my amazement my foot either doesn't hurt or barely hurts when wearing them. *These are just what I needed when I was feeling very desperate and like nothing was working!*



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EVERYDAY MIRACLES



Discovering a Lost Brother

BY *Juliana LaBianca*

KIERON GRAHAM ALWAYS knew he had an older brother. His adoption papers, signed and sealed when he was three months old, listed a sibling named Vincent but no last name. Though Kieron spent years thinking about Vincent, he could never track him down.

That changed in December 2017, when Kieron's adoptive parents gave their four adopted children AncestryDNA tests as Christmas gifts.

Kieron, now 21, sent his saliva sample in for analysis. When his results came back, he was stunned to find he had a slew of DNA matches for relatives who had also taken the test. Most were distant connections, but one match was so strong that it was labeled "close family." His name was Vincent Ghant.

Kieron looked for him on Facebook and soon made a possible connection.

"This is going to sound so wild ... but I think you're my brother," Kieron

wrote on Facebook's Messenger app. "I was given up for adoption in 1997 and it says on my paperwork that my mother has a son with your name and your birth date. Her name is Shawn."

"OMG do you know your real name?" wrote Vincent, now 30.

"I think it was Tyler."

"OMG YES!!! You are my brother."

"Wow," wrote Kieron.

"This is crazy," said Vincent.

THE CRAZINESS WAS just beginning. As they talked, the brothers realized they lived about 20 minutes from each other, outside of Atlanta. More mind-blowing, they attended the same university and majored and minored in the same subjects: political science and legal studies.

"We were like, What are the odds we're separated our entire lives and then end up at the same school with the same interests?" says Kieron.

Vincent was nine when Kieron was born and remembers caring for his baby brother. But times were tough, and Shawn, who worked 15-plus hours a day as a nurse, decided that placing Kieron for adoption would give him the best chance to succeed.

"She was very emotional about that time, to the point where it was hard for her to put into words anything about what happened," Vincent says.

Now the brothers had the chance to make up for lost time. They decided to meet at a local tea shop that week. "I was really nervous," says Kieron.

"I was wondering what I should say, what I should do." As he waited outside the shop, he heard someone call his name, and he suddenly found himself in a hug with the brother he'd thought about his entire life.

The men went inside and talked. "We connected," says Vincent, "like we already knew each other."

One of Vincent's concerns was that

"WE CONNECTED LIKE WE ALREADY KNEW EACH OTHER."

Kieron might resent his birth family for placing him for adoption. He was relieved Kieron didn't, and that he'd grown up in a loving family.

Later that day, Kieron talked to his birth mother on the phone and went to Vincent's to meet his wife and his two-year-old daughter, Kieron's niece.

"She looked up at me, and I was like, Wow, here I am an uncle and I have an older brother," says Kieron. "I was in shock at that point."

Since that first meeting, the brothers have bonded even more. They play flag football together—Vincent is the quarterback and Kieron is the receiver—and celebrated Christmas with their families. "We'll keep growing our relationship until it's time to leave this planet," says Vincent. That shouldn't be hard. As Kieron says, "We've got years and years to catch up on." **R**



I loathe
everything
about this article
except for moi.



COVER STORY



The

FUNNIEST

**Jokes
Since the
Internet**

EDITED BY *Andy Simmons*



Grumpy Cat catches a mouse.

The

FUNNIEST

INTERNET STAR

Finicky Feline

Grumpy Cat (that's her frowning to the left) made a name for herself in 2012 when her dour puss struck a chord with like-minded humans. Kitties, it turns out, are the cat's meow online, and former web editor Emily Huh has a theory why. Unlike dog owners, who can visit dog parks, "Cat owners don't have a cat park where they can congregate to talk about their cats," she told hellogiggles.com. In other words, the Internet is the dog park for cat people.

IT HAS been 29 years since computer scientist Sir Tim Berners-Lee invented the World Wide Web, and we can't imagine life without it. As one humorist noted, "I put so much more effort into naming my first Wi-Fi than my first child."

For many of us, surfing is now our major form of entertainment:

"9 a.m.: Very busy day today. I need to focus and stay off the Internet.

"1 p.m.: Did you know that Texas has the largest population of prairie dogs?" —[@SORTABAD](https://twitter.com/SORTABAD)

And it's the primary way we express ourselves:

FACEBOOK: "My kids are perfect."

INSTAGRAM: "My kids are beautiful."

TWITTER: "My kids are why I drink."

—[@XPLODINGUNICORN](https://twitter.com/XPLODINGUNICORN)

In true *Digest* tradition, we've collected the best online gags, giggles, and spoofs. Did we miss your favorite? Send it to us at RD.COM/LAUGHTER.

ELIZABETH RENSTROM. PREVIOUS SPREAD: PHOTOGRAPH BY MATTHEW COHEN (COMPUTER). IMACAQUARIUM COURTESY JAKEHARMS.COM. COURTESY GRUMPY CAT, LTD.

YELP CRITIC

A Lodging Establishment Got Its Five Stars the Hard Way

“As far as jails go, this is the *crème de la crème*. First off, you don’t even need a ride here. They pick you up from anywhere in the county. Sometimes they even get you out of bed and bring you, and it’s all free of charge.”

Yelp.com is one of many opinion machines that publish crowdsourced reviews of restaurants, hotels, and more. This writer was moved to satirize the form with a five-star shout-out to an unlikely resort: California’s Santa Rita Jail.



VIDEO COMMENT

When Music Meets Nature

“And here we see Dizzy Gillespie, storing jazz in his cheeks for the coming winter.”

This wisecracking (yet rather wise!) one-liner was left on a YouTube video about the jazz legend.



AMAZON REVIEW

The Beach Toy That Proves Bigger Isn’t Always Better

“We took this ball to the beach, and after close to two hours to pump it up, we pushed it around for about ten fun-filled minutes. That was when the wind picked it up and sent it hurtling down the beach at about 40 knots. It destroyed everything in its path. Children screamed in terror at the giant inflatable monster that crushed their sandcastles. Grown men were knocked down trying to save their families ... Rumor has it that it can still be seen stalking innocent families on the Florida Panhandle.”

This customer panned the Beach Behemoth 12-Foot Pole-to-Pole Beach Ball, but his vivid review gets five stars.

SHORTCUTS

How a Kid Would Send the Ten Commandments as a Text Message

1. no1 b4 me. srsly.

2. dnt wrshp
pix/idols

3. no omg's

4. no wrk on w/end
(sat 4 now; sun l8r)

5. pos ok –
ur m&d r cool

6. dnt kill ppl

7. :-X only w/ m8

8. dnt steal

9. dnt lie re: bf

10. dnt ogle ur
bf's m8. or ox. or
dnkey. myob.

M, pls rite on
tabs & giv 2 ppl.

ttyl, JHWH.

ps. wwjd?

Every day for 20 years, mcsweeneys.net has posted a new funny, like this heavenly one by Jamie Quatro from 2009.



VIRAL MEME

Celebrating Life's Little Victories

“Success Kid” originated in 2007 when this boy’s mother posted a photo of him online trying to eat sand. The Internet wondered, What else could get this kid so excited? Thus was born a fist pump for every “Yes!” moment.

REGRETTABLE TEXTS

Private Confessions That Go Public

“My blind date arrived. She looks like something I’d draw with my left hand.”

“My mouth tastes like poor choices.”

These anonymous posts on textsfrolastnight.com prove (again) that the only thing worse than drinking too much is texting a friend about it later.

SOCIAL (AND UNSOCIAL) MEDIA

Witty You Doing on Facebook?

FACEBOOK POST: Can't wknds be longer?

RESPONSE: Yes, *weekends*.

(Two Facebook friends held this global exchange.)

AMANDA: Luisa, I am hungary.

LUISA: Maybe you should czech the fridge.

AMANDA: I'm russian to the kitchen.

LUISA: Maybe you will find some turkey.

AMANDA: We have some, but it's covered in greece.

LUISA: Ew, there is norway you can eat that.

AMANDA: I think I'll settle for a can of chile.

LUISA: I would love a canada chile as well.

AMANDA: Denmark your name on the can.

Facebook was founded in 2004 by Mark Zuckerberg and friends in their Harvard dorm room. Now everyone—from kids to parents to Russian trolls—has a Facebook account on which they can whine or heckle whomever they like.

PET GAGS

Meow of the Wild



"Sandra, can you open this thing, bit of a situation here." —[@ALSBOY](#)



PINTEREST PICKS

Over-Oversharing

This decade, Pinterest quickly became the place for users to share photos of their favorite crafts and inventions. That prompted the invention of [pinterestyouaredrunk.com](#), which posts its LOL favorites, including the bra planter, knit long johns, and "picnic pants."

WEB GEMS

One-Liners Written in the Shower

◆ “Your stomach thinks that all potatoes are mashed.”

—POOPYPIRATEMCGEE

◆ “They should announce a sequel to *Groundhog Day* and then just rerelease the original.”

—FLYLIKEAMOUSE



◆ “This ‘spring forward’ thing would be a lot more popular if we moved the clocks ahead at 2 p.m. on Monday.”

—WOBBLES42

These posts are from “Showerthoughts,” a channel on reddit.com that proves that not all “Redditors” are mad.



YOUTUBE CLIP

Daddy, Can You Come Out and Play?

Created in 2005, YouTube is now the world’s largest video-sharing site. Today, almost five billion videos—from hair-washing tips to bleating goats that sound like men—are watched on the site every single day.

THE IMAGE ABOVE is from a clip that has been viewed by millions. During a live interview on the BBC, American professor Robert Kelly is discussing the 2017 impeachment of the South Korean president. Kelly has been talking for just over two minutes when his four-year-old daughter saunters in, upstaging him. Trying to save the interview, the professor shunts her to the side.

Not only won’t she be dismissed, but a few seconds later reinforcements arrive in

the person of her infant brother, toddling along in a baby walker.

With his train of thought clearly having gone off the rails, the professor is then seen pausing, either trying to gather himself or contemplating his next career move.

But there’s hope! His wife bursts in and drags the kids out of the camera’s view. She then crawls back in on hands and knees and closes the door behind her. But in his *Mona Lisa* smile, Kelly seems to know that his adorably disruptive family has just gone viral.

COURTESY BBC. SHUTTERSTOCK (2) (CLOCK)

FAKE NEWS

Phony Baloney Headlines

“World’s scientists
admit they just don’t like mice”

“Eminem terrified as daughter begins dating man
raised on his music”

“40,000 pounds of salsa spill on
I-10 near Cabazon, California. CHiPs respond.”

“ime travel. Quantum experiment proves t”

Because the Internet is where most of us get our news, it’s a great source for parodies too. The first two headlines are from the satirical site [theonion.com](#). The last two are from [fark.com](#), a news aggregator launched in 1999 that invites “Farkers” to write funny headlines for the news.



FAILURES

Mistakes That Take the Cake

The nice thing about the Internet community is that it’s happy to point out our boo-boos. Since 2008, [cakewrecks.com](#) has been sharing the foibles of bakers who tend to follow their customers’ instructions to a fault.

GRANDMA TEXTS

She’s Adorable
When She’s Trying
to Be Hip

Dear when you get home please set out the lasagna from the fridge

Gram you texted the wrong person. This isn’t grandpa

Oh I’m sorry sweet pea have a nice day!

Dear when you get home please set out the lasagna from the fridge

Grandma it’s still me.

Dear when you get home please set out the lasagna from the fridge

Oops silly potato

Humor sites such as [boredpanda.com](#) have come to understand and revel in the travails of people of a certain age trying to figure out this newfangled device called the cell phone.

DAD JOKE

That's Mean!
(But He's Got
Wicked Timing)

Dad there's a moth
on the outside of
the bathroom door
can you get rid of
it?

Pls hurry because
I'm going to cry

Dad

Dad

Dad is dead. You're
next. Love, Moth



FREE VERSE

If Only Walt Whitman Had Had Google ...

Where the hell are you
where the hell are you
where the hell are my keys
where the hell are my cheetos
where the hell are you when i need you

why even bother w
why even bother wearing a bra
why even bother with love if it never lasts
why even bother with love
why even bother with pants

I am ve|
i am vengeance i am the night
i am vermont strong
i am vertical sylvia plath
i am very bored

... the poetry he might have created! This
inadvertent poetry genre was first shared
on googlepoetics.com in 2012. Try it.
Simply type in a few words, and let
the search engine do the rest.

CANNON/KOBAL/SHUTTERSTOCK (NORRIS). OLEG KOZLOV/SHUTTERSTOCK

CELEBRITY SATIRE

Chuck Norris, Back in Action

“When Chuck Norris
crosses the street,
the cars have to look
both ways.”

“When the bogey-
man goes to sleep,
he checks his closet
for Chuck Norris.”



RECYCLED GAGS

Giving New Life to Old Yuks

◆ A couple of New Jersey hunters are out in the woods when one of them falls to the ground. He doesn't seem to be breathing, and his eyes have rolled back in his head.



The other guy whips out his mobile phone and calls emergency services. He gasps to the operator, "I think my friend's dead! What do I do?"

The operator, in a soothing voice, says, "Just take it easy. I can help. First, let's make sure he's dead."

There is a silence, and then a shot is heard. The guy comes back on the line: "OK, now what?"

An Alsatian went to a telegram office and wrote, "Woof. Woof. Woof. Woof. Woof. Woof. Woof. Woof."

The clerk examined the paper and told the dog, "There are only nine words here. You could send another 'Woof' for the same price."

"But," the dog replied, "that would make no sense at all."

So this British psychiatrist goes online and asks, "What's the funniest joke of all time?" No, this isn't a gag. It really happened, in 2002. Almost two million people from more than 70 countries voted on more than 40,000 jokes; participants claimed they laughed loudest at the gags above.

"Chuck Norris counted to infinity ... Twice."

"Chuck Norris uses pepper spray to spice up his steaks."

"Chuck Norris doesn't shower; he only takes bloodbaths."

In 2005, the Internet came to this stunning realization: There is nothing action hero Chuck Norris can't do! Thus was born the Chuck Norris Fact Generator to celebrate Norris's feats (albeit hyperinflated) of derring-do.

DIGITAL DIGS

**The Internet,
Its Own Best
Punch Line**

◆ “To err is human; to point it out with glee is Internet.”

