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# Reader's digest

MAY 2016

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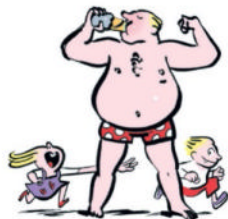
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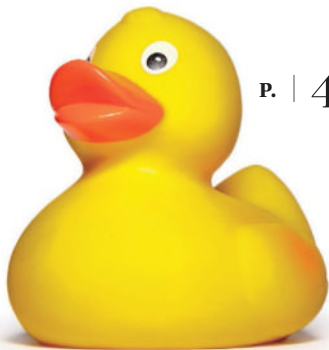
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# Editor's Note

## Yellowstone on Ice



I TOOK MY WILDLIFE-LOVING family to Yellowstone this winter. My father loved the West, and I remember gaping at Old Faithful, sleeping in a tepee, and rafting down the Snake River when I was my daughters' age. The park felt mystical and massive to me as a girl. But would it mean something else in this season and at this phase of my life? Now that I was mature enough to look closer, what might I observe and learn?

**Context matters.** At our local zoo, Olivia and Sophia could never be bothered to stop and behold the bison as they toddled their way to see Jelly and Jam in the black bear exhibit. But here the bison marched

freely through endless black-and-white landscape. It's impossible not to appreciate the quiet confidence in their lumbering, the grace in how they swept the snow by swinging their cinder-block heads, and the good sense in how mother bison forged a single path for their offspring, and the rest of the herd, to follow. On this trip, when Olivia sees bison on the restaurant menu, she bursts into tears.

**Renewal springs from the raw underbelly of loss.** We drove past trees bending under the weight of fresh snow, like melted marshmallows, and I thought of the newscasters in 1988. "It's a tragedy! The end of one of our national treasures," they said, as behind them two thirds of the park burned in a monstrous summer blaze that resisted the efforts of 25,000 firefighters. Yet Yellowstone's creatures have thrived in the years since. The Lamar Valley, with elk, moose, wolves, foxes, pronghorn, eagles, and hawks, is still America's Serengeti. The land is healthier than ever. I saw the charred evidence of those fires, tall black trunks bearing witness to the half-size offspring growing beside them. Turns out, the ubiquitous lodgepole pine



### Three fascinating facts from my Collette tour of Yellowstone:

**1.** *Like a cave turned inside out, the colorful, steaming limestone terraces at Mammoth Hot Springs are one of 10,000 hydrothermal wonders in the park.*

**2.** *Bison are surprisingly agile, able to run as fast as 35 mph. Because tourists assume they are docile, bison cause far more injuries in Yellowstone than do any other species.*

**3.** *Ghost trees are covered not in snow but in rime frost, which forms when extremely cold water droplets freeze instantly on a cold surface.*

Visit [gocollette.com/readersdigest](http://gocollette.com/readersdigest).

trees can reseed themselves only after fire. The '88 “catastrophe” was just the facial the park needed.

**Everything is moving, changing—always.** The bubbling, gurgling, sighing, and steaming of the earth’s core happens right at the surface of Yellowstone. We watched the thermal springs sculpt the edges of the painted pots. I saw the aftermath of tectonic plates shaking and breaking, as they must when two indomitable forces push together. Rangers spoke of the tremors that rattle the land regularly. The molten lava hiding under the frozen surface is a useful metaphor for all of life’s tensions and transitions.

My family has traveled far and wide to see creatures that excite us—Thailand for my elephants, Grand Cayman for Sophia’s sea turtles, Costa Rica for Olivia’s eyelash pit vipers, and Alaska for Steve’s bears and salmon. But our winter week out West reminded me that the earth itself is a living, breathing organism, worthy of our interest and respect. **R**



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# Letters

COMMENTS ON THE MARCH ISSUE

## Funny Family Stories

I died laughing at the cover story. Have you ever noticed that *fun* is in the word *dysfunctional*? The more dysfunctional your family is, the more fun you are!

MARTHA VILLANUEVA,  
Rohnert Park, California



My poor grapefruit went through an experience no grapefruit should have to go through. Now it is saddled with the odd combination of a generous amount of salt and sugar, lots of it. This is a faith-testing experience. I will try to get through.

BRYANT MCCONKIE, via e-mail

## Picture This

I'd like to add one more suggestion. Snap a picture of your luggage when you're preparing to travel. This can be a huge help if you have to report lost bags.

P. W., via e-mail

## Genius Uses for Your Microwave

There is a much simpler way to keep from crying while cutting up an onion: Keep your mouth shut! This trick works for me every time.

JOHN COLLINS, Weatherford, Texas

## Foods That Trick Your Taste Buds

In your latest issue, you suggest adding salt to a grapefruit to make it taste sweeter. This was not the case.

## Mother of the Bride

I am a pastor with 60 years of marriage counseling experience. I have reduced my counseling sessions down to two sentences: "Be supportive and positive about each other when you are in public" and "Be kind and respectful when you are alone." Practice those two things, and the rest will take care of itself.

BRYAN CROW, Anaheim, California

How beautifully and truthfully Ruth Pennebaker describes that wild ride called marriage. I couldn't have said it better myself.

SHERRIE FACCHINE, Jupiter, Florida

## I'm a Slob, and You Should Be One Too!

This article goes against all my OCD tendencies. I guess cleanliness is not next to godliness. Does this mean Mom was not always right?!

ANDREA ADAMS, York, Pennsylvania

I've been a lifelong advocate of unmade beds and jeans that stand on their own, but I never knew that these were actually healthy and frugal practices. Thank you for affirming my lifestyle choices.

BOB WAGNER, Las Vegas, Nevada

## A Legacy Denied

Any philosophy that causes doctors to rue that a boy didn't die "quickly enough" is one that our society should avoid. People are more than the sum of their body parts, and the present organ donation rules try to respect both patients involved.

KELLY BENTHEM,  
Colorado Springs, Colorado

One alternative to organ donation that was not mentioned is body donation. Organ donation is an excellent way to give meaning to one's death by giving hope to someone else. However, without skilled

physicians to transplant the organs, they are somewhat useless. An anatomical, or whole body, donation provides cadavers to medical schools that students can use to become the trained and skilled doctors required to make use of organ donations.

J. P., via e-mail

## Word Power

The article states that the U.S. Marine Corps motto, *semper fidelis*, is Latin for *always loyal*. In truth, it means *always faithful*. Please don't upset my Marines. Semper fi.

STEPHEN KANIA, Toledo, Ohio

## Thank You for Bringing Us Together

My 13-year-old son and I usually respond with "Yay!" when the next issue of *Reader's Digest* comes in the mail. I don't know any other magazine that a mother and son can both love and share. It has given us great topics of conversation during this stage of his life. Having conversations with teens can be challenging. I am so thankful we have *RD* to bring us closer, even though he usually reads the jokes first.

HEATHER HITCHCOCK,  
Oxford, Mississippi

**Send letters** to [letters@rd.com](mailto:letters@rd.com) or Letters, Reader's Digest, PO Box 6100, Harlan, Iowa 51593-1600. Include your full name, address, e-mail, and daytime phone number. We may edit letters and use them in all print and electronic media. **Contribute** Send us your 100-word true stories, jokes, and funny quotes, and if we publish one in a print edition of *Reader's Digest*, we'll pay you \$100. To submit your 100-word stories, visit [rd.com/stories](http://rd.com/stories). To submit humor items, visit [rd.com/submit](http://rd.com/submit), or write to us at Jokes, 44 South Broadway, 7th Floor, White Plains, NY 10601. Please include your full name and address in your entry. We regret that we cannot acknowledge or return unsolicited work. **Requests for permission** to reprint any material from *Reader's Digest* should be sent to [magrights@rd.com](mailto:magrights@rd.com). **Do Business** Subscriptions, renewals, gifts, address changes, payments, account information, and inquiries: Visit [rd.com/help](http://rd.com/help), call 877-732-4438, or write to us at Reader's Digest, PO Box 6095, Harlan, Iowa 51593-1595.





# EVERYDAY

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# HEROES



Farmer Jenny Brown  
gives abandoned animals new life

## Giving Creatures Comfort

BY JULIANA LABIANCA

 **SHORTLY AFTER** doctors diagnosed ten-year-old Jenny Brown with bone cancer, they had to amputate her right leg below the knee to save her life. Facing a year of chemotherapy after the surgery, Jenny begged her mother for a kitten. The orange calico Jenny named Boogie rarely left her side, licking tears from her cheeks after hospital visits and curling up in her lap as she adjusted to life with a prosthetic leg.

“My relationship with Boogie showed me that animals think, feel,

and suffer as much as we do,” says Jenny, now 44.

In 1994, Jenny graduated from Columbia College Chicago with a concentration in film and video, and began a career in television and documentary production, eventually working for ABC, PBS, and the Discovery Channel. On the side, she volunteered as a videographer for animal rights groups, and in 2002, she shot undercover footage of gruesome animal mistreatment at several Texas farm animal stockyards. ➡

“

*“In a loving environment, you begin to see the animals’ personalities,” says Jenny.*



“After seeing that, I knew I needed to help animals,” says Jenny.

A year later, she gave up her film career to work as an animal caregiver at Farm Sanctuary in Watkins Glen, New York.

“Farm animals are typically very timid,” says Jenny. “But in a loving environment, you begin to see their personalities.”

Jenny learned the ropes of farm life and, with her fiancé, Doug Abel, a film editor, opened the Woodstock Farm Sanctuary, a nonprofit organization dedicated to rescuing and rehabilitating farm animals, on a 22-acre property they bought in the rolling hills of Woodstock, New York, the next year.

Her earliest tenants were six hens rescued from an Ohio egg factory. The sanctuary’s first goat, Olivia, had been abandoned in a backyard after her owner’s house burned down. When Jenny rescued a calf she named Dylan, Olivia quickly became his caretaker. “The animals form serious bonds with the creatures around them,” says Jenny.

In August 2007, she received a call from Animal Care and Control of NYC about a small goat it had found hobbling around Prospect Park. Jenny guessed it had run away from one of the city’s slaughterhouses. The goat’s legs were severely injured, probably from being bound together with wire, and its mouth was covered in sores.

Jenny and her team brought the goat, which they named Albie, to the sanctuary, but they soon realized that Albie’s left front leg was injured beyond repair. After a veterinarian amputated the leg, Jenny asked Erik Tomkins, the doctor who makes Jenny’s prostheses, to fashion a leg for Albie. To date, seven of the sanctuary’s animals have received prosthetic limbs or braces. “On most farms, animals with these ailments would be immediately killed,” says Jenny.

The Woodstock Farm Sanctuary team gives tours of the farm from April to October and solicits volunteers and donations through [woodstockfarmsanctuary.org](http://woodstockfarmsanctuary.org). The website describes the backstory and personality of each of the more than 350 animals living at the farm, from Andy the pig to Picasso the chicken.

Last September, Jenny and Doug moved the sanctuary to a 150-acre farm in High Falls, New York, which has a commercially equipped kitchen and a dining hall in addition to several lodges, a barn, and other buildings. The new space has allowed their team of 17, including five full-time animal caretakers and a shelter director, to host vegan cooking classes and a kids’ camp.

“People love spending time with the animals. It’s therapy for them,” says Jenny. “We have a 2,000-pound steer who loves to cuddle. There’s a magic that happens here.”



# Rescue in The Rapids

BY ALYSSA JUNG

ON A BREEZY Saturday in April 2014, former police officer Kevin O'Connor and his son, Ryan, were standing in a park near the Fox River in Geneva, Illinois. As Kevin gazed at the river, he caught sight of several people on the bank motioning toward the water. When he looked in that direction, he noticed a bright red kayak swirling in the turbulent water at the base of the Geneva Dam, 300 feet away.

Kevin assumed the kayaker had jumped out of the boat. "Then I heard sirens," says Kevin, now 42. "That's when I realized somebody was in trouble."

He couldn't see anyone in the river, but he sped toward the bank and splashed into the freezing water. About 150 feet from shore, he spied an object bobbing downriver. "I thought it was a life jacket," he says. "When I caught up to it, I realized it was attached to a person."

Now in water up to his neck, Kevin grabbed the man, who was floating on his back unconscious, under both armpits and held his head above the surface. Kevin struck the man's chest again and again. After five hits, the



*Kevin O'Connor with son Ryan, 13*

man coughed up water and began mumbling incoherently. Battling the current, Kevin sidestepped his way toward the shoreline, repeatedly digging his shoes into the river's rocky bottom. When he reached the bank, someone jumped into the river and helped Kevin lift the 200-pound kayaker over a six-foot brick retaining wall to waiting medics, who whisked him away in an ambulance. The man recovered, but a friend who was kayaking with him died after being trapped underwater near the dam.

Kevin pulled himself up to sit on the shore beside Ryan, who had followed his father's path down the river. "When I caught my breath, I realized I saved someone's life," Kevin says.

In December 2015, Kevin received an award from the Carnegie Hero Fund Commission. "Lots of recipients lost their lives [saving someone]," he says. "Being put in the same category is very humbling." **R**

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# VOICES & VIEWS

Department of Wit

## Fast Track To a Dad Bod

BY DAVID TATE  
FROM MCSWEENEY'S



DAVID TATE  
*is a regular contributor to McSweeney's Internet Tendency. He has been working on his dad bod for nine years.*

**DAY 1:** Eat a burrito at your steady job during your lunch break.

**DAY 2:** Have a kid punch you in the groin to wake you up.

**DAY 3:** Look up how much college tuition will cost, then multiply it by the number of kids you have. Then, instead of crying, eat a late-night burrito.

**DAY 4:** Do one push-up, breathe heavily, and then open a bag of Wild Berry Skittles.

**DAY 5:** Buy a gym membership. When they give you a tour, take a good look around—this is the last time you will see it all.

**DAY 6:** Look at yourself in the mirror while recalling that how you look has zero to do with your chances of getting lucky today and that this is true every day forever after. ➔



**DAY 7:** Carry a child for the entire zoo trip in your left arm, even after you can no longer feel it.

**DAY 8:** Get four hours' sleep, and allow your body to confuse being tired with hunger and eat two burritos.

**DAY 9:** Chase a balloon across the parking lot of a Toys“R”Us at a “death struggle” level of intensity. Return it to the birthday girl, and wait until she smiles at you and says, “Thank you, Daddy,” before you throw up in the bushes.

**DAY 10:** Remember that time you were good at sports? Man, wasn't that so great?

**DAY 11:** Start running but immediately injure your entire body, and then take a year off.

**DAY 12:** Lower your testosterone level a bit by losing another negotiation with a two-year-old.

**DAY 13:** Reward yourself with a milk shake for waking up today.

**DAY 14:** Play basketball with the grade-school kids in your neighborhood. Spend the time in the hospital catching up on your sleep.

**DAY 15:** Let the stress of your current financial burden allow you to feel each individual hair turning white.

**DAY 16:** Take your blood pressure pill, but only after stressing a bit about having to take a blood pressure pill.



***Start running.  
Immediately  
injure your  
entire body,  
and then take  
a year off.***

**DAY 17:** Eat some Oven Baked Cheetos. If you don't have any on hand, get married, and they will appear where your regular Cheetos used to be.

**DAY 18:** Squat down to wipe up vomit; raise up with your back.

**DAY 19:** Whenever you see a pull-up bar, grab it and pretend you are about to knock out some pull-ups. Wonder quietly what doing a single pull-up feels like.

**DAY 20:** Go to the pool and confidently take off your shirt and swim a couple of laps. Put your shirt back on and quietly dry-heave in the car.

**DAY 21:** Show off your new dad bod to your wife by first flagging her down on Facebook. Ignore her eye roll and laughter—she isn't in touch with how attracted to you she is right now.



# WHAT BAD KNEE?

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Catching up on my resolutions  
to live more generously

# Spring Cleaning For the Soul

PHOTOGRAPH BY ALI BLUMENTHAL

[www.apadana-ielts.com](http://www.apadana-ielts.com)

**BY GINA BARRECA**

FROM THE BOOK "IF YOU LEAN IN, WILL MEN JUST LOOK DOWN YOUR BLOUSE?"

**NO. 1.** I will stop purchasing objects from flea markets, antiques fairs, and online dealers in a thinly disguised quest for my long-lost and occasionally misspent youth. I will remind myself that buying a nearly empty bottle containing six whiffs of Evening in Paris cologne will not conjure up my robust aunts who wore it or miraculously manifest their soft, padded shoulders against which I fell into a dreamless sleep on Sunday afternoons. I will remind myself that possessing the midnight blue, silver-capped bottle will merely force me to regret spending more money on an empty vessel than they, in their frugality and wisdom, would have spent for a full one. In my life, not only do such items evoke my own mortality, but they also need dusting. Plus, the more ridiculous of them make me recall vividly the phrase that my beloved aunts uttered on a daily basis: "Gina, for a smart girl, you're not very bright."

**NO. 2.** I will stop hiding things to keep them safe because the one person from whom these valuable items remain hidden is me—I can never remember where I put

something after I stash it away for safekeeping. I once hid a favorite necklace so effectively that I ended up begging every friend and family member to tear apart my closets, bookcases, and drawers to find it. My student Krissy lit candles to get the attention of St. Anthony, and with everybody's help, including Krissy's pal Tony, I found the necklace. Now I keep it someplace that's easy for me to locate—around my neck.

**NO. 3.** I will stop collecting old grievances as if they were old perfume bottles or Hummel figurines. I will get over being indignant, and I will shrug off being huffy. Impatience takes too much time, unfunny

bitterness ruins the flavor of life, and resentment gives me lines that make my mouth go down at the edges, which is not a good look. I need this bad mojo even less than I need another empty bottle of Evening in Paris.

**NO. 4.** I will never say "please" before I have said "thank you." (Unless it's something like passing the salt. I mean, I'm not crazy. I can say "Please pass the



**GINA BARRECA**  
is a professor of English at the University of Connecticut and a columnist with the *Tribune News Service*.

salt” without having to thank every d—n person for every d—n thing.)

**NO. 5.** I will swear less.

**NO. 6.** I will remember to send greeting cards by mail to friends and loved ones so that I might celebrate their birthdays, anniversaries, and happy occasions in a timely fashion rather than relying exclusively on Facebook. This way, I will be able to acknowledge the happiest days of their lives before it is too late and without involving Mark Zuckerberg.

**NO. 7.** While we’re on the mailing business, I will also write thank-you notes by hand, and I will encourage any young people I know to do the same. I will communicate my understanding that a card’s embossed “Thank You!” on the front does not mitigate the need to expand upon that sentiment in detail within the body of the text.

**NO. 8.** I will put my money where my mouth is and write checks to charitable organizations whose work I know and respect. If we have the privilege, we should choose to write a check to a shelter or a local arts organization, for example, rather than buy another pair of

shoes (or—you got it—another tchotchke). Yes, donating time makes a difference, but so does donating \$30, if you can afford it.

**NO. 9.** I will count my blessings whenever I am in the doldrums, count to ten when I am quarrelsome, and count on

my friends when I need a laugh.

**NO. 10.** I will encourage in myself and in others a ferocious hunger for learning and an unquenchable need to be generous. I will celebrate whenever possible, reassure whenever necessary, and prevail even if it means being called “bossy.” **R**

“  
*I will count to ten when I am quarrelsome and count on my friends when I need a laugh.*

EXCERPTED FROM “IF YOU LEAN IN, WILL MEN JUST LOOK DOWN YOUR BLOUSE?” BY GINA BARRECA, COPYRIGHT © 2016 BY GINA BARRECA, REPRINTED BY PERMISSION OF ST. MARTIN’S PRESS, LLC.



## TEN TIMES FAST

According to a 2013 MIT study, the hardest tongue twister in the English language is: “pad kid poured curd pulled cod.”

Source: bostonmag.com

# Your True Stories

IN 100 WORDS

## THE GOOD DOCTOR

**T**oto was a white dog with a small red tongue, and his stuffing was red as well. When his seams began to come apart beneath his knitted collar, it looked to my six-year-old eyes as though he were bleeding. That night, my father left for his shift in the emergency room with Toto wrapped in a blanket. The next day, Dad showed me the X-rays and Polaroid photographs of the surgery. Beneath the bandage on Toto's neck was a clean row of stitches. I still have the injury report! I love you, Dad.

DANICA HELFIN, *Tifton, Georgia*

## A SMALL FORTUNE

**W**hile walking across an open, grassy field, I became excited as my hand swooped toward the ground like an eagle attacking its prey. I picked up half of a \$5 bill. I continued to walk around looking for the other half but thought to myself it would be impossible to find it



on such a windy day. As I lifted my head, I spotted the other half of the bill tangled in crabgrass. Somehow, finding two halves of a ripped \$5 bill felt better than working for a twenty.

