

Reader's digest

MAY 2014

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CAT VS. DOG

We want our animal-loving fans to be happy, so we created one cat and one dog version and randomly distributed the issues to subscribers and stores. For more information about our cover models or to purchase the cover you missed, visit the sites below.



RD.COM/CAT



RD.COM/DOG

PHOTOGRAPHS
BY EVAN KAFKA;
PET TAGS FROM
MEANDMISS
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MICHELLE CROUCH





Cats everywhere are having a hard time smelling their litter boxes thanks to Fresh Step® Triple Action



freshstep.com



Editor's Note

Hearing with My Heart



I WAS RECENTLY INSPIRED to think about sound, thanks to Trevor Cox's story in this issue (see page 82). I'd never considered the isolated sense of hearing outside the context of music and noise ("Can you please turn that television down?!"). So one afternoon I went for a walk and asked myself, What are my sonic memories? Perhaps you'll be inspired to do the same.

I'm a kid in the backseat of the family car. I hear the confident knock of my father's class ring on the steering wheel. I love this sound.

I'm a girl preparing for a piano recital. I hear the steady click of the metronome keeping me in perfect time. I resent this sound.

I'm a traveler who's walked right up to the edge of Exit Glacier in Seward, Alaska. I hear the creaky groans and happy pops of ice moving, pulling, shifting, settling. I am in awe of this sound.

I'm a new mother, peering into her daughter's crib. I hear the soft sucking of fingers in a tiny mouth. I cherish this sound.

I'm a daughter, sitting beside her dad in his final days. He's sleeping in his bedroom under the mustard-color blanket that's come out of the closet to comfort us since before I can remember. I hear heavy, still quiet. I hear, almost imperceptibly, his beloved cat Lucy licking her paw. She's curled at the foot of the bed, keeping his feet warm, keeping watch. This is the sound of peace. **R**



PHOTOGRAPH BY STEVE VACCARIELLO; WARDROBE STYLIST: ELYSHA LENKIN



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

Letters

COMMENTS ON THE MARCH ISSUE



CHILLING MEDICAL DRAMA

One spring, I thought I had the flu, but my head started to pound, and I felt like I could die. I went to the hospital, and doctors quarantined me and did a spinal tap. The pain immediately stopped. They concluded that I had contracted viral meningitis and told me if I hadn't received that spinal tap, I might not have survived. Trust your instincts, and if something doesn't feel right, go to the hospital.

CINDY MCEVOY, *Lake Grove, New York*

ADVOCATE FOR AA

If Ms. Glaser had spent any time in the rooms of AA, she would have witnessed all that she admires in the other recovery programs discussed ("Sobering Up"): women empowered, healed, and accepting personal responsibility for their lives without the continued use of mind-altering chemicals. Helping women (and men) get sober is just a small part of what AA does. Its miracle lies in its ability to reform lives, if you let it.

DORIS O'REILLY-DILLON, MPA, MSN, APRN,
Lyndhurst, Ohio

OUR LITTLE HERO

Thank you for helping to bring awareness to childhood cancers (Everyday Heroes, "The Fight of Their Lives"). I read with tears and smiles the amazing stories of these true heroes. Our daughter was born in July 2012 with acute myeloid leukemia. She was diagnosed and began her first of four rounds of chemo just three days shy of her one-month birthday. Desperate, we placed her in a clinical trial with an experimental drug, and she is now a thriving, cancer-free toddler! We are

PHOTOGRAPH BY CLAIRE BENOIST

appreciative beyond words of those who have fought for funding and awareness that brings hope and help to others.

Laura Perez, Long Beach, California

GIVE THIS MAN A CHANCE

If ever there was a convicted felon worthy of parole, it is certainly Eddie Hill (“The Prisoner’s Gift”). His tragic story of a directionless youth gone awry, followed by such an inspiring prison redemption, moved me to tears. Like all flawed human beings, I live with many regrets over my past, but I also believe in well-deserved second chances.

Craig Armstrong, Newton, Iowa

BODY LANGUAGE

I just finished reading “This Is What Bodies Look Like,” and I have not smiled more or felt better about myself after reading anything in my entire life. Thanks for the lift!

Erin Jester, North Ridgeville, Ohio

I find it ironic that in your March issue, there’s an article extolling what more mature bodies look like juxtaposed with a picture of a young, lissome, blemish-free female. Don’t you think the article would have had

a better (and more telling) message had the picture had even the remotest likeness to the words?

Cecilia Mchugh, Plymouth, Massachusetts

AT PEACE, AT LAST

I am 22 years old and have never really understood the meaning of happiness. I’ve been content but am not easily excited. Until now, I didn’t understand why peers equated excitement with happiness. Thanks to “Why Calm Is the New Happy,” when someone asks me if I am happy, I can say yes instead of being dumbfounded.

A. B., via Internet

CHANGE OF HEART

Your article on the woman who sued McDonald’s because of its hot coffee (“Burned!”) was very humbling. I remember first reading about it and thinking, How ridiculous! Now I know to hold judgment until I truly understand the facts.

Sue Fletcher, Maricopa, Arizona

EDITOR’S NOTE: As readers explained, the terms apogee and perigee were used incorrectly in our Word Power section (“Earthly Extremes”). The correct words are aphelion and perihelion. **R**

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*From left: Jim Goodrich,
Phillip Huebner, and
Toby Vigil*




EVERYDAY HEROES



Three courageous strangers rescue
a teen from a burning car

“It Erupted in a Ball of Flames!”

BY MELODY WARNICK



• AARON TOTTEN, 16, had almost made it home from Central High School in Rapid City, South Dakota, when he realized he was missing something crucial: his daily bag of Cheetos. The high school junior made a U-turn in his Ford Expedition and beelined to a store for his favorite junk food fix.

As Aaron drove north in the left lane of Elk Vale Road, a Kia Rio abruptly swerved into him, sideswiping him on the right. Instantly, Aaron lost control and barreled across the median into

oncoming traffic, hitting another SUV head-on at about 55 miles per hour. The crash flipped the Expedition end over end down an embankment, where it finally skidded to a stop on the driver's side.

Horrified motorists watched as flames leaped from the car's exposed undercarriage and a column of acrid black smoke bloomed upward.

Jim Goodrich, 58, a retired Air Force mechanic, witnessed the accident on his way to a birthday party in nearby Custer. He pulled his car to the side of the road and dashed

down the hill, where a few men had gathered to help.

Toby Vigil, 62, a truck driver for Walmart, and Phillip Huebner, 55, a program director with the South Dakota Board of Regents, were already aiming small fire extinguishers at the wreckage when Jim got there. He rushed toward the mangled car to find the driver, but he couldn't see him. "I could hear moaning," he says.

Aaron was still strapped into his seat, but the force of the crash had jammed it backward. When the men located Aaron, one of them reached into the car to slice off his seat belt, and Jim tried to calm him. "Is anyone else in the car with you? What's your name?" Aaron was able to answer, but Jim could tell the teenager's injuries were serious. It looked like the car would be engulfed in flames at any minute, so Jim and another man began to maneuver Aaron out a window. Each time Aaron was moved, he screamed in pain.

On the other side of the SUV, the fire burned. All the extinguishers lay empty on the ground, and the flames began to crawl into the cab. Phillip didn't see any sign of rescue vehicles. "We need to get him out," he yelled.

Jim quickly suggested they tilt the vehicle. While Toby grabbed Aaron around the waist, Jim tugged on the boy's arms. As the men slowly rocked the car forward, it gave just enough that they could inch Aaron through the window, but partway out, he got stuck.



Aaron Totten's SUV, moments after rescuers carried the teen to safety

"This is going to hurt like hell," Jim warned Aaron. With a final push on the car and a monumental tug on the teenager, the men pulled Aaron free.

They picked him up and ran away from the car. Seconds later, flames engulfed the cab, and with a whoosh, the entire vehicle went up. "It was like a movie," Jim recalls.

Months later, Aaron has no memory of the accident or the ambulance ride. He spent five weeks in the hospital with a crushed pelvis, compound fractures, internal bleeding, and bruised lungs. He knows that he owes his life to a handful of drivers who cared enough to stop. "They put themselves in danger to save me," he says. "I don't know how to thank them."



A part-time employee steps up to help seniors in need

The Caring Janitor

BY DAMON BERES

LAST OCTOBER, three weeks after Miguel Alvarez started a stint as a janitor at a senior-care center, his job took a dramatic turn. Instead of mopping floors, Miguel, 33, a former stay-at-home dad, was thrust into the role of primary caregiver for the 19 elderly residents living at the center.

On October 24, 2013, the state department of social services closed the center—Valley Springs Manor, located in Castro Valley, California—citing numerous health and safety violations. Most of the staff walked out—except Miguel and the center's cook, Maurice Rowland. "I felt bad for the seniors, so I helped them," Miguel says.

Unable to find contact information for the residents' families, Miguel and Maurice themselves assisted the needy patients, some of whom were confined to beds or wheelchairs. Others reportedly had dementia. The two men fed, clothed, and bathed the residents for two days, taking only brief breaks to sleep on rocking chairs in the TV room.



"I was never paid for my work," says Miguel Alvarez, with son Lucciano, four.

Finally, after Miguel had called 911 many times over a 40-hour period, emergency workers arrived to evacuate the seniors to an area hospital or to their families' homes.

In January, the California Department of Social Services admitted that regulators "fell short" in properly managing the property's shutdown. The center's operators, Hilda Manuel and Mary Julleah Manuel, are being investigated by the Alameda County Sheriff's Office for possible elder abuse.

"I'd never want to see my parents or grandparents go through anything like that," Miguel says. "I tried the best I could." **R**

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FOR
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Department of Wit

My Back Story

BY HARRISON SCOTT KEY
FROM OXFORD AMERICAN



HARRISON SCOTT KEY lives in Savannah, Georgia, and teaches at the Savannah College of Art and Design.

RECENTLY, I WAS TRYING to remember my wedding vows. I don't recall much other than that my wife looked prettier than Grace Kelly (a disturbing thought since women who look like Grace Kelly generally do not stay married to men who look like me, unless we own small aircraft). Yet I do recall our uttering something about sickness and health. These were my thoughts, nine years later, as I lay on the couch and took abuse from my wife.

"You're not sick," Princess Grace said.

"I am," I said. "I might die."

"Your back hurts," she said. "It's not like you have cancer."

"You promised to tend my infirmities."

I don't know how it happened: I woke one morning and was unable to stand fully upright. It felt as though the brisket of my lower back had been broiled too long in a still-warm oven.

I cataloged my most ambitious movements of the day ➤➤

before. There was the small box (lifted), the flight of stairs (climbed), and the BMX bike that I appropriated from a neighborhood boy, in order to demonstrate for the crowd of curious children how legends are made (ramped). Sensations rushed back of that moment when I launched from the homemade ramp's zenith amid dropped jaws and willed my body and the bike into flight. Yet just as my rear wheel left the earth, I recall receiving a message from my lower back that indicated caution and horror, a neural communiqué hushed by the endorphins of ramp glory and the cheers of neighborhood children—until now, the following morning, when I received a new message from my back, in the form of a letter of resignation.

I pulled myself to a hunchbacked position and dressed in great agony, the way I imagine Yoda must do. I then hobbled off to work, where a colleague sidled up to me, smiling, as though possessing a secret.

"I've got two words for you," he said. "Horse liniment."

I thanked him and made a mental note to start bringing a handgun to work. I limped on, until bad led to worse. It happened during my afternoon lecture while I rhapsodized to a class about Aristotle's use of the topography metaphor in *Rhetoric*.

"Think of the human mind as a map," I said, arms outstretched. Then something snapped, as though a

distant bridge gave way, and it struck me that the bridge was nearby and that it was the meat and bones and cartilaginous substances of my back.

"Oh, no," I said, falling to my knees in a dramatic, *Game of Thrones*-ian flourish. But nobody came to my aid, as they were all resting, studying the insides of their eyelid skin.

"WHAT SEEMS TO BE the problem?" my internist asked.

He has the build and disposition of a gentle, unassuming superhero: the broad shoulders, thick arms, and trim waist of a man who would probably look entirely normal driving a Jeep without a shirt.

"It's my back," I said.

"Disrobe," he said.

The next few minutes progressed like many of my best high school dates, with a great deal of touching, bending, and whimpering.

"What's wrong with me?" I said.

I hoped it was something debilitating. A simple back injury would be emasculating, but there could be great glory and riches in a disease requiring a wheelchair. Something permanent, but not terminal, a malady that might lead to a career in motivational speechmaking and the lucrative field of disease memoirs.

He explained, as gently as he could, that my only malady was frailty. "You need to work out," he said. "Nothing too rigorous. I'm going to give you some exercises."

He handed me a printout of an illustrated elderly man in various postures, mostly on his back and mostly looking dead.

"WHAT'D HE SAY?" my wife asked.

"It's my muscles," I said.

"What's wrong with them?"

"Apparently I don't have any."

You could tell she did not think this was very serious, because she rolled her eyes. Princess Grace has elevated eye rolling to an art that can be practiced by only the demon-possessed and various dark wizards of irony. The iris goes up and all but disappears under a lid that flutters like a windblown sheet of paper under the burden of a commemorative paper-weight. I have tried to imitate this maneuver—to show her how attractive it makes her look—and came near to severing my optic nerve.

"I have a prescription," I said, holding it up as evidence.

"That's Aleve," she said.

Later, I positioned myself on all fours on our bed, attempting to practice one of the therapeutic poses suggested by Dr. America. The wrinkled man in the picture appeared to be imitating a male dog in the act of urination, and I could not get it right.

Princess Grace, who gave no quarter to any of my disease-based fantasies, demanded to know why I was acting like a dog about to urinate on her bed.

"I'm strengthening my core," I said.

In time, after I suggested having her bathe me, she assented that yes,

I might be in some pain. She did her duty, opening my beers for me, assisting me into the rocking chair, as though I were a tribal elder, carrying out the bag of garbage I can no longer carry. The woman has looked 20 years old since she was 15 and still does.

I have always seemed

much too old for her, with my premature baldness and high Gold Toe socks and love of pudding. And now, as in all May-September marriages that last, she has become my nurse.

It's difficult to know how long this will go on, whether my core will ever be strengthened by the Congress of the Urinating Dog. But I care not. It is pleasing to watch my child bride make good on her promises. I wanted to ask her if she would fetch me a bottle of horse liniment, but I didn't want her thinking me feeble of body *and* mind.

"Tell me you love me," I said.

"You love me," she said.

"I do, I do."

“*I hoped I had a malady that might lead to a lucrative career in motivational speechmaking.*”



Life

IN THESE UNITED STATES



“Hey, Mom, how about this one?”

IF SOMEONE FROM the 1950s suddenly appeared, what would be the most difficult thing to explain about life today? One answer: “I possess a device in my pocket that is capable of accessing the entirety of information known to man. I use it to look at pictures of cats and get into arguments with strangers.” Source: reddit.com

WE HAD JUST finished tucking our five kids into bed when three-year-old Billy began to wail. Turns out, he had accidentally swallowed a penny and was sure he was going to die. Desperate to calm him, my husband palmed a penny that he had in his pocket and pretended to pull it from Billy’s ear. Billy was

delighted. In a flash, he snatched it from my husband's hand, swallowed it, and demanded, "Do it again!"

From gcfi.net

MY HUSBAND was cramming all his chores into one day, but each job revealed another problem. For example, while touching up paint on a wall, he discovered gouges in the wood that needed to be filled in.

Later, I found him sitting in the living room, staring off into space. Looking up, he announced, "Frustration is when my cope runneth over."

BARBARA BIDERSON,
Huntington Beach, California

DURING MY MOTHER'S memorial, my five-year-old granddaughter could not stop staring at the urn that contained her ashes.

"Is that really Great-grandma in there?" she asked her mother.

"Yes, it is."

"Funny," she said. "I always thought she was taller."

LEE ROSENOW, *Long Prairie, Minnesota*

MY DAUGHTER-IN-LAW was driving on the freeway when the sight of flashing lights in her rearview mirror made her pull over.

"Do you know why I stopped you?" asked the state trooper. "You were going 85 miles per hour."

"Impossible," she argued. "I had my cruise control set at 82!"

PAT GOETZINGER, *Lincoln, California*

EVERY TIME I SAY that I'm ready to order in a restaurant, what I really mean is that I'm not ready but the panic will help me make a decision.

@ADAMHESSI



QUICK QUIZ

Which headlines are from a reputable news source, and which are from an even more reputable news source—the satirical website the *Onion*?

1. Parents Finally Cave and Buy 33-Year-Old Son PlayStation 1
2. Marshall County Sheriff's Candidate Disputes Report of Own Death
3. Stolen Prosthetic Arm Discovered in a Secondhand Shop
4. Poll: Majority of Americans Approve of Sending Congress to Syria
5. First Microbes Breathed Sulfur Before It Was Cool
6. Heat Fans Growing Frustrated with Team's Lack of NBA Titles Since June

ANSWERS: 1. The *Onion*; 2. WAFB (Huntsville, Alabama); 3. *Daily Echo* (England); 4. The *Onion*; 5. *Washington Post*; 6. The *Onion*.