— @APARNAPKIN
(Aparna Nancherla)

◆ “The most uncomfortable moment in my day is the time spent waiting in silence while someone searches for a ‘funny’ YouTube clip I *need* to see.”

— @EVAN_HADFIELD

◆ “Yelp is a fun game where you try to guess between whether a restaurant is bad or a reviewer is crazy.”

— @MIKEDRUCKER

◆ “When someone starts a Facebook post with ‘There are no words ...’ you’d better get prepared because you’re about to read a lot of words.”

— @JOSIEVORENKAMP

Budding comics found the perfect outlet when Twitter began in 2006.


CORPORATE OUTREACH

Go Ahead, Razz Your Customers

“Your time is wasted managing a social media account.”

—CONSUMER to *MoonPie’s Twitter account*

“Buddy, it’s Saturday night and you’re talking to a marshmallow sandwich on the Internet.”

— @MOONPIE *back to consumer*

“Wendy’s needs to get rid of the square burger. It seems a little too ... artificial.”

— @COOPERDFRANKLIN

“Unlike the super natural circle shape that hamburgers come in when you pick them off the vine.”

— @WENDYS



SIGN LANGUAGE

Lost and Found in Translation

Thanks to the Internet, we know that Americans aren’t the only ones mangling the English language. These translations, seen on flickr.com and news.3yen.com, need their own interpretations.

BEAUTY TIP

Hate Your Hair? Maybe You're Going to the Wrong Kind of Groomer



“My dog’s ear is like the perfect picture to show your hairdresser if you want beachy waves and caramel highlights.”

—[@KERBIEGIBBS](#)

OVERHEARD ZINGERS

Dialogue That Makes La-La Land Sound Even More Out There Than It Is

Guy staring at ambulance in front of Whole Foods: “Somebody must have accidentally eaten gluten.”

Bouncer: “Sorry, I need to see an ID.”

Girl: “I told you I’m 30. Why would anyone lie about that?”

Eavesdropping is great sport in many big cities, and there are dozens of sites and social media pages that report the best bits of stolen dialogue from the urban jungle. These come from [overheardla.com](#).

SPOOF FICTION

Beloved Bad Lines

“As a scientist, Throckmorton knew that if he were ever to break wind in the sound chamber, he would never hear the end of it.”

◆ “Corinne considered the colors (palest green, gray, and lavender) and texture (downy as the finest velvet) and wondered, How long have these cold cuts been in my refrigerator?”

The Bulwer-Lytton Fiction Contest celebrates purposely preposterous fiction. Above: winning entries posted online from two past honorees. ^R

Gotta go. Not a fan of spinning hair balls.



SPECIAL REPORT

The Nicest Places in America

We often talk today about division in this country, but that is clearly not the whole story. The caring and kindness demonstrated in this year's Nicest Places in America nominations—almost 500 of them—show how innate it is for Americans to help one another. Their stories are seeds of goodness to plant around the country. As for the winning place—well, if your faith has been wavering, it will be restored. Being a judge in the *Reader's Digest* Nicest Places search is my personal way of saying hope exists all around us. Feel the pure joy of this year's ten finalists.

—**ROBIN ROBERTS**, *Good Morning America* co-anchor
and *Nicest Places in America* chief judge



Clockwise from top left: Mower County, MN; North Riverside, IL; Enoch Pratt Free Library; Kalamazoo, MI; North Evergreen Street; Yassin's Falafel House; Katy, TX; Bothell, WA. Center, from top: Life Moves Yoga; Ellijay, GA





KNOXVILLE, TN

And the Winner Is ... Yassin's Falafel House

BY *Jeremy Greenfield*

IT WAS A few days before Christmas 2017, and a crowd had gathered in Market Square in Knoxville, Tennessee, for an annual holiday event called Welcome the Stranger. It's a Christian ritual with Jewish roots, where neighbors greet neighbors, friends, and anyone else who passes by with warmth and compassion, celebrating the season. Only this year, not everyone was in



Yassin Terou with his wife, Jamileh Al Saghir, and daughters Shaam (left) and Judy



the spirit. As the speakers organized by local churches stood before the crowd to share their holiday thoughts, a man draped in an American flag began yelling that he was out of a job and immigrants were to blame. As it happened, a local restaurateur named Yassin Terou was on the stage preparing to speak.

Terou is well-known in Knoxville as the owner of Yassin's Falafel House. He also emigrated to the United States from Syria in 2011. "I'm lucky to be here. It's like a blessing," he says of his adopted homeland. "The American dream to me is like a second chance of life."

He responded to the man by inviting him onstage—Terou wanted them to hold the flag together, immigrant and native-born American. When the man refused, Terou stepped down into the crowd. He approached the man, and they spoke for a few minutes. Come for dinner sometime, Terou offered. And then they shook hands. "When you break bread," he later explained, "you break hate."

That philosophy is at the heart of everything Terou has accomplished. After only seven years in the United States, he has turned his two restaurants into Knoxville fixtures by serving equal portions of chickpeas and



Mayor Madeline Rogero rides Knoxville's free trolley (top); Terou's employees from Bridge Refugee Services, with executive director Drocella Mugorewera (bottom)

compassion. "At any given lunch hour, you'll see power business leaders and tourists who were wandering by; you'll see Muslims and Christians and the breadth of our community sitting around tables and sharing a meal,"



Even on the most hectic days in his restaurants, Terou doesn't run out of smiles.

says Tom Ogburn, former pastor of the First Baptist Church, just a few blocks away from the downtown restaurant.

In case that snapshot of inclusivity isn't clear enough, Terou has put his philosophy on a sign right on the wall:

Welcome. All Sizes. All Colors. All Ages. All Sexes. All Cultures. All Religions. All Types. All Beliefs. All People. Safe Here at Yassin's Falafel House.

Which is why Yassin's Falafel House is *Reader's Digest's* Nicest Place in America.

TEROU FELL IN love with Knoxville on his first day in town. It was a Saturday in the fall of 2011, and University of Tennessee football fans flooded the streets in

their orange-and-white Volunteers jerseys. Everywhere Terou went, people smiled at him. It was partly because of the game, of course. But he knew that outsiders aren't greeted with a smile everywhere. "The overall values of our community are that we're welcoming," Knoxville mayor Madeline Rogero told *Reader's Digest*. "The expectation is that you treat people just like how you'd like to be treated."

Life was still hard for Terou. He couldn't find a job, even though he had all the legally required papers. Who would hire someone who couldn't speak the language or drive a car? The small Muslim community in town offered him free food and clothing. But Terou wanted to work. He asked



Pastor Tom Ogburn, Terou's partner in goodwill, at the First Baptist Church

whether he could sell sandwiches outside the mosque on Fridays after services. On the first Friday, he sold out. The next week, he made more, and again he sold every one. Even non-Muslims were buying them. That's when a fellow worshipper, Nadeem Siddiqi, knew he was witnessing something special.

"I asked him why he didn't open up a store," Siddiqi says. "He said he didn't have any money. I had a building downtown, an empty spot just sitting there, so I thought, Why don't we give it a shot and see how it goes?" That first shop opened in 2014. A

second followed in 2018, and Terou has plans for two more next year.

Terou would be the first to admit that, while his falafels are delicious, his secret recipe lies in the mind-set that had him leaping off the stage at the Welcome the Stranger event. "I'm not here just to make falafel and make money," Terou says. "I'm here to build this community."

His commitment doesn't stop at his restaurants. When fires hit Gatlinburg, just an hour away, Terou rallied his customers to help, filling a van with their donated food and supplies and driving it to the fire zone. He often holds fund-raisers for the community. When Knoxville recognized him with a Rotary Club Peace Award, he donated the \$1,000 prize to the Seeds of Abraham, a group that brings together youths from different faiths.

"Yassin has such a generous spirit and a generous heart," Siddiqi says of his business partner. "Nobody has a negative feeling toward that."

AS IT HAPPENS, Knoxville is a particularly fertile place to plant goodwill. The city has a history of compassion dating back to the strong abolitionist streak that ran through the area during the Civil War. Today you'll have no trouble finding the usual southern hospitality. People readily wave and smile at strangers, and no car sits broken down on the highway shoulder for very long before passersby stop to help.

Sometimes residents even take their show of inclusivity on the road. In the spring of 2017, Jonathan Williams, a self-described political conservative, and Andre Block, a liberal, decided to bicycle across the country together to demonstrate that what unites Americans is stronger than what divides us. They talked to people along the way about what they call the gray area—the things in the middle that most people want. The duo ultimately pedaled 3,200 miles in 35 days, from Oceanside, California, to Washington, DC, arriving in time to see the July 4 fireworks over the Capitol. They called their program the Unity Ride, and this spring they did it again, biking the route of the Underground Railroad, all the way to Toronto.

“If you want to grow as a person, you need to be around people who are a little different than you,” Williams says. “We’re all in this together, and Yassin very much embodies that.”

IN JANUARY 2017, a youth pastor at First Baptist asked Terou to talk to a group of kids at a church retreat. Terou and his family (wife Jamileh Al Saghir and daughters Judy, eight, and Shaam, two) cooked a huge meal. Terou took it to the church, where he

told the students about his early life, which started much as life had for the kids in Knoxville.

Terou grew up in Damascus, Syria’s capital. As a boy he took judo lessons and learned to play the trombone. His father was a lawyer, and his mother stayed home with Terou and his four siblings. He went to college and worked in public relations for a Kia car dealership. But he spoke out against the government in a country where that’s not a freedom allowed to citizens, and in 2010 the secret police



Market Square is a gathering place in Knoxville’s vibrant downtown.

paid him a visit. They summoned him every day for the next month. Most days, the interrogators would ask him one question and then make him stand in a small room for hours.

Terou applied for asylum and landed in Knoxville in 2011. He thought he’d take English classes at the university

and move on, but he quickly realized he was home. "Home is not where you are born; home is where you stay, where you build a life," he says, calling this decision "the best luck in my life."

Many people Terou knew in Syria are now missing or dead. He told the church kids that he would love to go back to see his family, especially his father, who is very ill, but he can't. "Maybe I'd get arrested. Maybe I'd get killed. I don't know," he says. "So the American dream gives me a second life to be safe and to be here around the American people and build this country together."

The impact on the teenagers was



Biking buddies Andre Block (left) and Jonathan Williams saddle up for the Unity Ride.

immediate. "It revolutionized the way they think about their neighbors and refugees and what we should do as Americans, first of all, and as Christians, above all, to welcome all who need a place of refuge," says the youth pastor, Ben Winder. "Some of our students and families prior to that weekend had thoughts that refugees were folks who were in some way dangerous. I don't think that can stick if you meet Yassin or other refugees like him, because you come to know the people they are."

S EVEN YEARS AFTER fleeing Syria, Terou is determined to help Americans who need a lifeline, just as America gave him one. He employs 30 people, many of them refugees like himself, people struggling with drug addiction, or women fleeing dangerous situations.

Tiffany Haun, 36, has lived at the YWCA a block from Terou's downtown location since a drug relapse sent her looking for a fresh start. "To work in a positive place, it helps me in so many ways, as in not dreading coming to work," she says. "And even when I do, Yassin is there to lift me up."

Terou spends time at both of his restaurants every day but Sunday, when the doors are closed so he and his workers can spend time with their families. "It's my job to help people," he says. "That's how we can keep being nice and transfer love to our kids and our grandkids. I don't want to be the last one who has been helped."



Q&A Meet Our Chief Judge

The Good Morning America co-anchor on faith, family, and friends—the themes she saw underlying all the entries

ROBIN ROBERTS has a long history with *Reader's Digest*—she was named America's most trusted newsperson in our 2013 poll—so we were thrilled that she agreed to be the chief judge for this year's Nicest Places contest. Still, even we were surprised by how actively she worked with our team. She discussed her passion for this project with editor-in-chief Bruce Kelley.

READER'S DIGEST What made you so excited to be part of Nicest Places?

ROBIN ROBERTS Nicest is a way to wave the flag and say, "Don't give up hope, folks! There are a lot of good, sweet, thoughtful people in America." There's a lot of talk of division in this country. It's great to show that that's not the whole story and to create ambassadors all across the country.

Did you nominate any place yourself?

I knew that as a judge I couldn't nominate it,

but my hometown of Pass Christian, Mississippi, is the nicest place in the whole wide world. And we're even stronger and more united than we were before Katrina. It really bonds a community, going through a tragedy like that. You just roll up your sleeves and find out who your neighbors are real fast.

Communities going through things together makes for strong bonds.

I was really drawn to the story of Katy, Texas, because I can relate.

You visited Knoxville, Tennessee, and the winner, Yassin's Falafel House. Did you get a sense of why it won?

You feel it as soon as you walk through those doors. Yassin has just—pure joy. He makes everyone feel included. You have people in Knoxville who may have been fed a certain narrative about immigrants, but Yassin changes the narrative. They see that he's as hardworking as they

are and wants what's best for Knoxville. You could understand if Yassin had a chip on his shoulder, given his background. But he's just the opposite.

Some people will be surprised that a restaurant could be the Nicest Place in America.

It's not about how many falafels Yassin can sell. He's gotten so much from Knoxville in such a short time that this is him giving back by shining a light on his hometown. You don't have to be born somewhere for it to become a part of who you are. This man—he bleeds Tennessee orange!

You were also partial to a very different kind of place: North Evergreen, which is a street in the middle of Burbank, California. Why?

Whether we live in New York or Timbuktu, I think all of us are just raising our hand and saying "Notice me." For a street like this to find a way to help people

feel connected to something—it's just so important.

Have you always been so focused on the way people relate to each other?