RON FLEMING,  
*Fort Drum, New York*

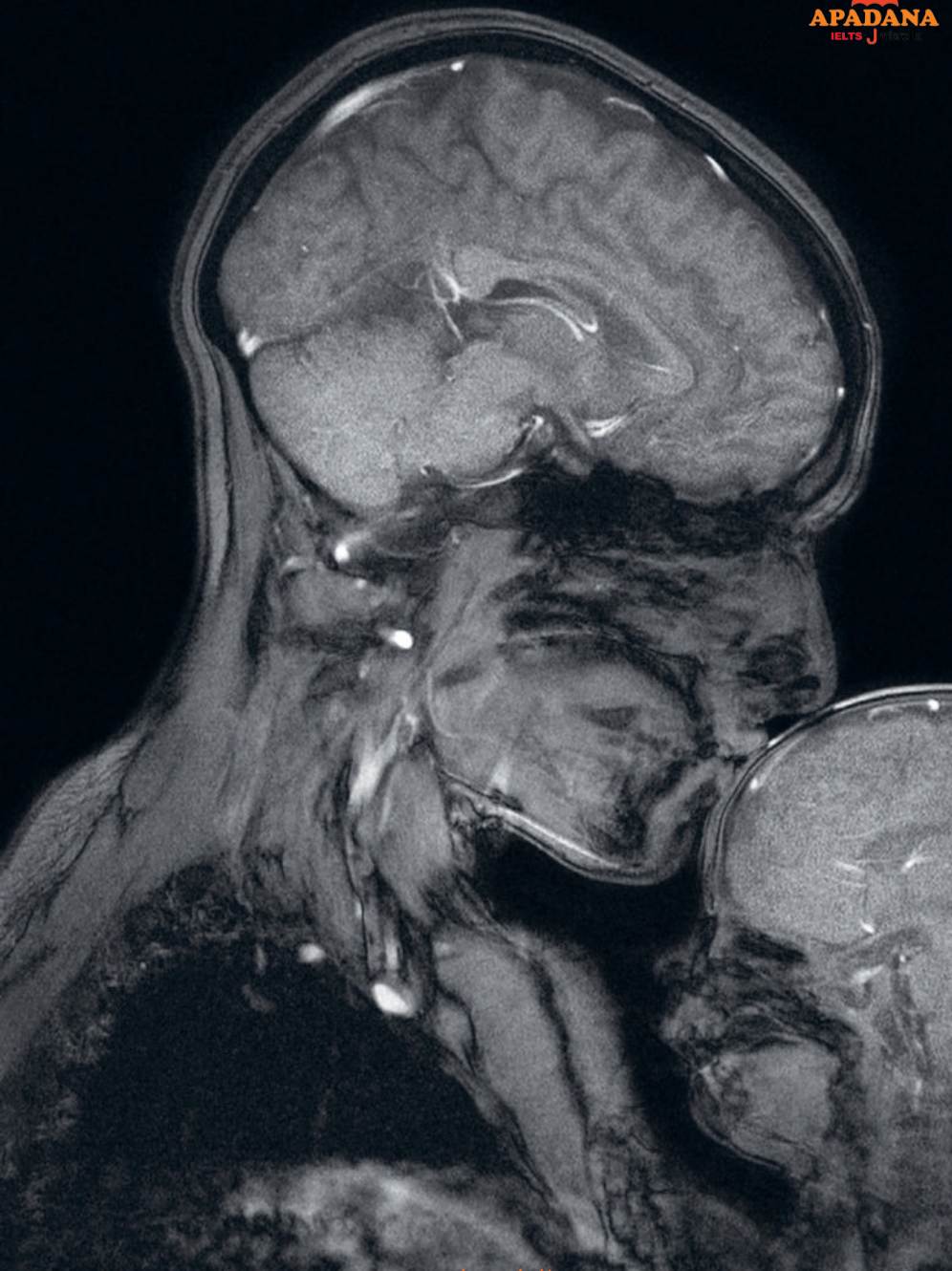
## SWEET SLEEP

**D**on't let her sleep in your bed." That's what I heard over and over after my daughter was born. So I didn't, unless she was sick. Now my baby is almost six, and every night, after we read and sing songs and turn off the light, I lie down with her before she falls asleep. We whisper to each other, and I watch her eyelids start to flutter. I smell her hair and kiss her forehead. And I wish I had done this every night.

SUZANNE CIFARELLI, *Albany, New York*

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# PHOTO

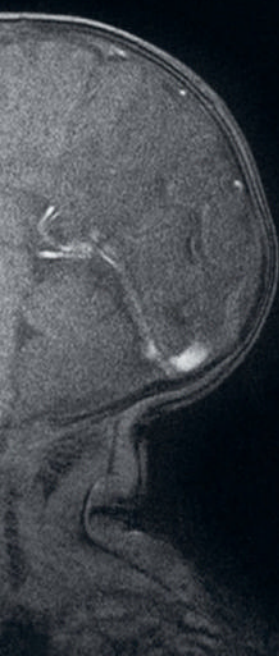
## OF LASTING INTEREST

### Tunnel of Love

A baby drifts to sleep in the arms of his mother. She kisses his forehead. The intimate scenario is caught inside a 3T magnetic resonance imaging scanner. Rebecca Saxe, the mother, is an MIT neuroscientist who specializes in scanning children's brain activity. She brought her two-month-old son Percy into the MRI tube for another purpose, though: because a side-by-side scan of a mother and child had never been taken. The best of 50 scans taken over two days (and after months of preparation) is an old image made new, Saxe says. "The two figures, with their clothes and hair and faces invisible ... could be any human mother and child, at any time or place in history."

**PHOTOGRAPH FROM THE DEPARTMENT OF BRAIN AND COGNITIVE SCIENCES AT MIT**

REBECCA SAXE AND ATSUSHI TAKAHASHI/COURTESY ATHINOULA A. MARTINOS IMAGING CENTER AT THE MCGOVERN INSTITUTE FOR BRAIN RESEARCH, MIT



# Points to Ponder

I ALWAYS SAY to people, if they're feeling depressed, go take a road trip and see what's actually happening ... In every street sign there is poetry and history.

**GILLIAN WELCH,**  
*musician, in the Guardian*

WE ALL BENEFIT from hearing everybody's stories. It makes our world better. It includes more voices ... It makes life worth living, you know what I mean? I'm not interested in living in a bubble where I'm only entertaining people just like me, or I'm only singing to my own versions of myself. I love myself, but I think you can do better.

**SAMANTHA BEE,**  
*comedian, in Mother Jones*

I KEEP ALL THE CLOTHES I wear on TV in my office on a little hanging rack. My girlfriend calls it all the colors of the German rainbow. Grays, blacks, a slightly greenish gray ... I'm not trying to accomplish anything in the way I look other than to be boring enough for people to hear me.

**RACHEL MADDOW,**  
*political commentator, in Lenny*

THE EFFECTS of a likability fixation are more sweeping than we realize. People like, and buy, the familiar. So a world driven by "like" doesn't stray too far from comfort zones. Confrontation and dissent and iconoclasm don't belong ... This is not a place for Stravinskys or Philip Larkins; it's certainly not one for Frida Kahlo, who would be trolled for her [looks].

**ANNE KINGSTON,**  
*culture writer, in Maclean's*



## WITTY WISDOM

It is useless to hold a person to anything he says while he's in love, drunk, or running for office.

**SHIRLEY MACLAINE, actress**

If you're gonna write a 300-word Instagram description, go ahead and throw a murder confession in there. Nobody will ever know.

**@IAMCHRISSCOTT, writer**

If you think I'm overdramatic, just remember that Candy Crush calls itself a saga.

**RANDI LAWSON, comedian**



Boxing is like stand-up. Getting hit in boxing really made me feel stronger as a stand-up because it's like having your worst fears happen to you ... You got hit, and it hurt, but you're OK.

**AMY SCHUMER,**  
*comedian*, in *Esquire*

**EATING PRIMARILY** for health is too much like marrying for money. In other words, it's not completely crazy, but unless a meal or a relationship commences with *yum*, I don't see it going anywhere.

**ROY BLOUNT JR.,**  
*humorist and writer*,  
from his book *Save Room for Pie*

**I DON'T BELIEVE** in closure. What does it really mean? Does it mean the closing of a door, the locking up of memories, the refusal to allow a flow of consciousness that may involve some measure of grief?

**DIANE REHM,**  
*radio broadcaster*,  
in her book *On My Own*

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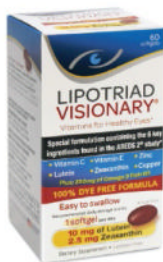
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Does a photogenic macaque own the rights to its image?

## The Case Of the Monkey Selfie

BY VICKI GLEBOCKI

IN 2011, BRITISH wildlife photographer David Slater traveled to the Tangkoko Reserve on the island of Sulawesi in Indonesia. After following a troop of about 25 endangered crested black macaque monkeys in the jungle, Slater set up his camera on a tripod. The monkeys approached it, fascinated by their reflections in the lens. Eventually, they began playing with the camera and took actual photos of themselves. One monkey in particular took many self-portraits, some of which appeared with a July 2011 *Daily Mail* article about Slater's

interaction with the monkeys. One of the "selfies" became the cover of a book of Slater's work, *Wildlife Personalities*, which was published in 2014 by Blurb, Inc., in San Francisco. The book identifies Slater as the copyright owner of the selfies.

In September 2015, the foundation for the People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA) filed a complaint in the U.S. District Court in the Northern District of California naming the monkey it calls Naruto as the plaintiff. Through his "friends" at PETA, including a primatologist named Antje Engelhardt, Naruto ➡➡



was suing the photographer and the publishing company Blurb for copyright infringement: “The Monkey Selfies resulted from a series of purposeful and voluntary actions by Naruto, unaided by Slater, resulting in original works of authorship ... by Naruto.”

“If a human had taken a photo with Slater’s camera, that person would own the copyright to the photos,” says Jeff Kerr, general counsel for PETA. “Naruto should be treated no differently.”

The attorney for Slater and Blurb, Andrew Dhuey, filed a motion to dismiss in November 2015. “A monkey, an animal-rights organization, and a primatologist walk into federal court ...,” he wrote. “What seems



One of the selfies


like a setup for a punch line is really happening.” Dhuey cited a 2004 case in which the courts had to decide whether whales, porpoises, and dolphins could sue the U.S. Navy un-

der the Endangered Species Act for tissue damage they’d received from sonar devices used by the Navy. The Ninth Circuit ruled that they could not. As Dhuey wrote in his motion: “[U]nless Congress has plainly stated that animals have standing to sue, the federal courts will not read any legislation to confer statutory standing to animals.”

*Does the copyright of a famous selfie lawfully belong to the monkey? You be the judge.*



## THE VERDICT

In December 2015, PETA argued that the case presents an issue of “first impression,” meaning that a question about the interpretation of a law was being asked for the first time: “Does the Copyright Act permit Plaintiff’s ownership of the works or give him standing to assert claims under that statute?” But in January, U.S. District Judge William Orrick ruled in favor of the defense to dismiss the case: “While Congress and the president can extend protection of law to animals, there is no indication that they did so in the Copyright Act.” In other words, Naruto can’t own the copyright to the photos he took. “We believe Congress has been clear in the Copyright Act,” says Kerr. “The Act speaks in broad terms ... to allow courts to fill in case-specific decisions like this one.” PETA has the option to appeal. 

Agree? Disagree? Sound off at [rd.com/judge](http://rd.com/judge).

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# Life

IN THESE UNITED STATES



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**MY COLLECTION** of vintage kitchen utensils includes one whose intended purpose was always a mystery. It looks like a cross between a metal slotted spoon and a spatula, so I use it as both. When not in use, it is prominently displayed in a decorative ceramic utensil caddy in my kitchen.

The mystery of the spoon/spatula was recently solved when I found

one in its original packaging at a rummage sale.

It's a pooper-scooper.

PATTY BROZO, *Green Valley, Arizona*

## WHAT MY GIRLFRIEND THOUGHT, FIRST FOUR DATES:

1. Nice shirt.
2. Wow. A second nice shirt.
3. OK, first shirt again.
4. He has two shirts.

🐦 @RISTOLABLE

**SIGN IN NEW AGEY** Woodstock, New York: “If you lived here, you’d be om by now.”

ALAN ZOLDAN, *Wesley Hills, New York*

**POLICE IN TAMPA, FLORIDA**, raided and shut down a weekly \$4-a-round mah-jongg game played by four elderly women. The *Week* asked its readers for titles of crime movies that could be made about this bust:

- *Golden Girls, Interrupted*
- *The Lavender Hair Mob*
- *Indicting Miss Daisy*
- *No Country for Old Women*
- *The Social Security Network*

**DRAMA:** a word boring people use to describe fun people.

🐦@JENNYANDTEETS (JENNY MOLLEN)

**I WAS AT THE** customer-service desk, returning a pair of jeans that was too tight.

“Was anything wrong with them?” the clerk asked.

“Yes,” I said. “They hurt my feelings.”

A. P., *via e-mail*

**THE PARTY’S HOST** paid me a great compliment. “You are a good-looking woman,” he said. “Honest—I’ve had only one beer.”

My glow was only slightly dimmed when my husband interjected, “Imagine how great she’ll look after two.”

ROSEMARY TOMY, *Tucson, Arizona*

Got a funny story about friends or family? It could be worth \$100. For details, see page 7 or go to [rd.com/submit](http://rd.com/submit).

## TEE IT UP

NBC golf commentator David Feherty has a way with words.

**On the swing of golfer Jim Furyk:**  
“It looks like an octopus falling out of a tree.”

**On beautiful weather:**  
“The only way to ruin a day like this would be to play golf during it.”

**On watching Tiger Woods hit a great shot:**  
“Never has my flabber been so completely gasted.”

**On his caddie:**  
“Not only was Rodney never on the same page as me; he was seldom in the same book and often not even in the same library.”



1. Undereath blue chair. 2. Undereath sofa pillows. 3. On back of sofa.



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# ART *of* LIVING

## Why Cats Don't Forgive

... And other fascinating facts about closure and moving on

BY MELISSA DAHL FROM NEW YORK



*Grumpy Cat  
has never  
forgotten the  
time you  
shooed him off  
the couch.*



**1 THE SCIENTIFIC LITERATURE ON FORGIVENESS CAME TO THE FORE ONLY IN 1989.** But some researchers suggest we're seeing more public figures seeking forgiveness because we're becoming more aware of the importance of achieving reconciliation.

**2 CATS NEVER FORGIVE.** Primates, like bonobos, mountain gorillas, and chimps, often follow confrontations with friendly behavior like embracing or kissing. Similar behavior has been observed in nonprimates like goats and hyenas; the only species that has so far failed to show outward signs of reconciliation is the domestic cat.

**3 NO OFFENSE IS UNFORGIVABLE.** "I have never found a particular injustice in the world that I don't know of at least one person who has forgiven those who have perpetrated it," says Robert Enright, a psychologist who pioneered the study of forgiveness.

**4 BUT BEWARE OF BETRAYAL.** According to a study from 2010, the most common type of unforgiven offense is betrayal, including affairs, deceit, broken promises, and divulged secrets.

**5 THERE ARE DIFFERENT KINDS OF FORGIVENESS.** Decisional forgiveness is a sincere decision to change the way you intend to behave toward someone who has wronged you, even though you may still feel negatively toward the person. Emotional forgiveness is a change in the

way you feel toward this person—resentment giving way to positive emotions like empathy, sympathy, compassion, and even love.

“  
*Repeatedly asking forgiveness will eventually extract it from others.*  
 ”

**6 YOUNG KIDS FORGIVE EASILY.** Unlike ten- and 11-year olds, seven- and eight-year-olds in one study didn't need an apology

to forgive; they tended to judge offenders who had apologized and those who hadn't as equally worthy.

**7 CARRYING A GRUDGE LITERALLY WEIGHS YOU DOWN.** Researchers at Erasmus University in the Netherlands asked people to write about a time when they either gave or withheld forgiveness. The human guinea pigs were then asked to jump as high as they could, five times, without bending their knees. The forgivers jumped highest, about 11.8 inches on average, while the grudge holders jumped 8.5 inches—a huge difference and a startling illustration of how forgiveness can actually unburden you.

**8 EXTROVERTS NEED FORGIVENESS.** Outgoing types are more proactive in seeking out forgiveness than introverts are (and also, notably, quicker to forgive others). Introverts tend to be initially more concerned with forgiving themselves than making amends with a person they've offended.

**9 FOR A HEALTHIER HEART, BE MORE FORGIVING.** When people are reminded of grudges, their heart rate and blood pressure can increase. Forgiveness, on the other hand, has been linked to better heart health. Plus, you'll sleep better when you let bygones be just that. But keep in mind you can't fake it: Researchers believe that the health benefits associated directly with forgiving apply only to emotional, not decisional, forgiveness (see No. 5).

**10 FORGIVENESS CAN BACKFIRE.** Couples who described themselves as more forgiving also reported experiencing more psychological and physical aggression over the first four years of marriage. In some cases, it's believed, forgiveness may keep the offending people from changing their bad behavior.

**11 DON'T UNDERESTIMATE THE WORDS I'M SORRY.** Behavioral economist Dan Ariely has found that repeatedly asking forgiveness will eventually extract it from others—

even if you don't really mean it and even if the person you've wronged knows you don't really mean it.

**12 RELIGIOUS PEOPLE ARE MORE FORGIVING THAN THE NONRELIGIOUS.** This is perhaps not surprising; most religions teach forgiveness, says Everett Worthington, a psychologist at Virginia Commonwealth University. But, interestingly, a 2013 study he coauthored found that people who consider themselves spiritual are more likely to practice self-forgiveness than people who called themselves religious.

**13 THE AMISH ARE VERY FORGIVING.** A decade ago, after a shooting at an Amish schoolhouse claimed five young lives, outsiders were stunned when the community responded with immediate forgiveness. But sociologist Donald B. Kraybill found that from an early age, the Amish practice forgiveness exercises. They'd been preparing to forgive this huge injustice their whole lives.

**14 A FIVE-STEP PROCESS TO FORGIVENESS.** 1. Admit you've been treated unjustly. 2. Respond with anger. 3. Work on seeing the person who harmed you as not solely defined by this offense. 4. Come to understand that the pain may not ever dissipate completely. 5. Find meaning in your suffering, perhaps by helping others. **R**

These staples may seem similar, but subtle differences could affect how you use them

# What's the Difference?

BY KELSEY KLOSS

## ■ YAMS VS. SWEET POTATOES

True yams have rough, scaly skin and often purple or red flesh, can grow up to five feet, and are starchier than sweet potatoes. But they're difficult to find in American supermarkets. There, you'll actually discover that one variety of sweet potatoes has been labeled *yams*. The USDA allows orange-fleshed sweet potatoes to be called yams to differentiate them from white-fleshed sweet potatoes.

## ■ PASTA VS. NOODLES

Pasta, made from a stiff dough of durum wheat and water, has a stronger, more elastic texture than do noodles and is usually dressed with sauce. Noodles, on the other hand, are typically made from a soft paste of eggs, flour, and salt and served in a broth.



### ■ CLUB SODA VS. SELTZER

Both drinks are plain water with carbon dioxide added for carbonation, but club soda includes additives such as table salt, potassium sulfate, and sodium bicarbonate, which give it a slightly saltier taste than seltzer.

### ■ JAM VS. JELLY

Jam has a chunkier texture than jelly does. To make jam, fruit is chopped, crushed, and cooked with sugar. Jelly is made from fruit juice that is boiled with sugar, rather than crushed fruit pieces, and sets to have a firm, gel-like texture.

### ■ CHICKPEAS VS. GARBANZO BEANS

Use these interchangeably? You're correct. Chickpea and garbanzo refer to the same fibrous legume with a bit of chestnut flavor. The Spanish term is *garbanzo*, and the English name is *chickpea*.

### ■ COLD BREW VS. ICED COFFEE

In recent years, cold brew has become increasingly popular, but it is a centuries-old Japanese brewing technique. Brewers steep coffee grounds in room-temperature water for up to a day. The essence is then diluted with water and served chilled. Iced coffee, on the other hand, is brewed hot with half the usual amount of water and poured over ice for dilution. Because cold brew is made with cooler water, it often has a mellower, less acidic taste than iced coffee.

### ■ NECTARINES VS. PEACHES

They are nearly genetically identical and can be used interchangeably in cooking. The main difference: Peaches have a dominant variant of a gene that gives them soft, fuzzy skin. Nectarines express a recessive gene that results in fuzz-free, smooth skin; they also tend to be smaller and firmer than peaches. Both grow in white and yellow varieties.

### ■ BANANAS VS. PLANTAINS

Native to India and the Caribbean, plantains are members of the banana family but are ready to use when green. Bananas are high in sugar; plantains are high in starch. This makes plantains better for cooking (they're often treated like vegetables) than for an on-the-go snack.