Quicker quiz: How can you make \$100? Send us your funny true story. See page 7 for details, or go to rd.com/submit.

A social activist taps one of our planet's greatest power sources: grandmothers

How to Light Up The World

BY BUNKER ROY

FROM THE SPEECH "LEARNING FROM A BAREFOOT MOVEMENT"



BUNKER ROY was born and educated in India and was motivated to start the Barefoot College as a way to combat the poverty in his country.

❧ CAN YOU IMAGINE a college without walls, professors, or classrooms? Educator Bunker Roy can. More than 40 years ago, Roy, now 69, founded the Barefoot College, in Tilonia, India. His school recruits a unique population—rural women, often grandmothers—and teaches them the basics of solar engineering and freshwater technology. His efforts have yielded enormous benefits. When the women return to their homes, they are skilled enough to provide their communities (some of the world's most isolated places) with electricity and clean water. They also gain something important, if less tangible: newfound self-confidence.

The Barefoot model has already been used to empower women throughout Asia, Africa, and Latin America. Last fall, former president Bill Clinton presented Roy with a Clinton Global Citizen Award, which honors leaders who are addressing the world's challenges in visionary and effective ways (other 2013 recipients included Pakistani student and girls' rights advocate Malala Yousafzai and then-New York City mayor Michael Bloomberg). The following is adapted from the acceptance speech that Roy delivered:



IF YOU GO all over the world to very remote villages, you will often find only very old people and very young people. The men have already left. So there are two ideas we've put into practice in order to make the Barefoot model work. First we declared that men were untrainable. Men are restless, men are compulsively mobile, men are ambitious, and they all want a certificate to show for their efforts. And the moment you give one of them a certificate, he leaves the village looking for a job in the city. So that is why we came up with the simple, commonsensical solution of training grandmothers.

Grandmothers are compassionate, tolerant, willing to learn, and patient. All the qualities that you need are there. And the second idea we'd practice was not to give out certificates. Because the moment you give a woman a certificate, like a man, she'll see it as a passport for leaving rural areas and going to urban areas to find a job.

Barefoot College follows the lifestyle of Mahatma Gandhi: Students eat, sleep, and work on the floor. They can stay for 20 years, or they can go home tomorrow. As of today, we've trained 604 women solar engineers from 1,083 villages in 63 countries.

The engineers have solar-electrified 45,000 houses. Please remember that our students are primarily women who have never left their villages before. They hate the idea of leaving their families and getting on a plane. When they reach India, sometimes after 19 hours of travel, they are faced with strange food, strange people, strange language. We do all the training in sign language. Yet in six months, they will know more about solar engineering than most university graduates.

Some women face problems at home for attending Barefoot College. In most of these traditional societies, the husband says, "If you go for training, don't come back to me. I will take another wife." Then the wife goes, and when she returns, she helps provide her village with solar electricity. And her husband says, "Please come back to me." But she says, "No, I'm fine."

Because the respect she now has is enormous.

We taught a woman from Afghanistan. It was the first time a grandmother had left this village. Afterward, at a community gathering, she went to sit with the men, who said, "What do you think you're doing? You should be sitting with the women." And she said quietly, "Today I am not a woman; I am an engineer. I have every right to sit with you."

I have a dream. I would like to provide the world's 47 least

developed countries with Barefoot College-trained grandmothers, and together they could solar-electrify more than 100,000 houses. I would like to reach a million people, and I hope you will be a part of this dream.

I'll end with a quotation from Gandhi: "First they ignore you, then they laugh at you, then they fight you, and then you win." R

“
***Today I am not
 a woman; I am
 an engineer,”
 said one student
 to the men after
 she was trained.***”

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INACTIVE LIVING

I'm "it's 8:30 and you wanna start a movie this late?" years old.

@LOSTRADAMUS

Probably not going to run with or without scissors.

@SUNNYMABREY



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An unmarried, absent father dies at work. Does his company have to pay to support his child?

The Case Of the Kid and The Cash

BY VICKI GLEBOCKI

❧ **JESSICA DOUGLAS** gave birth to a baby girl named Jamie on April 22, 1998. Soon after, the pair moved in with Douglas's boyfriend, Scott Moore, whom Douglas had been dating for some time. Though they all lived together in Moore's Michigan home on and off for several months, Moore wasn't entirely certain that he was Jamie's father. In fact, he filed a complaint to determine the child's paternity. Results from the DNA test came back at the beginning of September and proved that Moore was indeed Jamie's dad. By then, however, Douglas and little Jamie had moved out. Though Moore no

longer supported them financially, he was still, according to Douglas, "a father to [Jamie]."

Less than a month after he received the paternity results, Moore was working a job at an apartment complex for his employer, Prestige Painting. A gust of wind caused him to lose control of an aluminum extension ladder he was carrying, and the ladder touched an overhead power line. Moore was electrocuted. He died shortly after.

On behalf of her daughter, Douglas filed a petition to receive death benefits from Prestige Painting. In September 2002, a Workers' ➡

Compensation Board magistrate ruled that Jamie was eligible for benefits, since, according to the Workers' Disability Compensation Act, a child under the age of 16—whether legitimate or illegitimate, whether living with the deceased employee or not—“shall be conclusively presumed to be wholly dependent for support.” The magistrate awarded Douglas 500 weeks of benefits at \$252.33 a week.

“The order was clearly in the best interest of the child,” says Douglas’s attorney, Allen Wall.

But within days, Prestige Painting

appealed to the Workers' Compensation Appellate Commission (WCAC). Attorney Robert W. Macy called the magistrate’s decision a “legal error” and cited a different statute in the same Compensation Act, which stated that a child had to be “living with” the employee at the time of death to be considered an eligible dependent.

Should Prestige Painting be required to pay death benefits to Scott Moore’s daughter even though the child wasn’t living with him when he died on the job? You be the judge.



THE VERDICT

In 2003, the WCAC reversed the magistrate’s ruling, denying benefits for Jamie. But this legal battle was far from finished. Over the next four years, in appeal after appeal, Wall and Macy argued over those two workers’ comp statutes. They finally agreed to apply the rule stating that the child was not required to be living with the employee to receive benefits. Then the debate focused on which specific points in that statute were applicable here. The final question came down to this: Had Moore “deserted” Jamie? According to the second sentence in the statute, a child is “dependent for support upon a deceased employee” if the child “has been deserted by such deceased employee.” In December 2007, the Court of Appeals gave the last word: “We conclude that decedent Scott Moore did not desert his daughter, Jamie Douglas, and, as a result, Jamie was not a conclusive dependent.” Jamie was, therefore, not eligible for benefits. Had Moore deserted Jamie, she would have been eligible. Says Douglas’s attorney, “It kind of makes you scratch your head, doesn’t it?”

R

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

FACES OF AMERICA

BY GLENN GLASSER



Shahriar Anousfar, MD

**DEXTER,
NEW MEXICO**

"I grew up in Rockland, Maryland, and did my medical training in New York City. I was a city boy all the way through, so I'd never even seen a cow before. One day, I was watching a Western and thought, Looks beautiful—I'm gonna go out West and buy a ranch. I bought one before I even moved!"

I knew I was in love when...

Portland, OR

...we were climbing Rising Wolf Mountain in Glacier National Park, and

I got scared.

He talked me off the mountain so patiently and never cared that we didn't make it to the top. I knew I could trust him in the tough times.

MARGARET MCSHEA

Santa Clara, CA

...I started taking piano lessons and

making music.

NITA MEYER

Centennial, CO

...he told me he would help me **move to Italy,**

even if it meant putting me in a rowboat and pushing me off the shore.

MYNDI HOFFMAN

...I looked into my little boy's eyes,

40 years ago.

SUE WILLIAMS

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

...we were kissing

under the stars, and he said, "Thank you." I asked, "For what?" And he said, "I wasn't talking to you. I was talking to God."
(Today is our 20th wedding anniversary.)

ELAINE HOWES

...I heard each of

their hearts beat

and felt their first kicks.

CHRISTIE BAKER

Sturgis, MI

Columbus, OH

Bowling Green, KY

Oakland, NJ

Huntington Station, NY

...I tasted bacon

for the first time.

PHILDO TULLY

...he came to see me every day while I was in the hospital, even though

I was engaged.

My fiancé did not come to see me once.

KIM HUMPHRIES COMBS

Leesville, LA

New Orleans, LA

...I was 15, and he made me laugh.

Too bad he was 19! Later, those four years didn't make a big difference, and we have now been married for 30 years!

CHERYL GOTHARD DAVITZ

...his happiness

meant more to me than my own.

MARIE TERNULLO LEE

...The Survivor

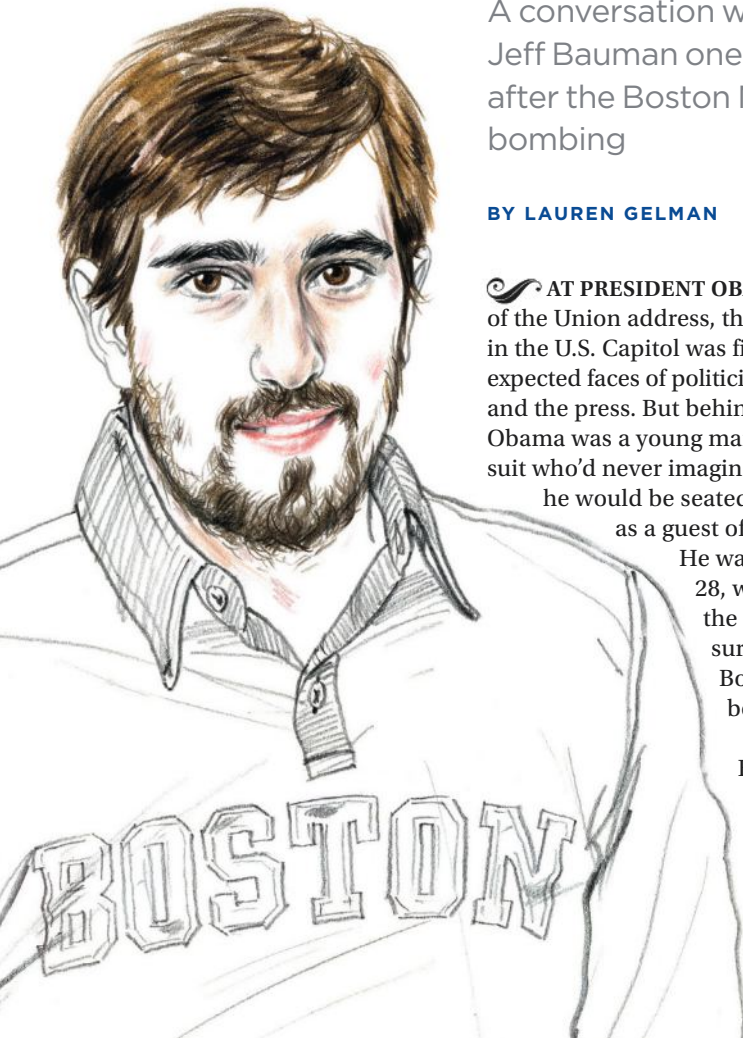
A conversation with
Jeff Bauman one year
after the Boston Marathon
bombing

BY LAUREN GELMAN

AT PRESIDENT OBAMA'S State of the Union address, the audience in the U.S. Capitol was filled with the expected faces of politicians, their aides, and the press. But behind Michelle Obama was a young man in an olive suit who'd never imagined that one day he would be seated in a box there as a guest of the first lady.

He was Jeff Bauman, 28, who is probably the best-known survivor of the Boston Marathon bombing.

Last April, Bauman was standing near the finish line on Boylston Street, waiting for his



girlfriend, Erin Hurley, to complete the race. At 2:49 p.m., his life changed forever when the first bomb exploded next to him. Thanks to the swift actions of a few citizens, including a cowboy-hatted Good Samaritan, Carlos Arredondo, Bauman was wheeled to an ambulance, but not before a photographer captured his image—his face ashen, his hands gripping his wounded legs. The photo would end up in news reports across the world, representing for many people the senselessness of the attack.

Both of Bauman's legs had to be amputated above the knee, requiring hours of physical therapy he still endures as he learns how to walk again, this time with prosthetic legs. For someone who came so close to death—about three minutes away, doctors guess—Bauman has made incredible progress in less than a year. His home in the Boston suburbs is filled with letters and gifts from well-wishers who consider him a symbol of resilience. In a conversation with *Reader's Digest*, Bauman, author of the new memoir *Stronger*, talked about what it's like to come back from tragedy and some of the people who've inspired him in his journey.

Obviously, your life changed completely on April 15, 2013. Tell me about who you were before that day.

I was a normal guy with a job at Costco, thinking about going back to school. I played sports; I hung out

with my friends. I wanted to make something of myself, but I didn't know what.

And today?

I'm still basically the same person; I just have to deal with more obstacles. Sometimes walking to the end of the street with my prosthetics feels like running a mile. But before [the bombing], I didn't feel like I had much to offer people. Now people write to me all the time and tell me how inspiring I am. Knowing that I might be encouraging others by facing my own difficulties is what helps me get out of bed in the morning.

Your perseverance after suffering such a devastating injury has impressed so many people. But how did you feel in the moments right after the explosion?

I was lying on the ground, and I thought, I'm going to die right here; I better start trying to call people and say my goodbyes. But as soon as I made it to the ambulance, I remember that my mind-set was changing. I was like, I might make this. Then when I woke up [after surgery] in the hospital and saw my best friend, I thought, This is great! I was just happy I was alive.

Have you always been optimistic?

Yes, I have. I feel grateful. I consider myself really lucky every single day. To the point where I feel guilty a lot



The Boston Marathon bombing photo seen around the world; Carlos Arredondo, Jeff Bauman, and physical therapist Michelle Kerr at a Boston Bruins game in June 2013



because I have so much and so many other people don't have what I have.

How do you deal with that guilt?

I try to remember what [musician] James Taylor told me. He was playing at a concert for One Fund [a charity for marathon victims], and he invited Erin and me to listen to the sound check. I told him I felt bad about getting all this support and donations, and he said, "You know, as much as it helps you, it helps other people by being able to give [something]."

That ties into a line from your book that I found very moving: "Bad people are rare, but good people are everywhere." What did you mean?

There were only two people who did [the bombing], but their actions have

been pushed aside by all the good people who've come through and helped out. I don't even think about those two bad people anymore. I prefer to think about the ones who sat down and wrote me letters and sent me things. Someone sewed me a quilt! This guy Joe from Oregon sent me a custom Les Paul guitar! Before this, I didn't realize that people cared so much about other people, you know?

Speaking of caring, a man named Kevin Horst is an unforgettable character in your book.

He runs the Costco store where I worked. When I was in the hospital, he walked my family through my health insurance benefits so we all understood them. I remember my

dad asked Kevin if he'd hire me back if I made it out, and Kevin said, "We can't hire him back, because he still works for us. We're not going to let him go." Kevin also brought me food from restaurants because he knew I didn't like the hospital food. He even took a couple of days off work, and he spent the entire time helping me.

Wow. Do you still see him much?

Yes. He's over all the time. He takes me to my physical therapy appointments. He even brings treats to my dog, Bandit.

Tell me about the soldiers from the Wounded Warrior Project, the U.S. veterans with amputations, who visited you in the hospital. What did it mean for you to meet them?

These guys had lost both their legs in combat, but they walked into my room with confidence and strength, like it was nothing. It was just a few weeks after the bombing. And that's what I wanted for myself—to walk without fear or embarrassment. Up until that moment, I'd never seen it done before. That made me think I could too.

You and your girlfriend, Erin, had gotten back together a month before the bombing. What has this experience taught you about love?

That it's about being there no matter what happens. When I was in the hospital, I felt weird about

our relationship—we'd been together for only a year. I didn't want to hold her back. So I told Erin she didn't have to stay with me. She just told me to shut up. She said she knew right away she wasn't going anywhere.


The bombing's first anniversary is coming up, and the famous photo of you being rescued by Carlos Arredondo [opposite page] will no doubt be shown everywhere. How do you feel about that image?

The first time I saw it, I couldn't sleep. It brought me right back to the event. But now when I look at that picture, it doesn't bother me, because it doesn't show me getting injured—it shows what happened after. Brave people rushed in and saved our lives. It's a picture of hope because I lived. And I'm going to be fine.

At Reader's Digest, there are a couple of questions that we like to ask all our interview subjects. What's your favorite word?

I like the word *faith*. I think you have to have faith that everything's always going to work out, and faith that the people around you will be there when you need them.

In your book, you come across as something of a practical joker. Can you tell me a joke?

Here's one that's family friendly. What did the cupcake say to the doctor? [Pauses] I'm feeling crummy! 

Points to Ponder

EVEN IF LIFE ON MARS does exist, we face a major challenge in efforts to discover it. If our only experience with life is on Earth, how will we know alien life when we see it?