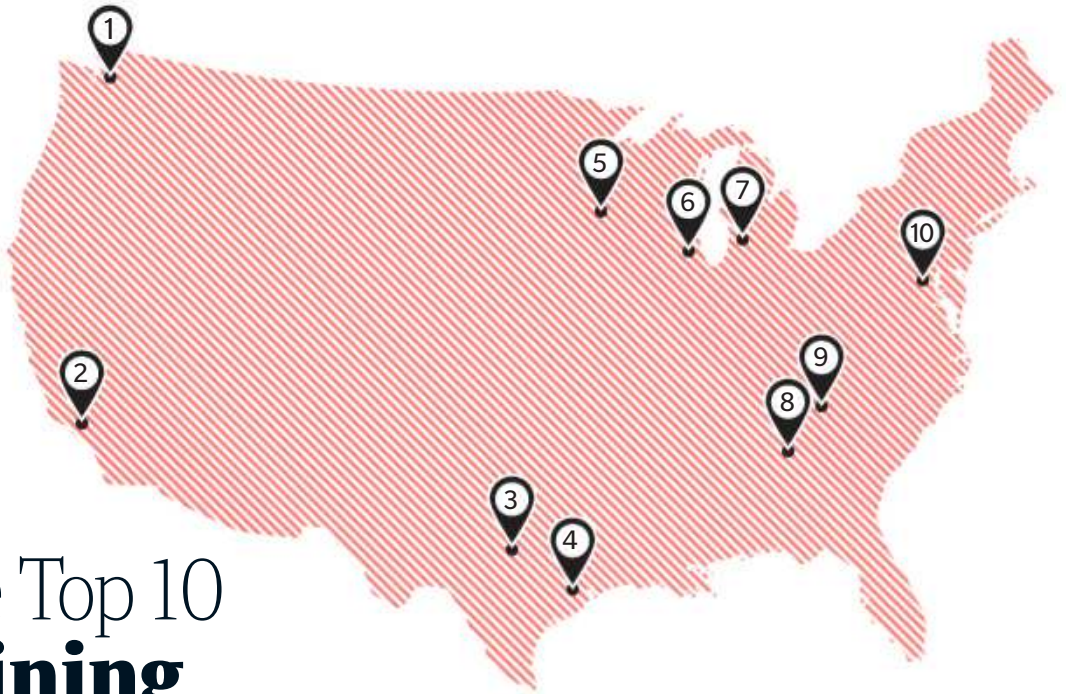
I come from a military family, and every place we moved, there was always that person or family that would make us feel welcome. And being of service to others was my parents' creed. On Thanksgiving, they would always have a service person who couldn't make it home at our table. I would be like, "Is that a cousin?" I am grateful that they exposed us to that.

Any advice for people who want their communities to be nicer?

I'd change the old adage from "Treat people the way you'd like to be treated" to "Treat people like you'd want your *mother* to be treated." Nice is not weak. Nice is *not* a four-letter word.

For more of the conversation, go to RD.COM/NICEST-ROBIN-ROBERTS.

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The Top 10 Shining from Sea to Sea

From a restaurant in Tennessee to a whole county in Minnesota, this year's finalists prove that kindness comes in all sizes and spirits.

1. **Bothell, Washington**, page 82
2. **North Evergreen Street**, page 94
3. **Life Moves Yoga**, page 89
4. **Katy, Texas**, page 80
5. **Mower County, Minnesota**, page 90
6. **North Riverside, Illinois**, page 83
7. **Kalamazoo, Michigan**, page 85
8. **Ellijay, Georgia**, page 92
9. **Yassin's Falafel House**, page 70
10. **Enoch Pratt Free Library**, page 87

HOW YOU PICKED THE NICEST PLACES

- ◆ In April, we asked for nominations, and readers sent in 448 entries.
- ◆ A team of editors narrowed the field to 70. Then our reporters collected their stories, which we shared on rd.com.
- ◆ We chose 40 places to present to our panel of judges: **Robin Roberts**, *Good Morning America*; **Randy Taran**, Project Happiness; **Emilie Starr**, *Random Acts TV*; **Geri Weis-Corbley**, Good News Network; and **Paige Brown**, mayor of Gallatin, Tennessee, the 2017 Nicest Place in America.
- ◆ With advice from the judges, RD editors selected the ten finalists.
- ◆ You cast ballots on *USA Today's* 10best.com. Total votes received: 62,795.
- ◆ The judges made their top pick, which, along with your votes, led us to our 2018 Nicest Place in America winner.



KATY, TX

In the Path of a Hurricane

KATY, TEXAS, CALLS itself “the city of churches,” but don’t take the name too literally. The faith of the 18,000 residents of this former farm town extends far beyond the walls of its 100-plus houses of worship.

When Hurricane Harvey dumped five feet of rain on southeast Texas in August 2017, Katy, about 30 miles due west of Houston, took a direct hit. Nearly 700 homes and 80 businesses were damaged or destroyed. Two of the town’s beloved citizens, the Reverend Donald Rogers and his wife, Rochelle Rogers, died as they braved the floods to check on Donald’s uncle, who lived



nearby on Rogers Road. The road was named after Donald’s grandfather.

Like the Rogerses, many Katy residents didn’t wait for the rain to stop before running, driving, and paddling to rescue their neighbors. “Good old boys in pickups,” as one rescuer called them, plowed through roads turned into rivers looking for stranded families. When the water was too deep, salvation came by boat. Pat Lester drove his airboat into town from his home on the outskirts. He had seven life jackets, so he scooped up seven people at a time, starting with pregnant women, the elderly, and anyone who was ill.



A local family, the Brights, at Katy Heritage Park, which celebrates the town's history

Other boats came straight out of a nearby Bass Pro Shop. The store donated all 80 boats it had in stock—and then headquarters sent dozens more. “We never even got a bill,” says city administrator Byron Hebert.

A 50,000-square-foot Buc-ee’s rest stop, just built on a new highway interchange outside Katy, was stocked with food, water, toiletries, and road trip staples such as batteries and Band-Aids. The mega-convenience store hadn’t even had its grand opening yet, but owner Beaver Aplin put

out the word to rescue workers: Come and get whatever you need, no charge.

“I’ve never seen anything like Katy,” David Scherff, who hauled his boat from San Antonio, told *Katy Magazine*. “We helped people in lots of other areas, too, but Katy was amazing.”

Other locals found creative ways to pitch in. Shakeib Mashhood used WhatsApp to raise an army of more than 100 volunteers who passed out food and water and cleaned up storm-

damaged homes. Animal control officer David Brown tied a lifeline from his truck to the city’s animal shelter, which was surrounded by high water, for people to hold on to as they shuttled back and forth to save the stranded animals.

The mayor, Chuck Brawner, says that’s simply the spirit of their town. “I think we just did what Katy has always done,” he says. “We all got together and helped each other out. There are so many great stories coming out of what was a terrible situation, but I’m not surprised. Katy has always been populated by people who care about one another.”



BOTHELL, WA

Pouring Cups of Joe and Joy



Will Tinkham (left) loved the free ride his police officer friends, like Chief Carol Cummings, gave him for his birthday last year.

FIRST SOMEBODY SHOWED up with a bunch of balloons. Then a cake. Then a big *Happy Birthday* banner that was stretched across the parking lot next to the Beca's Brew coffee stand. And people just kept showing up, dozens in all. It was a party—just as Beca Nistran had envisioned for her pal Will Tinkham. May 10 was Tinkham's birthday, and she wanted to surprise him.

Tinkham, 32, was born with developmental disabilities and loves people. Nistran, 30, the spunky owner of the stand in this fast-growing Seattle outpost of 45,000, thought he was wonderful—and a business asset. So she proposed an arrangement: If Tinkham showed up every day for an hour or two and chatted with the customers at her drive-through window, she'd give him a free drink. Pretty soon, an hour or two turned into the whole day. Nistran gave him a raise—and put him on garbage detail.

"It's great," Tinkham told KOMO News. "I have fun being here and have a great day, and she pays me a lot of money!"

Nistran actually thinks she's getting the better end of the deal. "He finds the smallest things to be happy about, and

COURTESY JUDY GRATTON

I'm over here stressed about minute things. He finds joy in everything."

Not everybody appreciated Tinkham's special brand of enthusiasm. Nistran noticed that some people would ignore him when he'd say hello. "One customer was extremely disrespectful," she says. She gave him his order for free and asked him to please never come back.

Nistran was so upset that she posted a sort of ode to Tinkham on a community blog. She also mentioned his approaching birthday. Without any more planning or prompting, neighbors showed up to celebrate with Tinkham on his big day, and he greeted everyone with a hug and a smile. Among the crowd: four police officers, who gave him a ride in a police cruiser—siren on, of course. "This is AWESOME!" Tinkham kept repeating.

Nistran was so inspired by all the spontaneous good spirit that she proposed that Bothell establish every May 10 as Cup of Kindness Day. The city agreed, and it even issued a proclamation that declared Tinkham to be "an exceptional conversationalist with a kind, joyous soul." Soon, others expanded the good cheer. A church gave a group of single moms massages, flowers, and other gifts. The trampoline park let kids jump for free. "If you are ever in need of something," says Joanna Elder, one of the residents who nominated the town for our contest, "Bothell has you covered."



NORTH RIVERSIDE, IL

Kindness By the Book

WHEN WE SAY that residents in the Chicago suburb of North Riverside, Illinois, "wrote the book" on how to be good neighbors, we're not exaggerating. The residents of North Riverside really *did* write a book on neighborliness that has helped make their town a remarkable place.

Neighbors All: Creating Community One Block at a Time is a 65-page manual filled with friendly suggestions ("Be the first to reach out"; "Be concrete in caring") and inspiring stories, all designed to build "family bonds" among neighbors. Every household gets a copy, delivered by a volunteer "block captain" tasked with welcoming new arrivals, helping seniors run

errands, making sure kids play nice, and more. It's a big job, but the 90 captains sprinkled across the town of 6,700 don't do it alone. They're organized by their own captain, Carol Spale, and the Neighborhood Services Committee, which appoints leaders of all ages, including a team of school-age "angels."

If all this seems somewhat bureaucratic, in practice *Neighbors All* has very much lived up to its title. One captain, handing out flyers door-to-door, got to chatting with an older couple who revealed that they couldn't afford to replace their broken stove. Before long, the Neighborhood Services Committee had collected enough money to buy them a new one.

Another resident, a woman from Poland, told her captain that she was having trouble sorting out the paperwork to get her citizenship. The captain told the committee, which told the mayor,

who enlisted the help of their local congressperson, and soon the woman's paperwork was all in order.

"I have been in North Riverside over 34 years and am very proud of the small-town caring the community demonstrates every day," Vera Jandacek Wilt wrote in her nomination. "Waters rising in the river, ready to flood nearby homes? Residents and officials are filling sandbags to hold back the floods. Someone is displaced by a fire? Residents step up to provide food, clothing, and anything else the family needs. Lonely seniors have not stepped out of the house? A block captain shows up to invite them to a block party. This community truly looks out for one another."

Does all this mean that North Riverside is perfect? No—neighbors still squabble. Kids still fight. But the community spirit that is part of North



You might call this North Riverside's welcome wagon: its team of "block captains."

COURTESY CAROL SPALE

Riverside's DNA pops up all over town. At a recent Neighborhood Services Committee meeting, a girl told a story about another child she'd seen being bullied at school. The girl had an idea: She gave him a set of "warrior" dog tags to protect him from the bigger kids. And so it does—with a little help from his North Riverside angel.



KALAMAZOO, MI

With Charity and Caring for All

ON A CHILLY Saturday night in February 2016, Rich Smith and his son, Tyler, 17, stopped at the Seelye Ford and Kia dealership on Stadium Drive in Kalamazoo, Michigan. They were standing in the parking lot checking out a blue pickup truck when a man walked up and opened

fire, killing them. The shooter, an Uber driver named Jason Dalton, didn't know the Smiths. He was on a rampage that ultimately left four more people dead and two critically wounded.

The story made national news. The 76,000 residents of Kalamazoo were shocked, just as the residents of other cities and towns across America have been when a mass murderer has struck close to home. Folks here also understood that recovering from an episode of gun violence carries its own dangers, given the political passions surrounding the gun control debate. Kalamazoo was determined to respond in the most inclusive, healing way possible. Within days, money poured in for victims and their families. Nonprofits formed to organize the support efforts. With names such as Kalamazoo Strong and ForeverStrong, they embodied residents' focus on keeping the tragedy from defining or dividing their city.

"We need to persevere with one another through the gaping hole where our sense of safety once resided," wrote Kalamazoo College women's volleyball coach Jeanne Hess in a blog post. "We need to be there for one another when waves of grief overcome us because the national disease of gun violence has invaded Kalamazoo. And we need to persevere just because this event is so terribly sad."

Just four months after the shootings, Kalamazoo was tested again. A driver high on methamphetamine and pain



In this college town, a charity called Kalamazoo Promise has handed out \$110 million to high school graduates since 2006—all of it donated anonymously. Here's the promise: If you go to public school in this city and want to go to college, it's paid for. The only strings are that you attend one of Michigan's state-supported colleges or universi-

Kalamazoo High School grads (left to right) Caitlyn Boyer, Mar'charnae Martin, and Lucienne Chou

ties and get good grades. pills plowed into a group of nine bicyclists, part of the local Chain Gang Bicycle Club, killing five and injuring the rest in one of the deadliest vehicle-bike crashes in U.S. history. The charities opened their arms a little wider. Kalamazoo Strong paid the medical and funeral bills for those victims. ForeverStrong, led by Rich Smith's widow, Laurie Smith, started planning a memorial to all the bikers and the shooting victims: a park and soccer center (Tyler loved soccer) that would be a bright spot long after that dark time.

"We want it all to be about how we go forward," says Laurie.

Keeping an eye on the future is something of a Kalamazoo specialty.

ties and get good grades.

"When I tell people about the Kalamazoo Promise, they think it's fake," says Emily Olivares, 24, who attended Western Michigan University and graduated without a penny of debt—as did her sister. "The Promise probably saved me 500 hours of overtime," jokes their father, Joseph Olivares, who works in a factory.

"I've been to nice places," Emily says, "but there's nothing like Kalamazoo."

She really means it. When Emily graduated with her degree in travel and tourism, she received two job offers: one in K-Zoo, as the locals fondly call it, and one in China. Guess which one she chose?

"I chose here," says Emily. "I want to be here to help build the next generation of my family."



ENOCH PRATT FREE LIBRARY

Writing a New Chapter in Baltimore

IT'S NOON ON a Tuesday in Baltimore, and a line is forming outside the Enoch Pratt Free Library's Pennsylvania Avenue branch. One at a time, people walk up to the end of the line, some clutching folders bulging with papers, others empty-handed. All are waiting for the clock to strike 1 p.m., when the Lawyer in the Library program will open its doors to anyone looking for advice or assistance from an attorney. Those seeking help range from veterans who can't navigate their way through the complicated benefits system to get what's coming to them to folks who got into trouble with the law and aren't sure how to move forward. Some weeks, 600 or 700 people show up.