### ■ ICE CREAM VS. GELATO

Made with milk, cream, sugar, and often egg yolks to create rich custard, ice cream is churned quickly to introduce air, making it light and fluffy. Gelato begins with a similar base but has a higher ratio of milk and less cream and eggs (if any) than ice cream. It is churned slower and with less air, making it denser, and is served at a warmer temperature. This gives the Italian dessert a silkier texture, and its low fat ratio lends it a stronger flavor than ice cream. **R**

Sources: britannica.com, extension.psu.edu, seriouseats.com, thekitchn.com, johnson-center.org, cookthink.com, clearspring.co.uk, fooducate.com, todayifoundout.com, today.com, theguardian.com, popsugar.com, buzzfeed.com, foodnetwork.com, foodrepublic.com

# The Smartest Way to Make A Sandwich

BY KELSEY KLOSS

**1 BREAD** Toast bread for a sturdier base. To cut in half, aim the knife straight across rather than diagonally. A straight cut provides thicker, stronger corners that make it difficult for fillings to slip out.

**2 LETTUCE AND AVOCADO** Dry lettuce with a paper towel to protect the bread from getting soggy. Place at the top for crispiness. Put avocado here so it's not squished in the middle.

**3 CHEESE** Layer cheese near the top: It protects the bread from the moist middle layer of vegetables and reinforces the sandwich's structure.

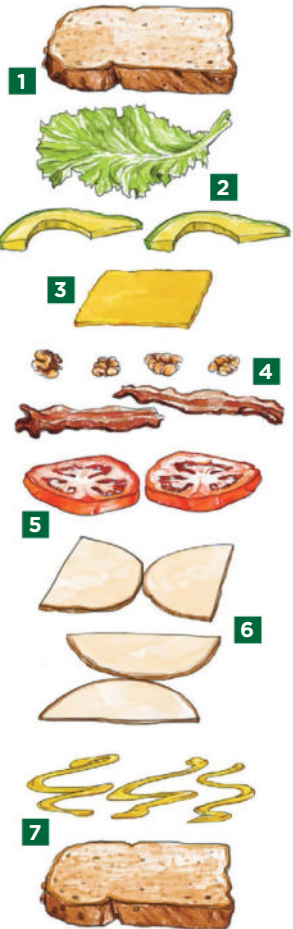
**4 CRUNCHY LAYER** Place crispy ingredients such as bacon, walnuts, or celery in the center. This layer offers mouthwatering texture and stays in place surrounded by pillowy layers.

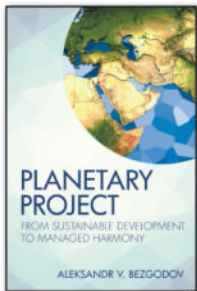
**5 VEGETABLES** Salt tomato and cucumber slices and place on a paper towel for ten minutes. This drains excess moisture, increasing flavor.

**6 MEAT** Deli meat is round, and sandwich bread is usually square. To avoid bare sandwich corners, cut each circle in half. Align the four straight edges with the bread edges.

**7 CONDIMENTS** Add spreads (e.g., mayonnaise, mustard, or pesto) to both pieces of bread for flavor and just the right amount of moisture. **R**

Sources: Clarisa Penzini, executive chef of the Sandwich Shop in New York City; firstweeasteast.com; epicurious.com; today.com; mensjournal.com; cooksinfo.com; seriouseats.com





## Planetary Project

*From Sustainable Development to  
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**Aleksandr V. Bezgodov**

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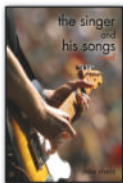
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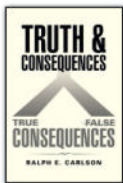
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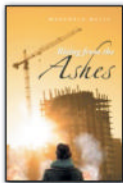
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What I took from Mom—and what she kept from me

# The Thief in Me

BY EILEEN STUKANE FROM HUFFINGTON POST

I REACH INTO the closet to unfasten the Belleek porcelain flower pinned to the lapel of a red blazer. From a navy blue blazer, I remove a dark green ceramic feather pin. I detach a sparkling rhinestone from the collar of a black jacket.

Every coat and jacket that belonged to my mother was adorned with complementary jewelry. I am breaking up time-honored pairings

because I have to, because she died one recent evening when she sat down to rest and never got up. So it's perfectly understandable that I unpin and put in my pocket the porcelain flower she bought on our trip to Ireland. It's understandable, but I still feel like a thief, stealing bits and pieces of my mother's life.

For each of the 22 Valentine's Days after my father's death, my mother

displayed a satin-tufted valentine heart that he'd sent her from boot camp when he was a young World War II Marine in Parris Island, South Carolina. My sister Ellen and I found this precious item in the top drawer of her dresser. Finally, Ellen said she would take it.

Like thieves, we were going through her intimate items, keeping what we thought should be rescued and letting the rest go. Hold on to the gold and silver jewelry. Toss the old hair rollers.

The thief in me doesn't want the outfits she wore to my and my siblings' weddings. Instead, I take the wooden powder box, also a present from my father on Parris Island. As a child, I sat at the foot of her bed and watched her powder-puff her face. The puff is gone, but the box retains its distinctive fragrance.

Her pink glass bud vase will sit on my kitchen counter holding a single fresh blossom every day. I can nod to it as I toast my mother in one of the crystal patterned stemware glasses that she brought to her lips when sipping manhattans. Accomplices in crime, Ellen and I pull out desk drawers, open cabinets, and reach into closet shelves, conducting a raid on her two-bedroom home.

The treasures before me include surprises, like a lock of hair from my first haircut; my daughter's laminated poem to her grandmother; the saved cards and notes from friends and family, including a love note to Dad

in a Father's Day card she sent him. Ah, love notes.

We'd had a small argument, my mother and I, over her decision to destroy the correspondence between her and my father during World War II when he served in the South Pacific. They wrote to each other daily for three years, without missing a day. I once asked my mother, "Where are your letters, yours and Dad's?"

"Oh, I destroyed them," she said as she casually poured herself a cup of tea. "How could you do that?" I asked. "I would have loved to have had the sense of what you and Dad were like in your 20s, during a world war. There was heritage in those letters, and you destroyed them?"

My mother looked at me directly and unapologetically said, "They were not your letters. They were mine. I decided that they were for me alone, no one else, so I destroyed them." Gone! Just like that! What was in them? I wondered. Probably something romantic that would pale in comparison to today's standards of sexiness. She shouldn't have done what she did.

And yet, as I rifle through her clothes, books, papers, photos, the many possessions of a long life, I can see her point. She had a right to keep something of herself from the rest of us. Even though I wish she hadn't, she possessed and protected her very private feelings in her own inner safe. Take everything else, she said in effect, but not those. **R**

# Squeak, Squeak!

How to stop the cracks and creaks that drive you mad

BY KELSEY KLOSS



■ **WOOD FLOOR** Seasonal changes may cause wood boards to swell and shrink, resulting in small gaps. When the boards rub against one another, they squeak. To stop the noisy friction, sprinkle baby powder over the squeak and sweep it into the board seams with a dry paintbrush. If the seams are tight, use a thin plastic card. Reapply after mopping the floor.

■ **BED FRAME** Noisy bed disturbing your sweet z's? Remove the mattress and use a wrench to tighten any loose bed-frame bolts. If you still detect a squeak, line each slat of the bed frame with mismatched socks, old T-shirts, or other scrap materials before replacing the mattress. This will create a buffer between the mattress and frame and eliminate friction points.

■ **SHOES** A great grand entrance is never squeaky. To quiet athletic shoes, lift the inner soles of the shoes and sprinkle cornstarch underneath. The cornstarch will prevent moisture, which can cause friction. Always wear socks—moisture from bare feet may also result in squeaks.

■ **CEILING FAN** Shut the fan off, and carefully clean the top of the blades. Even a little dust can

affect the fan's balance and make the motor squeak. If any mounting screws are loose, tighten them with a screwdriver. For fans with light fixtures, check that each lightbulb is screwed in securely. If there is still a squeak, consider a basic fan-balancing kit, available at most hardware stores, or call a handyman.

■ **DOORS** To replenish lubrication for squeaky doors, spray metal hinges with WD-40 or white lithium grease (found at most home stores).

■ **DRAWERS** Rub a plain paraffin or beeswax candle along the tracks. If you don't have a candle, fold wax paper and rub it along the tracks—the coating will also quell the squeak. **R**

Sources: J. B. Sassano, president of Mr. Handyman International, a professional handyman company; thisoldhouse.com; wonderhowto.com; wisegeek.org; doityourself.com; bhg.com

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# The Best Place to ...

BY KELSEY KLOSS

## 1 KEEP A WIRELESS ROUTER: On a bookshelf

Situate it on a desk or a tall shelf in a central location in your house. A router works best when elevated, since it sends signals in all directions. The worst place to have a router: in the kitchen. Metal appliances can disrupt its signal.

## 2 SOLVE A PROBLEM: In the shower

Monotonous tasks, like lathering up, may allow the mind to wander and boost creative thinking. In a *Psycho-*

*logical Science* study, participants who completed a simple task between solving creative problems performed better on the problems than those who completed difficult tasks or no task at all.

## 3 ADD A HOUSEPLANT: To the bathroom

Plants are a staple of your living space, but you probably haven't thought to stow one next to, say, your shower. They can filter indoor air, helpful for small spaces like bathrooms. Ferns are a low-maintenance

PROP STYLIST: NICOLE HEFFRON FOR BERNSTEIN & ANDRIULLI



choice: For a shady bathroom, try a Boston fern. In sunnier bathrooms, place a Kimberly Queen fern. A classic NASA study that identified air-purifying plants found both types of ferns filter air of chemicals like formaldehyde (found in tile grout and paper towels; can cause nose and throat irritation) and xylene (found in household cleaners and perfumes; can cause dizziness and headache).

#### **4 STASH EMERGENCY CASH:** **In the kids' room**

Scope out a subtle place in a young child's room, where burglars are less likely to look for valuable items. Tuck emergency cash in an envelope inside a stuffed animal that's no longer played with—say, a teddy bear on a high shelf.

#### **5 DO A MORNING WORKOUT:** **In the yard**

If you can, get outside to break an

a.m. sweat. A study in the journal *PLOS One* found that exposure to morning sunlight is linked to a lower body mass index (BMI). Researchers say just 20 to 30 minutes of morning brightness is enough to affect BMI; they hypothesize that sun exposure helps regulate metabolism. Bonus of taking your workout outdoors: Your burpees won't knock over a lamp.

#### **6 HIDE DURING AN** **EARTHQUAKE:**

##### **Under a desk or a kitchen table**

If your area is prone to earthquakes, don't count on the door frame.

Though standing underneath one is age-old advice, in many modern homes, the door frame is no stronger than any other part of the house and probably won't protect you from the most likely cause of injury: flying items. **R**

Sources: npr.org, lifehacker.com, cnet.com, alphr.com, huffingtonpost.com, nachi.org, usnews.com, wayoutofworld.com, earthquakecountry.org, apartmenttherapy.com



### GARDEN PATH SENTENCES

Each of the following is a complete sentence—but it might take you a few reads to realize it.

Can you understand them all?


- The man who hunts ducks out on weekends.
- The old man the boat.
- The complex houses married and single soldiers and their families.



The secret to better health could be as simple as an early dinnertime

# You Are When You Eat

BY EMILY LABER-WARREN

 JACKIE RODRIGUEZ gained 70 pounds after her first child was born. “I was very unhappy, but I stayed like that for two years,” she says. Then, when her daughter was two, she dropped all the weight with practically no effort. “I wasn’t using any diet pills, fat burners, or shakes ... nothing,” she recalls.

The transformation had nothing to do with what Rodriguez ate. Rather, it began when she started a new job that shook up her daily routine. Working in the office of a DJ company near her apartment in the Bronx in New York City, she started her shift at 5:30 p.m. Instead of sharing dinner with her husband at nine, when he got home from his job as a superintendent, she ate alone at five, before she dropped her child with a sitter and went to work.

Within nine months, she’d slimmed from a size 16 to a size 2. She felt like

a movie star who seems to lose baby weight effortlessly. “You don’t think that could happen to you,” she says.

Night work often leads to weight gain, so Rodriguez’s story might seem to be a quirk of her particular physique. But unlike many such workers, who labor in the wee hours or work rotating shifts, Rodriguez clocked out by 11 p.m. and got a regular night’s sleep. Perhaps even more important, she didn’t eat at work or when she got home—just showered and went to bed.

Her main adjustment was moving dinnertime almost four hours earlier. That single, simple change seems to have triggered Rodriguez’s dramatic weight loss—and emerging scientific evidence may explain why.

## New Danger of Night Eating

In labs around the world, researchers are developing a completely new

understanding of how metabolism works. It seems that our bodies are primed to process food most efficiently when it's eaten during daylight hours. "We now recognize that our biology responds differently to calories consumed at different times of day," says Harvard neuroscientist Frank Scheer, PhD. That means a habit as innocuous as eating at night, compared with eating calorically equivalent meals during the day, may cause people to gain weight. "That late-night bowl of ice cream may all go toward your waistline," says UCLA neuroscientist Christopher Colwell, PhD, author of *Circadian Medicine*.

Just look at Satchidananda Panda's mice. A molecular biologist at the Salk Institute for Biological Studies in La Jolla, California, Panda is a leading expert on how the timing of food intake affects health. His team has found that mice that eat only during their active hours (the equivalent of daytime for humans) are drastically healthier and thinner than mice that eat the same amount of food scattered over 24 hours.

Encouragingly, when unhealthy, snack-around-the-clock mice are put on a strict schedule that allows them to eat only during their daytime, their diabetes and fatty liver disease improve and their cholesterol levels

and inflammation markers diminish. "It's likely we can reduce the severity [of disease] just by changing when people eat," Panda says.

## The Food-Driven Clock

To understand the connection between meal timing and health, you have to go way, way back in history. The dramatic daily shifts between light and darkness on our planet because of sunrise and sunset have been incorporated into the biology of nearly every living thing. Our internal organs function differently during the day from how



they do at night, in patterns known as circadian rhythms. Over the past few years, researchers have discovered that unnatural light exposure—such as staying up late amid the glare of a digital screen—disrupts these rhythms in ways that over time can lead to a host of illnesses.

But now experts have begun to suspect a second circadian clock in the body—organized around food, not light. Scientists still have much to learn about this food-based body clock, but evidence suggests that round-the-clock snacking may pose as much of a danger to our health as artificial light at night. Night eating has been implicated as a factor in diabetes, heart disease, cancer, and learning and memory problems.

Throughout evolution, daytime has been for nourishment and nighttime for fasting, and our organs have evolved accordingly. Digestive enzymes and hormones ebb and flow in a predictable pattern over the course of 24 hours, enabling the liver, intestines, and other digestive organs to function together as one well-oiled machine. Our modern world of late-night takeout and snack-filled pantries threatens to upend this calibrating role of food.

“When you eat all the time, your insulin and glucose levels are elevated all the time,” says Ruth Patterson, PhD, a nutrition expert and epidemiologist at the University of California, San Diego.

Insulin promotes growth—its constant presence in the bloodstream may give precancerous cells a deadly boost. In new research on breast cancer survivors, Patterson and her colleagues found that breast cancer recurrences were less likely when women abstained from food for at least 13 hours at night.

### Gut Rest: How It Works

Compared with other kinds of diets, night fasting is simple. In a small pilot study, Patterson’s team told women to eat dinner as early as 6 p.m. and definitely by 8 p.m. and not to eat again until eight in the morning, for at least 12 hours of “gut rest.” “[Fasting] they instantly understood,” Patterson says. “They didn’t have to change what they ate or how they cooked. They would say, ‘If I give my husband a salad for dinner, that doesn’t always fly.’ But when they just said, ‘I don’t ever eat after eight o’clock,’ the men were like, ‘Whoa, tough girl!’ They got respect.”

The new research suggests that breakfast really is the most important meal of the day—but we need to embrace its original meaning: breaking a fast. The first meal of the day is most beneficial only if it comes after 12 to 14 hours of not eating or drinking, says Panda.

In addition to fasting at night, it’s beneficial to eat your main meal earlier in the day. In a 2013 study, Harvard’s Frank Scheer



Frequent diarrhea?  
Stomach pain? Bloating?  
Could it be

# EPI?

Exocrine Pancreatic  
Insufficiency

# DON'T KEEP A LID ON IT.

**EPI, or Exocrine Pancreatic Insufficiency**, is a digestive condition that may be embarrassing to talk about because of its symptoms. These may include ONE or more of the following:

- **Frequent diarrhea**
- **Unexplained weight loss**
- **Oily, foul-smelling stools that float**
- **Gas and bloating**
- **Stomach pain**

But here's a great reason to talk about your symptoms: **EPI is manageable**. To learn more, go to [coulditbeEPI.com](http://coulditbeEPI.com). While you're there, take the symptom quiz, print it out, and bring it to your doctor. It's an easy way to start the conversation about ALL your symptoms.

**DON'T KEEP  
A LID ON IT.**  
[coulditbeEPI.com](http://coulditbeEPI.com)

and Marta Garaulet of the University of Murcia in Spain analyzed 420 dieters at weight-loss clinics. Participants ate the same number of calories and were equally active, but those who had their main meal before 3 p.m. lost significantly more weight than those who ate later. “To find such big differences in weight loss with just a slight difference in meal timing is quite remarkable,” says Scheer.

To many, the science of meal timing is nothing but common sense.

Craig Weingard, a compliance manager at a financial firm, is an acolyte of a bodybuilding expert who for years has included nightly fasts among his recommendations. For the longest time, Weingard resisted. It seemed too painful to go to bed hungry. Finally, he tried it. “In a flash, my whole body changed. I literally can see it the next day when I look at my stomach if I didn’t eat after six,” he says. “Anything you eat after 6:15 p.m. becomes part of you.” **R**



## USE THE FOOD CLOCK TO LOSE WEIGHT

■ **Fast for at least half of each day.** Try not to eat for at least a 12-hour span daily. Ideally your fast would begin after the evening meal (from 6 to 8 p.m.) and extend until breakfast (8 a.m.).

■ **Eat breakfast like a king and dinner like a pauper.** A 2013 Israeli study put overweight and obese women into two groups. Both had the same number of calories, but one ate a large breakfast, a medium lunch, and a small dinner; the other had a small breakfast,

a medium lunch, and a large dinner. The large-breakfast group lost more weight and showed a stronger improvement in metabolic health metrics.

■ **Forgo late-night noshing.** A 2015 study found that an evening meal raises people’s blood sugar levels 17 percent more than does an identical meal eaten in the morning. Related research found that the number of calories people burn digesting food in the first two hours after a meal drops

by half if they eat the meal in the evening versus the morning.

■ **Consume only water during your fast.** Anything else will start your body clock. Put off that morning coffee until after your 12-hour window.

■ **Adjust to your natural rhythms.** Early birds might want to eat supper at 6 p.m. and fast until 6 a.m. or later. For night owls, it might be easier to have dinner at 9 p.m. and fast until at least 9 a.m.



# ~~Un~~Certainty



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# IS YOUR BLADDER ALWAYS CALLING THE SHOTS?

Ask your doctor about Myrbetriq® (mirabegron), the first and only overactive bladder (OAB) treatment in its class. It's approved by the FDA to treat OAB with symptoms of:



Urgency



Frequency



Leakage

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

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

Visit **Myrbetriq.com** for doctor discussion tips. Ask your doctor if Myrbetriq may be right for you, and see if you can get your first prescription at no cost.\*

\*Subject to eligibility. Restrictions may apply.

## USE OF MYRBETRIQ (meer-BEH-trick)

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

## IMPORTANT SAFETY INFORMATION

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

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

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

**Please see additional Important Safety Information on next page.**



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## IMPORTANT SAFETY INFORMATION (continued)

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

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

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

**You are encouraged to report negative side effects of prescription drugs to the FDA. Visit [www.fda.gov/medwatch](http://www.fda.gov/medwatch) or call 1-800-FDA-1088.**

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

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

**Brief Summary based on FDA-approved patient labeling**

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

**What is Myrbetriq (meer-BEH-trick)?**

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

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

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

**Who should not use Myrbetriq?**

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

**What is overactive bladder?**

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

**What should I tell my doctor before taking Myrbetriq?**

Before you take Myrbetriq, tell your doctor if you:

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

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

Tell your doctor if you take:

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

**How should I take Myrbetriq?**

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

**What are the possible side effects of Myrbetriq?**

Myrbetriq may cause serious side effects including:

- **increased blood pressure.** Myrbetriq may cause your blood pressure to increase or make your blood pressure worse if you

have a history of high blood pressure. It is recommended that your doctor check your blood pressure while you are taking Myrbetriq.

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

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

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

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

These are not all the possible side effects of Myrbetriq.

For more information, ask your doctor or pharmacist.

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

**How should I store Myrbetriq?**

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

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

**General information about the safe and effective use of Myrbetriq**

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

**Where can I go for more information?**

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

For more information, visit [www.Myrbetriq.com](http://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).