MICHAEL WHITE,
biologist, in *Pacific Standard*

SOMETIMES I LOOK at [celebrity stunts], and I know that pressure to feel like you have to pull your pants off in front of the world. What I've learned is, you don't need to do that if you have something to say or you're a real artist. But when you're young, you feel this pressure to succeed, [and it] sucks away creativity. You're so consumed, you can't hear anything else.

HOWARD STERN,
radio and TV personality, in *Billboard*

IT'S HILARIOUS TO ME THAT anyone would think I would have the slightest interest in [taking acting roles in films]. Baseball players don't think, "I gotta get into soccer!" They think, "I gotta try and hit that ball today. That's my life."

JERRY SEINFELD,
comedian, in the *Guardian*

THE F-WORD IS AN amazingly versatile piece of our four-letter Anglo-Saxon heritage. It can express surprise, outrage, anger, humor, or delight. And it can stand in for several parts of speech: noun, verb, gerund, participle, imperative, interrogative, interjection.

ROY PETER CLARK,
writing teacher, on *cnn.com*

People are very sensitive about what they put into their bodies. But they will put anything into their brains. They eat free-range chicken, but they watch TV shows about headless suburban demons.

They ingest loads of parsnips but never Picasso. Call me a hidebound traditionalist, but the brain is every bit as important as the small intestine.

JOE QUEENAN, *columnist*, in the *Wall Street Journal*



RAUL VEGA



Perfect isn't normal, nor is it interesting. I have no features without makeup. I am pale. I have blond lashes. My face is like a blank canvas. It can be great for what I do.

AMY ADAMS, *actress*, in *Allure*

YOU SHOULDN'T WORRY [when your child lies]. The moment kids start to lie is the moment storytelling begins. They are talking about things they didn't see. It's a wonderful moment. Parents should celebrate.

YOUNG-HA KIM,
novelist, in a talk on *ted.com*

IN ONE PASSAGE of former defense secretary Robert Gates's memoir, *Duty*, President Obama ends a meeting reminding "those of you writing your memoirs" that he was undecided on a key issue. "I was offended by his suspicion that any of us would write about such sensitive matters," Gates recalls while doing just that.

MICHAEL CROWLEY,
foreign affairs correspondent, in *Time*

ANOTHER CORE VALUE is humility. My dad would always say, "When you look at a photo, do you see yourself last?"

ANGELA AHRENDTS,
retail executive, in a commencement speech

IN DIALOGUES WITH young people, many [say that] more than they want things, they want to know how to find meaning and purpose. I suggest they can achieve these desires only when they find three things: a moral code to follow, a cause to serve, and a creed to believe in.

BILLY GRAHAM,
evangelist, in *Reader's Digest*

AS THE ECONOMY improves, our satisfaction hasn't buoyed. Since 2005, the Google search for "how to be happy" has increased by nearly 180 percent.

LAUREN ALIX BROWN,
writer, in *Quartz*

WE ALL HAVE THE EXPERIENCE that the attention span is shortening. The big irony is, when I told my publisher I wanted to write a book on attention, the response was, "That's great. Just keep it short." **R**

DANIEL GOLEMAN,
psychologist, in *Tricycle*

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ART *of* LIVING

Questions That Will Save Your Relationships

BY GLENNON MELTON
FROM THE HUFFINGTON POST

☛ WHEN I WAS A MAMA of three very tiny, very messy, very beautiful rug rats, we had days that went on for lifetimes. My husband, Craig, left at six o'clock every morning. As I watched his showered, ironed self leave the house, I felt incredibly blessed and thrilled to have so much time alone with my babies—and incredibly terrified and bitter to have so much time alone with my babies. ➤

ILLUSTRATIONS BY JOEL HOLLAND
PHOTOGRAPHS BY CLAIRE BENOIST



When Craig returned each evening at six o'clock (he actually returned at 5:50 but took a stunningly long time to get the mail), he would walk through the door, smile, and say, "So! How was your day?"

This question was like a spotlight pointed directly at the chasm between his experience of a "day" and my experience of a "day." How was my day?

The question would linger in the air while I stared at Craig as the baby shoved her hand in my mouth while

when my heart was so full, I thought I might explode, and there were other moments when my senses were under such intense assault that I was certain I'd explode. I was both lonely and desperate to be alone. I was simultaneously bored out of my skull and overwhelmed with so much to do. Today was too much and not enough. It was loud and silent. It was brutal and beautiful. I was at my very best today and then, just a moment later, at my very worst. Husband, when your day is totally dependent on the moods and needs and

schedules of tiny, messy, beautiful rug rats, your day is all these things and none of these things, sometimes within the same three-minute period. But this is not a complaint. Don't try to fix it.

I wouldn't have my day any other way.

But I'd be too tired to say all of that. So I'd smile and say, "Fine." But I'd be a little sad because love is about being seen and known, and I wasn't being seen or known. It made me feel lonely.

So we went to therapy.

There we learned to ask each other better questions. If we really want to know our people, we need to ask questions that convey "I'm not just checking the box here. I really care what you have to say and how you feel." If we don't want throwaway answers, we can't ask throwaway

*Questions are gifts.
It's the thought behind
them the receiver feels.*

the oldest screamed, "Mommy, I need help!" and the middle one cried in the corner because I never, ever, ever let her drink the dishwasher detergent ("Not even once, Mommy!"). I'd look down at my spaghetti-stained pajama top, unwashed hair, and gorgeous baby on my hip. My eyes would pause to notice the toys peppering the floor and the kids' stunning new art on the fridge. And I'd want to say:

How was my day? Today has been a lifetime. There were moments

questions. A caring question is a key that will unlock a room inside the person you love. So Craig and I don't ask "How was your day?" anymore.

After a few years of practicing intimate question asking, we now find ourselves asking each other questions like these:

- When did you feel loved today?
- When did you feel lonely?
- What did I do today that made you feel appreciated?
- What did I say that made you feel unnoticed?
- What can I do to help you right now?

I know. *Weird* at first. But not after a while. Not any weirder than asking the same empty questions that elicit the same empty answers. Now when our kids get home from school, we don't say, "How was your day?" Because they don't know. Their day was lots of things.

Instead we ask:

- How did you feel during your spelling test in English class?
 - What did you say to the new girl when you all went out to recess?
 - Did you feel lonely at all today?
 - Were there any times you felt proud of yourself today?
- And I never ask my friends, "How are you?" Because they don't know either. Instead I ask:
- How is your mom's chemo going?
 - How'd that conference with Ben's teacher turn out?
 - What's going really well with work right now?

Questions are like gifts. It's the thought behind them that the receiver feels. Love is specific. The more attention and time you give to your questions, the more beautiful the answers become.

Life is a conversation. Make it a good one. **R**

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UN-CYCLOPEDIA

WALL STREET: Seedy district of Lower Manhattan specifically zoned for performing lewd acts on people's retirement savings.

KITCHEN: If another room contains more knives than this room, get out of that house.

APARTMENT: Place where one lives while one looks for new apartment.

FROM THE ONION BOOK OF KNOWN KNOWLEDGE

Try as we might, we can't escape our culinary DNA

Mama's Corn Bread & Beans

BY PATRICIA SHARPE FROM *TEXAS MONTHLY*



PATRICIA SHARPE writes a regular restaurant column, *Pat's Pick*, for *Texas Monthly*.

MY MOTHER WAS not nostalgic about many things in life, but when it came to corn bread and beans, she was a sentimental fool. She and my father had been teenagers during the Great Depression, and the memory of those hard times was still raw when they married, in 1942. “Many a day, corn bread and beans was all we had to eat,” one of them was likely to say.

Mother made sure her three well-fed children had an inkling of what the previous generation had endured. At least a couple of times a year, a big pot of pinto beans seasoned with salt pork would appear on the stove, slowly simmering down to almost mush, along with a pan of yellow corn bread, fragrant and steaming. We would gather around our 1950s-era Formica dinette table and fill our cereal bowls and plates. I'm afraid that my two younger brothers and I rolled our eyes, although never so that Mother or Daddy could see us. Still, something must have sunk in because I often find myself calling up remembrances of meals past as a way of understanding, if only a little, where I came from. Food is about many things—nourishment, pleasure, and culture among them—but it's also about recognizing who you are, and why.

Some of my most vivid memories start in Cameron, the small Central Texas town where my father grew up. At the family's house, corn bread and beans may have gotten them



through difficult times, but Sunday dinner was the ritual that knit them together year in and year out. After church, my grandmother would head to the henhouse with a sharp ax in one hand and a bent coat hanger in the other. In a minute, she would have hooked a nice young frying hen. One whack of the ax on a tree stump and that hen was history, although its headless body continued to run and flop wildly around the yard for what seemed like forever.

The family would gather around the big oak table in the dining room and survey the bounty: a platter of chicken, of course, plus bowls of black-eyed peas, green beans cooked with a pinch of sugar and at least a ton of bacon grease, a relish tray of sweet pickles, and a basket of rolls kept warm under a napkin.

If my father had been forced to

live the way he grew up and eat the food of his childhood for the rest of his life, he would not have considered it a hardship. He was a small-town boy and proud of it. The immutability of Sunday dinner and the simplicity of our own family ritual of corn bread and beans only reinforced this.

Mother was cut from different cloth. She, too, was from small-town Texas—in fact, from a succession of small towns that concluded with Mercedes, in the Rio Grande Valley. Like my father, she and her siblings had grown up eating homey Southern and Texan dishes—hamburger steaks, pot roasts, enchiladas, and produce from the valley's huge farms and citrus orchards. Just as in Cameron, Sunday dinner in Mercedes meant fried chicken, though her mother would wring

the bird's neck instead of chopping its head off.

But corn bread and beans and those other down-home dishes were only part of who she was—and in her mind, not the most important part. She left Mercedes, went to the University of Texas in Austin, and married my father. From the time I can first remember her, when I was about four, she seemed a glamorous creature, her dark hair swept up in a mass of curls, brown suede platform heels on her size-five-and-a-half feet. She read non-stop, saving recipes from fancy magazines for dishes like veal à la casino, crème brûlée, and vichyssoise. But everyday meals consisted of Middle American staples like chicken salad and a hamburger-and-tomato concoction she christened Boy Scout Hash.

It's easy to see Mother's kitchen—and her life—as a battleground where corn bread and beans vied for supremacy with crown pork roast and its ilk. I see that same battle, in fact, reproduced in my own life every year during the holidays. At first I blithely think, Well, we'll have turkey and dressing this year because, after

all, it is our beloved family custom. But then I get antsy. I drag six or seven cookbooks off the shelves. I convince myself I must try something new and different.

Just the other day, looking for ideas, I pulled out one of Mother's old cookbooks. It was the *Better Homes & Gardens Cookbook*, 1946 edition, her indispensable recipe resource, with dozens of clippings and index cards tucked inside. It had sat on the counter next to the toaster for nearly five decades.

Cracking the book open, I suddenly realized what I wanted to make: corn bread and pinto beans. It was a cold, wet night, and I had some cornmeal in the pantry. I turned the now-fragile pages, trying not to tear them.

But, search as I might, I couldn't find the recipes I sought. I must have hunted for a good ten minutes, but nothing: not under Breads, not under Vegetables, not under Beans. And then it dawned on me: There were no recipes because Mother didn't need them. Veal à la casino—*that* she needed a recipe for. Corn bread and beans she knew by heart. **R**

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ANSWER: "Dozens"



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■ **MUSHROOMS** Store in the fridge in a paper bag, which will absorb the excess moisture that evaporates from the mushrooms, maintaining their crispness.

■ **COOKIES** “Put a slice of bread in an airtight container with the cookies; as they lose their moisture, they’ll pull that mojo from the bread. Magic!” says Christina Tosi, chef and owner of Momofuku Milk Bar.

■ **EXTRA BURGER OR HOT DOG BUNS** Tear into pieces and freeze in a ziplock bag. Ten to 20 pulses in a food processor will transform them into ready-to-use bread crumbs—no thawing necessary.



Freeze herbs in oil; toss into soups, stir-fries, and sauces when needed.

■ **PRODUCE (like celery, lettuce, and broccoli)** Wrap tightly in tinfoil before storing in the fridge; this will help the veggies stay crisp for up to four weeks.

■ **CHEESE** Smear a bit of butter onto the cut side to keep the block from drying out. **R**

Sources: buzzfeed.com, *Cook's Illustrated*, *Real Simple*, lifehacker.com, *Rachael Ray Magazine*

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BY ALISON CAPORIMO

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- **FRESHEN YOUR CLOSET** Uncap your favorite scented variety and place it in the corner of your closet for a powerful potpourri.
- **CREATE MATTE COSMETICS** Using your finger, dab deodorant under eyes and along the T-zone before applying makeup to solve shiny skin.
- **KEEP FEET ODOR-FREE** Apply a thin layer of clear deodorant to the bottoms of your feet before you go to bed at night for wetness and odor protection that lasts through the next day.
- **SLIP INTO JEANS** Rub along your legs to easily slide into a tight pair of skinny jeans or your favorite fitted leather skirt.

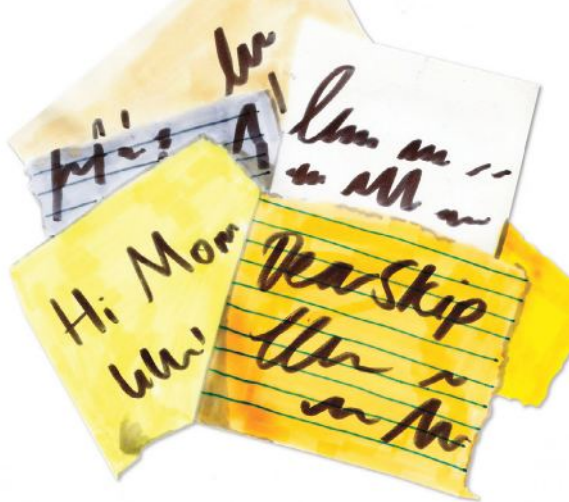
Sources: *Real Simple*, beautytips4her.com, Yahoo! Voices, thecouponhigh.net, bellasugar.com, xojane.com, nbcnewyork.com

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A Tradition To Note

BY JOSIAH HOWARD
FROM THE *NEW YORK TIMES*



THE FIRST NOTE I ever wrote for my mother said “Hi, Mom! Have a nice day! Love, Skip!” (her nickname for me). I was 12 when I wrote it, and I tucked it discreetly into her change purse. My mother worked as a key-punch operator—a profession now obsolete—at the New Jersey offices of Phillips-Van Heusen (PVH), the clothing company.


I knew that when my mom bought her meal at the PVH cafeteria, she would have to rifle through her purse for change. I didn’t know that she would keep that note, laminate it, and always carry it with her.

From the day that I first tucked that sliver of paper into my mother’s change purse, she and I left each other clandestine notes. They would be placed in the refrigerator or freezer, under a lamp, or by the TV remote controls; they would peek out from under an ashtray. I even found one stuffed in my shoe. From the outside, our notes may have been

banal summations of our days, thoughts, wishes, or observations. But to my mother and me, they were a lifeline—a communication with each other that no one else shared.

My mother died on October 20, 2009, at age 71. I was by her side, holding her hand.

I didn’t cry the day my mom died, and I didn’t cry a week later, when I went to the funeral home to collect her cremated remains. The ashes weren’t my mother. Neither was the broken, shut-down body that I held in the hospital room and that I was so thankful no longer had to suffer.

Recently, I found a note that my mom had left me, one that had remained hidden for years. It was scrawled on a piece of yellow, lined legal paper, and it was tucked away in the pages of my favorite childhood book, *Charlotte’s Web*. It read “Dear Skip, I love you always. Miss you a lot. Don’t forget me. Be happy! Love, Mom. xxxxx.” That day, I cried. 



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The story of one man's heartrending summer recalls a time ...

When Love Meant More Than a Text

BY DAVID VECSEY FROM THE *NEW YORK TIMES*

SOMETIMES WHEN I'm watching old movies, I can't help dwelling on the crucial plot devices that have been lost to, well, devices. The missed call, which today rings in our pockets. The long-lost love, who now lives forever in our Twitter feed.

Consider *Doctor Zhivago*: A chance sighting of Lara on a city street leads Yuri's heart to rupture as she disappears before Yuri can reach her. Had the Internet been around during the Bolshevik Revolution, Yuri and Lara never would have lost each other. They would have been Facebook "comrades."

Consider the plot twists in our own lives, moments that hinged on uncertainty, when all information was not laid out before us. Modern technology has made our world smaller and our lives easier, but perhaps it has also diminished life's mysteries, and with them, some sense of romance.

In the summer of 1991, without social networks to tether us, I felt such heart-bursting longing for a woman I loved that I traveled across two countries and an ocean to ➤

EVERETT COLLECTION (MOVIE STILL)



make sure she would not wander out of my life. It was only in her absence that I was able to appreciate the depth of love I felt.

I met Joelle in March while I was still in college. She had recently graduated and was knocking around Peoria, Illinois, her hometown, figuring out her next step. After two chance meetings, we began going out. Before long, we were rarely apart.

We spent less time with our friends, who could not track the electronic footprints of our relationship. The outside world fell away, and it became just us, slowly unlocking each other's secrets, which in those days were not posted on "walls" for anybody to scroll through.