"Just five to twenty minutes of a lawyer's time can literally change

someone's life," says Amy Petkovsek, the Legal Aid Society lawyer who runs the program.

Lawyer in the Library is staffed by more than 200 volunteers, including local lawyers doing pro bono work and law students. Advice is free for everyone. The program started in 2015 and quickly became a lifeline.

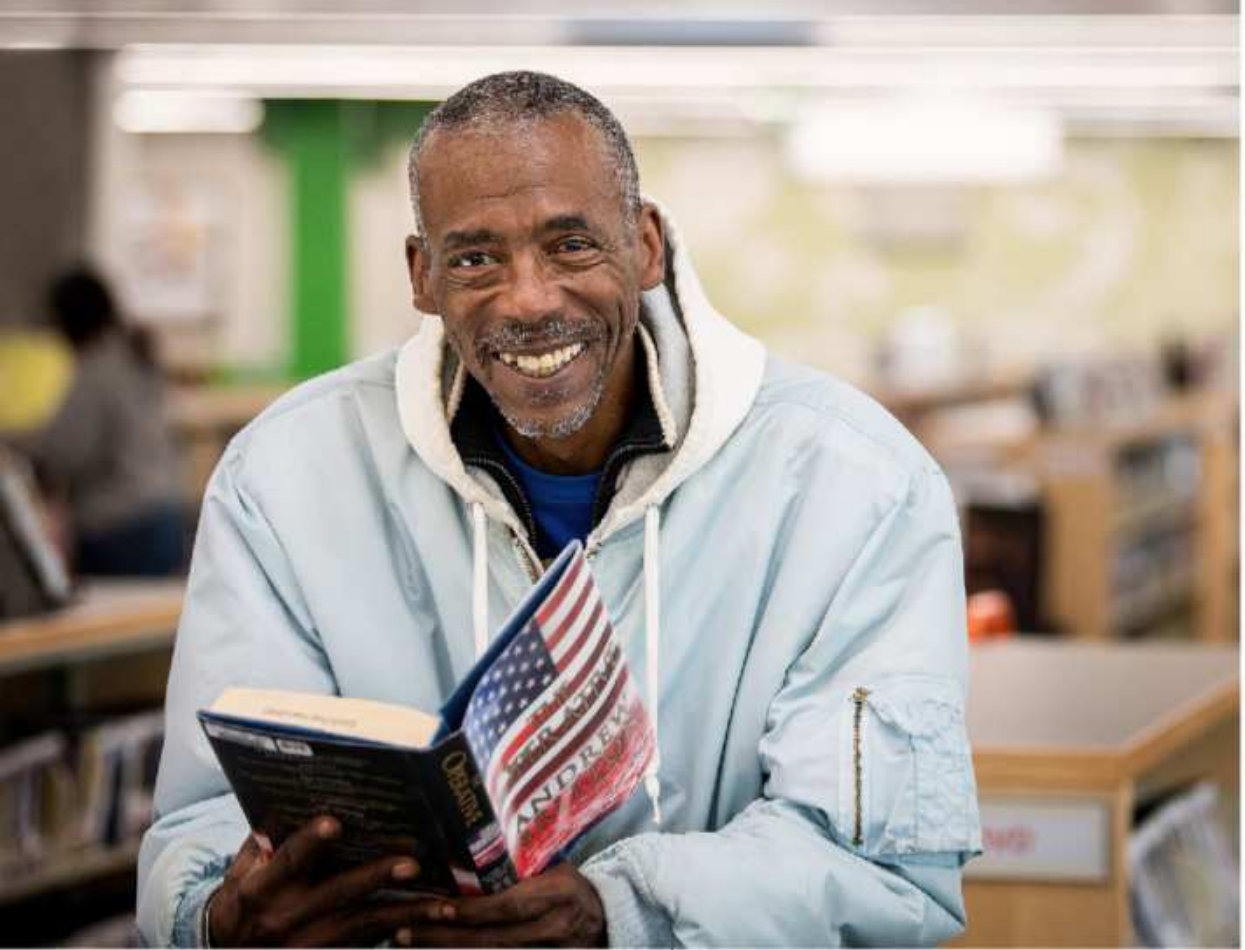
One woman used Lawyer in the Library to escape an abusive husband. "Because she knew the lawyers would be in the library, she asked his permission to come that day," Petkovsek says. "Now the woman is safely in a shelter program."

About 60 percent of what the lawyers see is related to expunging criminal records—removing old, minor offenses, for example, or excising charges that were filed but for which the person was never convicted.

"In many cases, we can clear a person's entire record," Petkovsek told *On the Record*, a public radio show.

Shannon Powell had a record going back to 1986. "It looks kinda bad," she admits, "but that's not me." People didn't want to hire her, she says, until Lawyer in the Library helped clear her slate. "Now I have a job where I work with 12 homeless women," she says proudly. "When I see them, it gives me the ability to give them the same love that Miss Amy gave me the day I walked into that library."

Enoch Pratt—named for the library system's first benefactor—has long been a beloved institution in a city



Enoch Pratt is something of a community center, but books are its beating heart.

ravaged by some of the highest rates of violent crime in the nation.

“If you go around Baltimore, nearly everyone has a Pratt story,” says Meghan McCorkell, the library’s director of marketing and communications and its Nicest Places nominator. Some were helped by the lawyers; some can proudly say they have a job thanks to Pratt’s award-winning Mobile Job Center. It’s a modern twist on the old bookmobile: a bus that travels around the city equipped with computer terminals and specially trained workforce librarians.

Still others are grateful for the new

Social Worker in the Library program, which functions like the lawyer program. McCorkell shared the story of a social worker who helped a man learn to read—and the heartwarming outcome. One day the man stood up during a group session and told everyone he was able to pay a bill on time because he could read what it said. Then he read aloud from a children’s book. There wasn’t a dry eye in the house. “These stories happen every day inside the Pratt Library,” McCorkell says.

Of course, you can still check out books at Enoch Pratt. But as of this year, if you’re late returning them, you won’t have to pay an overdue fine. Now *that’s* nice.



LIFE MOVES YOGA

Warriors Go to the Mat

ARMY LT. GEN. Paul E. Funk II is no stranger to stress. He has led soldiers in combat for years, from Operation Desert Shield to recent efforts in Iraq and Syria. After his fifth tour, Funk took the helm at Fort Hood, in Killeen, Texas, one of the world's biggest military bases. He was born there, when his father, Paul Funk Sr., who served in Vietnam and Desert Storm, was commander in chief, and he and his wife, Beth Funk, even got married in the base chapel.

As a legacy soldier, the younger Paul Funk knows it's not just the people wearing uniforms who serve—the whole family lives in the pressure cooker of military life. That's what

motivated Beth and the rest of the Funks to open the Life Moves Yoga studio, across the street from Fort Hood, in February 2017.

On any given day you might find them all on their mats. Paul Funk II is fluent in sun salutations and one-legged tree poses. His 78-year-old father comes, too, as does Beth's 82-year-old mother, Betta Yeosock.

Civilians are welcome, but the 1,000-square-foot studio caters to soldiers and veterans and their spouses. As students arrive for classes, teachers greet them by saying "Welcome



Military families unite in side plank pose, which builds balance and upper body strength.

COURTESY LIFE MOVES YOGA

hOMe,” with emphasis on the *om* yoga mantra. The studio’s goal is to help build physical and mental strength even when people are battling wounds, whether seen or unseen.

“Halfway through my husband’s deployment, I realized I had been holding my breath,” says Candace Jackson, who has been a client at Life Moves since it opened. “So just being invited, and encouraged, to breathe on purpose truly helped me endure the rest of the deployment and get through it.”

Life Moves also holds classes specifically for older people and for those in wheelchairs. On Wednesday nights, there’s the “Warriors at Ease” class, which caters to soldiers overcoming physical and mental trauma and is taught by the Funks’ daughter, Amanda Brown. “My parents raised us that you have to give back in some way,” she says.

Until recently, the class was paid for by a grant. When the funding dried up, Life Moves kept the class going on its own dime and has since trained more teachers in this special kind of adaptive yoga. It is clearly a valued investment.

“By the time I got out, I couldn’t do a push-up, because I couldn’t put pressure on certain joints,” says Caity Underwood, 31, who served in the Army for seven years, until medical problems forced her to retire. After just a few months at Life Moves, she can do many. Now, she says, “Wednesday is my favorite day.”



MOWER COUNTY, MN

One Bathroom at a Time

IN A STATE where the unofficial motto is “Minnesota Nice,” Mower County may just be the nicest place of all. There’s actually a Community Pride and Spirit committee whose sole purpose is to inspire people to do nice things for one another. Among its initiatives are a youth-mentoring program and a “good graffiti” volunteer group. That piece of profanity that once graced a fence near Mill Pond? It disappeared behind a mural that featured three simple words: *You Are Beautiful*.

Gina and Todd Grundmeier learned all about that beautiful spirit shortly after they moved to the county in 2010. Their house burned down, and they and their four kids lost everything. “There were times we were scrounging



Jason Ferch with the crew that remodeled his bathroom

just to buy a gallon of milk,” says Gina. Right away, neighbors started dropping off meals and clothes.

“These folks gave us our first real taste of what community love is all about,” says Gina.

The next year, Todd and Gina were back on their feet. They started a plumbing business called T’NG, a combination of their first names. They also agreed to combine their efforts to do something great for their neighbors in the best way they could. Every year, T’NG Plumbing remodels the bathroom of one family in need—for free. “I just wanted to find a way to reciprocate and give that

back to the community,” says Gina.

Local contractors donate materials and labor, and T’NG oversees the pipes and installation. They’ve done five so far, including one for a woman awaiting a kidney transplant, one for a couple who’d lost their son and their daughter to suicide, and one for a paraplegic man who’d been scraping his knuckles on his too-small bathroom door frame for 14 years.

“This was better than winning the lottery,” says Becky Josephson, whose new bathroom allowed her to get an in-home dialysis machine. “The lottery is just money. The love that continues afterward is a life thing.”

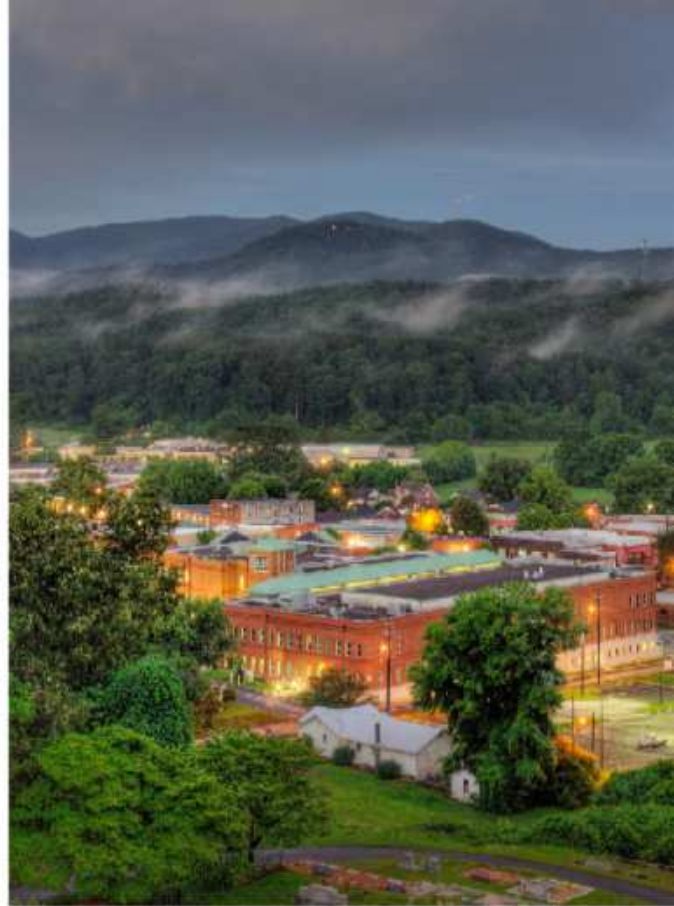


ELLIJAY, GA

Scooching Over to Make Room

THERE'S NOTHING WARMER than a hearty breakfast on a cold morning, especially when it comes with a side order of small-town hospitality. Just ask Steve and Marie Cortes.

On a trip from their home in Florida one cold January morning, the Corteses decided to pull into Ellijay, Georgia, a town nestled in the Blue Ridge Mountains about 90 minutes north of Atlanta. They parked in the thriving town square not far from the old-fashioned clock tower and walked into the Cornerstone Café, only to find it jam-packed. Just as they prepared to take their bellies elsewhere, one of the diners motioned them over. "We can make room," he said. In fact, several diners scooched over



until there was enough space for the couple to pull up two chairs at the end of a table. Breakfast, and camaraderie, was served.

"After an hour, we had made too many friends to count," Steve says.

The hospitality may have surprised the Corteses, but Ellijay is famous in these parts for taking care of others. When an epic thunderstorm roared through the town in July, dozens of residents were trapped in their homes by fallen trees—or unable to stay in their homes at all. Without even being asked, neighbors offered neighbors food and comfort. "This is the most amazing place I have ever lived! Every time I think about it I actually get emotional," one woman wrote on Facebook. "Thank you for coming to



The fertile soil here is especially suited to growing apples; the Blue Ridge Mountains surround acres of orchards.

also in the works, with the proceeds earmarked for the farm families.

“I came to the United States from Mexico not knowing any English, and I’ve always felt very welcomed by my peers and the teachers in the community,” says Maria Gonzalez-Santos, 21, a biology major at the local community college.

When Gonzalez-Santos’s father was picked up and held at an ICE detention facility after his work permit had expired, community members did everything they could to lend the family a hand. “People were constantly checking up on us, asking if we needed help paying bills, transportation, food—people who my dad has worked for, several of my teachers, and my employer as well,” says Gonzalez-Santos. “Regardless of their political stances, we’ve always felt support here. I am very thankful for this community. It’s shaped me into the person I am today.”