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**Myrbetriq<sup>®</sup>**  
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# Two's Company at the Doctor's Office

BY RAVI PARIKH, MD  
FROM THE ATLANTIC

**IT WAS LIKE A BAD SITCOM:** Everything Leo said ... his wife, Francine, said the opposite. He went to the gym, he told me; not since Bush was president, she countered. They'd been going on like this since they entered the exam room. Today was my first time seeing them—and one of my first times seeing two patients at once, a growing trend in medicine.

As I was wrapping up, Francine stopped me: "Can we talk about his vision?" Leo's eyesight was getting worse, particularly at night. He

denied it—but when I probed further, he admitted that his vision wasn't what it used to be. Several times, Francine added, he'd been in near accidents while driving at night.

The three of us worked out a plan where Leo could drive during the day for short distances and Francine would drive him at night. While Leo had some objections, Francine promised that he would follow it.

After both of them left that day, I couldn't help thinking that Francine may have saved her husband's life.

The American Academy of Family Physicians estimates that around 10 percent of family doctors now give patients the option to share their appointments with people who have similar health issues. For doctors, the benefits are obvious: Shared visits are efficient, allowing us to see more patients in a day. And they can help patients adopt healthy behaviors in a way that one-on-one visits don't.

A person's smoking, diet, and exercise habits can depend in large part on the behavior of his or her friends, family, or coworkers. In a landmark study in the *New England Journal of Medicine* in 2008, Yale sociologist Nicholas Christakis found that when a spouse, friend, or sibling quit smoking, a person's chances of smoking decreased 67 percent, 36 percent, and 25 percent, respectively. Other research has found similar positive social-network effects for things like medication adherence.

Much of health, in other words, is shared. For some conditions, like a cold or a sprained ankle, medical advice is simple; social support won't make much of a difference. But managing conditions like diabetes and high blood pressure can be overwhelming, and stress makes patients less likely to carry out doctors' instructions. Being around others may help. Group doctor visits may improve the ability of patients with heart failure or diabetes to retain medical information by 10 to

30 percent, research has shown. A study presented at the 2014 American College of Cardiology annual meeting found that being married dramatically lowered one's chance of heart disease, possibly because a spouse helped reinforce medication adherence and exercise habits.

Despite these outcomes, it's easy to see why shared medical appointments aren't more popular. They go against two principles that have defined medicine: the patient-doctor relationship and confidentiality.

Sometimes, though, that relationship isn't enough.

One of my patients has been seeing me for months in an effort to quit smoking. Her previous doctor prescribed nicotine patches, gum, pills; nothing worked. The reason: Her brother had moved in, and smoking was the one thing they did together. Unless she could get her brother to stop, she told me, it would be impossible for her to quit. I told her to bring her brother to her next visit—and I hope to persuade them to find a new shared activity. As Leo and Francine have taught me, having someone else in the room can make all the difference. **R**



**RAVI PARIKH, MD**, is a resident at Brigham and Women's Hospital and a former editor at *medgadget.com*. Follow him on Twitter: @ravi\_b\_parikh.



NEWS FROM THE

# World of Medicine

BY KELSEY KLOSS

## Contact Lens Detects Glaucoma Progression

A leading cause of blindness is glaucoma, an eye disease that damages the optic nerve. Columbia University researchers tested a new lens on 40 patients, who wore it for 24 hours at home. As eye pressure fluctuates, it generates an electrical signal that the lens records. Patients with steeper and longer spikes tended to have faster glaucoma progression. This data could help clinicians better monitor

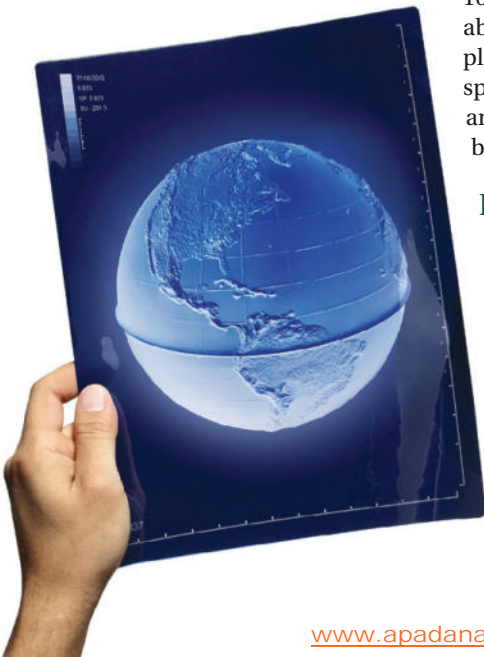
the disease. The lens, called the Sensimed Triggerfish, is approved in Europe but is awaiting FDA approval.

## How Your Address Affects Your Heart

A high-rise abode could raise the risk of cardiac arrest death, according to an analysis of 8,216 emergency 911 calls in Canada. People were more likely to survive if they lived below the third floor than above it. Only two of 216 people above the 16th floor survived, and nobody above the 25th floor lived. One simple reason: Elevators delay first responders. Training tenants in CPR and using automated external defibrillators (AEDs) could save lives.

## Explosion in Lyme Disease Ticks

According to the *Journal of Medical Entomology*, ticks that carry Lyme disease doubled their range in less than two decades and are now in nearly half of all U.S. counties, including those in new areas like Kentucky and Ohio. Lyme disease can cause flu-like symptoms and, if left untreated, neurological symptoms



PHOTOGRAPH BY THE VOORHES

such as numbness. Prevent bites by avoiding thick vegetation, using repellent, and bathing after hiking.

## Good News for Coffee Drinkers

In the past, caffeine and irregular heartbeats have been thought to be linked, but a new study found no association. Researchers recorded premature contractions, or early beats, in 1,388 older adults. There were no significant differences in heart disturbances among participants, regardless of how much caffeine they regularly consumed—but more research is needed to determine long-term effects of excessive caffeine.

## Myth of the Midlife Crisis

A decades-long study of high school and college seniors published in *Developmental Psychology* found that happiness usually rises starting at 18 and continues well into the 30s and that people tend to be happier in their early 40s (midlife) than at 18. Happiness was higher in years of marriage and lower in years of unemployment. This challenges the previous thought that happiness declines from the teens to the 40s, sometimes culminating in a midlife crisis.

## Colon Cancer Is Striking at Younger Ages

A study of nearly 260,000 colon cancer patients found that about 15 percent were younger than 50.

Younger patients were more likely to be found to have advanced cancer, since routine screening doesn't begin until 50. Colon cancer rates are rising as much as 2 percent yearly in younger adults (but declining in older adults). Physical inactivity and obesity are possible causes. People with risk factors (such as a family history) should discuss starting screening before 50 with a doctor.

## Spoonful of Medicine Could Be Wrong Dose

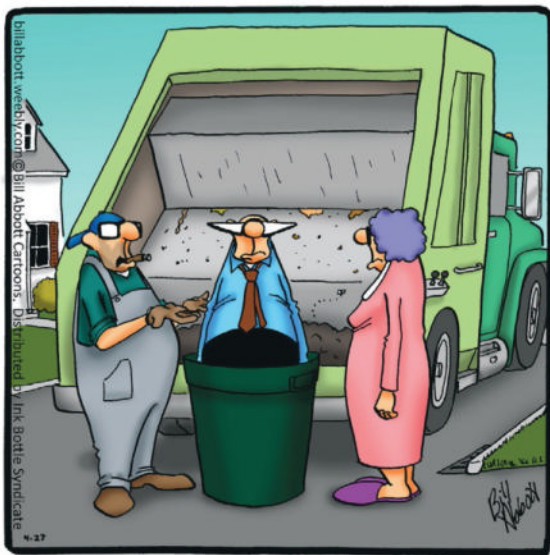
When Cornell University researchers asked 195 participants to pour one teaspoon of nighttime flu medicine into kitchen spoons of different sizes, they poured an average of 8 percent too little (using midsize spoons) or 12 percent too much (using large spoons). Repeat dosing mistakes may make medicine ineffective or even dangerous. Always use a measuring cap, a dropper, or a dosing spoon.

## Instagram Makes Food Tastier

Baffled by diners who take snapshots of their food? They may experience a tastier meal than you. In a series of three studies published in the *Journal of Consumer Marketing*, researchers found photographing food before eating it results in more favorable evaluations of the meal. A momentary delay allows your senses to be engaged in the food as the anticipation builds. **R**

ALL IN

# A Day's Work



*"Look, lady, I told you before; anything over 100 pounds you gotta take to the dump yourself."*

**CLIENT:** Please remove the unnecessary circle at the end of the sentence.

**Me:** You mean ... the period?

**Client:** I don't care what you designers call it; it is unsightly. Delete it.

Source: clientsfromhell.net

**THE CLOSEST A PERSON** ever comes to perfection is when he fills out a job application form.

*Businessman* **STANLEY RANDALL**

**AT AN ART GALLERY,** a woman and her ten-year-old son were having a tough time choosing between one of my paintings and another artist's work. They finally went with mine.

"I guess you decided you prefer an autumn scene to a floral," I said.

"No," said the boy. "Your painting's wider, so it'll cover three holes in our wall."

*Betty Tenney, Sterling Heights, Michigan*

**IT'S AMAZING HOW** a person can compliment and insult you at the same time. Recently, when I greeted my coworker, she said, "You look so gorgeous, I didn't recognize you."

ELAINE SCHYVE, *Cohocton, New York*

**WHILE I WAS OUT TO LUNCH**, my coworker answered my phone and told the caller that I would be back in 20 minutes. The woman asked, "Is that 20 minutes Central Standard Time?"

JAMIE HINDMAN, *Lewisville, Texas*

**A SALESMAN** talked my uncle into buying 10,000 personalized pens for his business with the promise that he would be eligible to win a 32-foot yacht. A born gambler, my uncle agreed.

Well, he won, and a few weeks after the pens arrived, his prize showed up: a 12-inch plastic yacht with 32 plastic feet glued to the bottom.

EDDIE EDWARDS, *Ripley, Tennessee*

### OVERHEARD AT OUR DINER:

**Girl:** Ick! Why does this sandwich have bacon on it?

**Friend:** You ordered a BLT.

**Girl:** Whaaaaa? I thought the *B* stood for *bread*.

ALYSSA HOOVER, *Dillsburg, Pennsylvania*

**AS A SPEECH THERAPIST**, I was working with a preschooler on body-part identification and the *k* sound. To that end, I had him use Play-Doh to make a sculpture of me.

"Is that my neck?" I asked, trying to get him to repeat the word.

"No, that's your chin," he said.

He added more Play-Doh. "Is *that* my neck?" I asked.

"No, that's your other chin."

ILENE SMITH, *Milan, Michigan*

---

Anything funny happen to you at work lately? It could be worth \$100. For details, see page 7 or go to [rd.com/submit](http://rd.com/submit).

## WHAT WORK E-MAILS REALLY MEAN

I have a question.	=	I have 18 questions.
I'll look into it.	=	I've already forgotten about it.
I tried my best.	=	I did the bare minimum.
Happy to discuss further.	=	Don't ask me about this again.
No worries.	=	You really messed up this time.
Take care.	=	This is the last you'll ever hear from me.
Cheers!	=	I have no respect for you or myself!

Source: [thecooperreview.com](http://thecooperreview.com)

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## Your Body's Trying to Tell You

*Confession:* what I really need  
for better health, nutrition,  
sleep, pain relief, and more

BY TERESA DUMAIN





## BEHOLD MY POWERFUL MIND TRICKS

**I can think myself full.** If you're indulging in a milk shake and I think it's high in fat and calories, levels of my hunger hormone ghrelin will dip a lot lower—and leave me feeling more satisfied—than if I believe I'm sipping on a healthier shake, even if the two have the same calorie count, a study in the journal *Health Psychology* showed.

**I can reshape my brain through meditation.** According to MRI scans, the hippocampus—the part of the brain in charge of learning and memory—thickens after only a couple of months of mindful meditation. Brain-cell density also decreases in the amygdala (responsible for fear, anxiety, and stress). Those physical brain changes can alter your mood.

**I can raise my body temperature.** A group of Tibetan nuns can increase their core body temp to about 100 degrees F in subzero weather just by doing a specific type of meditation called g-tummo. Yes, that's a rare group, but scientists taught Western people a similar technique and found the subjects could raise their body temp. The breathing caused thermogenesis, a process of heat production. This could help people function better in frigid environments.

**I can add years to my life.** By keeping a positive attitude about aging and

continuing to feel useful and happy, I'll most likely live about seven extra years, according to Yale University surveys.

## THINK TWICE BEFORE YOU ...

**Drink diet soda.** Sip one can or more a day, and I could pack on three times more belly fat than if you hadn't (not exaggerating). Researchers in Texas did the testing and measuring: People who drank diet soda daily gained 3.2 inches over nine years; those who didn't have any gained only 0.8 inches (the occasional drinkers: 1.8 inches). Choosing diet over regular soda to save calories can backfire—a study showed people who tried that ended up consuming more calories from food throughout the day. Just stick to fizzy water, please.

**Look down at your phone.** Would you hang four bowling balls from my neck? Before you say that's a stupid question, consider this: Sixty pounds (or about the combined weight of those balls) is the same amount of force exerted when you tilt your head forward at about a 60-degree angle to text or e-mail from your smartphone. And you do that for up to four hours (hours!) a day. For the love and integrity of my cervical spine, raise that phone up to your sight line.

**Grab a sweater as soon as you feel chilly.** Suck it up for a little while. Researchers discovered that when I shiver from cold, it stimulates hormones that convert energy-storing

white fat into calorie-burning brown fat. Shivering for about ten to 15 minutes had similar hormonal effects as did an hour of moderate exercise.

**Skip flexibility exercises.** You make time for cardio and strength training, which I appreciate. But my joints need to be stretched, too, especially as I get older. Connective tissue within ligaments and tendons becomes more rigid and brittle with age, which means a restricted range of motion and decreased flexibility. Pilates and yoga are two good options, but even simple controlled stretches held for ten to 30 seconds can help keep me moving more easily.

**“Forget” to tell your doc about memory lapses.** Only about one quarter of adults 45 and older fess up when they’re having memory issues. But it’s so important to mention. Sometimes a drug or combination of meds leaves me feeling forgetful or confused. Anxiety or depression may also have that effect, as can a slow thyroid or a vitamin B-12 deficiency. These conditions are all completely treatable. And if by chance your memory symptoms are linked to dementia, an early diagnosis is crucial—it gives my mind a better chance of benefiting from treatment.

## IF I COULD ONLY EXPLAIN ...

### Why healthy people get cancer.

You probably know someone who followed all the “rules”—wore sunscreen, ate vegetables, didn’t smoke—and still got cancer. I wish I had a good reason, but the truth is that about two thirds of variation in cancer risk is explained by random gene mutations that drive tumor growth. Essentially, bad luck. However, that absolutely, positively does not exempt you from following the rules. While some risk factors may be out of your hands, many others are not.

“  
**I get it: Memory problems are frightening. But the truth is that most cases are completely treatable.**”

### How placebos work.

Taking a sugar pill can affect heart rate, alter brain activity, ease depression, and improve Parkinson’s symptoms—all real, physiological responses to an essentially fake treatment. An analysis of 84 chronic pain–drug trials found the placebo effect getting stronger. By 2013, patients receiving placebos experienced a 30 percent decrease in pain levels on average, compared with about 5 percent in 1990. Scientists are trying to figure out why you may respond well to a placebo but your friend doesn’t, what precisely happens in people’s bodies and brains when a placebo is taken, and the best ways to harness placebos’ power.



**How my gut affects my mood.** I'm home to up to 100 trillion microbes, most of which live in my gut. "Good" bacteria help me metabolize foods; "bad" bugs make me gassy and increase inflammation. Imbalances in my gut bacteria are linked to many diseases. The fuzzier connection is between gut bacteria and my brain. One suggestion is that gut bacteria produce mood-regulating serotonin and dopamine or other chemicals that affect anxiety and depression. Another possibility: Microbes activate my vagus nerve, the main line of communication between the gut and the brain. Scientists are hyperfocused on bacteria these days, so stay tuned.

### LET ME EXPLAIN WHY ...

**You turn down the car radio when you get lost.** My brain has a limited amount of cognitive resources. It isn't really designed to process too much at once. On a familiar route, I can listen to the radio and still pay attention to the road. But once I need to read street signs or scan for house numbers, the music becomes a distraction.

**Squinting helps me see more clearly.** Narrowing my eyes slightly changes their shape so only a limited amount of light can enter, which helps me focus.

**Chatting with a stranger makes me happy.** Connecting with another person, even briefly—like talking to the barista brewing your coffee or

a random seatmate on the train home from work—gives me a feeling of belonging and improves my mood.

**I swing my arms when I walk.** My arms are like pendulums that naturally sway as you move. I expend less energy when they do their thing and swing. Holding them still while you walk uses 12 percent more energy.

### WHAT MY EYE COLOR CAN REVEAL

**If you have dark eyes (brown)**

- Lower macular degeneration risk
- Lower melanoma risk
- More trustworthy

**If you have light eyes (blue, green)**

- More competitive
- Lower risk of vitiligo, an autoimmune disorder linked to blotchy skin
- More alcohol consumption

### HABITS I WISH YOU WOULD START

**Reading paperbacks.** Like, on actual paper. Scientists found that people who use e-readers had a much tougher time remembering story details compared with folks who read a printed version. Things like holding the book, turning the pages, and touching the paper may contribute to better mental reconstruction of the book's plot. Never mind that exposure to the blue light from an e-reader's glowing screen before bed

makes it harder for me to fall asleep and snooze soundly.

**Covering your mouth when you sneeze.** Yes, you learned that in kindergarten. But one out of every four people fails to cover his or her mouth when coughing or sneezing in public, according to one observation study. Even grosser: Less than 5 percent of people used tissues or coughed or sneezed into their elbows, as health experts recommend. And get this: Scientists just found out that an average human sneeze expels a high-velocity cloud that can contaminate an entire room in minutes. Gross.

**Strolling through the park.** Living in urban areas seems to put people at a higher risk for mood disorders compared with friends in more rural settings. Time in nature may quiet my brain's subgenual prefrontal cortex, which is active when you brood and is linked to mental disorders. Find a leafy, peaceful park or path to walk through, and you'll dwell less on negative thoughts, research shows.

**Doing intervals when you exercise.** High-intensity interval training (HIIT) is my favorite way to burn fat. It

alternates between very strenuous bursts of activity and less-intense recovery times. Danish researchers tested a formula called 10-20-30 on a group of recreational runners. They lowered their blood pressure and cholesterol and shaved time off their

5K runs in just seven weeks, despite cutting their total workout time in half. Try it: 30 seconds of gentle running, 20 seconds at a moderate pace, and then ten seconds of full-out effort—for a total of one minute. Do three chunks of five minutes (with a two-minute rest between each block), and you've done a spectacular cardiovascular workout in 20 minutes.

“  
**When you type slowly, you tap into a larger vocabulary than when you try to be a speed demon.**”

**Typing slowly.** It may improve your writing skills. Researchers found that essay writers who had to use one hand to type had a larger, more sophisticated vocabulary compared with two-handed typers. The theory: Slowing down gives me a chance to think about the words I want to use and express myself more eloquently. When your fingers fly across the keyboard, I can offer you only the first word that comes to mind.

## **PAY ATTENTION TO THESE MILESTONES**

**First period:** the sign that you've become a woman, said your mother,

grandmother, and nosy aunt. British researchers add that your age at this first “visit” may be linked to heart disease risk. A study of 1.2 million middle-aged women showed that those who had their first menstrual cycle at 13 had the lowest risk of heart problems; those who were ten and younger and 17 and older had the highest. Menstruation age may indicate something about overall metabolic health. Other studies have found links to risks for diabetes and low bone mass.

**First knee injury:** Even just one could raise the odds of posttraumatic arthritis. It doesn't take serious damage, either: A very common torn meniscus from a fall or a ruptured ACL can leave my knee unstable and result in faster wear and tear. Damage doesn't always lead to osteoarthritis (your age, weight, and genes all factor in), but an injured joint is about seven times more vulnerable than a healthy one.

**Last cigarette smoked:** Five short years after the day you quit, my risk of developing cancer of the mouth, throat, esophagus, and bladder is cut by a whopping half. Thank you.

**First fracture:** Get the bone treated, of course, but if you're 50 or older, ask for a bone density test (DXA scan) too. About 80 percent of people skip that second part, but don't. Osteoporosis

could be to blame for my broken bone, especially if the injury was not the result of major trauma, like a car accident. If my bone mass is low, you want to know now so you can take steps to slow its progression.

## THESE FOOD TRICKS MAKE ME HEALTHIER

**Mix your yogurt.** That watery stuff sitting on top is whey, and it's filled with protein, bone-strengthening calcium, vitamin D, and gut-friendly probiotics. When you pour it in the sink, I miss out.