But our time together was coming to an end. Before we met, I had planned a summer backpacking adventure across Europe, and Joelle had been talking about a move to Chicago. I told her I would write, and I gave her the address of a friend in Wales, where I would be with my parents at the midpoint of my trip.

After landing in Frankfurt, Germany, I visited the Roman ruins in Trier, spent the summer solstice in Strasbourg, and saw a rock concert in a soccer stadium packed with 50,000 Germanic-looking bikers in Basel. In Budapest, my ancestral

home, I heard church choirs and stood before masterworks of art. It was beautiful.

And I was miserable. I could not have been lonelier. All I could think about was Joelle.

Sitting alone on a bench outside St. Stephen's Cathedral in Vienna, eating street schnitzel, I wished I were in Peoria, sitting across from her. I wrote her letters as if I could will her into my trip—long, heartfelt missives.

By the time I reached London to rendezvous with my parents, I was inconsolable. The distance between us had become unfathomable, and my spirits sank to a depth I had never known. I sobbed and pouted and slunk

around London for three days.

Finally, my father suggested (insisted, really) that I just call her.

So from our hotel room in London, I called Peoria. Except that Joelle wasn't in Peoria. Her mother told me that she had packed up and moved to Chicago. My letters, she said, were sitting there on the table, unopened.

I called Chicago next but was unable to reach her. There was no answer, no machine, no voice mail, no caller ID to show the missed call. Just a landline ringing in an empty apartment. There was no way of knowing where she was or when she



*When there was
no letter from
Joelle waiting,
I broke down,
blubbing.*

would be back. I became gripped by jealousy, panicked by the idea of her settling into a new life.

Here I was in Europe, weeping in front of relics for all the wrong reasons, and she was gallivanting around Chicago meeting people? It seemed ludicrous to admit I somehow thought she might hang around Peoria, waiting for me, but that was, it occurred to me, exactly what I had expected.

My parents and I drove to Wales the next day, and when there was no letter from Joelle waiting, I broke down into a blubbering mess. My body was in Wales, surrounded by craggy green hills and bleating sheep, but my heart was in Chicago.

My parents put me on a train back to London to catch the next flight home. At Heathrow, however, I was told that the round-trip airline ticket my parents had bought me could be used only out of Paris. So it was off to Dover, where I caught a ferry across the channel.

The boat was filled with fellow students, and as we staggered off in Calais and rode the night train to Paris, I regaled them with my tale of woe.

Forget it, they said. One guy said that he was meeting buddies in Pamplona to run with the bulls and that I should join. A girl was headed to France to wait on tables and lie on the beach. "Come with," she offered.

"No, no," I said. "If I don't get back, I'm going to lose her."

I was roundly ridiculed, and they said I would forever regret cutting short this once-in-a-lifetime trip.

In Paris, I headed straight for Charles de Gaulle Airport. I'd be in Chicago soon. All I had to do was get on a plane.

But I couldn't get on a plane. Inside the United terminal, it was utter chaos, with people 40 deep at the ticket counter. I would not be getting on the next plane—or any other.

Exhausted, I lugged my backpack toward the trains, tears in my eyes. What a disaster. Stuck in Paris for three weeks! Could things be worse?

But as I left the United terminal, I found myself in the British Airways wing. I was facing three smiling ticket agents.

"You don't happen to have any seats today?" I asked.

"We have seats," one said, "but the plane leaves in 20 minutes."

The one-way ticket cost twice what my parents paid for my round-trip fare. I glanced at my credit card: "For emergency use only."

I bought the ticket. This was the part I didn't tell my parents.

At least not until four years later, on the night before Joelle and I married. I confessed it after my father told a roomful of friends and family the tale of the despondent boy who chose love over bleating sheep, Roman ruins, and all the wine in Paris.

R

Dear Mom: Let's Take a Trip Together

BY KATKA LAPELOSA FROM MATADORNETWORK.COM

HEY, MOM, I want you to stop dropping me off at the airport for some trip I'm about to take and start becoming my seatmate. I want to travel with you—just you.

I want to explore a new place alongside the woman who raised me and changed my diapers, who put up with my teenage angst and my rebellious college years. I want to see my favorite cities with the lady who taught me essential life lessons, such as looking both ways before crossing the street, how to use a glue gun, and that the most important thing in the world is to help others.

I always appreciated the vacations you planned for our family: spring break in Philadelphia, where we saw Robert E. Lee's taxidermy horse at the Civil War Museum; a summer in Williamsburg, Virginia, where you watched me learn to square-dance with a costumed historian; a jaunt to relax by the Jersey Shore, where we ate snow cones and built sand castles. Any time spent with you in

a new place was always exciting and enlightening.

Despite what the other siblings might say, that summer when we rented a cabin in New Hampshire was one of the coolest trips I've ever taken. I loved swimming in the murky waters where *On Golden Pond* was filmed. I remember we shared a mushroom pizza at some New England restaurant, and we both thought it wasn't too shabby for non-New York Italian food.

I also recall how you watched me as I read *The Great Gatsby* on the porch at midday. I wonder if you felt proud of me. I wonder if you knew what that awkward seventh grader would become.

These days, I am sick of traveling to places with wishy-washy friends. I want to travel with a strong woman who can see how capable I am of learning to speak French or hiking on a glacier or eating something as disgusting-smelling as a durian fruit.

It's clear I inherited your sense of



adventure too. Don't think I've forgotten the stories you told me about the crazy road trips you and your friends used to take across the States or about the Caribbean resorts you used to frequent in your college days. And I still think it's incredibly romantic that your honeymoon was spent dancing flamenco in Spain and riding camels in Morocco.

Now I want you to see how much I thrive while abroad—I'm a different person, Mom. And I know you'd be different too. I want to come home

with inside jokes about weird old Greek dudes who hit on you and know that someone has shared a similar burst of emotion while snorkeling Australia's Great Barrier Reef for the first time.

So what do you say, Mom? Will you throw caution and responsibility to the wind? I want to travel with you. Let's just go—we can go anywhere in the world, just you and I. You can pick the place, and I'll do the rest.

Happy Mother's Day, *Katka*.

R



A NEUROTIC'S FAVORITE WORDS ...

"Check enclosed."

DOROTHY PARKER

"It's benign."

WOODY ALLEN

"I told you so."

GORE VIDAL



5 Vacation Myths Debunked

BY ADAM HODGE

MYTH: Book a plane ticket far in advance to save money.

TRUTH: A plethora of options for the most-traveled routes means fewer deals if you book too far out. You're more likely to save if you book six to seven weeks in advance. Also, for the best deals on domestic flights, fly on Tuesdays or Wednesdays.

MYTH: Cabin air makes you sick.

TRUTH: It doesn't. Airplanes spend a considerable amount of energy pumping in and pressurizing fresh air. Some is recycled, but it passes through numerous HEPA filters to draw out bacteria. So what does get you sick? Tray tables, lavatory handles, and headrests touched by dozens of passengers every day.

MYTH: Go early to avoid crowds.


TRUTH: Heritage sites, monuments, parks, and other popular attractions will always be crowded. The trick is

to go when no one else wants to, like during the middle of the day—when the sun is at its hottest—or when it's raining. Even better: See these sites in the off-season, when there are generally fewer visitors.

MYTH: Always trust local knowledge.

TRUTH: Locals might not know the ins and outs of the tourist industry in their city. For hotels and sightseeing, ask fellow travelers in person or online. For directions, locals can be hit or miss—you're better off with Google Maps and a smartphone. One exception: Locals tend to give good restaurant recommendations, since everyone loves a good meal.

MYTH: Duty-free is a good deal.

TRUTH: You don't pay taxes, but the baseline price for luxury goods, such as perfume, is often higher at the airport. What you can save on is a heavily taxed item such as alcohol. 



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ALL IN

A Day's Work



*“Good news. Your cholesterol has stayed the same,
but the research findings have changed.”*

POWERPOINT, the program you love to hate ...

■ Were Moses alive today, the Ten Commandments would be known as the Ten Best Practices, presented in PowerPoint and followed by 40 years of status meetings.

■ The greatest trick the devil ever pulled was convincing the world that he didn't invent PowerPoint.

■ No one ever says, “Boy, that ‘I Have a Dream’ speech could’ve been a lot better if Martin Luther King Jr. had used PowerPoint.”

From meetingboy.com

RECENTLY, a man stopped at my desk at the library asking for help: A woman had breast-fed her infant and forgotten to “tuck herself back in.” I walked over to Lady Godiva and said, “Ma’am, I’m very sorry, but we don’t allow open drink containers in the library.”

Source: notalwaysright.com

SCENE: A man applying for credit at a department store.

Clerk: What do you do for a living?

Man: I’m a tree trimmer.

Clerk: What do you do after Christmas?

RUTH SADECKAS, *Joelton, Tennessee*

JOURNALISTS AND EDITORS on deadline make the occasional error. Some are funnier than others:

■ NBC reported that American students rank internationally at: “26th math, 21th science, 17th reading.”

■ Britain’s Sky News showed the importance of punctuation: “Top stories: World leaders at Mandela tribute, Obama–Castro handshake and same-sex marriage date set.”

■ A retraction from *Wired*: “A previous version of this story incorrectly quoted Dropbox cofounder Drew Houston saying ‘anyone with nipples’ instead of ‘anyone with a pulse.’”

Sources: jonathanturley.org, *Washington Times*, poynter.org

HEARD OVER the plant’s paging system: “Will John Porter please return to where you were before you went where you are.”

IRENE ONORATO, *Plymouth, Massachusetts*

REALLY? The China National Tourism Administration has created tips for its citizens when traveling abroad, including:

■ Don’t steal life vests from airplanes to give as gifts.

■ Don’t leave footprints on the toilet.

■ Don’t dry your underwear on lampshades.

Source: list25.com



THAT REMINDS ME OF A JOKE

HERE’S THE NEWS:

A Minnesota lawyer, Thomas P. Lowe, agreed to handle a woman’s divorce case. One thing led to another, and the two had an affair. The tryst didn’t last, though, and they parted ways romantically and professionally. But not before Lowe submitted his bill to her, including time they’d spent in court as well as in bed. Lowe ended up having his law license suspended for 15 months.

Source: twincities.com

HERE’S THE LAUGH:

A lawyer e-mailed a client: “Dear Jennifer: Thought I saw you on the street the other day. Crossed over to say hello, but it wasn’t you, so I went back. One tenth of an hour: \$30.”

That reminds me of how to make \$100—send us your funny work story. Go to page 7 or rd.com/submit for details.

Hippocratic Oaths Everyone Should Take

BY NANCY KALISH

ALL NEW DOCTORS today still pledge to do no harm, which may be Hippocrates' most famous legacy. But much of the ancient Greek physician's wisdom applies to everyone—not just those who have medical degrees. "Hippocrates was a visionary who figured out the most important ways we can stay healthy, all of which have been proved by modern science," says David Katz, MD, founding director of the Yale University Prevention Research Center and author of the book *Disease Proof: The Remarkable Truth About What Makes Us Well*.

Here are five of his health rules that have stood the test of time (about 2,000 years).

1 Walking Is Man's Best Medicine.

"Hippocrates did the first clinical

studies by observing people and comparing their health habits," says Brian Clement, PhD, codirector of the Hippocrates Health Institute, a nonprofit center in West Palm Beach, Florida. He noticed that "bodies grow relaxed and squat ... through their sedentary lives," which led to various illnesses. Those who walked more stayed well longer. So he often prescribed exercise.

TODAY'S TRANSLATION: Dozens of studies show that even 30 minutes of walking a day lowers your risk for diabetes, heart disease, osteoporosis, and certain cancers. A recent National Cancer Institute study on more than 650,000 people found that those who walked briskly for just 150 minutes a week gained an average of 3.4 years of life expectancy. "There's no drug that can give you those kinds of benefits," says Clement.

2 Know What Person the Disease Has Rather Than What Disease the Person Has.

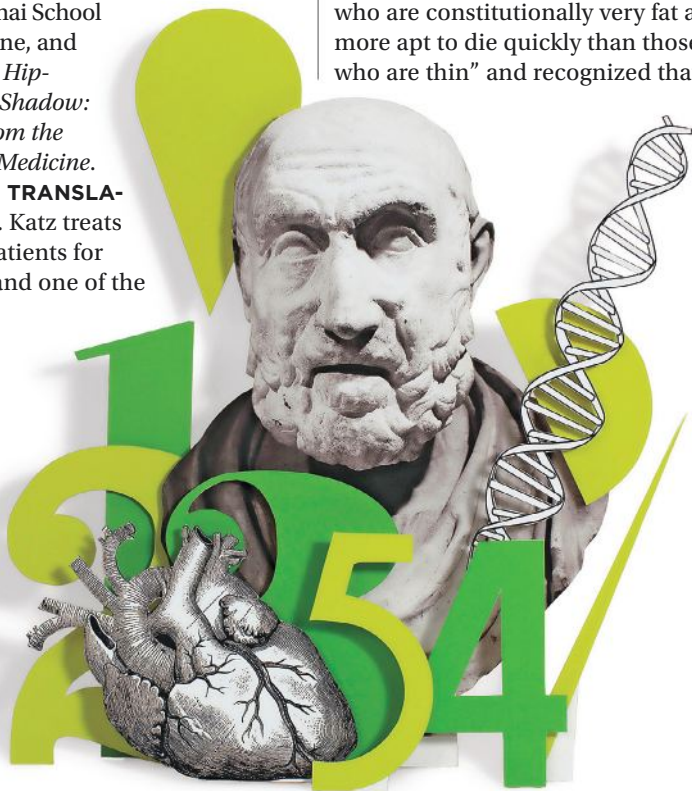
Hippocrates meticulously examined his patients' urine, stools, pus, and sweat. But he also observed their personalities, home environment, relationships, diet, and even their facial expressions before diagnosing and treating them. "He believed that it was impossible to understand illness without understanding the whole person," says David H. Newman, MD, director of clinical research, Department of Emergency Medicine, Mount Sinai School of Medicine, and author of *Hippocrates' Shadow: Secrets from the House of Medicine*.

TODAY'S TRANSLATION: Dr. Katz treats a lot of patients for obesity, and one of the

first things he asks is whether they have toxic relationships, a stressful job, or poor sleep. "There's no way for these people to lose weight until they fix these issues," he says. "You've got to find out what's setting a problem in motion, then reverse engineer it. When you treat the whole person, weight loss—and many other medical problems—becomes astonishingly easy to deal with."

3 Let Food Be Thy Medicine.

Hippocrates observed that "those who are constitutionally very fat are more apt to die quickly than those who are thin" and recognized that



when people ate mainly a fresh, plant-based diet, they developed fewer diseases. His primary form of treatment was usually improving a patient's diet.

TODAY'S TRANSLATION: No matter what eating style you follow, if it's based on unprocessed foods, colorful plants, and little added sugar, you're likely to be healthier and live longer, says cardiologist Joel K. Kahn, MD, a *Reader's Digest* columnist and the author of *The Holistic Heart Book*. Consider this powerful research: A 2013 study of more than 7,000 people published in the *New England Journal of Medicine* found that those who ate a Mediterranean-style diet were 30 percent less likely to suffer a

stroke or heart attack than those assigned to follow a low-fat diet. The link between food and health has to do with epigenetics, the study of how lifestyle and environment influence the expression of your genes. Processed foods with sugar, animal saturated fats and trans fats, and artificial chemicals can activate disease-causing genes that might have stayed dormant otherwise; they also lack the healthy nutrients that activate protective genes, says Dr. Kahn.

4 Everything in Moderation.

OK, what Hippocrates really said: "Everything in excess is opposed to nature." He recognized that the same



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remedy could heal in one dose but harm in a greater one. For example, he prescribed wine as part of a healthy diet and to combat pain in childbirth. But Hippocrates also observed that his patients developed gout if they continually drank to excess. When he convinced them to temper their habits, the inflammatory disease disappeared.

TODAY'S TRANSLATION: "We all love to take good things to the extreme," says Dr. Katz. "But exercise, water, supplements, and sleep can all be damaging if you overdo them." Even too much kale can be harmful because it can prevent your thyroid from absorbing the iodine it needs.

5 To Do Nothing Is Also a Good Remedy.


In Hippocrates' day, many quacks convinced sick people to undergo dangerous, unnecessary, and expensive procedures. "But Hippocrates believed that unless you had real evidence that a medical treatment was helpful, you shouldn't use it," says Dr. Newman.

TODAY'S TRANSLATION: In this age of advanced medicine, it's harder than ever for doctors to resist ordering tests, procedures, and treatments—even if they're unnecessary. "I often point out to my patients that the best diagnostic tool we have is time," explains Dr. Katz. "If we don't know what to do, let's not just do 'something.' Doctors have a knee-jerk

reaction to order tests and procedures when they might even lead to harm." Back pain, for example, will often resolve itself within three months with such simple remedies as ice, heat, over-the-counter pain relievers, and gentle exercise.