Ellijay’s spirit of acceptance has a way of getting into people’s blood. It happened to Steve and Marie Cortes too. The couple that was just driving through town those many years ago felt so welcomed that they wound up moving to Ellijay. They even opened a store—WhimZ, a children’s clothing boutique. It is located right next door to the Cornerstone Café.

my house, picking up my generator, working on it, then bringing it back to my house at 10 p.m. and hooking it up for me. Thank you for the delicious chicken and dumplings and fresh pineapple.”

Trees connect many folks in this town of 1,700—Ellijay bills itself as the apple capital of Georgia. For the most part, the folks who pick the Granny Smiths, Fujis, and Honeycrisps are workers from Mexico and Central America. In some towns, the welcome mat might have been pulled out from under the new arrivals. But the people of Ellijay have made room. The Gilmer Learning Center now teaches English as a second language, while the Catholic church offers Mass in Spanish. A charity fashion show and auction are



NORTH EVERGREEN STREET

Small Town in the Big City

CAN YOU GUESS the location of North Evergreen Street from these descriptions left by residents on its community Facebook page?

◆ “A series of unfortunate events led me to leave my house with my front door wide open. Andre, our mailman, alerted my neighbors, who not only locked my house up for me but checked for any bogeymen too!”

—ANN M.

◆ “We recently went on a long weekend getaway only to find that we had forgotten to leave the key with our

house/dog sitter. Our neighbors across the street jumped right in to save the day, or days, as it was. They fed our dog, checked her water, made time to play with her, and even took her for walks. This neighborhood is the best I’ve ever lived in, so familylike, friendly, helpful.” —DOROTHY B.

◆ “My neighbors found a stray pig in their yard that was obviously someone’s pet. I was walking my dog when I saw them giving the pig carrots and apple slices. I wrote a post to see if anybody knew where it belonged. Before my walk ended, the pig had found his way home thanks to this group!”

—SUSAN S.

Is this somewhere in small-town America, perhaps, maybe out in farm country? In fact, North Evergreen Street is in Burbank, California, which is part of the Los Angeles metro area, smack in the middle of the most populated county in the country. Burbank is famous for its TV studios, and its charming streets showed up in *The Wonder Years*. But instead of being a fabricated Hollywood version of a small town, this close-knit neighborhood is the real thing.

You can drive right onto North Evergreen; there are no guards to stop you, as you’ll find at countless gated communities nearby. The homes sit on tidy yards, not on estates so big you can’t even see your neighbors. Folks wave when you pass by, and when you get home you might find a dozen eggs from the backyard coop next door waiting



COURTESY ASHLEY ERIKSON

on the porch or a bag of limes hanging from your doorknob. These neighbors just like to share. “Over the years, we’ve given and received oranges, lemons, limes, grapes, tomatoes, squash, avocado, kale, jalapeños,” resident Jane H. says. Recently Jon O. posted in the Facebook group that he would fire up his outdoor pizza oven for anyone who felt like coming over. He ultimately

The neighborhood’s year-round warmth—in spirit and weather—makes for frequent block parties.

made—and shared—18 pizzas. That’s just why people such as Amruta S. move to North Evergreen: “I want my son to know what living in a village feels like.” Even if that village is in the heart of La-La Land. **R**



ALL
in a Day's
WORK

Our company gives out Thanksgiving turkeys to retired employees. All they have to do is stop by the plant to pick them up. A few days before the holiday, a retiree called to ask,

“What time do the turkeys get in?”

The receptionist, without thinking, responded, “Everyone starts at eight.”

—ED ROBINSON
*Warminster,
Pennsylvania*

Pearls of “wisdumb” from less-than-stellar students:

◆ I had a girl in my class ask how long it would take for a

submarine to travel from Florida to California ... going underneath the country.

◆ I had a student who wrote an art history paper about “Leonard Davin Chi.”

◆ I walked into a classroom where the professor was in the midst of an angry lecture on plagiarism because one of his students had turned in an essay that

Hard to believe, but many of our customers at the bank still don't know how to swipe their card through the ATM card reader. One teller complained that she kept getting odd looks every time she explained how it's done. I found out why when I overheard her tell one man, "Strip down facing me."

—GCFL.NET

started with: "In my 25+ years of experience in this field ..."

◆ I teach French. I'd given everyone in class a lengthy piece of French homework. One student put the entire assignment into Google Translate, but translated it into Spanish.

—REDDIT.COM

On *The Late Late Show*, Paul McCartney told host James Corden how he and John Lennon wrote the Beatles hit "She Loves You" in McCartney's childhood home: "We're just finishing it up, John and I, and we were like, 'Oh, that's it. Let's play it for my dad.' So we say, 'Dad, Dad, you

want to hear a song?' So we sing, 'She loves you, yeah, yeah, yeah ...' and he listens to the whole song. Then he said, 'That's very nice, but son, there's enough of these Americanisms around. Couldn't you sing, She loves you, yes, yes, yes?'"

I asked a patient to write the Medicaid number from his card on his form. This is what he wrote: "The Medicaid Number."

—PLEASEFIREME.TUMBLR.COM

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PAGE-TURNERS

Four librarians share conversations that made their days.

◆ During story time, I read a book that mentioned doughnuts growing on trees.

Me: "I want to live in a world where doughnuts grow on trees!"

Child: "I want to live in a world where bananas grow on trees."

◆ A patron's question for the reference desk: "Can you come and get a raccoon out of my house?"

◆ A patron came up to the desk to check out a book.

Me: "I'm so sorry, but you won't be able to check out since you owe \$173."

Man: "173? That's how much I weigh too!"

◆ A six-year-old girl asked me: "Do you have any books about how to make boys cry?"

—IWORKATAPUBLICLIBRARY.COM





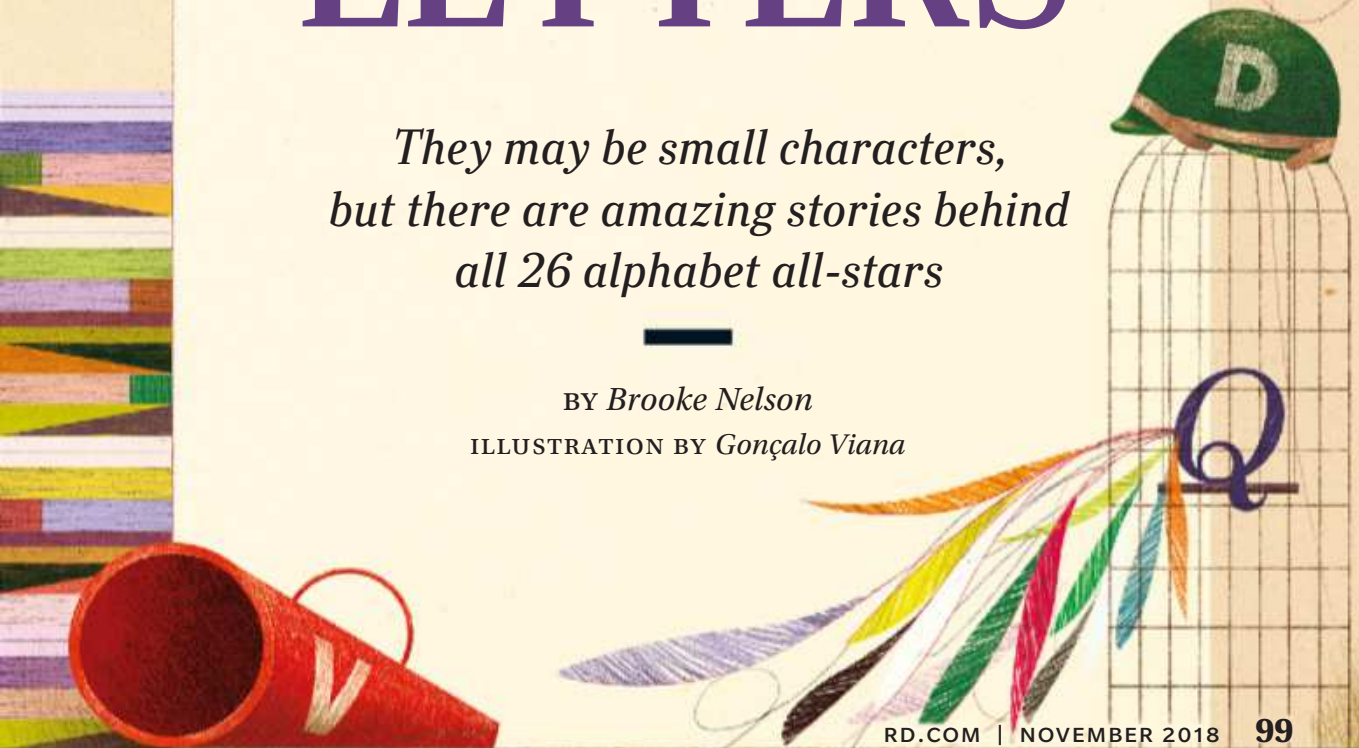
FASCINATING FACTS

The Secret Lives of LETTERS

*They may be small characters,
but there are amazing stories behind
all 26 alphabet all-stars*

BY *Brooke Nelson*

ILLUSTRATION BY *Gonçalo Viana*





A THE CAPITAL *A* hasn't always looked the way it does now. In ancient Semitic languages, the letter was upside down, which created a symbol that resembled a steer with horns.

B GRAB PAPER and pen and start writing down every number as a word. Do you notice one missing letter? If you kept going, you wouldn't use a single letter *b* until you reached one billion.

C BENJAMIN Franklin wanted to banish *c* from the alphabet—along with *j*, *q*, *w*, *x*, and *y*—and

replace them with six letters he'd invented himself. He claimed that he could simplify the English language.

D CONTRARY TO popular belief, the *D* in *D-day* does not stand for “doom” or “death”—it stands for “day.” The military marks important operations and invasions with a *D* as a placeholder. (So June 5, 1944, was D-1.)

E MEET THE “Smith” of the English alphabet—*e* is used more often than any other letter. It appears in 11 percent of all words, according to an analysis of more than 240,000 entries in the *Concise Oxford English Dictionary*.

F ANYONE EDUCATED in today's school system knows that the lowest grade you can get is an F. The low-water mark, however, used to be represented by the letter *E*. When Mount Holyoke

College administrators redesigned the grading system in 1898, professors worried that students would think the grade meant “excellent.” F more obviously stands for “fail.”

G BOTH *G* and *C* were originally represented by the Phoenician symbol gimel, which meant “camel.” It was the Romans who finally separated the two letters, letting *C* keep its shape and adding a bar for the letter *G*.

H THE BRITS have long had an *h* hang-up, according to Michael Rosen, author of *Alphabetical: How Every Letter Tells a Story*. They pronounce *h* two ways: “aitch” and “haitch.” Accents that dropped the *h* from words were once considered lower class, Rosen writes. And in Northern Ireland, pronunciation distinguished Catholics (“haitch”) from Protestants (“aitch”).

I FUNNILY ENOUGH, the dot over the letters *i* and *j* has a funny-sounding name: It's called a *tittle*.

J THIS IS one of the two letters that do not appear on the periodic table. (*Q* is the other.) Invented in the 1500s by an Italian, *j* was also one of the last letters to be added to the alphabet.

K WITH THE possible exception of *L* (see below), *K* is the most notorious letter in sports. It's how baseball fans record a strikeout. (When the first box score was written back in 1859, *S* was used to indicate a sacrifice; *K* was plucked from the end of *struck*.)

L THE NATIONAL Football League has traditionally used Roman numerals to denote the number of the Big Game, but for the 50th Super Bowl, they decided to go with just the number 50.

Why? Sports fans use the letters *W* and *L* as shorthand for "win" and "loss." Because the Roman numeral for 50 is *L*, the NFL worried that Super Bowl *L* would be, in PR terms, a big loser.

M YOU CAN'T say the letter *m* without your lips touching. Go ahead and try it!

N THE LETTER *n* was originally associated with water—the Phoenician word for *n* was *nun*, which later became the Aramaic word for "fish." In fact, the capital *N* got its shape because it was a pictorial representation of a crashing wave.

O ONLY FOUR letters (*a*, *e*, *l*, *o*) are doubled at the beginning of a word (*aardvark*, *eel*, *llama*, *ooze*, etc.), and more words start with double *o* in English than with any other pair.

P THIS MAY be the most versatile letter in English. It's the only consonant that needs no help in forming a word sandwich with any vowel: *pap*, *pep*, *pip*, *pop*, *pup*.

Q ONE OUT of every 510 letters in English words is a *q*, making it the least common letter in the English alphabet, according to a *Concise Oxford English Dictionary* analysis.

R SOMETIMES referred to as the *littera canina*, or the canine letter, because Latin speakers trilling it sound like a growling dog, *r* gets a shout-out from William Shakespeare in *Romeo and Juliet* when Juliet's nurse calls the letter "the dog's name" in act 2, scene 4.

S THE ENGLISH alphabet briefly included a letter called a "long *s*." Used from the late Renaissance to the early

1800s, it resembled the letter *f* but was pronounced as an *s*. You'll see it in various manuscripts written by the Founding Fathers, including the Bill of Rights.

T THE TERM *T-shirt* refers to the T shape of the garment's body and sleeves. F. Scott Fitzgerald is believed to be the first to use the term in popular culture, in 1920, when the main character in his novel *This Side of Paradise* brings a T-shirt with him to boarding school.

U BEFORE THE 1500s, *u* and *v* were used interchangeably as a vowel or a consonant. A French educational reformer helped change that in 1557 when he started using *u* exclusively as a vowel and *v* as the consonant.

V THIS IS the only letter in the English language that is never

silent. Even usually conspicuous letters such as *j* and *z* are silent in words we have borrowed from foreign languages, such as *marijuana* (originally a Spanish word) and *laissez-faire* (French).

W EVER WONDER why we call it a double-u instead of double-v? The Latin alphabet did not have a letter to represent the *w* sound in Old English, so seventh-century scribes just wrote it as *uu*. The double-u symbol eventually meshed together to form the letter *w*.

X FROM "x marks the spot" to "solve for x," this is the go-to letter to represent something unknown. The idea is believed to have come from mathematician

René Descartes, who used the last three letters of the alphabet to represent unknown quantities in his book *The Geometry*. He chose *a*, *b*, and *c* to stand for known quantities.