**Nuke potatoes.** Microwaving or baking retains the most nutrients. If you peel and boil the spuds, you lose all the fiber in the skin and about two thirds of the vitamin C.

**Let chopped garlic rest.** When the clove is minced or crushed, an enzyme called alliinase is released, triggering the formation of disease-fighting compounds. Give it ten to 15 minutes. Cooking the garlic bits too soon can inactivate the enzyme.

**Squeeze lemon over spinach.** Those dark greens are a good source of iron, but for me to absorb plant forms of the mineral more easily, spinach needs to be paired with vitamin C (hence the shot of lemon).

**Slice your own pineapple.** I know it's more effort, but buying fresh-cut





versions at produce stands may short-change you a little on nutrients. After six days in the fridge, cubed pineapple loses 10 percent of its vitamin C and 25 percent of its carotenoids (antioxidants) when compared with whole fruit sliced the same day it's eaten, according to research.

## THESE HACKS MAKE ME HAPPY

### Tap your forehead: Curb a craving.

Weird? Yes. But researchers tested a few 30-second techniques to stop mindless eating. This one worked best at distracting obese study participants from their favorite foods, thus reducing cravings. Next time a chocolate doughnut is calling your name, place your finger on your forehead and tap away your desire.

**Color: Reduce stress.** There are lots of intricate coloring books made for adults now, though I'm sure you can snag your niece's too. Either way, coloring can zap away my anxiety. When I'm focused on something that's concrete and repetitive, it activates portions of my parietal lobe, the same

area of the brain connected to spirituality and one that tends to be active during meditation and prayer.

**Scowl: Win a negotiation.** In a tough bargaining situation (like when you walk away from a car salesman's "final" offer), putting your best angry face forward might get you a better deal than a poker face, researchers found. Why? It could give your threats more credibility.

### Ice your hand: Ease a toothache.

Rub a cube on the webbed spot between your thumb and index finger. Nerves there send cold signals to the brain, which may squash the pain signals from your tooth. This method reduced toothache pain as much as 50 percent compared with massaging the spot with no ice, Canadian scientists reported. **R**

Contributing experts: Joseph Borrelli, MD, orthopedic surgeon and chair of orthopedics for Texas Health Arlington Memorial Hospital; David Bucci, PhD, professor of psychological and brain sciences, Dartmouth College; Jeffrey Mogil, PhD, professor and E. P. Taylor Chair of Pain Studies at McGill University; Ben Michaelis, PhD, clinical psychologist and author of *Your Next Big Thing: Ten Small Steps to Get Moving and Get Happy*; Andrea J. Singer, MD, clinical director, National Osteoporosis Foundation



## EXTRA CHEESE

I have arrived for the positive-thinking workshop.  
The class is half empty.

 @MRNICKHARVEY

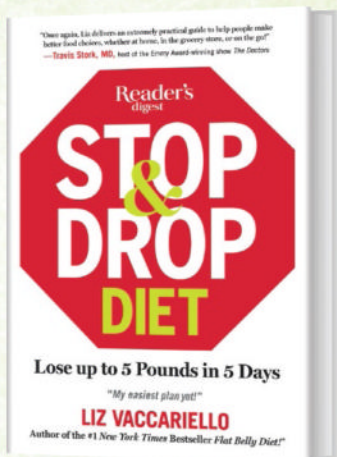
**NOTE:** Ads were removed from this edition. Please continue to page 72.

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Donna Lindskog

Donna Lindskog is an employee of *Reader's Digest*.

**Reader's**  
digest

# Laugh Lines

FOR YOUR VIEWING PLEASURE

Every *Scooby-Doo* episode would literally be two minutes long if the gang went to the mask store first and asked a few questions.

🐦@SCBCHBUM (ERICA)

If growing up in the '80s taught me one thing, it's that my friends and I should have found a treasure map by now.

🐦@LIZHACKETT

Luke Skywalker is my favorite hero that looks 100 percent prepared to figure skate at all times. 🐦@THENATEWOLF (NATHAN USHER)

"The end."  
—Quentin Tarantino starting a bedtime story

🐦@SAMGRITNER

*The Revenant* (2015).  
An epic tale of one man's desperate journey to do whatever it takes to finally win an Oscar.

🐦@BADBANANA (TIM SIEDELL)

Watch *The Walking Dead* with someone who's super into it so every time a zombie appears, you can pull the old, "Wait, who's this, now?"

🐦@KARENKILGARIFF



A H E R O

I N

T H E



An apartment in flames.  
Children missing.  
Jordan Sullivan gets the call.

# S M O K E

**BY N. R. KLEINFIELD**  
FROM THE *NEW YORK TIMES*



**A**sk a firefighter about his first fire, and details pour out. It was a chemistry lab of a school, a pizza parlor, a Laundromat. It was at 78th and York, in the ductwork of a Chinese restaurant. It was the top floor of a brownstone, backup man on the hose. The captain took a picture, rookie at his first fire, and it sits in a frame at home.

That's what Jordan Sullivan, a rookie firefighter, or probie, out of the Fire Academy in New York City had spent 96 days waiting for: his first fire. Sullivan had done easily a couple of hundred runs, almost always in the junior position on the truck, the one called the can man, who lugged a big fire extinguisher. He had even been to the scenes of fires but always in a supplementary role, after the blazes were under control.

But he had not had what firefighters regard as their true first fire. It's when their truck is the "first due"—the one first to arrive—and therefore they are the ones who go in first.

At 2:15 a.m. on Sunday, March 16, 2014, Sullivan finally got his chance. A resident reported smoke at an apartment building in a nearby Brooklyn neighborhood. On this run, Sullivan rode the truck that was the first due.

**S**ullivan is soft-spoken with alert eyes and an engaging smile. After wrestling in high school and a bit in college, he had wanted to be a wrestling coach. But soon after the 2001 attacks on the World

Trade Center, he decided he wanted to become a firefighter.

In 2002, he took the 85-question Fire Department entrance exam, receiving an 89. It was a good score, but it didn't place him high enough among the 17,850 people who took the test to qualify. And by the time the next test was offered, in 2007, he would be 29, too old by department age limits to apply.

But in July 2009, a federal judge ruled that the 1999 and 2002 exams had discriminated against black and Hispanic applicants. Under court-ordered reforms, promising black and Hispanic candidates not appointed from those tests could take a newly created one, regardless of their age, and would receive priority in being hired.

At the beginning of 2012, a full decade since Sullivan had had that first urge, he was among hundreds of black and Latino candidates invited to sit for the new exam. He was amazed and unabashedly grateful at this stroke of providence.

He passed the exam and a physical and was accepted as a priority hire, one of 76 who would emerge from the most diverse class in the

department's history. In July 2013, at 36, Jordan Sullivan, who thought he could never be a firefighter, entered the Fire Academy.

The fire truck rolled to a stop outside the Wyckoff Gardens housing project, a pallid building, 21 stories high, and to Sullivan, time seemed to accelerate. At the front door, a resident jerked his head upward and said, "It's on the fifth floor."

Everyone has a function in the choreography of firefighting. Three of the crew members made up the inside team that would find the fire for the engine and look for victims. It was led by Lt. John LaBarbera and included Firefighter John Crowley, the "iron man," who carried the tools to force open doors, and Sullivan, the can man.

Sullivan had a 2½-gallon water extinguisher slung over his shoulder and held a six-foot hook, a wooden stick with a spiked metal end for probing and ripping through walls. Strapped to his helmet were a chock and seven nails for propping open doors. He is five foot nine, 155 pounds. Swaddled in gear, he was 100 pounds heavier. The front of his helmet bore the "pumpkin patch," the orange emblem etched with PROB that advertised his novice standing.

The three men clomped up the

smudged stairwell, Sullivan at the rear. In a high-rise, one stairwell becomes the attack stairs that the hose and inside team advance through, while the other is for evacuation. On the list of shoulds and shouldn'ts: Always use the stairs on a fire up through the seventh floor. And take an elevator to only two stories below a fire, to avoid getting trapped above it.

Smoke was in the stairwell. Flight by flight, it thickened. On the fifth-floor landing, a man pressing his shirt to his face and pointing said, "It's down there." And a panicked woman, Gloria Meadows, 64, was screaming: "Oh, God; my babies are inside! Oh, God; my babies are inside!"

Meadows had escaped with two of her grandchildren, a one-year-old and a 14-year-old, but two others were inside, a five-month-old boy and an eight-year-old girl.

LaBarbera radioed to Mike Kehoe, another member of the firefighting team, to punch in a 10-75, code for a working fire.

The man at the stairwell steered them to the door, and the three firefighters knelt down. They normally fight fire and search buildings on their knees. Sometimes, they're on their stomachs. Down low, the heat is less intense, and the visibility is better.

“

**The dresser was on fire, flames licking the ceiling. Sullivan navigated through whorls of smoke.**

Curls of smoke spilled from beneath the door. LaBarbera tried the knob. It was unlocked. Black smoke pervaded the apartment. Crowley told Sullivan to check behind the front door. Stuff was wedged there, maybe clothing but not children. LaBarbera, trailed by Sullivan, went left; Crowley went right.

LaBarbera had a handheld thermal-imaging camera to help locate the fire, and all the firefighters had lights, but these were of limited help in the dense smoke.

Sullivan crawled catlike behind LaBarbera on the worn linoleum, close enough to touch his ankles but not to see him. Sullivan's left hand was on the wall, and he advanced as if fighting a wind in some macabre fun house maze. With his right hand, Sullivan waved his pole like a baton, searching. Don't lose the wall. Don't lose the wall.

New firefighters groping through a burning apartment have the sensation of an immense labyrinth. Then, afterward, once the smoke clears, they find there's nothing to it. The apartment felt vast to Sullivan. It measured less than 600 square feet.

He was still pumping with adrenaline. His oxygen bottle held what was estimated at 45 minutes of compressed air, but that would be if you were, say, weeding the garden. In its testing, the Fire Department has determined that a firefighter working a fire has on average 17½ minutes of

air. An anxious probie is apt to have far less—maybe ten minutes. In training, probies are lectured to regulate their breathing: Don't "suck your air," don't "blow through your bottle."

How does a probie on a first fire stay calm? Sullivan had learned tips like clenching teeth. It was hard. He was sucking air.

**T**he dresser in the bedroom was on fire, flames licking the ceiling. Crowley went left, using his left foot to stay in touch with the wall. Sullivan went right, his right hand grazing the wall, navigating through the whorls of smoke. Don't lose the wall.

Time ticked by. They had been inside a burning apartment for several minutes, the hose not on it yet. Firefighters were taught that an unhindered fire tends to double in size every 30 seconds. Where were the children? How long could they live?

Sullivan reached forward with his left hand, feeling something. The skinny leg of a piece of furniture. He groped higher. Slats. He knew what it was. A crib.

He stood up, reached inside, and gingerly fingered through what he took to be blankets and toys or who knows what; he couldn't see.

His light was clipped to his shoulder, and he leaned over, and it shone on something. It was white and felt squishy. He knew what that was too. It was a diaper.

As soon as he saw the diaper, then felt the softness of the body, he knew it was the baby. Sullivan scooped him up.

Your training tells you to stay calm. Convey information in clear, pithy phrases. He was not calm, not even close. When he felt the infant, he shouted, "Sir, I've got a baby!"

Crowley radioed a 10-45, signifying a victim was found. He could not help chuckling that even in these harried circumstances, Sullivan kept adorning everything with "sir," still the proper probie.

Cradling the limp child against his shoulder, Sullivan sped out of the apartment. In the hallway, he encountered Dale Ford, a firefighter from

Ladder 110, who told him, "Give me the baby and go back inside." He handed over the infant and returned to the apartment to hunt for the other child.

The rest happened quickly. The engine men stretched the hose into the apartment and, on their knees, sprayed the fire with water at 240 gallons a minute, knocking it down.

Sullivan entered the second bedroom. Oddly, discovering the baby had calmed him down. A minute and a half had passed since he had found the baby. He heard someone bark a 10-45. Bryan Kelly, a firefighter from Squad 1, had located the eight-year-old

*"My adrenaline was pumping," says Sullivan. "I was anxious to test myself."*



girl splayed unconscious on the floor.

Inside the first bedroom, the engine men heard a muted mewling sound, perhaps a children's toy. Beneath the bed frame was a tiny dog, alive and soaked.

In the next ten minutes, the engine men had the fire tamed. New firefighters arrived to perform a secondary search, a fresh set of eyes. By now, the number of responding firefighters had swollen to 60.

The others from Ladder 105 had their masks off. LaBarbera noticed Sullivan still wore his and told him it was fine to remove it. He had air. The low-air alarm never sounded.

The smoke dissipated, and the darkness lifted. The drenched and charred apartment looked as if it had been in a huge storm.

Downstairs, as the moon crept over the sky, the firefighters debriefed Battalion Chief Matthew Ferris, recapitulating the facts. He congratulated Sullivan, who was still going nonstop with the deferential "sirs." The chief told him, "Calm down; no need for *sirs* here."

At that moment, the children, snug in hospital beds, were being treated. They would recuperate and be released. (The dog survived too.)

It would be another four days before some of the firefighters would visit the family at a local school. Sullivan would hold the baby again.

After the debriefing, the firefighters hoisted themselves onto the rig, smoke and water on their clothes. In the solace of the firehouse, they peeled off their sopping gear and washed up. Sullivan was tired.

He knew that he remained a green firefighter who had much to learn. Replaying the night in his mind, he felt he could have been more alert. He had been hazy at times about who was where. But he felt baptized. And he felt elated and humbled by the staggering thing that had happened inside that building, how he had held a child and given him back his life.

Among the injunctions that probies live under is they are not to use their cell phones at work. This once, Sullivan violated the rule. At somewhere past four, in the witching hours of the morning, he called his father.

"I found a baby," he said. "I can't talk now. I'm at the firehouse."

His father, a stoic man, just said, "OK. We'll talk later."

The rest of the tour was quiet. After the shift, he went to the firehouse gym and worked out, then drove home. He was too jumpy to sleep, and he didn't.

Soon it was time to report for his next shift. The Fire Department's public affairs people had arranged for some TV stations to interview him outside the firehouse. Once they had departed, he was back at the sink, probie territory, doing the dishes. **R**

# So, Why Do You Think They Call It “Super”?



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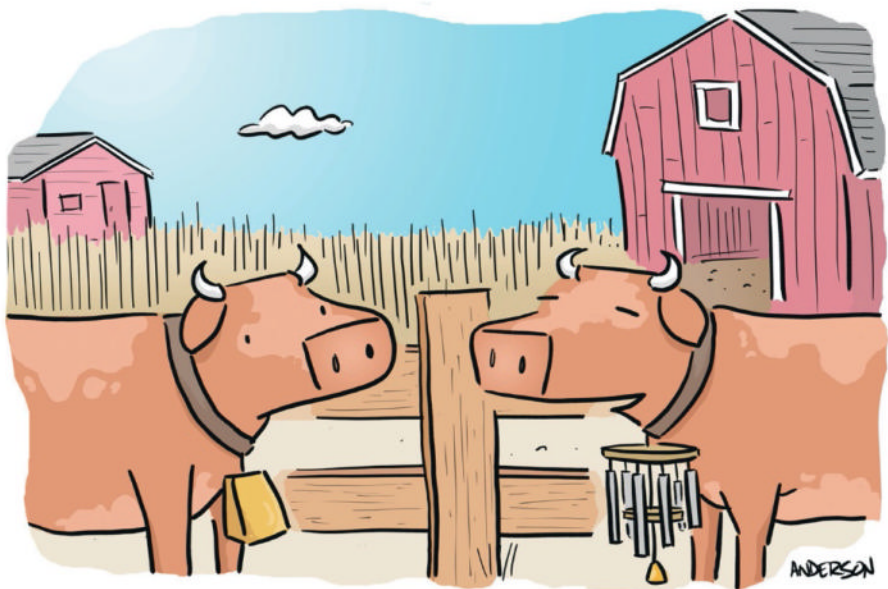
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# Laughter

THE BEST MEDICINE



*"It's so soothing."*

**FIVE E-MAIL ADDRESSES** it would be annoying to give out loud ...

- MikeUnderscore2004@yahoo.com
- MikeAtYahooDotCom@hotmail.com
- Mike\_WardAllOneWord@yahoo.com
- AAAAAAThatSixAs@yahoo.com
- IOneTheFirstJustTheNumberTheSecondSpelledOut@hotmail.com

MICHAEL WARD, via mcsweeneys.net

**A POLICE OFFICER** jumps into his squad car and calls the station.

"I have an interesting case here," he says. "A woman shot her husband for stepping on the floor she just mopped."

"Have you arrested her?" asks the sergeant.

"No, not yet. The floor's still wet."

Submitted by ROSE MATTIX, Decatur, Illinois

**THIS MAY BE THE WINE** talking, but I really, really, really, really love wine.   
 @ROBINMCCAULEY

**FOR MOTHER'S DAY:** My mom taught me ...

- Logic: "If you fall off that swing and break your neck, you can't go to the store with me."
- Humor: "When that lawn mower cuts off your toes, don't come running to me."
- Justice: "One day you'll have kids, and I hope they turn out just like you. Then you'll see what it's like!"

Source: thestir.cafemom.com

**WE CAN TEACH KIDS** there's no *i* in *team*, but it's way more important to teach them that there's no *a* in *definitely*.   
 Humorist AARON FULLERTON

**AFTER HEARING** a sermon on Psalm 52:3-4 (lies and deceit), a man wrote the IRS, "I can't sleep knowing that I have cheated on my income tax. Enclosed is a check for \$150. If I still can't sleep, I'll send the rest."

**ONE OF MY FRIENDS** is pregnant. And I'm really excited. Not for the baby but because she's one of my skinniest friends.

@MICHELLEISAWOLF (MICHELLE WOLF)

**Q:** What kind of exercise do lazy people do?

**A:** Diddly-squats.

Submitted by VALERIE LUNT, Mesa, Arizona

**RED SKY AT NIGHT**, shepherd's delight. Blue sky at night, day.

*Humorist* TOM PARRY

**NO, I'M NOT** walking on string-cheese stilts. These are just my first bare legs of the season.

@SASSYCURMUDEGEON (UNA LAMARCHE)



### IT WAS A DARK AND STORMY NIGHT!

If you're a fan of lousy literature, you're in luck: Here are two intentionally bad first lines of nonexistent novels.

As he caressed her hair, cheek, forehead, chin, collarbone, shoulder, upper arm, and stomach, she knew that her decision to take Octoman as a lover was the correct one. **L. C.**

If Vicky Walters had known that ordering an extra shot of espresso in her grande non-fat sugar free one pump raspberry syrup two pumps vanilla syrup soy latte that Wednesday would lead to her death and subsequent rebirth as a vampire, she probably would have at least gotten whipped cream. **M. C.**

From the Bulwer-Lytton Fiction Contest

**There's nothing bad about sending us a funny gag. It might be worth \$\$\$! For details, go to page 7 or [rd.com/submit](http://rd.com/submit).**

# That's an Awful Idea!

Five schemes that should never have seen the light of day. Thankfully, they did.

BY ANDY SIMMONS

## A CITY PAYS PEOPLE NOT TO KILL ONE ANOTHER

**Our reaction:** I'm sorry, did you say you're paying people not to kill one another? I thought so. *Are you nuts?!* What sort of message does this send?

**But it worked!** Ten years ago, Richmond, California, a city of 104,000, had one of the highest murder rates in the country. Millions were spent on crime-

prevention programs, but nothing worked. It got so bad that the city council declared a state of emergency.

But since the town instituted a plan to pay the toughest gang members to follow a Life Map that would keep them out of trouble, the city's murder rate dropped 77 percent from 2007—when the program was initiated—to 2014.

During that period, homicides in the rest of the county rose.

The idea was the brainchild of DeVone Boggan, 49, the CEO of a youth-mentoring consultancy in nearby Oakland. Once his plan was approved by the city council, Boggan created the Office of Neighborhood Safety.

According to *Mother Jones*, ONS staff members, most of them former felons, use police data as well as



intelligence they gather on the street to determine the gang members most likely to kill or be killed.

Up to 50 gangbangers are offered a monthly stipend for nine months ranging from \$300 to \$1,000 to stick to their Life Map. Staff members help gang members attain a driver's license or GED. They also arrange anger management classes, job training, and other specialty courses that might help them develop the skills needed to keep them

off the streets. The better they do at avoiding trouble, the more money they make.

The thinking behind paying for good behavior is simple, criminologist Barry Krisberg told the *Washington Post*: "If you can't stabilize their financial situation, they'll go back to dealing dope, and drugs is a dangerous business."

To be sure, other factors, such as gentrification and a new police chief who put a priority on community policing,

are often cited as contributing to Richmond's drop in crime. All these influences have combined to recast Richmond's image as a modern Dodge City.