"A patient may say, 'Look, I'm suffering, and you have to do something,' which creates a lot of pressure on doctors," says Richard J. Baron, MD, president of the American Board of Internal Medicine (ABIM) Foundation, a nonprofit established to improve medical professionalism. The result: pointless treatments like prescribing an antibiotic for a cold. "It certainly won't help, and it could cause an allergic reaction, a yeast infection, or dangerous diarrhea, not to mention antibiotic resistance," says Dr. Baron.

That's why it's essential that patients and doctors work together to avoid needless tests or drugs. If your doctor wants to prescribe medication at the first sign of high cholesterol or high blood pressure, ask if you can change your diet and exercise routine first, says Dr. Kahn.

The ABIM Foundation created a campaign called Choosing Wisely, in which dozens of specialty medical societies—from those of cardiologists to surgeons to gynecologists—developed lists of five procedures or tests doctors and patients should question. View them at choosingwisely.org/doctor-patient-lists. 



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Fiber Mistakes That Bother Your Belly

BY LIZ VACCARIELLO

☞ AH, FIBER. We don't eat nearly enough of you, despite research that shows how important you are for our digestive, metabolic, and cardiovascular health. (Most people fall way short of the recommended 21 to 25 grams a day for women and 30 to 38 grams a day for men.)

But the more I learned about fiber while researching my latest book, *21-Day Tummy*, the more I realized how poorly most of us—even some doctors and nutritionists—understand it. Eating too much of certain kinds of fiber can actually upset your belly. It's a problem my coauthor, registered dietitian Kate Scarlata, sees with her clients all the time. "People start eating high-fiber foods and wonder, Why does eating healthy hurt?" she says. Knowing how different fibers affect your belly can make a huge difference in your quality of life. Here's a primer.



■ **IF YOU HAVE DIARRHEA, WATCH FOR: INSOLUBLE FIBER**

Prone to frequent or unpredictable bathroom breaks? This type of “speeding” fiber may be your worst enemy, says Tamara Duker Freuman, RD, a New York City–based dietitian who works in a gastroenterology practice. Found in such foods as whole wheat, wheat and corn bran, leafy vegetables, broccoli, and tomatoes, insoluble fiber helps trigger bowel movements. Freuman advises patients with diarrhea to eat more soluble fiber instead (see examples below), an adjustment they have described as life changing.

■ **IF YOU’RE CONSTIPATED, WATCH FOR: SOLUBLE FIBER**

This fiber, abundant in such foods as oatmeal, beans, apples, strawberries, and blueberries, helps slow down digestion (the opposite of what insoluble fiber does). This makes it ideal for people with diarrhea—but less so for those who are constipated. People prone to constipation often do well with a mix of both insoluble and soluble fiber.

■ **IF YOU HAVE GAS AND BLOATING, WATCH FOR: FRUCTAN AND GOS FIBER**

These groups of fiber are like fast food for the bacteria in your large intestine. Bacteria break them down quickly, which can lead to uncomfortable gas and bloating. High-fructan foods include garlic, onions,

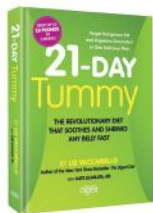
watermelon, cashews, and pistachios; inulin, an additive in many processed foods, is also high in fructan. High-GOS (galacto-oligosaccharides) foods are mainly beans. Keep in mind that these foods aren’t inherently unhealthy. But if your GI tract is sensitive to them, you may feel better if you cut back.

■ **IF YOU WORRY ABOUT EATING ENOUGH FIBER, WATCH FOR: FIBER-FORTIFIED FOODS**

If your doctor told you to eat more fiber, it might seem easy to just load up on the “functional” fiber added to many packaged goods. Everything from granola bars to cottage cheese is enriched with processed fiber that, especially in large quantities, can make you gassy and bloated. (Look for words like *inulin* and *chicory root extract* on ingredients labels.) Another issue: “The vast majority of scientific research supporting the health effects of fiber examined whole food sources,” says Freuman. “It’s far less clear whether added fiber offers all the same benefits as that from vegetables, fruits, beans, and whole grains.”


R

21-Day Tummy (Reader’s Digest, \$25.99) is available wherever books are sold. The plan reveals breakthrough foods to slim your waist and soothe your digestion.



Summer Skin: The Rules Have Changed

BY THE PHYSICIANS OF *THE DOCTORS*

 RECENT RESEARCH has revealed ways to make your daily sun protection habits even more effective, but unfortunately, many doctors don't talk to patients about such advice. When Wake Forest School of Medicine researchers recently analyzed 21 years of doctor-visit data, for example, they found that physicians discussed sunscreen in fewer than 1 percent of all appointments. We asked our trusted dermatologist colleagues to share their cutting-edge tips for healthier and younger-looking skin.

■ **OLD ADVICE:** Use a shot glass's worth of sunscreen to cover your body.

■ **NEW RULE:** Use the house-painting rule: Apply two coats. Who pours sunscreen into a shot glass, anyway? It's no wonder we're notorious for using too little. Research shows that most people apply only 25 to 50 percent of the amount used in testing, which results in an SPF that's about

one third of the one indicated on the label. For better coverage, follow the advice of Steven Wang, MD, director of dermatologic surgery and dermatology for Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center in Basking Ridge, New Jersey: "With the first coat, you don't put on enough or apply it evenly," he says. "A second coat can fix inadequate application and distribution."

■ **OLD ADVICE:** SPF 15 is perfectly fine.

■ **NEW RULE:** SPF 50 offers significantly better protection, especially over time. Dr. Wang explains that a sunscreen with SPF 15 allows 7 percent of UVB rays to be transmitted to your skin, while one with SPF 50 permits 2 percent of rays to pass through. This means that an SPF 15 sunscreen allows more than three times as many UVB rays as SPF 50, which makes a big difference when you consider cumulative exposure over months, years, and decades.

■ **OLD ADVICE:** It's most important to slather on sunscreen at the beach.

■ **NEW RULE:** Applying every day is crucial too. "It's not just typical 'weekend warrior' activities that lead to sun damage," says Ranella Hirsch, MD, a dermatologist in Boston.

"Everyday activities like driving and other short, regular exposures contribute significantly." Dartmouth researchers found that cumulative sun exposure contributed more to nonmelanoma skin cancer and signs of skin aging than sporadic damage (like that burn you got on your annual Florida getaway). This is why it's so important to apply sunscreen every morning as a habit. Add it to a routine you already have, such as shaving or applying makeup.

■ **OLD ADVICE:** Wear sunglasses.

■ **NEW RULE:** Make them wraparound, and wear a broad-brimmed hat. Smaller lenses or ones that aren't a close fit can let through up to

44 percent of UV rays, an *American Journal of Public Health* study discovered. In a Japanese study, even when sunglasses protected well from the front, UV light still got in through the sides, leading reviewers to recommend wraparound sunglasses or ones with side shields.

The hat will protect eyes from UV rays even more.

■ **OLD ADVICE:** Worry about sun exposure during the hours of 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.

■ **NEW RULE:** Early mornings and late afternoons can be dangerous too. Yes, UV rays are most damaging to your skin around midday. But a recent study found that long-term exposure of the eye to UV rays—which can cause eyelid cancers as well as cataracts and other eye conditions—occurs early (8 a.m. to 10 a.m.) and late (2 p.m. to 4 p.m.), when the sun's rays are more parallel to the eye. Wear sunglasses to protect your eyes and the skin around them, even if it's not super sunny. **R**



Cohost
and plastic
surgeon Drew
Ordon, MD

YOUR DAILY DOSE The health teams at *The Doctors* and *Reader's Digest* partner monthly to prescribe feel-great advice. Check local listings to watch the hit show every day.

THE DOCTORS

World of Medicine

Organic Milk Is More Nutritious

Researchers examined nearly 400 samples of whole milk from both conventional and organic U.S. dairies to compare levels of omega-6 fats and healthy omega-3s. In today's typical Western diets, people consume 15 times as many omega-6s as omega-3s, an imbalance that experts link with disease. Organic whole milk contained 62 percent more omega-3 fatty acids and 25 percent fewer omega-6s than conventional milk. Paying more for organic milk might be a good option, particularly for people who don't get their omega-3s from fish, research suggests.

How Exercise Helps Intimacy

Antidepressants often dampen libido, but a new study indicates that exercise may help women get back in the mood. When 52 women exercised for 30 minutes right before they had sex, they experienced a significant boost in sexual

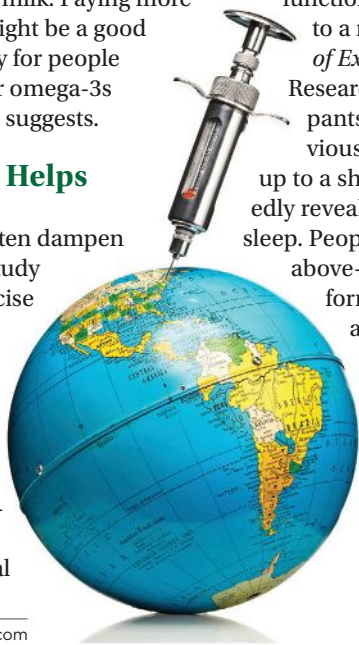
desire, University of Texas at Austin researchers found. By activating the "fight or flight" sympathetic nervous system, exercise boosts blood flow to the genital region, which can increase arousal. Physical activity also improves mood, lowering the number of days people feel depressed.

Energy Boost: Fake a Good Night's Sleep

Believing you slept well—even if you didn't—may improve cognitive

function the next day, according to a new study in the *Journal of Experimental Psychology*.

Researchers asked 164 participants how they'd slept the previous night, then hooked them up to a sham machine that purportedly revealed to scientists their REM sleep. People who were told they had above-average REM sleep performed better on cognitive and attention tasks than those who were told their REM sleep was below average, regardless of how they'd actually slept. So if you're tired, try not to dwell on it—that could make you feel even more exhausted.



Yearly Testing Prevents Lung Cancer Deaths

An estimated 22,000 of the nearly 160,000 annual deaths from lung cancer in the United States could be avoided if certain people received preventive CT scans, according to a new report from the U.S. Preventive Services Task Force, an independent panel of doctors and public health experts. For those at high risk, the benefits of detecting lung cancer earlier outweigh the potential risks of the tests, such as radiation exposure or a false-positive result. Current and former smokers ages 55 to 80 with a “pack-year” history of 30 or higher (roughly a pack a day for 30 years) should get yearly screenings.


Friends Don't Let Friends Drive Buzzed

A new review of more than 500,000 deadly collisions in the United States found that any amount of drinking before driving is unsafe. Researchers at the University of California, San Diego, found that drivers with a blood alcohol level of 0.01 (which can register after the consumption of just one beer) were 46 percent more likely to be responsible for a crash than completely sober drivers. The legal limit is 0.08, but even a level of 0.01 can slow down reaction times and alter cognition. Researchers are urging legislators to lower the legal limit and reminding designated drivers to abstain.

The Virus That Increases Stroke Risk

Having shingles at a young age may increase your risk of having a stroke or heart attack, according to new research in *Neurology*. After British researchers analyzed data from more than 300,000 people, they found that those who had the condition before age 40 had a 74 percent greater risk of a stroke and a 50 percent greater risk of a heart attack later in life than those who didn't develop shingles, even after they adjusted for factors like smoking and obesity. The risk wasn't as severe in patients who first had shingles at older ages.

“Smart Contacts” to Treat Diabetes

First came Google Glass, now Google contact lenses. Researchers at the technology giant have developed a prototype that embeds a tiny glucose sensor and a wireless chip within contact lenses to measure levels of glucose in tears. The lenses may help diabetes patients check glucose levels without pricking their finger to draw and test blood. Researchers are now investigating whether the lenses may serve as an early-warning system for abnormal glucose levels. One possible means of alert: integrated LEDs—so tiny, they would appear as flecks of glitter in your field of vision—that would light up if blood sugar levels got too high or too low. 



AMERICA'S FAVORITE PEANUT BUTTER

SUPER STOMACH-TURNING
ICK
Super Creamy
PEANUT BUTTER

Food-borne illnesses are escalating in the United States, and it's not because of a few unwashed spinach leaves. Foul conditions, lax regulations, and too few inspectors are threatening our safety. It's worse than you think.

HARD TO SWALLOW

BY BARRY ESTABROOK FROM *ONEARTH* MAGAZINE

ALL HIS LIFE, Paul Schwarz had been active and healthy. When his family imagined the various ways that the decorated veteran of World War II might eventually die, they never imagined that the cause would be a piece of cantaloupe.

On Tuesday, September 13, 2011, Schwarz, 92, complained to his daughter Janice of abdominal pains and a slight fever. She took him to his doctor, who said it was likely the stomach flu. By Thursday, the symptoms had worsened, and Schwarz had

developed diarrhea. Janice took him to the ER. Again, flu was the diagnosis, and he was sent home. For a few days, he improved. He called his son, also named Paul, that Sunday and cheerfully assured him that he'd eaten a big breakfast and felt a lot better.

But on Monday morning, the younger Paul received an urgent phone call. His father, unable to move his legs, had been rushed to the hospital. In the coming weeks, Schwarz's behavior grew erratic, and he began thrashing in his bed and behaving like a drunk. Within a month, he no longer recognized his son. On December 18, he passed away.

By then, the doctors had determined that he was suffering from invasive listeriosis, an infection caused by *Listeria monocytogenes*, a bacterium transmitted by eating contaminated meat, dairy products, or produce. The pathogen can lead to bacterial meningitis, an infection of the covering of the brain and spinal cord, which may cause headaches, confusion, and convulsions. It kills about one in six of those infected. Children, the elderly, people with depressed immune systems, and pregnant women are most vulnerable. Schwarz had

contracted listeriosis from eating contaminated cantaloupe in a fruit bowl he'd ordered at a restaurant that he visited after Mass each week.

Schwarz was but one of more than 100 patients suffering similar symptoms at the same time in 28 states. Eventually, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) would attribute 147 illnesses, 37 deaths, and one miscarriage to the listeria, making it the most lethal outbreak of food-

borne illness in the United States since 1924. While the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) oversees food safety for most meat and poultry products, the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) is charged with keeping the rest of our food supply safe. And for the Schwarz family, the FDA had clearly dropped the ball.

The 2011 listeria outbreak was not an isolated case. The United States is experiencing what amounts to an epidemic of food-borne illnesses. According to the



CDC, there are about 48 million cases of food poisoning a year, leading to more than 128,000 hospitalizations and more than 3,000 deaths. *E. coli* in spinach and fruit juice, salmonella in eggs and jalapeño peppers, listeria in cheese and bagged lettuce: The toll from food-borne bacteria is mind-numbing.

With the exception of *E. coli* infections, the rate of outbreaks from other pathogens tracked by the CDC rose from 2007 to 2011. The decline in *E. coli*-related illnesses is in part the result of strong actions taken by the USDA. Following an outbreak caused by tainted hamburger that killed four children in 1993, the agency declared *E. coli* 0157:H7, the strain that sickened the children, an adulterant, making it illegal for companies under USDA jurisdiction to sell food contaminated with the bacterium. But potentially fatal bacteria other than *E. coli* have yet to be declared adulterants.

It would be truly impossible for any government agency to prevent every case of food poisoning in our country. But in report after report, the Government Accountability Office (GAO) has uncovered woeful shortcomings within the FDA. Its product-recall process is ineffective and confusing. It has done a poor job of dealing with

the overuse of antibiotics in livestock feed. It lacks the scientific capacity to perform its duties. Even when it uncovers health violations at food-processing plants, the FDA takes enforcement action in about half of the cases and almost never imposes fines, making it logical for corporations to risk making people ill, since the worst they can expect is a warning letter.

By the time doctors diagnosed Schwarz with listeriosis, the FDA had zeroed in on the source of the contaminant—a farm in Colorado owned by brothers Eric and Ryan Jensen. Inspectors descended on Jensen Farms three times during September 2011. Conditions could hardly have been more favorable for listeria, which thrives in moist areas.

There was no system for precooling the picked cantaloupes; this allowed condensation to form on their rinds as they were refrigerated. Water stood in puddles on the floor. The washing and drying machinery was rigged in a way that made it all but impossible to clean, so corrosion, dirt, and “product buildup” remained even after the machinery supposedly had been sanitized. Finally, Jensen washed its fruits in only water, using no chlorine or other antimicrobial solution that might have killed the listeria.

Jensen issued a recall on September

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Corporations risk making people ill, since the worst they can expect from the FDA is a warning letter.

”

14, but the damage had been done. On October 18, more than a month after its initial investigations, the FDA issued a warning letter to the company (which eventually filed for bankruptcy). If there ever was an example of too little too late, this was it.

Until people started dropping dead, the Jensen facility had never once in its 20-year history been inspected by the FDA, even though the agency considers fresh produce to be “high risk” and a priority for inspection. Like most produce companies, Jensen used third-party auditors to certify its handling systems. On July 25, at about the same time the first people were sickened by contaminated cantaloupe, one auditor visited Jensen for four hours and blessed the plant with a “superior” rating of 96 percent.