Y THE SWITCH-hitter in the alphabet, *y* functions as both a vowel and a consonant. *The Oxford English Dictionary* actually calls it a semivowel because while the letter stops your breath in words such as *yell* and *young*—making it a consonant—it also creates an open vocal sound in words such as *myth* or *hymn*.

Z BELIEVE IT or not, the letter *z* has not always been the last letter of the alphabet. For a time, the Greeks had *zeta* in a respectable place at number seven. **R**

SOURCES: THE CONCISE OXFORD ENGLISH DICTIONARY, DICTIONARY.COM, FONTS.COM, GIZMODO.COM, GRAMMARLY.COM, MERRIAM-WEBSTER.COM, OXFORDDICTIONARIES.COM, ROLLINGSTONE.COM, TODAYIFOUNDOUT.COM



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Things You Need
to Know About
ARTHRITIS

*This painful joint disease is actually a
collection of more than 100 ailments—
and it affects people of all ages*



BY *Sari Harrar*

ILLUSTRATIONS BY *James Steinberg*



Arthritis. If the word makes you think about older folks with creaky knees and jumbo bottles of ibuprofen, you need an update. Arthritis now strikes an estimated 91 million American adults, according to a new study, and 30 percent of them are ages 18 to 64. By far the most common type, which affects 57 percent of Americans with arthritis, is osteoarthritis, followed by gout (27 percent of cases), psoriatic arthritis (14 percent), and rheumatoid arthritis (3 percent). There is no cure for any of them, but science has made several breakthroughs in understanding how to treat the inflammation and pain that come with the condition as well as how to halt the underlying joint damage. The first line of defense: Educate yourself.

OSTEOARTHRITIS

(OA): Wear and tear of the cartilage cushion between joints that can often cause—and in some cases result from—chronic inflammation.

1 OLD-FASHIONED X-RAYS ARE the best diagnostic tool. A Washington University study noted that X-rays can diagnose OA as accurately as magnetic resonance imaging (MRI)—and they do it faster and more cheaply. Identifying arthritis early gives you time to turn to lifestyle changes (see page 111) before irreversible damage is done to your knees (the most common pain point) or other joints.

2 THE CUSTOMARY TREATMENT for OA doesn't repair joints. Up to 85 percent of osteoarthritis sufferers try nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs) such as ibuprofen. Though they can be effective at getting you through the day, says Kelli Allen,

PhD, a researcher at the Thurston Arthritis Research Center, they don't protect joints from progressive damage and may have serious side effects.

3 WHEN PEOPLE WITH osteoarthritis used NSAID gels, drops, or patches, half said their pain fell by 50 percent or more over 12 weeks. Because these versions are rubbed onto your skin, less of the drug gets into your bloodstream, which reduces the risk of gastrointestinal bleeding, heart problems, and other side effects. That said, do not use these topical treatments if you have kidney disease or are also taking oral NSAIDs.

4 A 2018 STUDY OF 240 osteoarthritis patients showed that those who took opioids were in slightly more pain after a year than those who took non-opioid medication. The researchers aren't sure why, but given that these drugs can be very addictive, they recommend against opioids.

5 ARTHRITIS HURTS YOUR heart by contributing to chronic inflammation, reducing physical activity, and increasing NSAID use—all factors in cardiovascular risk. All told, researchers estimate that OA boosts your odds for heart disease by 24 percent. (Psoriatic and rheumatoid arthritis raise the odds even higher.)

6 AUSTRALIAN RESEARCHERS WHO reviewed the evidence for 20 top-selling herbs and dietary supplements



used to treat osteoarthritis concluded that three—*Boswellia serrata* extract, pine bark extract, and curcumin—are most effective in reducing inflammation and pain in the short term.

7 CORTISONE INJECTIONS DON'T help in the long term. “A single shot can ease pain,” says Timothy McAlindon, MD, MPH, chief of rheumatology at Tufts Medical Center. But a recent study found that repeated shots of

cortisone, a steroid, not only didn't control pain but also actually led to more joint damage.

8 THE JURY IS still out on other injectable treatments. Hyaluronic acid injections are designed to add more shock-absorbing fluid to joints, but research on their effectiveness is mixed. Similarly, new injectables using your own fat, bone marrow, platelet-rich plasma, or stem cells promise relief, but Dr. McAlindon says “the research isn't sufficient to show if they actually work” to ease pain and rebuild joints.

9 INSOMNIA IS AN often under-treated side effect of arthritis, but there are fixes. Lack of sleep can intensify sensitivity to pain, a problem for OA patients, according to a Johns Hopkins University study. Cognitive behavioral therapy, which helps people change the distorted thinking that can worsen pain levels, has been

shown to increase the amount of time osteoarthritis sufferers slept—and presumably decreased their pain.

10 A NEW DEVICE called Coolief uses specialized electrodes to send water-cooled radio waves into the tissue around your knee, which temporarily deactivate nerves. Patients reported greater, longer-lasting pain relief (up to 12 months) with Coolief than with cortisone injections.

11 STEM CELLS COULD save joints—someday. Scientists have programmed stem cells to grow new cartilage on a 3-D template shaped like the ball of a hip joint. Using gene therapy, they have also activated the new cartilage to release anti-inflammatory molecules to fend off a return of arthritis. But the stem cell therapy offered for knee osteoarthritis in many clinics isn't yet a proven cure.

RHEUMATOID ARTHRITIS

(RA): The immune system attacks the fluid that lubricates joints, causing inflammation and destroying cartilage.

12 A NEW DRUG could prevent RA. Early results from one study showed that for people with mild joint aches and high inflammation levels, one shot of rituximab cut the risk of developing rheumatoid arthritis in half. The drug blocks production of compounds that trigger inflammation.

13 SO COULD VITAMIN D. In another study, researchers found that people with low blood levels of vitamin D, which boosts immune function, were at higher risk for RA. (One great free source of vitamin D: sunshine.)

14 IT'S POSSIBLE TO put rheumatoid arthritis into remission. While there's no way to reverse joint degeneration, getting treated within



six months of the onset of pain and stiffness can curb symptoms and prevent further damage. Unfortunately, a 2016 national survey found that it took people with RA four years and visits to at least three different doctors to get a proper diagnosis.

15 EARLY ARTHRITIS CLINICS are showing great promise. Focused on treating rheumatoid arthritis patients with a recent diagnosis, clinics have opened at the University of Rochester Medical Center, Oregon Health and Science University, and many private facilities. In one study, 89 percent of RA sufferers treated at an early arthritis clinic got disease-modifying antirheumatic drugs (DMARDs) in three months, compared with 50 percent who got care elsewhere. The clinic's patients had higher remission rates as a result.

16 MENOPAUSE WORSENS THE symptoms of rheumatoid arthritis. A 2018 study of 8,189 women in the journal *Rheumatology* confirms something women with RA have long experienced: Joint degeneration speeds up after menopause. Early menopause can trigger the disease too.

17 RHEUMATOID ARTHRITIS CAN raise your risk for certain types of cancer. Lung cancer, lymphoma, and multiple myeloma are more common in people with RA, partly due to inflammation and partly because RA drugs suppress the immune system.

18 ONE DMARD DOES not fit all. “DMARDs can put RA into remission, but a drug may stop working after several years. Some people have to try several before they find the one that works best,” says David Daikh, MD, PhD, outgoing president of the American College of Rheumatology.

19 TUMOR NECROSIS FACTOR (TNF) is an inflammatory protein responsible for pain and cartilage degeneration in RA, and drugs called TNF inhibitors can sometimes block it. And if one TNF inhibitor—such as etanercept (Enbrel) or adalimumab (Humira)—doesn’t work, try another. In a recent study, 43 percent of patients who didn’t respond to one type of TNF inhibitor responded positively to a different one.

20 BIOLOGIC DRUGS—SUCH as etanercept (Enbrel), golimumab (Simponi), and adalimumab (Humira)—are engineered from human genes. They work by targeting specific parts of the inflammation process rather than suppressing the immune system in general (as older DMARDs do), so they tend to have fewer side effects. Unfortunately, they are also more expensive than traditional medications.

21 GENETIC PROFILING COULD SOON pinpoint which drug classes or even individual drugs will work for you. In a new multisite study published this May in the journal *Arthritis & Rheumatology*, researchers analyzed joint tissue from 41 rheumatoid arthritis patients to determine which gene variations each individual had and how they responded to each type of drug. Next they hope to predict which patients will respond best to specific drugs based on their genetic signature, saving time and money.

22 NERVE STIMULATION COULD reduce joint damage. In one small study, when patients with rheumatoid arthritis were zapped with mild electrical current to the vagus nerve (which passes through your neck to your abdomen), the charge reduced their levels of TNF, the same inflammatory protein targeted by TNF inhibitors. Some also had less swelling and tenderness.



PSORIATIC ARTHRITIS

(PsA): An autoimmune disease in which the immune system attacks healthy joint tissue, PsA affects about 30 percent of people with psoriasis, a condition marked by red, scaly patches on the skin.

23 PSA IS NOT RA. Psoriatic arthritis is often misdiagnosed as rheumatoid arthritis, but the cause and many treatments are different. Until 2013, the medications approved by the FDA to treat psoriatic arthritis were RA drugs. Since then, several new treatments for those with PsA have become available.

24 GETTING A TIMELY diagnosis can prevent permanent joint damage. “In psoriatic arthritis, erosive joint changes can begin within six months of first symptoms,” says

rheumatologist Sergio Schwartzman, MD. “But for many people, there can be a five-year delay in receiving a diagnosis.” A growing number of combined dermatology/rheumatology clinics may help reverse the trend.

25 PSORIATIC ARTHRITIS SUFFERERS are six times more likely to have the inflammatory bowel disease (IBD) known as Crohn’s disease, according to a study of more than 174,000 women. Chronic inflammation underlies both Crohn’s and PsA, and some of the medications used to treat arthritis may lead to or exacerbate IBD symptoms. (Other PsA drugs, though, can help IBD symptoms.) People with PsA are also at higher risk for diabetes, osteoporosis, kidney disease, other autoimmune diseases, and many other conditions.

GOUT

Caused by uric acid crystals in joints (most often in the big toe).

26 THE NUMBER OF people diagnosed with gout doubled between 1960 and 1990, and rates have risen about 25 percent since. The use of certain medications for high blood pressure—especially loop and thiazide diuretics—are among the top reasons for the increase. Foods and drinks rich in compounds called purines (such as alcohol, bacon, and sweets) also contribute to the formation of uric acid crystals, as does being overweight and sedentary.

27 TOMATOES, WHICH can increase uric acid levels, could be a gout trigger for some people, a study from 2015 found. They were the fourth most common food trigger after seafood, alcohol, and red meat.



throughout the year were 37 percent less likely to have recurrent attacks.

29 GOUT DRUGS CAN be effective, but they can also have drawbacks. In a 2018 study of more than 6,000 people with

28 IT BEARS REPEATING: Cherries can lower the risk of a gout attack. In a 2012 study, researchers followed people with gout for a year and found that those who either ate fresh cherries or took cherry extract

gout, those who took febuxostat were 34 percent more likely to die from heart disease than people who took allopurinol, another common gout drug. But allopurinol can cause liver problems, while another older gout drug, colchicine, can cause severe diarrhea.

THE POWER OF HEALTHY CHOICES

New research has proved that these old-time remedies really work. While most studies have been done with osteoarthritis or rheumatoid patients, experts say these strategies will help almost all kinds of arthritis.

30. Weight Loss

In a study of 640 overweight and obese people, those who lost just 5 percent of their body weight over two years had lower rates of cartilage degeneration compared with stable-weight participants.

31. Fiber

People who ate 22 to 28 grams of fiber per day had a 30 to 61

percent lower risk for OA-related knee pain.

32. Fish


One study showed that RA patients who ate fish at least twice a week had fewer swollen, tender joints than those who rarely did.

33. Physical Activity

Just 45 minutes a week of walking or other easy exercise helped people

with OA reduce pain and improve joint function in knees, hips, and ankles by 80 percent.

34. Touch and Movement Therapies

A review of 21 complementary therapies found that acupuncture, massage, yoga, and tai chi were most effective in easing OA and RA pain. 

10

She set out to scatter her husband's ashes in a national park. Would she make it out alive?

A photograph of a forest path with large white letters 'S' and 'T' overlaid. A moss-covered branch is draped over the 'S'. The text 'DRAMA IN REAL LIFE' is at the top, and 'IN THE PACIFIC WOODS' is in the lower right. The author's name 'BY Tom Hallman Jr.' is at the bottom.

DRAMA IN REAL LIFE

IN
THE
**PACIFIC
WOODS**

BY *Tom Hallman Jr.*

F

FOR 34 YEARS, Jean and Jack Geer doted on each other as they moved from San Francisco to Hawaii to, finally, Port Angeles in Washington State. Then, in December 2016, Jean walked into their bucolic backyard and found Jack crumpled on the ground. Seemingly in perfect health, he had died of a massive heart attack. He was 72.

In the following months, Jean devoured books on grief and loss, hoping she would find the will to go on without him. One task she thought could help: Jack had told Jean that when he died he wanted half of his ashes scattered in Hawaii and half in Olympic National Park, about a 25-minute drive from their home. So in March 2017, Jean dutifully flew to Hawaii to disperse the first part of Jack's remains in the ocean. But she dreaded the thought of parting with Jack forever. She put off spreading the rest of Jack's ashes until she was ready. That day came on July 17.

Jean, 71, took the urn holding Jack's remains, grabbed Yoda, her five-year-old 11-pound Chihuahua mix, and climbed into her 2004 Ford Explorer. It was 4 p.m. A slight woman, just five feet tall, Jean wore capri pants,



Jean Geer, months before she and her dog disappeared in Olympic National Park

a Hawaiian shirt, and canvas espadrilles. No need for a coat on what should be a 30-minute walk. She planned to be home in time to make dinner.

With its dramatic peaks and old-growth forests, Olympic National Park covers nearly a million sprawling acres. Jean was heading for one special spot off Obstruction Point Road, an eight-mile dirt and gravel byway. She drove in about three miles, pulled her Explorer over on an untamed stretch of road devoid of signs, and got out. She grabbed her cell phone and the urn, stashed her purse in the car, and locked the doors. And then Jean and Yoda entered the woods.