"Young men who are historically responsible for gun violence in this city are making better decisions about how they negotiate everyday conflicts," Boggan told the *Contra Costa Times*.

Richmond's mayor, Gayle McLaughlin, agrees: "[Our] old reputation is dying off."



## TO STEM MALPRACTICE SUITS, HOSPITALS SHOULD ADMIT THEIR MISTAKES

**Our reaction:** Oh, the ambulance chasers are gonna love this. If you admit wrongdoing, they're gonna bleed you dry! Why not just hand over the bank account?!

**Hmm, the hospitals may be onto something:** When a patient perceives, correctly or not,

that a doctor or hospital has made a mistake, the doctor's or hospital's knee-jerk reaction is typically to circle the wagons and deny guilt. A study from Johns Hopkins found that only 2 percent of American hospitals let patients know when a mistake has occurred. But that

may be changing. Oregon passed a law stating that an apology from a doctor won't be used against him or her, while the University of Michigan Health System has launched a groundbreaking initiative.

According to *U.S. News & World Report*, "the University of Michigan Health System pioneered the Disclosure, Apology, and Offer model, in which patients who have been the victim of an error are quickly told, issued an apology, and offered a settlement." As a result, the hospital system's legal costs dropped some 60 percent, and it had 36 percent fewer medical claims lodged against it.

While admitting a grave medical error may seem like career suicide in today's litigious society, the fact is, what most patients and their family members really want are to know the facts and to be treated fairly.

As Richard Boothman, a former trial lawyer, told *U.S. News & World Report*, doctors can disarm angry patients by simply saying, "I could and should have done better—I'm sorry."

## DO YOU NEED A KIDNEY? TAKE OUT AN AD

**Our reaction:** What are you thinking?! Don't you know what kind of creeps answer ads like these? Go through the proper channels to get a kidney.

**Success!** After having not felt well for weeks, Christine Royles, a South Portland, Maine, restaurant worker and mother of one, took time off to visit her doctor. The diagnosis he gave her was devastating: She had lupus and anca vasculitis, an autoimmune disease that affects blood vessels. As a result, both her kidneys were failing, and she would need a transplant. Royles, only 23, was placed on a donor transplant list along with

100,000 other people, then waited for a call.

But Royles grew impatient. Being tethered to a dialysis machine for ten hours a day will have that effect. So, using a marker, she wrote an ad on the rear window of her Kia in the hope that some kind-hearted soul would see it and respond. The ad read: "Looking for someone 2 donate their kidney. Must have Type O blood. (You only need one kidney.)" She then included her phone number.

Josh Dall-Leighton was on a shopping trip with his family when he spotted the plea on the back of the Kia. According to the

*Portland Press Herald*, Dall-Leighton, a 30-year-old corrections officer and father of three, immediately told his wife, "I need to do this."

He called the number on the ad, then took the requisite tests that proved he was a match.

Last June, doctors successfully removed both of Royles's failing kidneys and replaced them with one of Dall-Leighton's healthy kidneys.

Royles's debatable (or brilliant) solution brought out the heroism in Dall-Leighton, though he doesn't see it that way. His actions were practical, he told the *Press Herald*. "If my wife needed a kidney, and I couldn't provide for her, I would hope that somebody else would help her out."







## SINCE PROSTHESES TAKE AN EMOTIONAL TOLL ON KIDS, MAKE THEM WITH LEGOS

**Our reaction:** Have you ever had kids? Know what they do with Legos? They lose them! Having a prosthesis isn't fun and games!

**Why it's ingenious:** When it comes to kids, maybe prostheses should be fun and games. Children missing limbs suffer from both physical and psychological handicaps. Carlos

Torres Tovar wondered if there was a way to make these kids the life of the party.

Tovar, a Colombian designer who studied at Umea University in Sweden, created a prosthetic arm with a three-finger gripper, powered by a specialized motorized adapter, much like many other prostheses. But here's where it gets interesting: The gripper

can be easily snapped off the device in favor of a gadget made entirely of Legos, one the child designs and creates. Want an airplane for an arm? Here's your chance! How about a doll? Go for it.

A Maserati? *Vroom!*

Dario, then an eight-year-old from Colombia, was born with a partially developed right arm that stopped growing at the elbow. Last year, he became the first to test the new device. With the help of family and staff members, he created a battery-powered remote-controlled backhoe, which he fitted onto his arm after removing the gripper.

Dario's friend joined him at the test. The friend has two fully functional arms, but he got swept up into the spirit and built a Lego spaceship. Dario snapped that onto his arm, and soon the two were off in outer space.

The reason Lego-compatible prostheses make kids happy is simple, Tovar told qz.com. It's social: "When you assemble a Lego set, you assemble it with your parents or your friends, or you even make a new friend with them."

## TO FIGHT DROUGHT, POUR 96 MILLION PLASTIC BALLS INTO RESERVOIRS

**Our reaction:** Shouldn't they try pouring more water into the reservoir instead? There's already enough garbage in our drinking water!

**A brilliant effort:** The skies finally opened up over California recently, but after five years of

devastating drought, everyone wants to make sure the water stays in the reservoir and isn't lost to evaporation. To that end, the Los Angeles Department of Water and Power has dumped "shade balls" into the reservoir. By blocking the sun's rays

from the water, the balls will reduce evaporation by 300 million gallons a year; they'll also keep "the water clear of dust and critters, hinder algae growth, and prevent chemical reactions between sunlight and chlorine," says *USA Today*.

The balls, which have at least a ten-year life span, are just four inches in diameter and are made from the same BPA-free plastic material as milk jugs. At 36 cents a pop, or \$34.5 million total, the shade balls are a lot cheaper than the EPA's alternative: Create a floating cover for the reservoir at a cost of \$300 million.

Pouring 96 million plastic balls into a reservoir might strike some as crazy talk, but desperate times require desperate measures. As Los Angeles mayor Eric Garcetti told [huffingtonpost.com](http://huffingtonpost.com), "This is emblematic of the kind of creative thinking we need to meet those challenges." **R**



### SHOULDA BROUGHT A MAP

The only reason some people get lost in thought is because it's unfamiliar territory.

PAUL FIX, *actor*

A true story of how George W. Bush  
and Bill Clinton brought  
my son and me closer together

# Love THAT BOY

BY RON FOURNIER

FROM THE BOOK *LOVE THAT BOY*

**MY WIFE, MY CHILDREN**, and I stood in front of a white, seamless wall, our noses practically touching its surface. Suddenly, the wall opened—it was a hidden door to the Oval Office.

“Come on in, Fournier!” shouted George W. Bush. “Who ya’ dragging in?”

It was my last day covering the White House for the Associated Press, and this 2003 visit was





*Ron Fournier and his family with President George W. Bush, April 2003*

a courtesy traditionally afforded to departing correspondents. I introduced my wife, Lori, and daughters, Holly and Abby, before turning to my son, Tyler, five. “Where’s Barney?” Tyler asked.

The Scottish terrier ran in, and Bush said, “Let’s do a photo!”

As the most powerful man on earth posed, my son launched into a one-sided conversation. “Scottish terriers are called Scotties; they originated from Scotland; they can be traced back to a female named Splinter II; President Roosevelt had one ...”

I cringed. Tyler is loving and brilliant, but he is what polite company calls awkward. He doesn’t know when he’s being too loud or talking too much. He can’t read facial expressions

to tell when somebody is sad, curious, or bored. I’ve watched adults respond to Tyler with annoyed looks or pity.

But Bush was enchanted. When my son paused, he changed the subject with a joke. “Look at your shoes,” the president told Tyler. “They’re ugly. Just like your dad’s.” Tyler laughed.

We were walking out when Bush grabbed me by the elbow. “Love that boy,” he said, holding my eyes. I thought I understood what he meant. It took me years to realize my mistake.

## MISSING THE CONNECTION

Fathers and sons don’t always know how to talk to one another, which is why we have sports.



I never felt closer to my dad than when we played catch. The film *Field of Dreams*—and its idealized notion of fatherhood—makes me cry every time. I assumed that my son would be an athlete and we'd find common ground on a baseball diamond. But Tyler didn't like athletics, and he was terrible when forced to try. I know, because I forced him to try for years.

Lori and I believed that Tyler needed the exercise. We also felt he needed to be part of a team. At school, he was struggling academically and socially. One playdate rarely led to a second. He had few hobbies or interests and was fixated on those he had: telling jokes; visiting bookstores; playing video games; building Lego models; and watching TV shows about animals, U.S. history, and the presidency.

After a dozen years of butting heads about athletics, Tyler and I came to an agreement. He could give up sports if he exercised three days a week and joined an extracurricular club. "You got a deal," he said. Then he grew quiet. I asked what was wrong. "I was afraid you wouldn't like me as much if I stopped playing sports."

When Tyler was 12, Lori was watching the TV show *Parenthood* one night, and she recognized our son in the character of Max Braverman. Max was sweet and smart. He was also rude, obsessed with insects, and prone to meltdowns. His parents ricocheted among exasperation, guilt, and fear. Max had Asperger's syndrome, a form of autism.

"Tyler might be autistic," she told me. "Watch the show." I did. Suddenly, it seemed clear what was wrong with our boy.

Lori found Mittie Quinn, a psychologist, who gave Tyler a battery of tests. Seven years after the Oval Office visit, my wife and I walked into Quinn's office to hear the results. "Your boy is fascinating for somebody like me," Quinn said. "He's got all kinds of stuff going on. But he's just a charming, charming kid." She said that Tyler had a pretty classic case of Asperger's.

Labeled little professors by the pediatrician who first identified the syndrome, Aspies can be taught social skills. Especially suited for instruction, Quinn said, are boys like Tyler who are on the high-functioning end of the autism and Asperger's scale.

Then she dropped the bomb: "He scored himself as [above] average on depression," Quinn said. Tyler would eventually lead a happy and successful life, but for now, she told us, "he's sad. Nobody understands him. Kids make fun of him, and he's left out." Thankfully, he had a sense of humor to prop him up. She added, "Do you know what Tyler said when I told him he needed to show more empathy? He gave me a confident smile and said, 'I know. I'm working on that.'"

It was time for me and Lori to do some work. If Tyler felt alienated, it was because we had failed to acknowledge—and accept—his differences. I was so focused on the con-



ceit that my son would be like Kevin Costner's character in *Field of Dreams* that I failed to see the son I had.

## FATHER-SON "GUILT TRIPS"

**L**ori, the true hero of this story, sprang into action. First, she got our son transferred to a school with a program for high-intellect and mainstreamed Aspies—a move that Tyler now says was “life changing.” Then, she persuaded me to drop my objection to his taking stronger medications to help counteract his severe attention-deficit disorder.

But the hardest thing was figuring out how to integrate Tyler into society. Lori enrolled him in a therapy group with other socially awkward boys. More than that, though, he needed something social he could lose himself in. So Lori sent us on the road together. “He would feel valued if you did this with him,” she said, inadvertently unearthing a wellspring of guilt. If I had been around more, would we have diagnosed Tyler's condition sooner?

Lori had a redemption plan. “You can use a job that took you away from Tyler to help him,” she said, suggesting we visit sites connected to presidents because Tyler loves history and I spent my career on the White House beat.

I called them guilt trips. We traveled to the homes and/or libraries of Presidents Washington, Theodore Roosevelt (Tyler's favorite), John and John Quincy Adams, Kennedy, Ford,

Clinton, and Bush. At Lori's urging, I also arranged meetings with two presidents I had covered, Bill Clinton and George W. Bush (which would be Tyler's second encounter with Bush).

The project gave Tyler and me weeks alone together that might have otherwise been devoted to my work and his video games. Tyler got to road test his lessons from social-skills classes and therapy, discovering how to communicate and connect.

“There is a 90 percent chance that George Washington stood on that rock while he surveyed for the C&O Canal,” a park ranger in Great Falls, Virginia, said. “Well,” Tyler replied, “there's a 10 percent chance he was never even here.” The ranger laughed and said, “That's the first time somebody has called me on that, son.” He and Tyler spent the next ten minutes swapping obscure anecdotes about the nation's first president.

I came to see Tyler through the eyes of others—a skill he, too, was trying to master—and felt proud. In Quincy, Massachusetts, Tyler dominated the guide's time during a tour of the Adams homesteads. For every story the ranger told, Tyler had a question or an anecdote. I silenced him until an elderly woman noticed. “What happened to that nice young fellow with all the smart questions?” she asked, turning to me. “You didn't tell him to shush, did you?”

Finally, I learned to admire Tyler's quiet grit. A therapist had called him

courageous, which I hadn't understood. How could a boy afraid of bees, needles, and dark rooms be brave? But the boy who faces his fears—to introduce himself to new people every day, for instance—might be the bravest person I know.

## A VISIT WITH BILL CLINTON

**O**n our second-to-last trip, Tyler and I went to Little Rock,

Arkansas, in March 2012 to meet Bill Clinton. The former president opened the door to his suite atop his official library. Walking over to the windows, Clinton and I pointed to buildings: the capitol dome, beneath which we both had worked; the shuttered remains of the newspaper where I was a state-house reporter; the headquarters of one of his first political benefactors.

Tyler pointed to a picture, jolting us out of our reverie. "It's hard to find a picture of two polar bears fighting."

"You like that?" Clinton asked. "You interested in polar bears?"

"Yes," Tyler replied, repeating at high speed: "It's hard to find a picture of two polar bears fighting."

"Take it." Clinton pulled the picture off the shelf; it was actually the cover of a book called *Polar Dance: Born of the North Wind*.

"No, sir," Tyler said, "I couldn't possibly accept this."



*Tyler and Ron Fournier with  
President Bill Clinton, March 2012*

He must have sounded overly formal, but I was relieved to watch Tyler's training take hold. At home, he had begun to greet me and Lori by saying stiffly, in his unusually deep voice, "And how was your day?"

Clinton pooh-poohed Tyler's objections and led us to a table with three overstuffed chairs. Tyler sat rigid at first, but after 45 minutes, his hands were folded calmly in his lap and his knees were crossed—mirroring Clinton's posture—as he and the former president excitedly shared their passion for Theodore Roosevelt.

"He had asthma and all that when he was a kid, but when he grew up, he became famous for being really tough," Tyler said. "I actually heard once that a guy insulted him, so he punched him."

"Have you guys been out to Sagamore Hill yet, Tyler?"

"Yes."

"Did you love it?"

"It was awesome," Tyler said. "All those trophies everywhere."

"Neat. I'm a hu-u-ge Theodore Roosevelt fan," Clinton said, stretching out his vowel.

He pulled out a 1919 edition of Roosevelt's letters to Roosevelt's children, signed it, and gave it to Tyler. "I read in the notes my staff gave me that you were a big Roosevelt fan, and the moment in history when he was president ... was the moment in history that most closely approximates the period I served ..." And off he went. If you've spent time around Clinton, you've heard this: Roosevelt was the bridge to the 20th century, just as Clinton's presidency was the bridge to the 21st.

Clinton's monologue lasted ten minutes, and Clinton didn't notice that Tyler was bored. Suddenly, I thought: If even Clinton could miss social cues, why worry so much about my son?

"Nice guy," Tyler said later. "He talked a lot about himself and his stuff."

"Like you, son?"

"Yep."

## A VISIT WITH GEORGE W. BUSH

**F**or our last trip, Tyler and I went to George W. Bush's Dallas office. The ex-president had his feet propped on a desk and a coffee cup marked "POTUS" in his hands.

"Do you like school?" Bush asked.

"Pretty good," Tyler replied.

"Favorite subject?"

"American studies."

"Do you like to read?"

"Yeah. I read all the time. I don't have a favorite topic."

"Fiction? Nonfiction? Sports?"

"I don't know much about sports."

"Mysteries?"

"I really don't like mysteries."

"Most 14-year-olds don't like to read," Bush said, stretching for a compliment.

Worried that the conversation was going nowhere, I reminded Tyler to say what Clinton had told us.

"Oh, yeah," he said. "Bill Clinton sends his best."

Bush smiled. "We've been friends," he said. "We've shared experiences. We're like brothers."

I nervously changed the subject to sports. Bush engaged with me but turned back to Tyler.

"So, Tyler, at 14 this is probably an unfair question to ask, but do you have any idea what you'd like to be when you get older?"

"Maybe a comedian."

"Maybe a what?" Bush said, a bit surprised.

"A comedian."

"Well," Bush replied, "I'm a pretty objective audience. You might want to try a couple of your lines out on me."

"Nah," Tyler demurred. "I don't have any material."

"Ah, interesting," Bush said. "I've met a lot of people. You know how many people ever said, 'I think I'd like to make people laugh'? You're the only guy. That's awesome."

Bush had connected. With an impish smile, he told Tyler about the time that rocker and humanitarian Bono was scheduled to visit the White House. Bush's aides worried about their boss. Bush told us, "[Chief of Staff] Josh Bolten said, 'Now, you know who Bono is, don't you?' I said, 'Yeah, he's married to Cher.'"

"Get it?" Bush asked Tyler. "Bone-oh. Bahn-oh."

Afterward, I asked Tyler about the Bono joke. He replied, "Sounds like something goofy you would say."

For me, the exchange was an eye-opener. Rather than being thrown by Tyler's idiosyncrasies, Bush rolled with them. He responded to every clipped answer with another question. Bush, a man who famously doesn't suffer fools or breaches of propriety, gave my son the benefit of the doubt. I realized that people were more perceptive of and less judgmental toward Tyler than I was.

## TYLER TEACHES ME

**T**hanks to the team—doctors, therapists, teachers—that Lori put together, our son is learning to connect and belong, and we know he will be a happy, thriving adult. Rather than sweat over his Asperger's, I see how much I'd miss if he wasn't an Aspie—his humor, his bluntness, his unaffected obsessions with everything from video games to family.

In the spring of 2014, my father died. Mom decided to rent a boat and scatter Dad's ashes in the Detroit River. After my mother, my siblings, and our families had boarded the boat, we filled the 30-minute ride with awkward conversation. *How's the job? How about those Tigers?*

My sister, Raquel, lost her composure, dashing below to find a bathroom. She almost ran into Tyler at the bottom of the stairs. He recognized her distress and said, "I don't know what to say to make you feel better, but I can give you a hug."

That was exactly what she needed. "He hugged me so tight. And kept hugging me," Raquel told me later. "It meant the world to me."

At the appointed spot, the boat stopped. Raquel poured Dad's ashes over the side, while Mom stood alone behind her. My brothers made eye contact with me. What should we do?

Rather than step forward to comfort Mom, I stepped back. It was not my finest hour. But Tyler exceeded my expectations, walking over to hold his grandmother tightly. He whispered to her, "Everyone thinks I'm comforting you, but really I need comforting."

Finally, I know what perfect is. It's a child blessed with the grace to show goodness, even on the worst of days. No, Tyler is not my idealized son. He is my ideal one. **R**

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# The Moth

A TRUE TALE FROM THE PREMIER LIVE STORYTELLING GROUP

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## A GRAVE PREDICAMENT

BY BORIS TIMANOVSKY

**L**AST SUMMER, after 16 years in the United States, I traveled to the city in Russia where I grew up. I was the first in my family to return after all those years. My mom gave me a hand-drawn map showing the location of my grandfather's grave at the local cemetery, and she asked me to visit it.

When I was leaving, she asked me again.

"Are you going to go there?"

"Yes."

"Promise?"

"Promise."

It was really important to her that I go there. My grandfather died when I was little, and she wanted me to



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TICKETS!

RD readers can score free tickets to a Moth event near them. Go to [rd.com/moth-tickets](http://rd.com/moth-tickets).



remember him. She would tell me stories about him. He was still very much alive in her mind, and she wanted him to continue to live in my mind as well.

But I was just too little when it all happened, so I didn't remember much. I thought maybe this visit to his grave would make up for what she thought was her failure at keeping his memory alive.

So I promised that the first thing I'd do when I arrived would be to visit the cemetery. Well, the first thing I did when I got there was to locate my high school girlfriend.

And I got caught up in work, and I had a lot of catching up to do with my childhood friends. So it wasn't until a day before I was leaving that I found time to go to the cemetery.

It was late in the afternoon, and right by the entrance was a lady who was selling flowers. By then she had only seven carnations left in her bucket. I bought them all, but when I reached for my wallet, I realized I didn't have the map with me. I had no idea what had happened to that

map. And I had no idea where my grandfather's grave was located.

I could call my mom and ask her. There was a pay phone right there, and I still had ten or 15 minutes left on my calling card, and it was already morning in New York.

But the problem was that I had already told her I'd gone to the cemetery. What was I going to say? That I decided to go again but lost the map? She knows whom she's dealing with. She'd see right through me.

So I found the main office. It actually occupied a family mausoleum. I figured some affluent family must have commissioned it but then had immigrated to the United States, and the management took advantage of the situation and moved right in.