The FDA often seems to adopt a “see no evil” approach to potential problems. In 2010, eggs from two Iowa-based companies, Hillandale Farms and Wright County Egg, sickened almost 2,000 people in 11 states with salmonella, a bacterium that can produce fever, stomach cramps, and diarrhea and can result in death. The outbreak led to the recall of 170 million eggs, the largest such recall in American history. When FDA inspectors visited Wright County Egg, owned by Austin DeCoster, in August 2010 after determining that its products were partly responsible for the outbreak, they found barns

infested with mice, flies, and maggots. Manure pits were leaking. In some areas, manure was piled eight feet high. Hens used the heaps as ramps to access laying boxes. Wild birds, which are potential carriers of salmonella, fluttered about. The barns were littered with dead, decaying chickens.

What’s shocking is that farms owned by DeCoster were involved in an outbreak that occurred in the Northeast in 1987. The contamination that sickened 500 and killed nine was caused by eggs from farms owned by DeCoster. In the early 1990s, Maryland regulators banned the sale of DeCoster eggs in the state after they were found to be contaminated with salmonella. The company had so many environmental and safety violations that Iowa declared it a “habitual” offender. Despite the red flags, the FDA did not inspect DeCoster’s Iowa barns until after the 2010 outbreak. And when FDA inspectors discovered “serious deviations” from food-safety laws, the agency’s punishment consisted of a warning letter saying that failure to initiate prompt “corrective actions” could lead to “regulatory action being taken.” In November, one month after the letter was mailed, the FDA allowed DeCoster to resume selling fresh eggs.

Following a 2007 salmonella outbreak in which 425 people in 44 states were sickened by peanut butter produced by ConAgra and sold under the Peter Pan and Great Value brands, the FDA intensified its inspection activity

at peanut-processing facilities. Unfortunately, the agency missed a plant owned by the Peanut Corporation of America in Blakely, Georgia. It was a deadly omission. In 2008 and 2009, products from that plant sickened 714 people in 46 states and Canada and killed nine. When they did arrive, FDA inspectors found mold on the walls and processing equipment covered in slime.

Investigators for a congressional committee turned up something even more worrisome: internal e-mails indicating that Peanut Corporation's owner, Stewart Parnell, not only knew about the salmonella at his plant but also ordered products that had tested positive for the bacterium to be shipped. "Turn them loose," Parnell wrote in one message to a plant manager. He added that results showing contamination would cost the company "huge \$\$\$\$\$." In a rare instance of prosecutorial vigor, the FDA, which lacks authority to file criminal charges on its own, teamed up with the Justice Department to pursue a case, yet four years passed before charges were filed. (Parnell has pleaded not guilty.) In the meantime, the lawsuit-besieged Peanut Corporation filed for bankruptcy. "I have never seen a clearer case that demanded criminal prosecution," says William Marler, a Seattle-based

attorney who has represented food-poisoning victims in court for 20 years.

Marler says that during the past 20 years, the FDA has only twice succeeded in pursuing a significant criminal case. In 1998, for example, Odwalla, a fruit-juice bottler based in California, pleaded guilty to 16 misdemeanor charges and agreed to pay fines totaling \$1.5 million—hardly an onerous penalty, given that the company's *E. coli*-tainted apple juice killed a Colorado toddler. Three years later, Odwalla's owners sold out to Coca-Cola for \$181 million.

“
***Most of the
 seafood eaten
 here is imported,
 but the FDA tests
 only 0.1 percent
 of it for banned
 chemicals.***

The FDA's responsibilities also include inspecting seafood sold in the

United States. Eighty-four percent of it is now imported, and half of the imports are from Asia. Fish farmers there produce huge volumes of shrimp, catfish, and tilapia in grossly polluted and overcrowded ponds, thanks to antibiotics and fungicides banned in the United States because they can cause antibiotic resistance or spark allergic reactions when consumed by humans or because they are carcinogens. The FDA is charged with keeping drug-tainted fish out of our food supply, but according to a 2011 GAO report, the agency is hardly trying: The FDA tested only one out of 1,000 imported

seafood products—or 0.1 percent—for 16 chemicals. By contrast, Canada tests 50 out of every 1,000 products for over 40 chemicals; Japan tests 110 out of every 1,000 for 57.

This lack of oversight not only leaves the American public vulnerable but also threatens our once-thriving catfish industry. Bill Battle, until recently the president of the Catfish Farmers of America, has had to sell over 1,000 of his 3,000 acres in recent years. The problem: competition from cheaper, Asia-raised fish. Battle doesn't begrudge foreign farmers the advantages of warmer weather and cheaper labor, but he strongly objects to their being allowed to sell fish raised with the help of chemicals banned here. "I wouldn't be cutting back hours, selling land, or draining ponds if the FDA had done its job," he says.

The state of Alabama became so frustrated with the FDA that it initiated its own testing program for imported seafood. Of the 258 samples tested between 2002 and 2010, nearly half were positive for banned drugs, according to Lance Hester, director of the food safety section of the Alabama Department of Agriculture and Industries. American producers eventually lobbied to have jurisdiction over the inspection of both imported and domestic catfish moved from the FDA to the USDA, which has a more robust inspection system. Although the 2014 Farm Bill reauthorized this change, opponents in Congress still seek its

appeal. Battle suspects that critics are reluctant to disrupt trade and diplomatic relations with Vietnam, which supplies more than three fourths of the catfish imported into the United States. "I guess politics trumps food safety," he says. "Apparently, we are going to let [Asian fish] come here and possibly kill people—and certainly kill the industry."

If there is an enforcement arm for food safety in the United States, it's trial lawyers like Marler, an intense workaholic who estimates that his firm, Marler Clark, has won more than \$600 million for clients since he filed his first lawsuits in the early 1990s. As he sees it, the FDA is being slowly starved of the resources and manpower required to fulfill its mandate. In the 1970s, the agency conducted 35,000 inspections of food-processing plants each year. Today, it inspects fewer than 8,000, although the number of facilities under its jurisdiction has skyrocketed.

Recognizing that business-as-usual was failing, the FDA began drawing up a proposal to improve its performance following a series of outbreaks from 2006 through 2008, according to David Acheson, MD, the former associate commissioner at the agency and now a food-industry consultant. Dr. Acheson says that the agency has a "huge problem with a lack of personnel and resources in general, which is a direct consequence of a lack of money." The FDA employs about 1,000 food

inspectors, who cover 421,000 facilities. The USDA has about 7,000 inspectors for about 7,000 facilities, and a USDA inspector is present at every operating slaughterhouse or poultry processor. "If you look at the enormous number of places that are growing, processing, manufacturing, holding, distributing, or selling food versus the number of inspectors at the FDA, inspections are not going to happen very often," Dr. Acheson says. "This can lead to a get-away-with-it mentality." He adds

that the agency "carries a very small stick" with which to punish violators, although this may be changing.

In 2007, Dr. Acheson and a group of agency associates drew up a plan to radically realign the FDA's efforts. It would shift the agency's focus from responding to outbreaks to preventing them. It called for the creation of clear standards and for training food-industry personnel on how to meet them. Inspection would play a part, but site visits would be targeted,



with frequency based on the risks of a product's poisoning people. "Some products, like bananas (because the fruit is in a protective skin), are inherently safe," Dr. Acheson says. "Products like lettuce, spinach, and tomatoes, which are right out of the fields, are less safe. Some places you need to visit regularly, others every five years and you'd be fine." The plan would also speed up and streamline the response to outbreaks.

This plan became the basis for the Food Safety Modernization Act, which passed in early 2011 but has yet to take effect. The act gives the FDA new authority, including the power to revoke the registration of a company and prevent it from selling its products. Dr. Acheson says that sterner civil penalties and higher fines in early drafts were stripped out by legislators.

Maybe the plague of food-borne illness in this country has not yet affected the right people needed to force real change in the system. "It's mind-boggling," says Paul Schwarz Jr. of

his father's experience with listeria. "After all my dad gave for this country, the government was not there for him when he needed it. I keep asking, Why did it happen to him? To us? The answer is that you never know when it will happen to someone close to you. Nothing is perfect in life, but you can try to do the best you can, and we're not doing that. Maybe it will take a congressman losing a loved one before food safety gets the attention it deserves."

UPDATE: *In September 2013, Eric and Ryan Jensen—co-owners of Jensen Farms, which supplied the tainted cantaloupe—were charged by federal authorities with introducing adulterated foods into interstate commerce. Both men pleaded guilty, but their attorneys said that did not imply intentional wrongdoing or knowledge that the fruit was contaminated. In January, the Jensens were sentenced to five years' probation. Paul Schwarz Jr. said while he does not agree with the sentence, he accepts it.* **R**

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COMING IN THE JUNE ISSUE

AMERICA'S SLEEP CRISIS

Sleep deprivation now rivals obesity and smoking as our greatest public health risk.

The Woman Who Gave Two Kidneys

Julie Stitt's husband and father both needed a kidney. How could she save them?

The Little Boat That Sailed Through Time

An *RD* Classic from 1993

PLUS: Dave Barry on manliness

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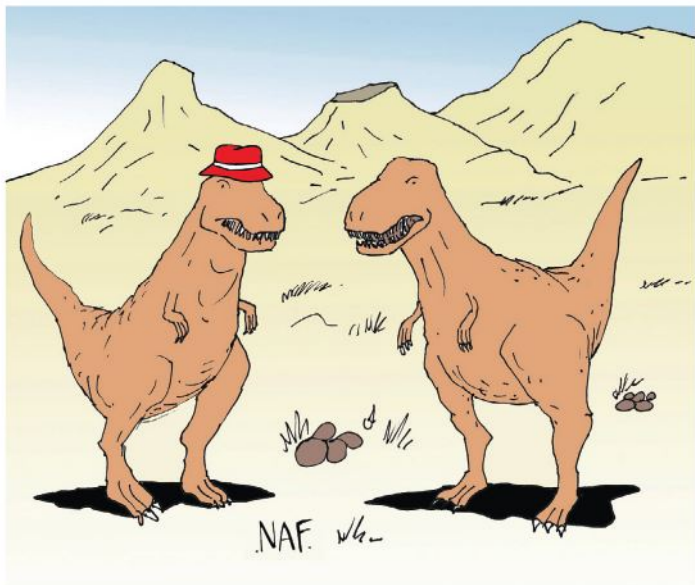
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Laughter

THE BEST MEDICINE



"I love your hat. One question: How did you put it on?"

SWIMMING IS A confusing sport, because sometimes you do it for fun, and other times you do it to not die.

Comedian **DEMETRI MARTIN**

I HIDE PHOTOS on my computer of me petting animals at the zoo in a file named *Fireworks and vacuums* so my dog won't find them.

@ELITERRY

CROSSWORD PUZZLE answers you'd never get right:

- Star of *Gravity* (Newton)
- You say potato, I say __ (carbsmakemefat)
- Turned water into wine (ernestandjulio)
- Number of wheels on an 18-wheeler (goingtoofasttocount)
- Etsy, Russian (nyetsy)

Source: *Esquire*

“GIVE ME A SENTENCE about a public servant,” the teacher instructed her second-grade student.

“The fireman came down the ladder pregnant,” he answered.

“Umm ... Do you know what pregnant means?”

“Yes,” said the boy. “It means carrying a child.”

EARL B. CHILD, *Roy, Utah*

T NOW! What do we want? MORE TIME-TRAVEL JOKES! When do we want them? RIGH **@JOHNFREILER**

WHILE AT A CONVENTION, Bill, Jim, and Scott shared a hotel suite on the 75th floor. After a long day of meetings, they were shocked to find that the hotel elevators were broken and that they’d have to climb all the way up to their room.

“I have a way to break the monotony,” said Bill. “I’ll tell jokes for 25 flights, Jim can sing songs for the next 25, and Scott can tell sad stories the rest of the way.”

As they started walking up, Bill told his first joke. At the 26th floor, Jim began to sing. At the 51st floor, it was Scott’s turn.

“I will tell my saddest story first,” he said. “Once there was a man who left the room key in the car.”

NOAH JORGENSEN, *Silsbee, Texas*

Noah got \$100 for the joke above. You, too, can be rolling in the dough. See page 7 for details, or go to rd.com/submit.



EDIBLE COMPLEX

Gags for the carnivores and herbivores in your life.

FOR MEAT EATERS:

Why does vegan cheese taste bad? It hasn’t been tested on mice.

Did you hear about the vegan devil worshiper? He sold his soul to seitan.

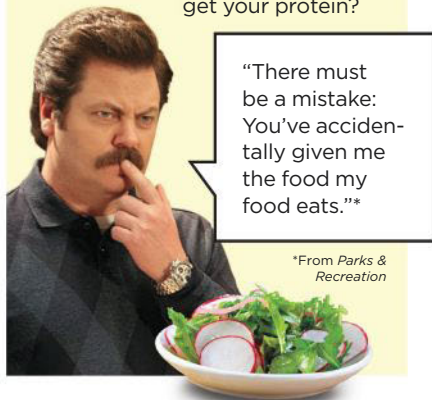
How did the pioneers refer to vegetarians? “Lousy hunters.”

FOR VEGANS:

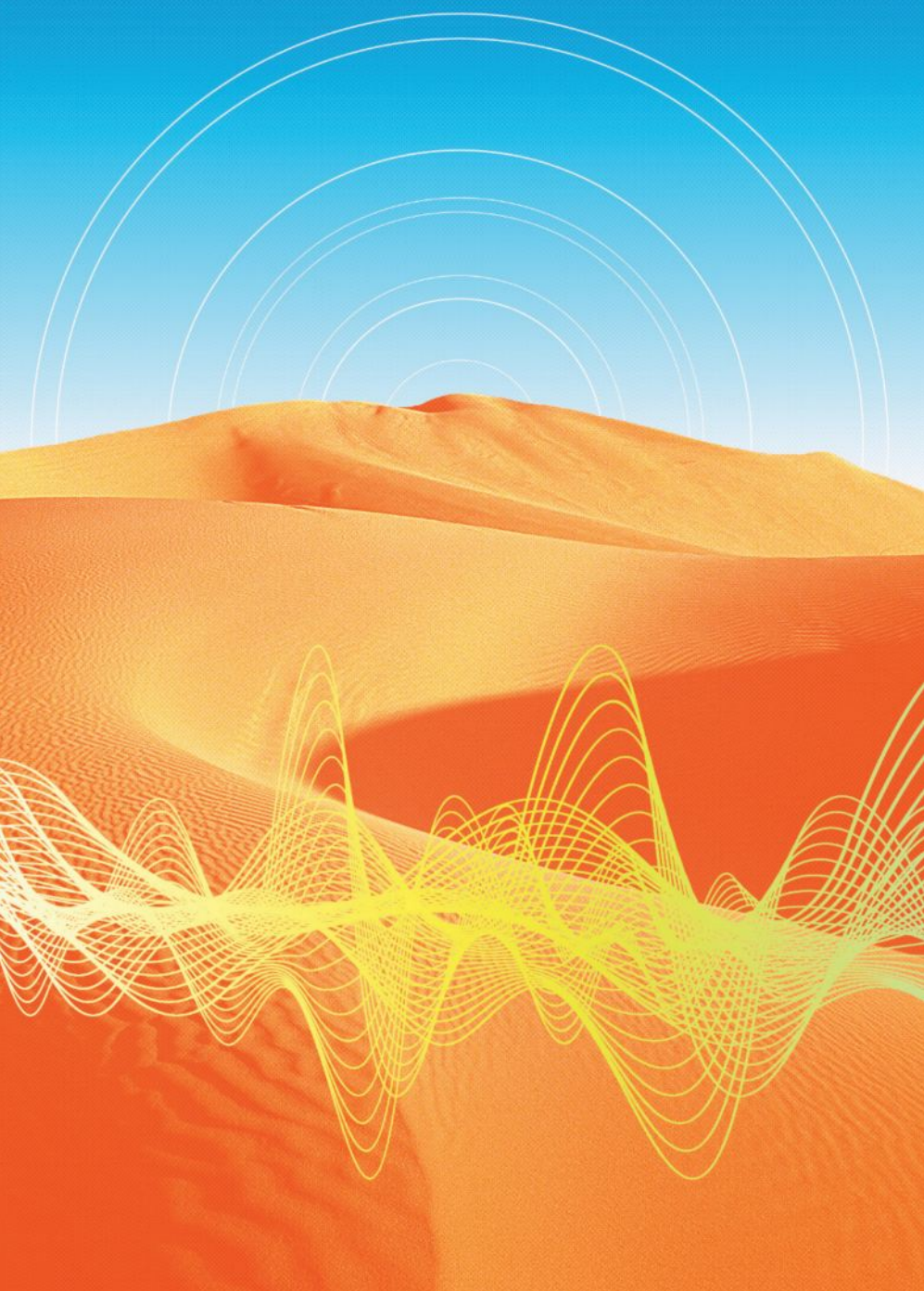
What do you call a dumb carnivore? A meathead.

How many carnivores does it take to change a lightbulb? None. They prefer to stay in the dark.

How many vegetarians does it take to screw in a lightbulb? I don’t know, but where do you get your protein?