THE PARK FEATURES one of the world's most diverse populations of wildflowers, and Jean was on a quest for blue alpine forget-me-nots. Their beauty, Jack had once told Jean, moved him. When she

PREVIOUS SPREAD: JOSEPH SOHM/SHUTTERSTOCK



didn't see any, she walked deeper into the woods and finally spotted a blanket of blue through a small opening in the trees. Relieved, she walked to the flowers and distributed Jack's ashes. She said a quiet blessing and turned to leave.

Then she paused. Had she come in this way or that? Where was the trail? Jack would have laughed. He'd frequently teased her about her terrible sense of direction. His nickname for her was "wrong-way Jean."

She saw a hill and headed toward it. If she could make it to the top, she could scan the horizon and spot Obstruction Point Road. Her shoes, which had smooth treads, were ill-suited for the climb. Yoda ran ahead while Jean struggled to maintain her balance. She slipped, dropped the urn, and watched it roll over the edge of the hill and tumble into a gully. Jean crept her way to the slope's side. She spotted the dark plastic urn, barely visible in the underbrush. She hated abandoning anything related to Jack, but the steep hillside was too dangerous to navigate. She eventually made it to the top of the crest, where she saw nothing but trees and more hills. She'd been gone from home for a few hours, and it was getting dark.

COURTESY JEAN GEER

NEW!

**BIG
VANILLA
LATTE
FLAVOR**



**BIG FOOD
FOR
BIG DAYS**



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The shelter Jean made. She and her dog, Yoda, ultimately lived in it for three days.

She reached for her cell phone to call for help. No service. Thirsty, Jean needed water. She randomly picked a route, pushing her way through underbrush and branches that cut and pricked her, until she came upon a small creek. She and Yoda drank deeply. As night fell, Jean was chilled by an awful realization: She would be spending the night in the woods.

She'd heard stories about people who had died in the park, including one who had been mauled by a bear. Just stay calm, she thought, forcing herself to focus on the task at hand. First things first—she needed a place to sleep. She spotted a downed tree, about seven feet in diameter, that had fallen on a big rock next to the creek. The space beneath was large enough to shelter her for the night. She crawled under the log and lay there.

Yoda snuggled close, warming her as the temperature dipped into the 40s. An experienced camper, Jean wasn't frightened by the forest's strange noises or creepy-crawlies. But her predicament did keep her awake. To distract herself, she thought about the dinner she'd planned but wouldn't get to eat: noodle soup with pork and vegetables, and fresh cherries for dessert.

And she thought of Jack. Jean recalled the first time she'd laid eyes on him. It was 1982. Armed with her MBA, she had applied for a job at a San Francisco bank, where Jack served as a vice president. After she was hired as an assistant vice president, Jack took her to lunch to congratulate her. Mutually attracted, they began to date, fell in love, and were soon married. Thinking about Jack made her calmer, allowing her to conclude that if she could make it until daylight, she'd find her way out.

AT DAWN, JEAN left the shelter, forging her own trail through underbrush with Yoda now trying to keep up with her. At home, Yoda had the run of nearly five acres, where he chased deer and explored. But this adventure was different. The bushes were high in many places, and he had to tunnel through. With his short legs, he couldn't jump over the logs. Discouraged, he'd yelp for Jean. But Jean couldn't carry him. It taxed her strength, and she might fall. Yoda was on his own.

Jean, meanwhile, was fighting her own battles with panic. So much could go wrong in the wilderness for even a young, able-bodied hiker. But for a septuagenarian, the perils were magnified. Crossing over slippery rocks, she worried she'd fall and break a leg. She avoided ravines, knowing that if she plunged into one, she could never climb back up.

Before she knew it, another day had passed. Her chances of being rescued had not improved. As night fell again, Jean and Yoda found another fallen tree to sleep under.

THE NEXT MORNING, her third day lost in the park, Jean had given up on finding her own way out. She'd read stories about people who'd endured in the wild, and the rules of survival were simple: Find a water source, don't get injured, and find an open spot to make it easier for rescuers to find you. Then stay put.

By midafternoon, Jean had scouted out the place she'd call home for however long she needed it. She'd found two trees that had fallen next to each other. She used branches to build a roof and to close off one end of the space, leaving an opening for a "doorway." Inside, she stacked branches to use at night to close off the opening. She used moss to make the ground softer.

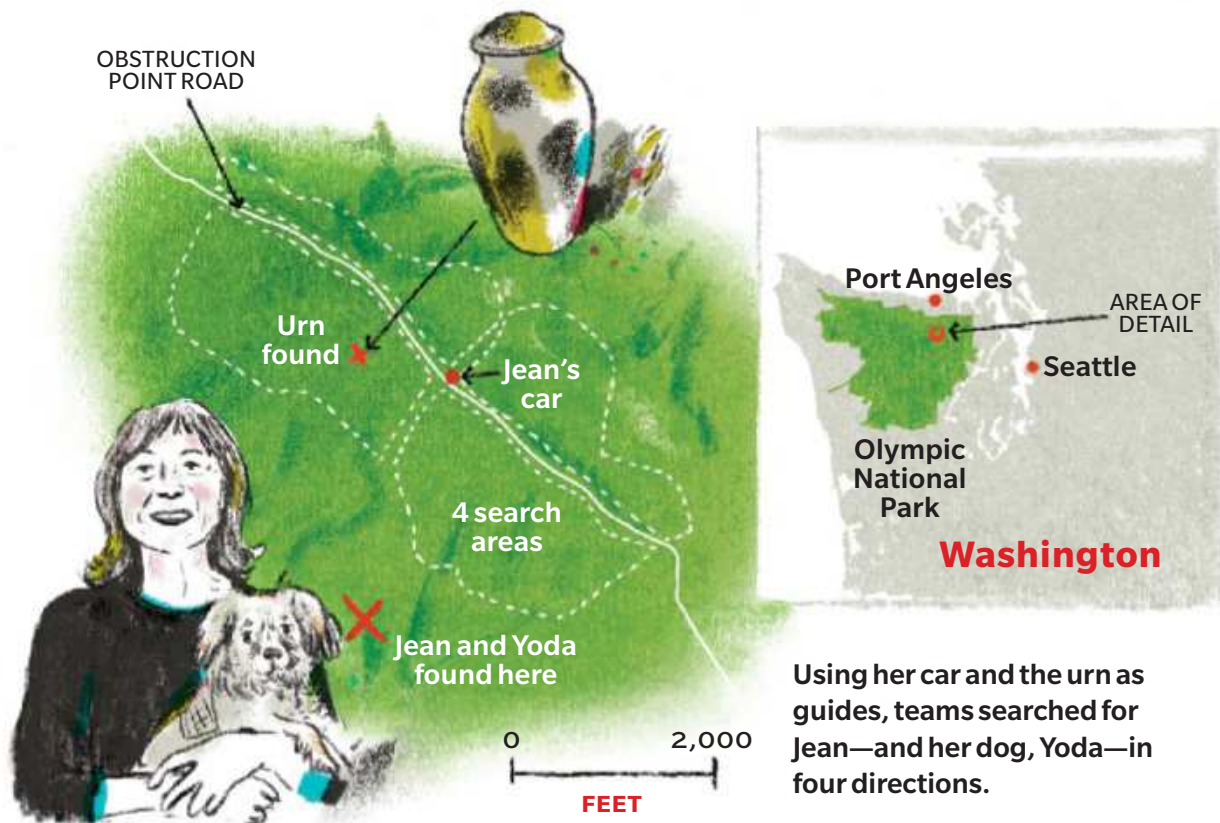
At the end of day three, Jean and Yoda entered the eight-by-five-foot shelter. As she settled in, so many

**BIG DAYS
ARE RIPE
WITH
POTENTIAL**



**BIG FOOD
FOR
BIG DAYS**





Using her car and the urn as guides, teams searched for Jean—and her dog, Yoda—in four directions.

thoughts, some absurd, ran through her head: She'd bought tickets with a friend to go on an October cruise that would take them to Greece, Italy, and Spain. Would she get to go? And then there were those cherries. She couldn't stop thinking about them.

The next day, her fourth lost, Jean settled into her survival routine. Several times over the course of the day, she made her way down a steep hill to drink water. Taking care not to fall, she dug her heels into the ground and clung to the bushes.

She tried building a fire by gathering dry pine needles and then rubbing a small stick against a stone, hoping the stick would get warm enough to ignite. It failed, but she kept trying.

Starving, she ate wild currants, tender pine needles, and even ants, which had a lemony taste. Yoda, for his part, impressed Jean with his new-found ability to snatch flies out of the air and dig up grubs for dinner.

By 4 p.m., Jean and Yoda had climbed into her shelter. Despite the moss, the hard ground was miserable and the cold was embedded in her bones. But she wasn't giving up. Although Jack had taken care of her for so many years, Jean now harked back to a time when she hadn't been dependent on anyone.

Shortly after World War II, her family had moved to the United States from China. At school, kids would hurl racial slurs and start fights with her. Her

father had sat Jean down and offered this advice: You are a little person. You won't be strong physically. You must be strong internally. Somehow, somehow, he was saying, Jean had to take care of herself. Hungry, tired, and growing weak, Jean drifted off to sleep repeating her father's words.

BY NOW, JEAN'S brother in Seattle had become concerned. Numerous calls to Jean had not been returned, and when he drove the two hours to her home, there was no sign of her. He contacted the sheriff's office, which sent a missing-person report to all governmental agencies, including an office at Olympic National Park. At 1:30 p.m. on July 22, five days into Jean's odyssey, a park employee spotted the Explorer. He radioed it in, setting in motion a series of alerts that ended with Zachary Gray, of the park's search-and-rescue operations squad, gathering a handful of searchers to look for Jean.

They met at her parked Explorer. Dust and water spots indicated the vehicle had been there for several days. Searchers walked into the woods, calling Jean's name. They found nothing. At 7 p.m., with nightfall approaching, the search was halted.

The search began again the next day at 6 a.m. Gray now had a team of 37 under his command, which he split into four groups heading out in different directions. Still, he couldn't buck the nagging feeling that this would

**FILL UP
FOR
BIG DAYS**



**BIG FOOD
FOR
BIG DAYS**



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end poorly. At 71, Jean was likely disoriented and probably injured. Gray had been on ten searches already that year. Nearly all had ended when the team found a body.

At noon, Gray's two-way radio crackled. A searcher had found a plastic urn with Jack Geer's name on the side. Gray had other teams focus on a half-mile radius from where the urn was found. Hours passed. Nothing.

Gray radioed to request a helicopter. Once aboard, he searched below where the urn had been found. Jean, he thought, might have fallen into the gully and dropped the urn. Injured, she likely would have continued walking downhill until she either collapsed or died. Flying 300 feet above tree level, Gray saw nothing but a sea of green. He had another idea. If Jean were somehow alive, she'd need water. He studied the terrain. Far away, he spotted a creek. The pilot made two passes. Nothing. Wait—Gray thought he saw something move. He asked the pilot to circle back.

Then Gray saw a dog. Then a woman with silver hair waving at the chopper. He radioed the team, giving new instructions. From a distance, he watched searchers running to the

woman. He saw them hug her. His radio came to life: We have Jean.

After six days in the woods, Jean was too weak to walk out on her own. Gray called in a larger Coast Guard helicopter, one that could hoist Jean up into the chopper in a basket, while the ground crew carried Yoda out.

At the hospital, doctors were stunned that Jean's only injuries were scratches on her legs. Tests revealed that her potassium was low from eating next to nothing for nearly a week. She was released from the hospital that night with a prescription for potassium tablets, which she chased down with a big bowl of cherries.

When rescuers discussed the search, they talked about the small urn. Without it, they would never have found Jean. Gray is convinced that Jack Geer's spirit protected his wife.

Jean doesn't doubt it. But the woman who questioned her will to go on without her husband had found the wherewithal to survive. And with that came a life-affirming conclusion. "It's time to let go and let [my] own light shine, and stand up," she told the *Seattle Times*. "This situation forced me. I realized I had to be on my own and move on to my life." **R**



About That Preboarding Rush

Everyone who lined up 30 minutes early to board the plane is gonna be so mad when we all land at the same time.

 @MSGWENI

HUMOR *in*
UNIFORM



“Careful, now. I don’t like the looks of this.”

While serving in Vietnam, my friend and his buddies were hunkered down in a mud-filled hole that had been dug into the side of a berm and covered with lumber for protection. Their one extravagance: a bare light bulb they’d hung from the “ceiling.”

One guy was reading a newspaper article from back home about a congressional investigation into why some troops were living in relative luxury.

The guy put down the paper, turned to my friend, and said, “Well, there goes the light bulb.”

—JAMES VALOUCH
New York, New York

As A.J. and his platoon of recruits were marching, their sergeant slipped and tumbled down a ravine. The irate sergeant scrambled back up amid guffaws and barked, “Those who laughed, get down and give me 20!” A.J. and some

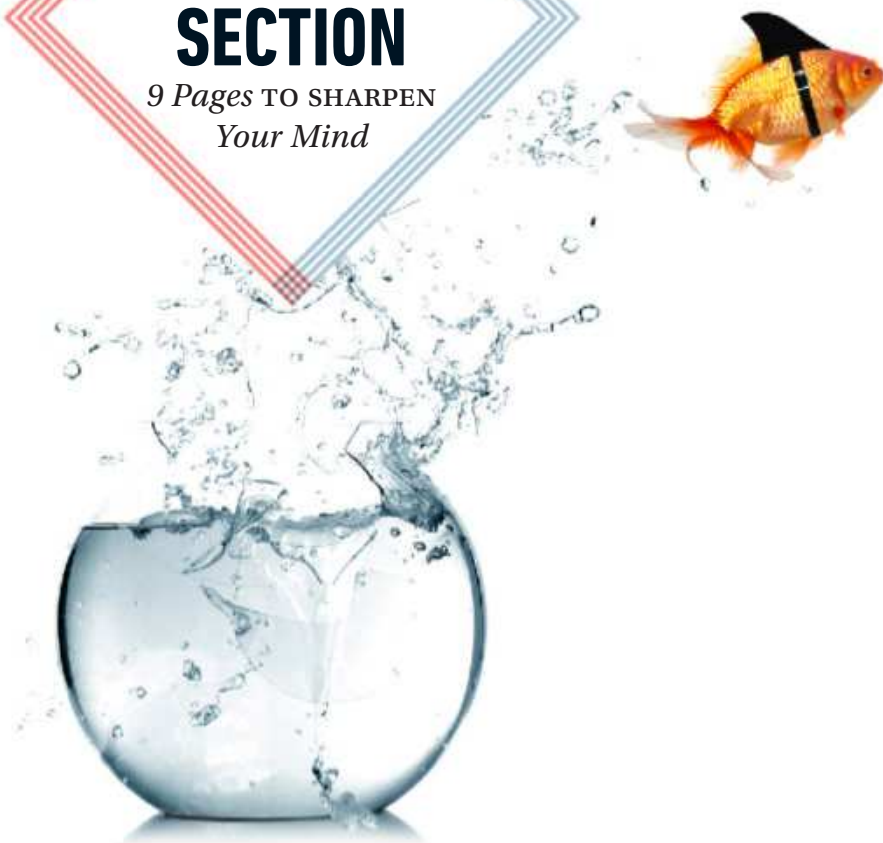
others fell to the ground quickly and did their push-ups. Meanwhile, the sergeant glared at the others. “As for the rest of you, get down and give me 40 for lying!”
 —S.C. *via mail*

GOT A FUNNY STORY about the military or your military family? It could be worth \$\$\$.
 For details, see page 4 or go to RD.COM/
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THE GENIUS SECTION

9 Pages TO SHARPEN
Your Mind



WISH YOU WERE MORE CREATIVE? JUST PRETEND!