Fortunately it was open, and inside was a small office filled with file cabinets. It looked like a financial aid office at some community college. Behind the counter was an old woman, and she said she'd help me locate my grandfather's records.

A couple of minutes later, she came back with a printout. I was

“

***I lost the map  
my mother had  
drawn and  
had no idea  
where the grave  
was located.***

”

**THE MOTH**

*Reader's Digest* is proud to partner with the Moth on storytelling “Grand Slam” events in many cities across the country, with the best stories appearing in the July/August issue of *RD*. To learn more and purchase tickets to a show near you, visit [themoth.org](http://themoth.org).



going to reach for it, but she said, “No, no; let me see it first. It’s five dollars per grave.”

I said, “Well, is there more than one?”

“Yes. There’s always more than one.”

It turned out there were 17 Abraham Pikarskis on the list. I paid for the two whose age I believed closely matched my grandfather’s.

I set off to look for them. I hoped that at least one would have a portrait on the tombstone. It is the custom with Russian immigrants here in New York to put portraits on tombstones.

This way I’d know which grave was mine.

I found the first grave and it said *Abraham Pikarski* on it, but there was no portrait. Only an inscription: *From the Loving Wife and Children.*

I had no idea whether this was the right one, so I went off to look for the other one. I found it, too, and it was virtually indistinguishable from the first one. Even the granite was the same color. It said *Abraham Pikarski*, no portrait. The inscription was slightly different. It said: *From the Grieving Family.*

I had no idea what to do. Was my family the loving one or the grieving one? I was standing there waiting, thinking maybe some sort of special

feeling would come to me. Maybe I’d feel some sort of kinship with the person who was lying there.

I tried to remember all I knew about my grandfather. He was a locksmith. He was a father of three. He was a soccer fan. He died of a heart attack.

I put three carnations on that grave, and I went back to the first one. I stood there, too, for a while, and again I was hoping that I’d feel something special. But it was getting late, and I remembered that I had yet to pack for the trip back to New York, so I put three carnations on this grave.

I stood there with the last flower in my hand.

Which Abraham Pikarski should it go to? Should I just discard it? Should I take a flower from another grave and make sure that each Abraham Pikarski got an equal number of flowers?

I had to come up with some sort of a formula.

Then, suddenly, I knew what to do. I put that flower on that same grave where I was standing. I thought if this is really my grandfather who is lying there, then all is well and good, and he got the most. But if not, then let this be a consolation to the stranger, because somebody else’s grandson came all the way from America to pay his respects.

“

*I stood there  
and waited,  
thinking some  
feeling of  
kinship might  
come to me.*

I went back to the hotel and flew home to New York the next day. I never found that map again.

Mom and Dad picked me up at the airport. They have this thing about picking me up at airports. Really, I would have been home at least an hour sooner if it weren't for them. First they couldn't find the parking lot, then they went to look for me at the wrong terminal, then they lost each other. Finally I found them, and on the way home from the airport, my mom started crying.

I asked, "Mom, why are you crying? It's only been a week."

She said, "I'm just so happy that you took the time to visit your grandfather's grave. It really means so much to me. You know when you called and told me you went there,

I thought you were just saying it to make me feel good."

When I was still in the air this morning, her second cousin who lives in Russia had called and told my mother that she had just come from the cemetery and had seen my flowers there. So my mom knew that I had really done this. And she stopped crying, and she was sitting there, and she was wiping her eyes.

And I thought: Should I ask her how many flowers her second cousin saw? Three or four?

But then I decided that maybe I should not say anything at all. **R**

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**Boris Timanovsky is a software developer, playwright, and founding member of the Three Bridges Theater company. He has appeared in a number of Moth events nationwide. He lives in New York City.**

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*Via Uncle John's Bathroom Reader*



# When Good Parents Get Arrested

BY LENORE SKENAZY

WITH ADDITIONAL REPORTING  
BY KELSEY KLOSS



A generation ago, letting your child play unsupervised was commonplace. Today it's likely to get you in serious trouble.

PHOTOGRAPHS BY JOHNNY MILLER  
ILLUSTRATION BY NICK DAUPHIN

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**IT WAS A STEAMY AUGUST DAY** in the sleepy town of Hood River, Oregon—perfect for Erika Doring to take her almost-three-year-old, Elaina, to the local lake. She buckled Elaina into the car seat and was on her way when Doring, then 45, suddenly realized: She'd forgotten her daughter's life jacket.

It was in the back of the children's consignment shop she owned, a few blocks down the street from their home. She parked her car with Elaina inside, left the AC on, and ran in, not even stopping to say hi to her employee—just, "I've got to grab the life jacket!" Racing out a few minutes later, Doring saw the neighborhood parking enforcement officer standing beside her car. Her heart slammed in her chest. Had something happened?

A few moments later, two police officers arrived (the parking officer had called them). As Doring tried to explain, they looked at her coldly. "I would never leave my kids in the car, even in the driveway," one said, according to Doring.

The officer handed her a citation: She was being charged with child neglect. The doting mom—a part-time social worker who worked closely with child protective services, or CPS—had 24 hours to turn herself in at the local police precinct.

## A Pendulum Swung Too Far

**D**oring's story is emblematic of a disturbing trend. Parenting practices common a couple of

decades ago—letting your child play outside or stay in the car so Dad could run a quick errand—are now considered neglectful, even criminal.

"The pendulum has swung hard in favor of highly protective parenting," according to David Pimentel, an associate professor of law at the University of Idaho and an expert on how the legal system addresses child neglect. "The legal standards for child protection and the agencies entrusted with it are likely to keep it there, despite compelling evidence that it should be allowed to swing back."

I get at least one e-mail a week from parents like Doring. They stumble upon me—the founder of the movement Free-Range Kids and the accompanying book and blog—while Googling late into the night, too upset to sleep. "I just ran in to drop off a book at the library ..." or "I didn't want to wake up my son," their notes begin.

It's hard to estimate how common this trend is because neglect is classified differently from state to state and because the reasons parents are charged vary widely, but dozens of experts I've interviewed—including lawyers, economists, sociologists, and embattled parents—agree it's



a growing problem. Take Illinois: In 2012, there were 26,343 reports of inadequate supervision made to the state's Department of Child and Family Services. But only 26 percent were "indicated"—meaning that some level of neglect was found, according to a 2015 analysis from the Family Defense Center, an advocacy group for families in the child-welfare system.

National data on the number of kids taken away from their families by CPS show a troubling increase. In 2003, about 206,000 children were removed from their homes following investigation (for reasons including but not limited to neglect), according to government data. Five years later, that number rose to 267,000—a nearly 30 percent increase. But more than 41 percent of children removed were not found to have been mistreated.

That statistic is even worse when you consider the consequences parents face. Being investigated can add your name to a child-abuse registry, which comes up during employment background checks. There's the threat—or reality—of being separated from your children. Legal fees. Criminal charges. Erika Doring was ultimately acquitted of her child-neglect charge, but only after she spent a quarter of her annual income on legal fees.

Of course, no one wants to stop CPS from intervening where there is legitimate emotional or physical abuse or neglect. But that's not these folks.

"Parents feel like they don't have the option of leaving their ten-year-old home to dash out to the store, because somebody could call the cops and start some legal nightmare," says Pimentel. "They can't let their kid walk home from school, because what would the neighbors think?"

## Bullied into Overparenting

That's exactly what happened to Danielle and Alexander Meitiv, a Silver Spring, Maryland, couple who made national headlines after they let their then-ten- and six-year-old children, Rafi and Dvora, walk home from a park in December 2014. The Meitivs believe in giving their kids freedom to help them become independent. "I see a lot of kids who don't have confidence or competence," Danielle told me. "I want my children to be able to take care of themselves."

The kids had made it only about halfway home when a police officer stopped them after a call from a worried onlooker. A couple of hours later, the local CPS agency showed up; a worker required Alexander to sign a "safety plan" promising not to let the kids out of sight for 48 hours. Alexander says CPS told him that if he didn't comply,



his children would be removed. A few months later, police picked up the kids while they were walking home from a different park; the children were detained by the police and CPS for more than five hours before they were reunited with their parents.

“What CPS considered neglect, we felt was an essential part of growing up and maturing,” Alexander told the *Washington Post*. “We feel we’re being bullied into a point of view about child rearing that we strongly disagree with.”

All charges against the Meitivs were eventually dropped, but it was an emotionally traumatic six months. CPS workers visited their home on multiple occasions, insisting on searching it. Social workers went to the kids’ school—without their parents’ knowledge—and even pulled the kids out of class to interview them. The Meitivs had to hire lawyers. The children had nightmares and saw a therapist. Parenthood itself has been criminalized, says Danielle. And even worse, she adds, “it’s the criminalization of childhood. In one generation, we have changed the definition of what it means to be a child.”

## Are Kids Really Unsafe?

**O**n the tape recording, the bystander who called about the Meitiv children tells the operator he was walking his dog and spotted “two kids that are unaccompanied, and they’ve been walking around for about 20 minutes by themselves.”

He doesn’t seem sure this merits a call but doesn’t want to be an apathetic onlooker in case, God forbid, something terrible happens. But therein lies the problem. Our assumptions about threats to children’s safety are totally out of whack.

In 2008, the Bureau of Justice Statistics’ National Crime Victimization Survey estimated that the rate of violent crime was 19.3 per 1,000 people over age 12—less than half the rate from 1973, when the agency began tracking data. Kids under 12 are much safer: Their assault rate is about one seventh; their robbery rate, about one twelfth; and their forcible sex rate, about half, according to George Mason University economics professor Bryan Caplan, PhD, in his book *Selfish Reasons to Have More Kids*. Stranger kidnappings—the threat parents fear most—are much rarer than people think. They account for only one-hundredth of 1 percent of all missing children, according to David Finkelhor, PhD, director of the Crimes Against Children Research Center at the University of New Hampshire.

You might be wondering: Could crime rates be down because of stricter, more supervised parenting? Experts like Caplan and Finkelhor, who’ve extensively crunched these numbers, say no. They attribute the decline in crime rates to more policing, aggressive prosecution of wrongdoers, the prevalence of cell phones,

and greater use of psychiatric meds.

So objectively, childhood has never been safer. But media reports that misrepresent risks about kidnappings and other dangers get burned into parents' minds—and those of community members who might call the police when they see kids alone or even those of jury members who have to decide whether a parent behaved negligently.

“If the public is misinformed about the risks children face in the world and driven by irrational fears inflamed by sensationalistic media reports, the jury may be in a poor position to judge the actions of a parent,” Pimentel has argued. “Because jurors can quickly and easily recall examples of child abductions, they will assume that such events are common ... and will be quick to condemn parenting choices that fail to guard against such ‘common’ and well-known risks.”

This can unintentionally expose kids to more harm. A perfect example: Letting your kid walk to school is dangerous, right? She could be hit by a car or abducted by a stranger. But statistically, being driven to school in a car is the most dangerous way to get there. According to an American Academy of Pediatrics report about school transportation safety, 75 percent of fatalities and 84 percent of injuries to

kids occurred in passenger vehicles. Just 6 percent of injuries occurred among walkers.

## The Decline of Neighborliness

Thirty years ago, if an adult saw a kid wandering around the neighborhood, he or she might have said hi and asked if the child needed anything. Call the cops? Never. For one thing, the adult didn't have a cell phone tucked into his or her pocket. But chances are the adult also knew the kid—and his or her parents—much better than neighbors know one another today.

Only about 20 percent of people regularly spend time with those living next to them, and one third report never interacting with their neighbors, according to a 2015 report from economist Joe Cortwright. Four decades ago, one third of Americans hung out with their neighbors at least twice a week, and only 25 percent had no engagement.

“There's a fear of taking responsibility for kids in the neighborhood,” Michael Brendan Dougherty, a senior correspondent at [theweek.com](http://theweek.com), wrote recently. “A neighbor's interest may seem invasive or even creepy. Lacking church or community,



bystanders in a neighborhood refer their concern about a suboptimal parental situation to the only other institution empowered to look out for the welfare of children: the state.”

## The Way to Real Reform

**S**o what can a bystander, like the dog walker who called the police about the Meitiv children, do differently? For starters, take a step back. Is the kid really in danger? Would you still call if you knew his family might face a months-long investigation? If you’re worried, talk to the child—and try to also talk to his parents—before you call the police.

“Say ‘Hey, it looks like your kid might be lost or frightened,’” suggests Pimentel. “Then the worst thing is maybe you’ve made the parent unhappy because you’re being too nosy, but calling the police is such a terrible act of aggression. And it’s a series of events that can’t be stopped once you make that call.”

Policy changes are also necessary. State laws need to define neglect with more specificity, agree Pimentel and Diane Redleaf, executive director of Illinois’s Family Defense Center. The Family Defense Center calls for clearer guidelines to help CPS investigators evaluate the actual likelihood of harm to a child as a result of being left alone—not just a theoretical threat. “If a child is entirely unharmed by being left alone, if a child felt safe in the situation, if the parents made

a deliberate decision to let the child be alone, and if there are no reasons to believe the child was in danger, there should be no basis to find neglect,” the group says. “When these factors are present, investigations should end.”

Redleaf also argues for removing personal judgment from CPS investigations. “It’s a problem anytime the child welfare system decides ‘I wouldn’t let my children do this’ but doesn’t at the same time say ‘But a reasonable, non-neglectful, caring parent who has his child’s best interests at heart might decide to do this.’ We want a system that lets parents make their own decisions for their children without being second-guessed,” she says.

Pimentel calls for CPS to be rebranded as an agency that supports parents in the difficult task of raising kids rather than an adversary that threatens to break up families through child removal. For that to happen, he told me, “it almost certainly requires a statutory change. Elected officials have to say, ‘Parents are the most embattled people in our community, and we need to stick up for them rather than threaten them.’”

## The Town That Got It Right

**S**everal months ago,” the e-mail to me began, “our youngest son was accosted by an officer for riding his bicycle in front of our house. The officer told my husband, who was home at the time, that our

son wasn't allowed to play on the sidewalk 'without supervision.'"

The writer, Heather Head, went on to describe two occasions when her older son, age ten, was stopped by the cops while walking a few blocks from home. Both boys became too scared to leave the house alone. This was in Belmont, North Carolina, a suburban town of 10,000 outside Charlotte with a bustling Main Street, a beautiful botanical garden, and summer concerts held downtown.

"Let me publish this on my blog!" I wrote back. But Heather wasn't sure that humiliating the police or lawmakers was the way to go. Instead, she spoke to the city manager and assistant city manager. They, in turn, talked to Belmont's chief of police. Heather and her husband began encouraging their boys to walk to the park, the library, and the convenience store by themselves again. "It took some convincing, but gradually they started to feel comfortable," Heather says.

Then, a few weeks ago, Heather's seven-year-old charged rosy-cheeked into Heather's room after a walk to the park by himself—to tell his mother he'd been stopped by a police car. "My heart pounded, and I held my breath," she told me. She had to restrain herself from running outside to confront the cops again. But Heather wanted to hear her son's story first.

The police car stopped beside the boy when he was halfway between his house and the park. The officer leaned



out the window and asked him if he was OK. He said yes. Then the officer asked him if his parents knew where he was. Again, yes. Then the officer did something shocking.

He said, "Great. Have a nice day." And went on his way.

Heather's levelheaded tactic worked. By harnessing the impulse that had precipitated all those interventions—concern—she helped get the town's government and law enforcement on board to bring kids back outside. If Belmont residents see children playing unsupervised, now they might be encouraged to ask "Hey, how are you doing?" instead of dialing 911. If the Belmont police are nonetheless called, they can ask the same thing, instead of assuming the worst of the parents. And if child protection workers are summoned, they, too, can proceed from an innocent-until-proven-guilty stance rather than the opposite. The love we feel for kids can be turned into a safety net—instead of a snare. **R**

Can a few lines of verse rescue thousands of redwoods? That depends on who reads them.

# The Poem That Saved a Forest

BY JACQUELINE SUSKIN FROM *YES! MAGAZINE*

PHOTOGRAPHS BY BRENDON BURTON







**F**OR THE PAST four years, I've performed Poem Store: a public project that consists of exchanging on-demand poetry composed on a manual typewriter for a donation.



I've done most of my work in Arcata, at the Arcata Plaza Farmers' Market. I have lived in and around this Northern California coastal town for three years. The community has embraced me and treated me as its unofficial town poet.

I think of this place as the throne of the earth, where I go to wander through ancient forests; stroll the edge of the continent; and kneel along the lip of clear, cold rivers.

Here I learned the language of landscape. Here I became acquainted with a history of harvest. Everywhere I looked, the trees were owned, considered a crop, nurtured and prepared for our consumption.

Folks would camp high up in the old-growth redwoods, trying their hand as saviors, but usually to little effect.

I wanted to know more about this system. About the people who owned the trees and those who sat in them. That's because no matter how much I read, no matter how many tree sitters I talked to, I still felt I was missing something. I still felt

there was something I could do to help resolve the impasse.

NEAL EWALD IS THE senior vice president of Green Diamond Resource Company. Green Diamond is a five-generation, family-owned, and highly controversial timber harvesting company that possesses 400,000 acres of land in California.

Green Diamond has a reputation for its clear-cut logging practices, use of toxic herbicides, and issues with mass privatization of land. Lesser known and hardly celebrated are the recent sizable adjustments the company has made, including receiving a Forest Stewardship Council certification for improved and responsible forestry.

In 2010, at the Arcata Plaza Farmers' Market, I wrote Neal this poem per his request on the subject of being underwater:

*Of all the things to do in life,  
all landscapes to believe in,  
all ways of proving anything is  
possible,  
with the weight of water around us,  
we pay tribute to the finest  
possibility.  
When below the surface  
we take moments to look up and  
know  
that be it waking life or not,*

*all the force of the world lies deep  
and well in such an unknown place.*

This poem inspired Neal to solicit another, this time through the mail. He sent me a package. Inside was a book. He explained that he had lost his wife to cancer and that this was a collection of her correspondence with friends and family for the five months before she passed away.

***Neal wanted  
something unique  
just for Wendy.  
He felt he'd been led  
to me for a reason.  
I was to write a  
poem for his wife.***

He wanted me to study the book and then compose a poem for him and his children to read as they finally spread Wendy's ashes in the ocean. He hadn't been able to do this, because he hadn't found anything that he felt was good enough for such a moment. He didn't want to choose a song or a poem from an anthology. He wanted something unique, something just for Wendy. When he met me, he felt he'd been led to me for a reason. I was to write a poem for his wife.

It wasn't until I composed and

delivered Wendy's poem that I even realized who Neal was. He holds the key to the forest, and there isn't much that I care about more than the forest. Neal presented a way for me to be directly in service to the earth. I was overwhelmed with the feeling that we could collaborate and create change.

**O**UR FRIENDSHIP grew based upon the inherent trust that comes from sharing such an intimate experience. Our poetic exchange about Wendy allowed for comfortable and familiar alliance.

We began having dinners, we started a book club, and I was invited to Green Diamond walks in the woods. And always every encounter was full of discussion.

We mused about the future of the company, what revisions could occur, what the public needed to know, and what problems needed solving.

Neal expressed great interest in my ideas. He listened enthusiastically, and his intrinsic desire to explore the unknown was very clear. He never once seemed unavailable, never like a fat-cat businessman but a true seeker, an openhearted wonderer.

We created a shared language. We developed themes to talk about each time we saw each other: grief, activism, poetry, women, love, corporate accountability, polarity, Native Americans, environmentalism, dehumanization.

We shared inspirations and lessons: I read stories about his father. He taught me how to shoot guns and use a chain saw.

We made plans: I would help him create a permaculture homestead design for his personal land. We would swim in the ocean on anniversaries and honor Wendy together, spreading lilies in the water. And I would recite her poem.

Above all, we focused on one word: *yes*.

*Although Neal  
and the tree sitter  
disagreed, they  
chose to hear each  
other out. To work  
within the other's  
Yes Zone.*

Neal is dedicated to the discovery of how to say *yes*. He wants to disrupt the concept that there needs to be opposition. Throughout his career in forestry, he has striven to find a way to dismantle dichotomy and meet his adversaries in the middle.

This is extremely difficult when your opponents, the tree sitters, choose not to view you as a human being but simply as greedy and power hungry.

Neal is available, although under

the construct of his position running a business, and he does have a Yes Zone, as he likes to call it. He wants to experiment and do things differently.

**P**ERHAPS MY experience with Neal could have ended with our deep exchange over the poems I had created for him. If that were the only outcome of this connection, I'd have been completely satisfied. To see how those poems brought him healing was enough. But because of our trusting relationship, something else occurred.

The history of the McKay Tract, a piece of land that contains a grove of old-growth redwoods in Cutten, California, is much too complex for me to tell here. Folks have dedicated years of their lives trying to preserve this forest. A young man named Farmer was the voice of this particular protest. He had been covertly living in the trees for a long time. He hated Green Diamond. Yet with Farmer I saw possibility in his passion. After various promptings and considerable conversation, with my support, Farmer took the initiative and reached out to Neal.