**From Parks & Recreation*



Treats for our ears are everywhere—
we just have to pay attention.
A leading aural researcher chimes in.

SONIC WONDERS OF THE WORLD

BY TREVOR COX ADAPTED FROM *THE SOUND BOOK*

SPEECH SPUN around the inside of the curved sewer like a motorcyclist performing in a wall of death. I have worked in architectural acoustics for 25 years, yet this ordinary sewer contained a reverberant sound effect I had not heard before.

As I slogged around, I realized that distortions can sometimes be wonderful. Despite having studied sound intensely for decades, I had been missing something. I had been so busy trying to remove unwanted noise that I had forgotten to listen to the sounds themselves.

By the time I emerged through a manhole onto a leafy suburban street, I'd decided I wanted to find more unusual acoustic effects. And not just the ugly ones. I wanted to experience the most surprising, unexpected, and sublime sounds—the sonic wonders of the world.

My search morphed into a full-blown quest, taking me all over the globe. I also set up an interactive website, sonicwonders.org, to invite suggestions and catalog my discoveries. Here are seven of my favorites.

MOJAVE DESERT **Singing Sand Dunes**

Find the right slope, and as you climb up Kelso Dunes, the sand will honk like a badly played tuba. Scoot down on your backside to create a mini “avalanche,” and the whole surface will vibrate, sounding like an aircraft taxiing down the runway. This rare phenomenon is caused by the shape, size, and coating of the sand grains.

MEXICO **Mayan Pyramid That Chirps**


If you clap your hands in front of the Temple of Kukulcan in Chichén Itzá, you’ll hear a chirping echo like a bird-call. This effect is caused by sound bouncing off the pyramid’s stair treads. Kukulcan was built around the 11th century, and acoustician David Lubman has suggested that the echo was used by Mayans during ceremonies to mimic the sacred and venerated quetzal bird.

SERENGETI **Gong Rock**

What did the world sound like to our prehistoric ancestors? Sound is ephemeral, but musical artifacts provide some clues. The Gong Rock rings with a harsh metallic clang when struck with another stone. Hammered indents on this and other large boulders show us that they were struck and played in the past. Although getting exact dates for these marks is difficult, some are assumed to date back to antiquity.

NEW YORK CITY **Whispering Walls In Grand Central Terminal**

If you whisper into one side of the tiled arch outside the entrance to the terminal’s famous Oyster Bar & Restaurant, your words will seamlessly follow the curve of the ceiling and come back down to be heard on the other side. For the best effect, the whisperer and listener need to get



close to the stone, like naughty children standing in opposite corners of a classroom. The arch is a popular place for marriage proposals.

CALIFORNIA **Civic Musical Road**

In the city of Lancaster, a road plays the “March of the Swiss Soldiers” from Rossini’s *William Tell* Overture. No electronics are involved: The music is made by the vibrations of car wheels. How? The road is a bit like a rumble strip (those ridges at the edge of a highway that make a sound alerting drivers to danger). The musical road takes the rumble strip one step further by spacing the corrugations in a pattern that creates the tune.

KOREA **The Divine Bell**

When large bells ring, their shape often creates a distinct warble. Most Western foundries want to avoid

this kind of tremor, but in Korea, it’s believed to be an important part of the sound quality. The Divine Bell of King Seongdeok, cast in AD 771, is now housed in the Gyeongju National Museum. It peals like a crying child; the reason, according to legend, is that the bell’s maker had to sacrifice his daughter in order to get it to ring.

SCOTLAND **The World’s Longest Echo**

The Inchindown oil storage tanks were dug into a hillside north of Invergordon in Ross-shire, Scotland, amid concerns that German bombing during WWII would interrupt the supply of shipping fuel to the Royal Navy. Each concrete tank is twice the length of a soccer field, with a high arched roof. If you were to play a single note on a baritone saxophone in one of these tanks, the sound would reverberate for nearly two minutes after you stopped playing. **R**

Crushed

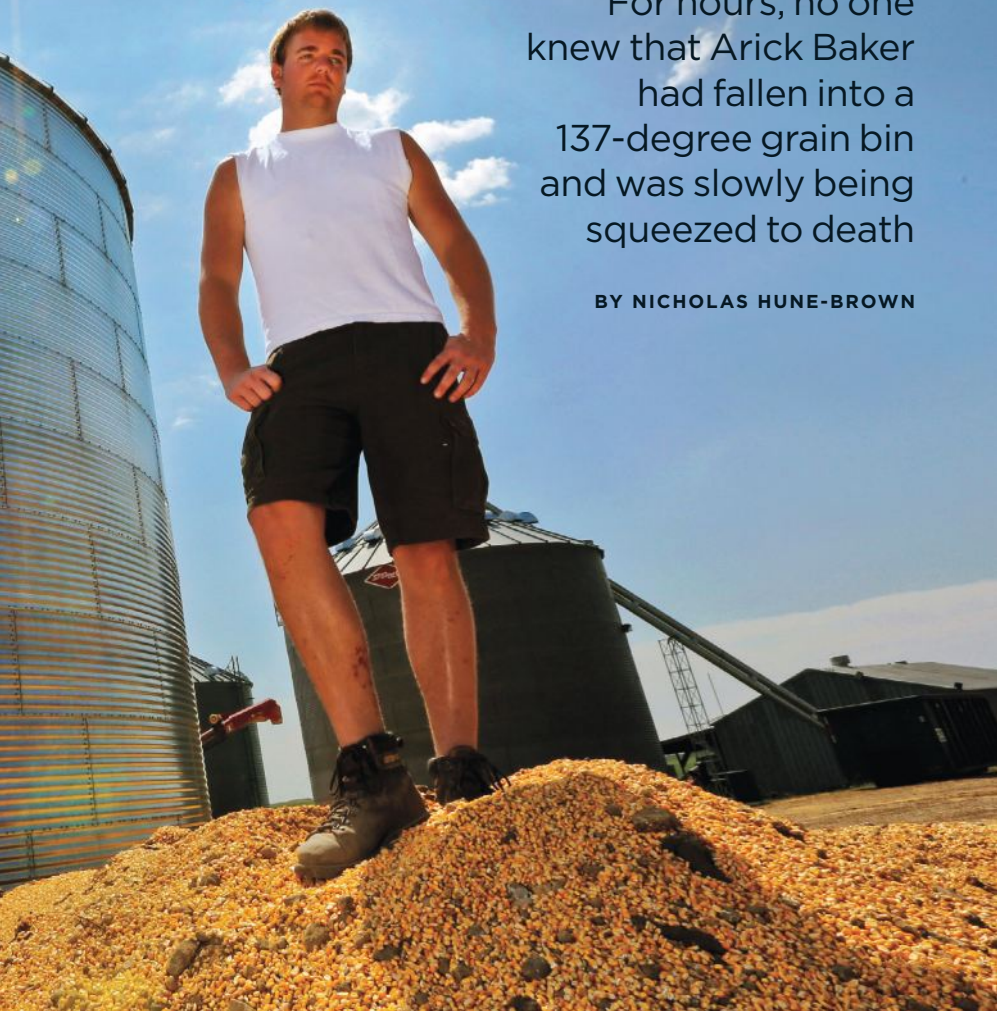


DRAMA IN REAL LIFE

by Corn

For hours, no one knew that Arick Baker had fallen into a 137-degree grain bin and was slowly being squeezed to death

BY NICHOLAS HUNE-BROWN



Ever since Arick Baker was a kid, his father had warned him: **“If you go down in the corn, you don’t come out.”**

The enormous grain bins that dot the Iowa landscape store enough dried corn to swallow up a body completely, squeezing the breath and life from a person in seconds. Accidents happen, and they’re often fatal. In 2010 alone, 26 Americans were killed in silo accidents. For the firefighters of Iowa, more often than not, a trip to a grain bin isn’t a rescue operation—it’s a recovery mission.

On a Wednesday last June, however, 23-year-old Baker wasn’t thinking about the risks. With his dad, Rick, getting older and the only other farmhand over 70, Baker was increasingly responsible for the farm’s most unpleasant tasks. His first time cleaning out a dusty silo had taken all day Monday and Tuesday, and now he was just trying to finish the job.

That morning, while his father and another driver took turns hauling away truckloads of grain, Baker stood in the 60,000-bushel bin using a length of PVC pipe to try to break up the chunks of rotten corn that were blocking the flow. It was a sweltering day, and it was 137 degrees inside the massive cylinder of corrugated steel. Baker is

asthmatic, so his dad had given him a battery-powered ventilation mask with a visor and a cloth that he tied under his chin. The mask didn’t make oxygen, but at least it filtered out all the dust kicked up while Baker worked ankle deep in the corn.

Around 10:30 that morning, Baker’s dad left his spot on the roof, where he’d been keeping an eye on his son, to turn off the auger, the rotating screwlike device that was churning at the base of the silo, moving the kernels of corn out of the bin and into the waiting truck. With the load complete, Baker’s father drove off. Just seconds later, Baker felt the corn beneath his feet give way.

He didn’t know it then, but he had broken through a chunk of rotten corn that had solidified into a bridge with a cavernous air pocket beneath it. That pocket was now filling up fast, drawing in the corn—and Baker along with it, until it was up to his knees, then his waist. He had a rope wrapped around his right arm, and he held on as tightly as he could, but it was useless. The corn was like quicksand, dragging him down, and



Baker standing close to the spot where he was buried for four hours

he could only watch helplessly as the cord slipped out of his gloved hands. “Dad!” Baker yelled once. He took a deep breath. Darkness, silence. He was down in the corn.

Baker was stuck firm, his left arm pointed straight up, with just his fingertips poking out of the corn. The pressure on his body was enormous. For Baker, it was an awful sensation, to feel himself squeezed with equal force across every inch of his body. It felt like being strangled by a thousand boa constrictors. He tried to move his leg an inch, but the corn would rush back in to fill the void, packing him in even tighter. Every breath was exhausting. He was hyperventilating, which didn’t help either. Still, he was breathing. His

mask seemed to be doing just enough. But how long could the batteries last? Three hours? Then what?

My father must know by now I’m down here, Baker reasoned. Surely he’d figure it out. But a second thought kept gnawing at him: What if the second driver came back and turned on the augur? The gearbox was just inches from Baker’s extended right foot. He’d be sucked into the machinery.

Hours crept by, and Baker kept himself from going crazy by thinking about everything he would miss. Just the weekend before, Baker and his friends had driven out to Lake of the

Ozarks. They'd rented a pontoon and gone over to Party Cove. It was one of the best weekends of his life. And to think that now it could all be over ... He'd never get to talk to his friends, some of whom had moved away from Iowa and would learn about his death over Facebook. He'd never find out what might happen with that girl he'd just started chatting with—the girl who, at the very moment he was slowly suffocating alone, was texting him: “Did you die, mister, or are you just not talking with me today?”

At a certain point, Baker resigned himself to death. Filling his lungs seemed to take more strength than he had, the slightest swelling of his chest meeting the unbending resistance of the mountain of corn pushing in from all around him. He was tired of fighting, and he began drifting in and out of consciousness.

At 10:32 that morning, just moments after driving away, Baker's father had left his son a phone message: “Hey, Arick. Like a jackass, I forgot to wait to make sure you got out OK. Give me a call when you get this.” Two hours later, when he still hadn't gotten a reply, Baker's dad called the other truck driver and told him to check on

his son before restarting the augur. When the driver looked inside the silo, there was no sign of Baker, just his rope dangling limply from the top of the bin down into the corn. That's when he flagged down a passing state patrolman.

It was 12:45 when the Iowa Falls Volunteer Fire Department reached the farm. Fifteen-year veteran Tyler Prochaska and another firefighter, Jason Barrick, immediately lowered themselves into the bin. It was still. Silent. They scuffed through the stifflingly hot, gloomily lit structure for a few minutes before radioing back

the bad news: “If the kid's in here, he must be dead, because I don't see him or hear him.”

Then, from down in the corn directly beneath their feet, a yell: “I'm alive, I'm alive, I'm alive!”

Prochaska and Barrick sunk to their knees and began digging like dogs. They could hear Baker down beneath them, counting out loud for some reason, and they followed the sound of his voice. Prochaska was elbow deep before he found the young farmer's outstretched hand.

“Finally,” Prochaska would say later, “I grabbed something that grabbed me back.”

Knowing that Baker was still alive

“
*The firefighter
 said, “If the
 kid's in here, he
 must be dead,
 because I don't
 hear him.”*

galvanized the firefighters, who piled into the bin to help. The digging, however, was slow, and Baker's initial euphoria at being discovered began to fade. With his head peeking out of the corn, it was clear that he was at the center of a funnel, the grain piled high and precariously around him. Five times, Prochaska and Barrick uncovered Baker's



Baker shows a gash cut into the silo to release grain.

head, and five times something shifted and the grain avalanched down onto him, plunging him back into the terrifying darkness all over again. They dug again, working to the sound of the intermittent beeping coming from his mask as the batteries died.

The firefighters brought in the grain-bin rescue tube—a metal cylinder with detachable panels designed to contain the victim and relieve some of the pressure. It was only recently purchased, and now they were putting it to the test.

Prochaska and Barrick pushed sections of the tube down into the corn around Baker, forming a barrier, then climbed in with him, taking turns scooping out the grain with their hands, their helmets, whatever else they could use.

Prochaska wedged himself into the tube, using his body like a jack to keep the barriers from collapsing. Even so, one of the barriers buckled, letting grain trickle in, so Prochaska jammed his back against the leak. Paramedics urged Barrick and Prochaska to take a break after working for two and a half hours in the broiling silo, but they refused to leave Baker's side. If we move, he's gone, Prochaska thought.

Meanwhile, more than 120 volunteer firefighters from across the county as well as local farmers gathered around the bin, ready to help. Using saws and torches, they cut holes into the base of the bin to try to empty the container, though the grain only trickled out. Volunteers took shifts, shoveling out the grain that pooled beneath the openings. It was slow going until

Baker's dad, who'd arrived earlier, used a neighbor's bulldozer to clear the debris.

The rescue was in its third hour, around four o'clock, and Baker was still skeptical he would make it. And then it happened. In one swift motion, rescuers freed his leg and pulled him up and out of the rescue tube, alive, where he collapsed onto Prochaska. Baker sobbed as the two men hugged and then fell to the ground, too exhausted to support their own weight.

A month later, the Baker family held a dinner for the rescuers. Remarkably, Baker had recovered over two days in the hospital without lasting damage. Doctors had pumped him full of liquids and extracted corn kernels embedded in his skin. His heart had been pushed to the limit, they told him.

"They said if I had been five years

older, my heart would have exploded," says Baker. "If I had been five years younger, I would have been crushed." At the dinner, Baker and Prochaska shared hugs and tears before diving in to pork loin and comparing notes on the ordeal. Between the toasts, Prochaska had a question: "Why were you counting out loud?" he asked Baker. "Were you timing us?"

Baker laughed. "I wasn't counting anything," he said. "I just didn't have anything else to say."

For the most part, Baker has put his experience in the silo behind him, as if it were a surreal dream rather than the actual near-death experience it was. Keeping the memory smooth and tidy, the edges rounded off.

Sometimes, though, a heavy feeling comes over him, and he'll slump under pressure and an awful helplessness. For a second, he'll be there—back in the darkness, down in the corn. **R**



DATING FOR PUNSTERS

Reddit.com asked users to share the cheesiest pickup lines they'd ever heard. We were all ears.

- "Are you Google? Because you are everything I'm searching for."
- [*Holds out hand*] "Hey, I'm going for a walk. Will you hold this for me?"
- "There are 21 letters in the alphabet, right? Oh, wait—I forgot U R A Q T."

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... To Be A Personal Assistant *(for the rich and famous)*

BY AMY CRAY, AS TOLD TO MAYA MIRSKY, FROM THE *BILLFOLD*

LOYALTY IS A BIG PART of what my clients look for in an assistant. You cannot have someone in this position who doesn't come with incredible recommendations, because she knows more about your investments than you do. She is managing your nannies or the people working on your house. You're placing her in control of everything in your life.

My clients have ranged from Hollywood screenwriters to surgeons and entrepreneurs. Now I work for a famous writer in San Francisco. I carry my clients' credit cards and purchase all sorts of things on their behalf. It's normal for me to charge \$6,000 or write a check for \$400,000 and not even think about it. My boss and I

will talk about holiday bonuses for the staff, and I'll say, "How much did we give the housekeeper last year?" Later I'll think, Oh my god, it's crazy that that's a normal thing for me to ask. The spending thing is more confusing for my family than for me.

I come home with these crazy experiences: I took a new \$90,000 BMW

out for a spin. My family is kind of like, “What is this life that you live?” My daughter will say, “Why did they get to go to London over spring break, and we went to Nana’s house?” But I think she understands the concept that these kids live a different life from the one we do. She also knows that they aren’t any happier than we are. In

fact, I would say my clients are usually less happy than anyone I know in my income bracket.

Don’t get me wrong—I can see the perks of throwing money at something. But I’m never jealous of it. Ultimately, that ability doesn’t outweigh the benefit of having time with the people who love you for you, not because you’re famous.