*Thinking you aren't gifted may be what's
blocking your inner artist*

BY *Susie Neilson* FROM THE CUT

V. S. ANANDHAKRISHNA/SHUTTERSTOCK

I WANT TO ASK you a favor. I have a pair of pants. Tell me: How many different ways can I put a pair of pants to use?

Now imagine you're an architect. Same question.

Now imagine you're Cher. Bill Gates. A scuba diver. A medieval knight. You still have the pants. What alternative uses come to mind?

What you just practiced—the conscious act of “wearing” another self—is an exercise that, according to psychiatrist Srinii Pillay, MD, is essential to being creative.

One great irony about our collective obsession with creativity is that we tend to frame it in uncreative ways. That is to say, most of us marry creativity to our concept of self: Either we're “creative” or we aren't, without much of a middle ground. “I'm just not a creative person!” a frustrated student might say in art class, while another might blame her talent at painting for her difficulties in math, deflecting with a comment such as, “I'm very right-brained.”

Dr. Pillay, a tech entrepreneur and an assistant professor at Harvard University, has spent a good chunk of his career subverting these ideas. He believes that the key to unlocking your creative potential is to defy the clichéd advice that urges you to “believe in yourself.” In fact, you should do the opposite: Believe you are someone else.

Dr. Pillay points to a 2016 study demonstrating the impact of stereotypes on

one's behavior. The authors, educational psychologists Denis Dumas and Kevin Dunbar, divided their college-student subjects into three groups, instructing the members of one to think of themselves as “eccentric poets” and the members of another to imagine they were “rigid librarians” (the third group was the control). The researchers then presented all the participants with ten ordinary objects, including a fork, a carrot, and a pair of pants, and asked them to come up with as many different uses as possible for each one. Those who were asked to imagine

IGNORE ADVICE TO BELIEVE IN YOURSELF. INSTEAD, BELIEVE YOU ARE SOMEONE ELSE.

themselves as eccentric poets came up with the widest range of ideas, whereas those in the rigid-librarian group had the fewest. Meanwhile, the researchers found only small differences in students' creativity levels across academic majors. In fact, the physics majors inhabiting the personas of eccentric poets came up with more ideas than the art majors did.

These results, write Dumas and Dunbar, suggest that creativity is not an individual trait but a “malleable product of context and perspective.” Everyone can be creative, as long as he or she feels like a creative person.



IDEAS GET DROWNED OUT BECAUSE MOST OF US SPEND WAY TOO MUCH TIME WORRYING.



Dr. Pillay's work takes this a step further: He argues that simply identifying yourself as creative is less powerful than taking the bold, creative step of imagining you are somebody else. This exercise, which he calls psychological Halloweenism, refers to the conscious action of inhabiting another persona. An actor may employ this technique to get into character, but anyone can use it.

According to Dr. Pillay, it works because it is an act of "conscious unfocus," a way of stimulating the default mode network, a collection of brain regions that spring into action when you're not focused on a specific task or thought. The default mode network

may be quiet, but it's hardly idle: It spends all day rummaging through our memories and collaging ideas together.

Unfortunately, those ideas often get drowned out because most of us spend way too much time worrying, and about two things in particular: how successful/unsuccessful we are and how little we're focusing on the task at hand. These twin worries feed on each other—an unfocused person is an unsuccessful one, we believe—and so we don't allow our minds to wander into its quietly fertile fields. Instead, we buy noise-canceling headphones, knuckle down, and berate ourselves for taking breaks.

What makes Dr. Pillay's argument resonate is its healthy, forgiving realism. According to him, most people spend nearly half of their days in a state of "unfocus." This doesn't make us slackers; it makes us human. The quietly revolutionary idea behind psychological Halloweenism is: What if we stopped judging ourselves for our mental downtime and instead started harnessing it? Putting this new spin on daydreaming means tackling two problems at once: You're making yourself more creative, and you're giving yourself permission to do something you'd otherwise feel guilty about. Imagining yourself in a new situation, or an entirely new identity, never felt so productive. **R**

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BRAIN GAMES

E		R		F	T	B		L
L			E		R		T	
	M	T		B		Y		E
T		M					Y	B
X	F	L	Y	E	B		M	
R		Y	T	L		F		X
Y		F	X		L		B	R
	R		F			X		
M		X	B	R			F	Y

Word Sudoku

EASY Complete the grid so that each row, each column, and each three-by-three frame contains the nine letters from the black box below. A hidden nine-letter word is in the diagonal from top left to bottom right. (It may contain repeated letters.)

BEFLMRTXY



















Happy Campers

MEDIUM You just bought nine beautiful lakeside campsites, which you can rent to campers with tents for \$20 per campsite per night. You can also upgrade the sites with electrical hookups. This will cost you \$60 per campsite but will allow you to rent to RVers for \$40 per night. Suppose you can always fill your campground to capacity. If you're starting without any cash on hand, how many nights will pass before you'll be able to upgrade all nine sites?

Arithme-pick

MEDIUM Place one of the four basic arithmetic operations (+, −, ×, ÷) in each box to make a correct equation. All operations are performed from left to right, ignoring the mathematical order of operations. The result at each step must be a positive whole number. What's the equation?

$$5 \square 7 \square 3 \square 9 \square 4 = 32$$

Suit Yourself

DIFFICULT The playing card suits in the cells above are placed according to a pattern. What's the missing symbol?

Animal House

EASY How many pets live in my house if all of them are snakes except two, all are hamsters except two, and all are rabbits except two?



For more Brain Games, go to GAMES.RD.COM.

For answers, turn to **PAGE 131**.

WORD POWER

The editors at Merriam-Webster added a whopping 850 words and definitions to the dictionary in 2018—including, appropriately, *wordie* (“lover of words”). Quiz yourself on these other newcomers, then look up the answers on page 130.

BY *Emily Cox* AND *Henry Rathvon*

1. life hack *n.* ('life hak)

- A identity theft.
- B short bio.
- C clever tip.

2. chiweenie *n.*

- (chih-'wee-nee)
- A chewy noodle.
- B Chihuahua/dachshund hybrid.
- C crybaby.

3. demonym *n.*
('deh-muh-nim)

- A impish child.
- B floor model.
- C name for an inhabitant.

4. harissa *n.*
(huh-'rih-suh)

- A spicy sauce.
- B hair dye.
- C brash woman.

5. cryptocurrency *n.*
(krip-toh-'kuhr-en-see)

- A classified information.
- B digital money.
- C unpredictable events.

6. beach cruiser *n.*
(beech 'croo-zer)

- A amateur surfer.
- B bike with wide tires.
- C migrating shorebird.

7. Wanderwort *n.*
('wahn-dur-wort)

- A daydreamer.
- B tofu sausage.
- C far-traveling word.

8. dumpster fire *n.*
('dump-ster fire)

- A total disaster.
- B mass layoff.
- C rumormonger.

9. poke *n.* (poh-'kay)

- A raw fish salad.
- B online pest.
- C rural town.

10. Silver Alert *n.*
('sil-ver uh-'lurt)

- A warning of a missing senior.
- B notice of a price drop.
- C ship's distress signal.

11. kombucha *n.*
(kahm-'boo-chuh)

- A fermented tea.
- B modular furniture.
- C gorilla species.

12. mansplain *v.*
('man-splayn)

- A mooch off a friend.
- B brag about money.
- C explain condescendingly.

13. piloerection *n.*
(py-loh-ih-'rek-shun)

- A demolished building.
- B bristling of hairs.
- C new website.

14. gastroplasty *n.*
('ga-stroh-pla-stee)

- A culinary customs.
- B stomach surgery.
- C horrible crime.

15. cotija *n.*
(koh-'tee-hah)

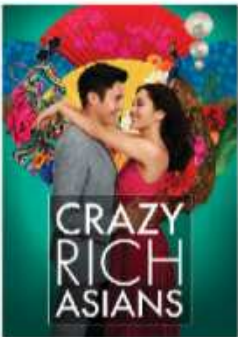
- A hard Mexican cheese.
- B ballroom dance.
- C poisonous snake.

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

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PG-13

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D'oh! Good One, Homer

Also among Merriam-Webster's new words is *embiggen* ("to enlarge"). It was coined as a joke by the writers of *The Simpsons*, who had challenged themselves to invent two words that sounded real. The Springfield town motto is: "A noble spirit embiggens the smallest man." The other invented word was *cromulent* ("acceptable"), which has not had a life beyond the cartoon show—so far.

WORD POWER ANSWERS

- 1. life hack (C)** *clever tip.* Here's a simple life hack: Use dental floss to neatly slice up a cake.

 - 2. chiweenie (B)** *Chihuahua/dachshund hybrid.* My kids like Yorkie-poos, but I'm partial to chiweenies.

 - 3. demonym (C)** *name for an inhabitant.* As a Cleveland native, José prefers the demonym "Buckeye" over "Ohioan."

 - 4. harissa (A)** *spicy sauce.* After one bite of Marissa's lemon harissa chicken, my mouth was on fire.

 - 5. cryptocurrency (B)** *digital money.* I don't trust these cryptocurrency fads; I'd rather write a check than pay with Bitcoin.

 - 6. beach cruiser (B)** *bike with wide tires.* Did you
- hear that Bryce started a business renting beach cruisers to tourists?

 - 7. Wanderwort (C)** *far-traveling word.* The word *orange* is a classic Wanderwort, with roots in Sanskrit, Persian, and Arabic.

 - 8. dumpster fire (A)** *total disaster.* "Today was such a dumpster fire—I lost my wallet, I fought with my wife, and I got into a fender bender," Jess moaned.

 - 9. poke (A)** *raw fish salad.* With tzatziki, acai, and poke on this menu, I need a translator to order!

 - 10. Silver Alert (A)** *warning of a missing senior.* No need for a Silver Alert; we found Grandpa tinkering in the attic.

 - 11. kombucha (A)** *fermented tea.* The new health food store sells kombucha by the gallon.
- 12. mansplain (C)** *explain condescendingly.* Ryan began to mansplain about film history to his date, even though she had a PhD in the subject.

 - 13. piloerection (B)** *bristling of hairs.* I dare you to read a Stephen King book without some serious piloerection.

 - 14. gastroplasty (B)** *stomach surgery.* "Gastroplasty can help some people lose weight, but it isn't right for everyone," cautioned Dr. Willis.

 - 15. cotija (A)** *hard Mexican cheese.* Cotija is often described as a cross between feta and Parmesan.

Vocabulary Ratings

9 & BELOW: so last year
10–12: up-to-date
13–15: ahead of the curve

BRAIN GAMES ANSWERS

See page 126.

Word Sudoku

E	Y	R	M	F	T	B	X	L
L	X	B	E	Y	R	M	T	F
F	M	T	L	B	X	Y	R	E
T	E	M	R	X	F	L	Y	B
X	F	L	Y	E	B	R	M	T
R	B	Y	T	L	M	F	E	X
Y	T	F	X	M	L	E	B	R
B	R	E	F	T	Y	X	L	M
M	L	X	B	R	E	T	F	Y

Happy Campers

THREE. On the first night, you'll host nine tents and make \$180, which you'll use to upgrade three sites. On the second night, you'll host three RVs and six tents, earning \$240, letting you upgrade another four sites. On the third night, you'll host seven RVs and two tents, earning you more than enough to upgrade the last two.



Caption Contest

What's your clever description for this picture? Submit your funniest line at RD.COM/CAPTIONCONTEST. Winners will be published in a future Photo Finish.

Arithme-pick

$$5 + 7 \div 3 \times 9 - 4 = 32$$

Suit Yourself

♠ **SPADE.** Each suit has a numerical value: diamonds equal one, hearts equal two, spades equal three, and clubs equal four. Or, if you prefer, diamonds equal four,

hearts equal three, spades equal two, and clubs equal one. Either way, each row and column adds up to ten, and the missing symbol is a spade.

Animal House

One of each, for a total of **THREE.**

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JONATHAN HIGBEE

PHOTO FINISH
YOUR *Funniest* CAPTIONS



Winner

How vampire tourists get out during the day.

—MELISSA SITTON *Vian, Oklahoma*

Runners-Up

“Hold on. My sweater’s unraveling!”

—LINDA MILLER *Port Deposit, Maryland*

“Think Chewbacca will like my new hairdo?”

—SUSAN MCIVER *Allegan, Michigan*

To enter an upcoming caption contest, see the photo on PAGE 131.



Leading Bladder Leak Pad

“A bladder leak pad that’s
a lot less bulky, and drier too.*
Need I say more?”



Always Discreet is made differently.
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*Always Discreet 4, 5, and 6 drop pads vs. the equivalent Leading Brand pads.

BONUS COVER

Reader's Digest

*Robin Roberts
Reveals ...*

**THE
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← Turn to p. 68