After a few in-depth meetings, an arrangement developed. Green Diamond was already working on plans for the McKay Tract, and Neal saw this common thread of interest as a way to connect with his adversaries. These two rivals figured out how to meet and discuss the forest while avoiding

*An unlikely pair:  
the poet Jacqueline  
Suskin and the  
timber baron  
Neal Ewald*



dehumanization. It didn't matter that they disagreed about so many things. They chose to hear each other, to consider each other's perspective and not simply make demands. Each worked within the other's Yes Zone.

The McKay Tract will not be cut. The nonprofit Trust for Public Land is working on turning a great deal of it into a community forest. This agreement caused a new communion, no matter how subtle. Forest protesters were able to see Neal's willingness.

They can now credit his character and his obvious wish to say yes.

In each conversation I have with Neal, he likes to remind me that this change occurred because of us and our discussions.

I follow it all the way back to the fact that a single poem created a spark.

With this story, a reminder bursts brilliantly before us all. This is that age-old concept that one person can truly make a difference.

May we remember that everyone

holding a place of power is still simply human. People may be grieving, they may be in need, they may be sitting with an ache that only we can

help ease. They may be nothing like the picture that society paints of them, and they may want to do something extraordinary. **R**

### THE POEM FOR WENDY

# Everything's a Gift

*Here we pay tribute to the teachers of wisdom.  
All who choose to re-create the standard way of leaving,  
Who carefully furl away grief in the name of celebrating  
The greater weave, who allow experience to shine as it should,  
The beauty of all things held high and seen well,  
Even in the darkest of times.*

*It is these guides who recognize the fickle ways of the body,  
Knowing that all life is not had in the mind, who discover  
The sturdy ground is in the kith and kin, in the loves  
We nurture with the simple give and take that can only be had  
Through such constant connection.*

*It is these who settle on patience in the face of mystery  
and misfortune, knowing that we are but provided with words  
as explanations and everything's a gift. And so beyond  
trying to figure answers and find ends, we should instead  
honor the circle we've been offered, allow for its turns  
and delivery to come with grace and acceptance so that we  
might leave it all behind knowing how perfect it was  
in all directions.*

—For Wendy, Neal, Zach, and Annie, and all who continue to be touched by Wendy's love and wisdom. Written July 25, 2010, by Jacqueline Suskin, with honor and thanks.

# That's Outrageous!

GUESS WHO IS TELLING THE TRUTH

■ A former art lecturer at MIT was sentenced to a year in jail for robbing a bank. Although he admitted to committing the crime, he insisted he should not serve time.

**HIS EXCUSE:** It was done as part of a performance art piece.

Source: masslive.com



officer to be quick, as he was in a hurry.  
**HIS EXCUSE:** He had tickets for the Super Bowl in Santa Clara, California, and kickoff was at 6:30. Police were skeptical, since the stop occurred in Pennsylvania.

Source: pennlive.com

■ After a Breathalyzer test showed her blood alcohol level was more than four times the legal limit, a New York State woman was arrested. But, she said, there was an explanation.

**HER EXCUSE:** She suffered from auto-brewery syndrome, which meant her body created alcohol.

Source: CNN

■ Another disputed DUI occurred in Wisconsin. The 75-year-old driver told officers he hadn't touched a drop.

**HIS EXCUSE:** His blood alcohol level was high because of his dinner—beer-battered fish.

Source: WISC-TV

■ On February 7, at 4:30 p.m., a driver was pulled over for topping 100 mph. The man, however, asked the police

■ When a Florida bicyclist was detained, police found crack cocaine in his pants pocket. "Wait, what?!" said the man.

**HIS EXCUSE:** He had no idea how the crack had gotten into the pants because they weren't his pants. The cash the cops found? Yeah, that was his, but not the drugs.

Source: Sun-Sentinel (Miami)

■ A Pennsylvania man was convicted of pulling off ten armed robberies. Although the heists were caught on videos that showed his face, he denied responsibility.

**HIS EXCUSE:** Of course the guy in the videos looked like him. It was his "evil twin."

Source: Las Vegas Sun

## SO WHO'S TELLING THE TRUTH?

Let's raise a glass to auto-brewery syndrome lady!



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# WHO ? KNEW

## 13 Odd Things That Happened on Friday The 13th

BY ANDY SIMMONS



STATISTICALLY, what happens on this superstitious day is no more bizarre than what goes on during any other day of the year. Well, we'll find out if the statisticians are correct this month because 2016 is the rare year that has only one Friday the 13th on the calendar, and it falls in May. Friggatriskaidekaphobes (Friday the 13th scaredy-cats) are preparing for the worst. After all, the following all occurred on this blackest of days.

**1** On Friday, October 13, 1307, the French rounded up thousands of Knights Templars and tortured them as heretics. Some wonder whether this was the beginning of the whole Friday the 13th mythology (if it is a myth ...).

**2** On Friday, November 13, 1829, 10,000 people gathered to watch Sam Patch jump into New York's Genesee River from atop the

Genesee Falls. Only weeks earlier, he'd leaped off Niagara Falls and into the Niagara River and survived. He wasn't as lucky this time.

**3** On Friday, October 13, 1972, a plane crashed in the Andes. Twelve people died instantly, and survivors resorted to cannibalism.

**4** That very same day, 174 were killed when a Russian airliner crashed on landing near Moscow.

**5** On Friday, August 13, 2010, a 13-year-old boy in Suffolk, England, was struck by lightning. The lightning reportedly hit at 1:13, or 13:13 in military time. The boy survived unharmed.

**6** On Friday, October 13, 2006, nearly half a million people lost power when Buffalo, New York, and the surrounding suburbs were buried under 22 to 24 inches of snow. Western New York is used to a lot of snow, but 24 inches? In October?!

**7** On Friday, October 13, 1989, the stock market fell a whopping 6.91 percent. At the time, it was the second-worst day in market history.

**8** On Friday, July 13, 1979, Bob Renphrey decided to stay in bed every subsequent Friday the 13th because of a spate of bad luck he'd suffered on that unlucky day, such

as: walking through a plate glass door, getting fired, and putting his wife in the hospital after hitting her in the head with a stick meant for the dog. Another Friday the 13th saw his wife fall down a flight of stairs.

**9** On Friday, July 13, 1951, after days of record-setting rain fell in northeastern Kansas, swollen rivers poured over their banks—consuming the cities of Topeka, Lawrence, and Manhattan in the process.

**10** On Friday, July 13, 1821, one of the scariest fellows ever was born: Nathan Bedford Forrest, a founder of the Ku Klux Klan.

**11** On Friday, January 13, 2012, the cruise ship *Costa Concordia* partially sank off the Italian coast after running aground, killing 32.

**12** On Friday, April 13, 2029, Asteroid 99942 Apophis is forecast to pass Earth a scant 18,000 miles away, closer than any of the satellites we've put into orbit.

**13** On every Friday the 13th, the world's economy apparently loses about \$900 million because people are scared to work and travel on this date, says Donald Dassey, founder of the Stress Management Center and Phobia Institute. **R**

Sources: livescience.com, huffingtonpost.com, listverse.com, bustle.com, dailymirror.com

A strange clash among locals, scientists, and technophobes has made this hamlet both a haven and a hell

# The Town Without Wi-Fi

BY MICHAEL J. GAYNOR  
FROM WASHINGTONIAN

YOU CAN'T MAKE a call or send a text on your cell phone in Green Bank, West Virginia. Wireless Internet is outlawed, as is Bluetooth. As you approach the tiny town on a two-lane road that snakes through the Allegheny Mountains, the bars on your cell phone fall like dominoes, and the scan function on the radio ceases to work. The rusted pay phone on the north side of town is the only way for a visitor to reach the rest of the world. It's a premodern place by design, devoid of the gadgets and technologies that define life today.

The reason for the town's empty airwaves is visible the moment you arrive. It's the Robert C. Byrd telescope, aka the GBT, a gleaming white, 485-foot-tall behemoth of a dish. It's the largest of its kind in the world and one of nine in Green Bank, all of them government owned and operated by the National Radio Astronomy Observatory (NRAO).

The telescopes aren't the "ocular" kind you're probably thinking of. They're radio telescopes, so instead of looking for distant stars, you listen for them. There's a long line of astronomers all over the world who want to use the GBT, a telescope known to be so sensitive that it can pick up the energy equivalent of a single snowflake hitting the ground.

Such a highly tuned listening tool needs total technological silence to operate, so in 1958, the Federal Communications Commission established a one-of-a-kind National Radio Quiet Zone, a 13,000-square-mile area encompassing Green Bank where, to this day, electromagnetic silence is enforced every hour of every day.

Residents who live within a ten-mile radius of the Green Bank observatory are allowed to use landline telephones, wired Internet, and cable televisions, but microwave ovens, wireless Internet routers, and radios





“

*As you approach the tiny town of Green Bank,  
the bars on your cell phone fall like dominoes.*



are forbidden. You can have a cell phone, but you won't get a signal.

Lately, because of how much its way of life diverges from the rest of America's and whom that has attracted, Green Bank (pop. 143) has come to feel smaller than ever. For locals, the technology ban is a nuisance.

For others who come to Green Bank for their health, the town has become a refuge.

## A Mysterious Illness

In 2007, Diane Schou, now 66, moved with her husband, Bert, 69, to Green Bank from Cedar Falls, Iowa, hoping that living free of technology would relieve her relentless headaches—headaches, she insists, that were caused by signals from a cell phone tower near her home. The Schous are members of a growing community who say they suffer from “electromagnetic hypersensitivity,” or EHS, caused by exposure to radio frequencies. The symptoms, according to sufferers, also include nausea, insomnia, and chest pains.

Mainstream medicine doesn't recognize the syndrome, but Diane and Bert couldn't be more sure. After her declining health forced her to give up her job as an agricultural scientist, the couple drove hundreds of thousands of miles across the United

States seeking a respite from her condition. After returning from a sojourn with relatives in Sweden—the first country to consider EHS a disability—the Schous heard about the Quiet Zone from a national-park ranger in North Carolina. The couple pulled into Green Bank shortly there-

after, and Diane lived in her car behind a convenience store to give the town a try.

“Life here isn't perfect,” Diane says. “But at least I'm not in bed with a headache all the time.”

Fellow sufferers heard about Diane, and soon she was letting visitors stay

in her home when they came to experience life in Green Bank. By 2010, roughly two dozen “electrosensitives” had moved to Green Bank. Jennifer Wood, a former architect before electrosensitivity felled her, remembers walking into the Schous' home and being welcomed by a handful of other electrosensitives. “It was just like family,” Wood says.

But not everyone in Green Bank has been so keen to meet the new neighbors. Diane ruffled some feathers when she tried to get the local church to remove its fluorescent lights, which electrosensitives find excruciating, and when she told people to stop using their cell phones as

“

*By 2010,  
roughly  
two dozen  
“electrosensitives”  
had moved to  
Green Bank.*

cameras around her. The senior center, one of the town's few gathering places, obliged her request to replace the fluorescent lights in one area, but when she asked that her food be delivered to her from the center's kitchen—so she wouldn't have to walk under other fluorescents—Green Bankers began to protest.

"There have been some rough spots in dealing with other members of the community," says the diplomatic sheriff David Jonese, whose Pocahontas County department has been called in several times to mediate disputes between old-timers and newcomers. "They want everybody in the stores and restaurants to change their lighting or turn their lights off when they're there, which creates some issues," he says.

## Echoes of the Past

Friction between the locals and the transplants has happened before in Green Bank. After breaking ground on the initial telescope in 1957, the NRAO needed to hire PhDs and engineers, and it began hiring scientists from out of town. But the locals—some of whose farms and homes had been condemned and displaced to other parts of town to make room for the observatory's campus—didn't take so kindly to the influx. In 1965, a group of farmers even complained to their members of Congress that observatory scientists had caused a crop-killing drought.

"I remember one fella said the observatory would make it rain when they wanted it to," says Harold Crist, a 90-year-old Green Bank native who worked for the telescope at one time.

The big-city transplants didn't immediately warm to the locals either, but with time came acceptance. Today many Green Bankers work various jobs at the telescope. The campus's cafeteria is a favorite lunch spot for locals. And more than a few scientists moonlight as artists, with work hanging in the local art center.

At Green Bank Elementary-Middle School, right next door to the telescope, you'd expect to find teenagers bemoaning the unavailability of the cool gadgets they see on TV. But that's not the case. According to one seventh grader, plenty of kids in Green Bank have smartphones, and although they can't get a signal, they've found a work-around. By connecting to a home Wi-Fi network (that the telescope interference protectors apparently haven't picked up on), kids don't need a cell network to talk to their friends—they can just use the new texting functions in apps like Facebook's Messenger and Snapchat. Teenagers and technology, it seems, will always find a way.

## The End of Quiet?

A force outside Green Bankers' control may ultimately settle the clash of old-timers and newcomers, of technology and tranquillity: the fate

of the thing that started all the trouble in the first place—the telescope.

It's funded entirely by the National Science Foundation, and in 2013, in a wave of belt tightening across the federal government, a committee recommended shutting down the campus. NSF hasn't said whether it will accept the proposal, but a decision is expected this year. If Washington chooses to divest, and the observatory can't find outside funding, it could close by 2017.

Which might spell the end of Green Bank's quaint life free of Wi-Fi.

Some say that in the long run, that may be best for the town. "We'll be so far out of the loop one of these days that we won't be able to catch up," says Crist, who raised six children in the Quiet Zone and watched some of them move away. "People come back home and think we're living in the Dark Ages."

But a shuttered telescope would obviously be a nightmare for the electrosensitives who are just making inroads with the locals.


In the fall of 2013, Monique Grimes married Tom Grimes, a native Green Banker who owns

a spacious hundred acres where lambs and sheep roam. Tom says his wife, who moved to town from Florida when her EHS symptoms forced her to quit her job as a speaker for a public policy group, helps out around the farm, and he introduces her to locals. "They get to know me first as Mo, not as an electrosensitive," Monique says. "Now friends of ours have gone so far as to replace the lightbulbs in their house because they want me to come to visit."

Whatever happens to the telescope, Monique is pretty convinced that her version of the science will prevail and that future generations will see the folly of iPhones and laptops just like past ones did of asbestos and cigarettes. As one sympathetic doctor told her, "You were just born a hundred years before your time."

"Or after," Tom quips, knowing there's a decent chance they're sitting in the last quiet place on earth.



*In July 2015, the NRAO received funding for the Green Bank Telescope for at least five more years.* 

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## DOG-EAT-DOG CITY

For every person bitten by a shark, 25 are bitten by New Yorkers.

Source: bbc.com

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IT PAYS TO INCREASE YOUR

# Word Power

*This month's quiz is for fans of the BBC series and Netflix favorite Sherlock, as well as readers of the original mystery tales by Sir Arthur Conan Doyle. Sleuth out the meanings—or follow the trail to the next page for answers.*

BY EMILY COX & HENRY RATHVON

**1. connoisseur** (kah-neh-'sir)  
*n.*—A: swindler. B: expert.  
C: paid informant.

**2. faculties** ('fa-kuhl-teez) *n.*—  
A: powers. B: intricate details.  
C: sudden insights.

**3. infallible** (in-'fa-leh-buhl) *adj.*—  
A: never wrong. B: remaining  
questionable or unsolved.  
C: carefully balanced.

**4. minatory** ('min-uh-tor-ee) *adj.*—  
A: unethical. B: with a menacing  
quality. C: subversive.

**5. furtive** ('fer-tiv) *adj.*—A: nervous.  
B: sneaky. C: tall and thin.

**6. untoward** (uhn-'toh-uhrd) *adj.*—  
A: illogical. B: strongly opinionated.  
C: not favorable.

**7. facilitate** (fuh-'sih-luh-tayt)  
*v.*—A: make easier. B: confront.  
C: unravel.

**8. incisive** (in-'siy-siv) *adj.*—  
A: urgent. B: doubtful.  
C: impressively direct.

**9. tenacious** (tuh-'nay-shus) *adj.*—  
A: persistent. B: well concealed.  
C: supremely rational.

**10. desultory** ('deh-suhl-tor-ee)  
*adj.*—A: yielding no clues. B: hot and  
humid. C: having no plan.

**11. proficiency** (pruh-'fih-shun-see)  
*n.*—A: right-handedness.  
B: likelihood. C: great skill.

**12. illustrious** (ih-'luhs-tree-uhs)  
*adj.*—A: graphic. B: eminent.  
C: deceiving.

**13. injunction** (in-'junk-shun)  
*n.*—A: order. B: coincidence. C: shot  
of medicine or drugs.

**14. truculent** ('truh-kyuh-luhnt)  
*adj.*—A: cruel or harsh. B: puzzled.  
C: of few words.

**15. sardonic** (sahr-'dah-nik) *adj.*—  
A: carelessly dressed. B: threatening.  
C: mocking.

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



## Answers

**1. connoisseur**—[B] expert. “Can you recommend an art *connoisseur*?” the detective asked after the robbery at the museum.

**2. faculties**—[A] powers. The prosecution set out to test the full *faculties* of the defense team.

**3. infallible**—[A] never wrong. “Not to worry—our key witness has an *infallible* memory,” the lawyer said.

**4. minatory**—[B] with a menacing quality. The thief gave his victim a *minatory* gaze before leaving her in the alley.

**5. furtive**—[B] sneaky. I didn’t for one second trust the suspect—he has a cruel and *furtive* look.

**6. untoward**—[C] not favorable. “Barring *untoward* circumstances,” said the judge, “we’ll have a decision by week’s end.”

**7. facilitate**—[A] make easier. The sergeant needed at least one more lead to *facilitate* the investigation.

**8. incisive**—[C] impressively direct. “Guilty,” the juror offered in a most *incisive* tone.

**9. tenacious**—[A] persistent. Though not very personable, Officer Bluntley can be as *tenacious* as a bulldog.

**10. desultory**—[C] having no plan. After finding no clues at the crime scene, the police began what felt like a *desultory* search for evidence.

**11. proficiency**—[C] great skill. “I claim no *proficiency* at lab work—but I am a huge *CSI* fan!”

**12. illustrious**—[B] eminent. After an *illustrious* 30-year career, Detective Klein finally decided to step down.

**13. injunction**—[A] order. For failing to follow the *injunction*, Thomas was ordered to serve 90 days of community service.

**14. truculent**—[A] cruel or harsh. The witness was unscathed by the prosecutor’s *truculent* remarks.

**15. sardonic**—[C] mocking. “Catch me if you can!” cried the felon with a *sardonic* laugh.

### CALLING ALL DETECTIVES

The term *private eye* alludes simply to *private i* (short for *investigator*). You may also call such a person a *tec* (short for *detective*), a *gumshoe* (from quiet, rubber-soled footwear), a *sleuth* (from an Old Norse word for “trail”), a *shamus* (of Yiddish origin), or a *hawkshaw* (from a detective in the 1863 play *The Ticket of Leave Man*).

### VOCABULARY RATINGS

**9 & below:** bloodhound  
**10–12:** junior detective  
**13–15:** master sleuth

# Humor in Uniform



*“Welcome to basic training.”*

**THE STEAMING JUNGLES** of Vietnam were not my husband’s first choice of places to spend his 21st birthday. However, the mood was brightened when he received a birthday cake from his sister. It was carefully encased in a Tupperware container and came with this note: “Dick, when you’re finished, can you mail back my container?”

KATHY WILSON, Chaska, Minnesota

**NEVER VOLUNTEER!** During basic training at Fort Leavenworth, our

sergeant asked if anyone had “artistic” abilities. Having been an architectural draftsman in civilian life, I raised my hand. Then the sergeant announced that everyone would get a three-day pass ... except me. I would stay behind and neatly print each soldier’s name onto his Army-issued underwear.

STEVEN SILVER, Scarsdale, New York

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# Quotable Quotes



“  
He who laughs  
most learns  
best.

**JOHN CLEESE,**  
*comedian and writer*

**SPEAK YOUR  
MIND, EVEN IF  
YOUR VOICE  
SHAKES.**

**MAGGIE KUHN,** *activist*

**A skill is something you  
learn. Talent is what  
you can't help doing.**

**CAROLINE GHOSN,**  
*Levo CEO*

**THE FIRST PAGE SELLS THAT BOOK;  
THE LAST PAGE SELLS YOUR NEXT  
BOOK.** **MICKEY SPILLANE,** *crime writer*

**To be a fan is to know that  
loving trumps being beloved.**

**CARRIE BROWNSTEIN,** *musician*



**MY FATHER ALWAYS  
TOLD ME THAT  
A FOOL AT 40 IS  
A FOOL FOR LIFE.**

**IDRIS ELBA,** *actor*



I promise there'll  
be a tomorrow.  
It's already  
tomorrow in  
Australia.

**CHARLES SCHULZ,**  
*cartoonist*

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