My yearly salary is in the \$80,000 to \$125,000 range, plus health, retirement, and bonuses. My wife, who works in nonprofit to support home-

I can see the perks of throwing money at something. But I’m never jealous of it.

less and low-income families, makes less. We always say we actually do the same job. But she does it for people with no money and no homes. I’ve worked for some people and felt like I was helping make the world a worse place. I felt guilty about that. A lot of my job is doing frivolous and superfluous tasks like “Oh, can you book the tickets to Dubai?” My wife and I feel that between her job and mine, it’s a comfortable equality for our family. She’s working to “save the people.” It evens out. **R**

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That's Outrageous!

POOR SPORTS

A BRITISH fisherman won a trophy and \$1,300 when he landed the largest bass during a fishing tournament. But before he could stuff it with shrimp and pour a lemon sauce over it, he was arrested and disqualified. It turns out the winning fish had been stolen from an aquarium.

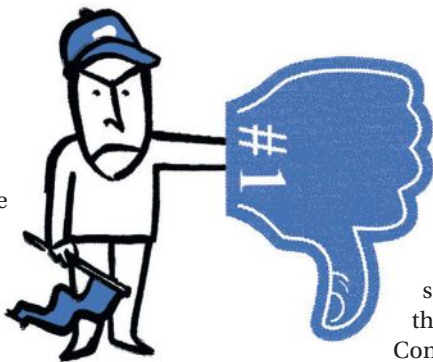
Source: *The Week*

THE DAY AFTER the second game of the American League playoffs, Detroit native Robert Shiller called his brother to tell him that he'd won the Nobel Prize in economics. "I said, 'Did you hear the news?'" said Shiller. "And he said, 'Yeah, the Tigers lost.'"

Source: *The Hartford Courant* (Connecticut)

A FAN of Britain's Manchester United soccer team was so irate after a referee's call that he phoned Britain's equivalent of 911 and demanded that the ref be arrested for his criminally poor judgment. In the end, someone did get taken in for a wrong call—the fan.

Source: *metro.co.uk*



SOON AFTER the city of Stockton, California, filed for bankruptcy, its minor-league hockey team, the Thunder, was scheduled to play the Bakersfield Condors in Bakersfield. The Condors

welcomed its fans and the Thunder with a special promotion: Our City Isn't Bankrupt Night.

Source: *abcnews.com*

ARE YOU THE SORT of cardplayer whose face gives it away when you get a royal flush? Good news! A New York City plastic surgeon has introduced "Pokertox," a program of Botox and facial fillers designed to enhance a player's poker face.

Source: *huffingtonpost.com*

FAIR TRADE? A player from the Fort Lauderdale Strikers, a team in the North American Soccer League, was sent to the San Antonio Scorpions in exchange for two nights of hotel lodging for the team.

Source: *Sports Illustrated*



I hoped it wouldn't come back
I hoped it wouldn't grow
I know it's time to act



Talk to your dermatologist—it's not too late to give your advanced basal cell carcinoma some serious attention.

SEND IN THE ATTACHED CARD TO GET AN ERIVEDGE INFORMATION PACKET

Erivedge
(vismodegib) capsule

You can also call (855) 7-ERIVEDGE (855-737-4833) or visit Erivedgesupport.com.

Please see the accompanying Medication Guide on the following pages for additional important safety information.

If you don't have prescription coverage or can't afford your medicine, we may be able to help. Visit genentech-access.com/erivedge/patients or call (888) 249-4918 to learn more. Capsule shown not actual size.

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Indication

Erivedge® (vismodegib) capsule is a prescription medicine used to treat adults with a type of skin cancer, called basal cell carcinoma, that has spread to other parts of the body or that has come back after surgery or that your healthcare provider decides cannot be treated with surgery or radiation.

Important Safety Information

What is the most important information I should know about Erivedge?

- Erivedge can cause your baby to die before it is born (be stillborn) or cause your baby to have severe birth defects
- For females who can become pregnant, talk with your healthcare provider about the risks of Erivedge to your unborn child. Your healthcare provider should do a pregnancy test within 7 days before you start taking Erivedge to find out if you are pregnant. Avoid pregnancy by using highly effective birth control before starting Erivedge, and continue during treatment and for 7 months after your last dose. Tell your healthcare provider right away if you have unprotected sex or think that your birth control has failed
- For males, always use a condom with a spermicide during sex with female partners while you are taking Erivedge and for 2 months after your last dose, even if you have had a vasectomy
- Tell your healthcare provider right away if you or your female partner could be pregnant or thinks she is pregnant while you are taking Erivedge
- Before taking Erivedge, tell your healthcare provider if you are pregnant or plan to become pregnant, or if you are breast-feeding or plan to breast-feed

Exposure to Erivedge during pregnancy:

Pregnant women are encouraged to participate in a program that collects information about exposure and the effects on the mother and her unborn child by calling the Genentech Adverse Event Line at (888) 835-2555.

What should I avoid while taking Erivedge?

Do not give blood or blood products during treatment with Erivedge and for 7 months after your last dose.

What are the possible side effects of Erivedge?

The most common side effects of Erivedge are:

- Muscle spasms
- Hair loss
- Change in how things taste or loss of taste
- Weight loss
- Tiredness
- Nausea
- Diarrhea
- Decreased appetite
- Constipation
- Vomiting
- Joint aches

These are not all of the possible side effects of Erivedge. For more information, ask your healthcare provider or pharmacist.

Because everyone is different, it is not possible to predict what side effects any one person will have or how severe they may be. Tell your healthcare provider if you have any side effect that bothers you or that does not go away.

You may report side effects to the FDA at (800) FDA-1088 or www.fda.gov/medwatch. You may also report side effects to Genentech at (888) 835-2555.

Please see the full Prescribing Information, including serious side effects, at Erivedge.com.

MEDICATION GUIDE

ERIVEDGE® (EH-rih-vej) (vismodegib) capsule

Read this Medication Guide before you start taking ERIVEDGE and each time you get a refill. There may be new information. This Medication Guide does not take the place of talking with your healthcare provider about your medical condition or your treatment.

What is the most important information I should know about ERIVEDGE?

ERIVEDGE can cause your baby to die before it is born (be stillborn) or cause your baby to have severe birth defects.

For females who can become pregnant:

- You should talk with your healthcare provider about the risks of ERIVEDGE to your unborn child.
- Your healthcare provider should do a pregnancy test within 7 days before you start taking ERIVEDGE to find out if you are pregnant.
- In order to avoid pregnancy, you should start using highly effective birth control before you start ERIVEDGE, and continue to use highly effective birth control during treatment, and for 7 months after your last dose of ERIVEDGE. Talk with your healthcare provider about what birth control method is right for you during this time.
- Talk to your healthcare provider right away if you have unprotected sex or if you think that your birth control has failed.
- Tell your healthcare provider right away if you become pregnant or think that you may be pregnant.

For males:

- You should always use a condom with a spermicide, even if you have had a vasectomy, during sex with female partners while you are taking ERIVEDGE and for 2 months after your last dose to protect your female partner from being exposed to ERIVEDGE.

- Tell your healthcare provider right away if your partner becomes pregnant or thinks she is pregnant while you are taking ERIVEDGE.

Exposure to ERIVEDGE during pregnancy:

If you think that you or your female partner may have been exposed to ERIVEDGE during pregnancy, talk to your healthcare provider right away. Pregnant women are encouraged to participate in a program that collects information about exposure to ERIVEDGE during pregnancy, and the effects on the mother and her unborn child. This program is called the ERIVEDGE pregnancy pharmacovigilance program. You may participate in this program by calling the Genentech Adverse Event Line at 1-888-835-2555.

What is ERIVEDGE?

ERIVEDGE is a prescription medicine used to treat adults with a type of skin cancer, called basal cell carcinoma, that has spread to other parts of the body or that has come back after surgery or that your healthcare provider decides cannot be treated with surgery or radiation.

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

What should I tell my healthcare provider before taking ERIVEDGE?

Before taking ERIVEDGE, tell your healthcare provider if you:

- **are pregnant or plan to become pregnant.** See “**What is the most important information I should know about ERIVEDGE?**”
- **are breastfeeding or plan to breastfeed.** It is not known if ERIVEDGE passes into your breast milk. You and your healthcare provider should decide if you will take ERIVEDGE or breastfeed. You should not do both.

Tell your healthcare provider about all the medicines you take, including prescription and non-prescription medicines, vitamins, and herbal supplements.

Know the medicines you take. Keep a list of them to show your healthcare provider and pharmacist when you get a new medicine.

How should I take ERIVEDGE?

- Take ERIVEDGE exactly as your healthcare provider tells you.
- You can take ERIVEDGE with or without food.
- Swallow ERIVEDGE capsules whole. Do not open or crush the capsules.
- Take ERIVEDGE one time each day.
- If you miss a dose, skip the missed dose. Just take your next scheduled dose.

What should I avoid while taking ERIVEDGE?

- Do not donate blood or blood products while you are taking ERIVEDGE and for 7 months after your last dose.

What are the possible side effects of ERIVEDGE?

ERIVEDGE can cause serious side effects, including:

- See **“What is the most important information I should know about ERIVEDGE?”**

The most common side effects of ERIVEDGE are:

- muscle spasms
- hair loss
- change in how things taste or loss of taste
- weight loss
- tiredness
- nausea
- diarrhea
- decreased appetite
- constipation
- vomiting
- joint aches

Tell your healthcare provider if you have any side effect that bothers you or that does not go away.

These are not all the possible side effects of ERIVEDGE. For more information, ask your healthcare provider or pharmacist.

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

You may also report side effects to Genentech, Inc. at 1-888-835-2555.

How should I store ERIVEDGE?

- Store ERIVEDGE at room temperature between 68°F to 77°F (20°C to 25°C).

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

General information about ERIVEDGE

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

This Medication Guide summarizes the most important information about ERIVEDGE. If you would like more information, ask your healthcare provider. You can ask your healthcare provider or pharmacist for the FDA-approved information about ERIVEDGE that is written for healthcare professionals. For more information, call 1-855-737-4833 or visit www.erivedge.com

What are the ingredients in ERIVEDGE?

Active ingredient: vismodegib; Inactive ingredients: microcrystalline cellulose, lactose monohydrate, sodium lauryl sulfate, povidone, sodium starch glycolate, talc, magnesium stearate (non bovine). The capsule shell contains gelatin, titanium dioxide, red iron oxide, and black iron oxide. The black printing ink contains shellac and black iron oxide.

This Medication Guide has been approved by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration.

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HE0002305800

He came to America with nothing—except a remarkable gift for turning strangers into friends



Peter Ter and his usual gang—(from left) Leila Yau, a friend, Maggie Kennedy, Sonia Hudson, and Jessica Sweeney—at a Gators game

A Lost Boy Builds a Family

BY STEPHANIE HANES FROM THE *CHRISTIAN SCIENCE MONITOR*



When he finally arrived at the surnames that began with T, University of Florida President Bernie Machen paused his reading of the list of 2008 graduates. There was, he told the crowd, someone whom he wanted to stop and honor.

This student, Machen told some 8,500 graduates and their families, had learned to read and write at a Kenyan refugee camp. He'd come to Florida as a teenager with nothing, put himself through school, and, against all odds, worked his way into the hearts and minds of Gator Nation.

He asked Peter Ter to rise, and as the Sudanese man stood, Machen turned to the upper seats. "Could Peter's family also stand?" he asked. There, for all to see on the Jumbotron, was Ter's "family," a motley collection of unrelated white Southerners—a dentist, a schoolteacher, a professor, and others—waving at him below.

The audience cheered. And Ter—who a few years earlier had never seen a movie or even a light switch and who years before had wondered if he would die in one of the world's most heartbreaking exoduses—smiled shyly and walked to the stage. And then the "Lost Boy," the title given to Ter and the other children from southern Sudan who'd wandered for years after being violently separated from their families, turned to the crowd and extended his two long arms in the Gator Chomp. The crowd went wild.

Ter's journey has been remarkable, but he's the first to point out that his story is only partially about him and equally about the friends and "family members" who adopted him throughout his global odyssey, from northwest Kenya to sunny Florida to the cold mountains of Azerbaijan and back to academia in Boston. It is a story of kindness. And it is the story, in its elemental sense, of thanksgiving.

"Being strong is a part of my nature," Ter says in an interview. "Being able to learn without being held back by all the bad things. But I am talking with you today because people I didn't know helped me survive."

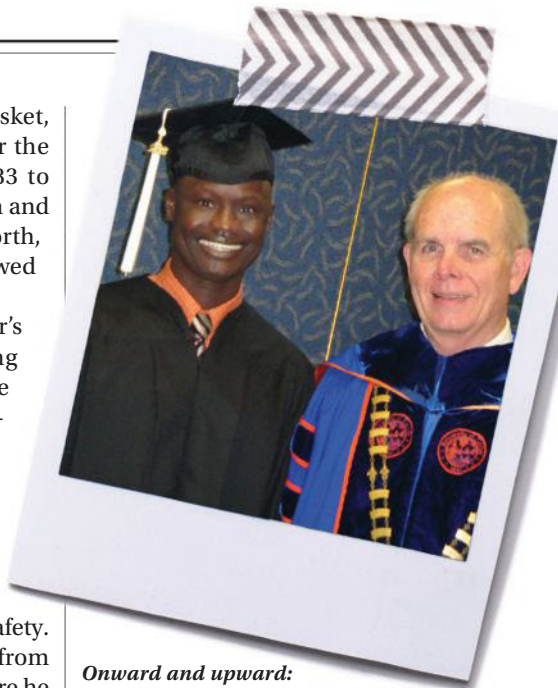
IN 1988, Ter was tending cattle outside Nyanding in what is now South Sudan. He was about three years old, and he'd been going to the cattle camps for most of his life, riding on his father's shoulders or carried by a brother who would plop him down to play with the other children. While the women were in the village or fields, the men tended the herds. Ter's family—his parents and their nine children—were not educated, but they never went

hungry. The area was a breadbasket, which was part of the reason for the brutal war that raged from 1983 to 2005 between the Christian South and the more politically powerful North, which was Muslim and less endowed with natural resources.

By 1988, the war had come to Ter's village, with the North bombing the South in an effort to crush the emerging Sudan People's Liberation Army. One day, the children heard rumbling in the sky and looked up to see jets. Ter remembers running and chaos. But there was kindness among the bombs. Someone—he doesn't remember who—pulled him to safety. In the melee, he was separated from his parents; it would be years before he learned whether they'd lived or died. He eventually also lost track of his siblings.

Helping hands reached out to him again and again. "I had people who would grab me and run because they didn't want me to die," Ter says.

With a group of children also separated from their families, he walked for months toward a refugee camp in Ethiopia. Then, when the camp was attacked, they trekked 1,000 miles back through Sudan to Kenya. The more than 20,000 Lost Boys—and a large number of Girls—became the prey of lions and soldiers and starvation. Throughout their migrations, they walked until their feet bled, passing through a nightmare of shelled villages and corpses. Thousands died.



*Onward and upward:
Ter with university president
Bernie Machen in 2008*

Today, Ter is matter-of-fact but shies away from discussing details of the ordeal. The memories still wake him up, he admits. But then, he says with a smile, he turns on National Public Radio, which soothes him. "I love NPR," he says. "All Things Considered"—that is my favorite phrase."

This attitude is a hint of what helped him survive in the UN's sprawling Kakuma Refugee Camp in Kenya. Aid workers tried to arrange basic schooling for the Lost Boys and one meal a day, but the children largely fended for themselves. Ter vowed to become literate, and he learned to read by poring over the Bible and

to write by tracing letters in the dirt.

Crime and disease were rampant—but there was also generosity. James Thak Dhiel, a man about ten years older than Ter who came from the same county, took an interest in him. Dhiel knew that the younger boy left for school in the morning without eating and came home dizzy with hunger, so he regularly slipped him money to buy food. He kept an eye out for the bandits and corrupt soldiers who preyed on the weaker residents.

“I will always be so humbled thinking of him,” says Ter, who has lost touch with Dhiel but knows the man was relocated to Australia in 2002. “There is always humanity. Everywhere, people will give, regardless of whether they have anything.”

After almost nine years at Kakuma, Ter was given refugee status by the U.S. government; he would be flying to a place called Florida. On his last day with Ter, Dhiel gave the boy a special present: a pair of orange-and-blue shorts from a used-clothing stand, emblazoned with the word *Florida* and the image of what Ter identified as a crocodile.

“I was a Gator when I was still in Kenya,” Ter says with a grin.

ADAM LOHSE remembers getting a phone call in the fall of 2001 from his friend Meg Young. She had run into these Sudanese guys at the grocery store, she said, and she

was hosting a party for them. She wanted Lohse to be there—he was a fellow churchgoer, interested in missionary work, and here were people their own age who needed a welcome. Lohse was pleased. Jacksonville was a growing destination for refugees, and he felt it was God’s work to reach out.

Young’s generosity came at a time when Ter needed a friend. He’d arrived in Florida a few months earlier. None of the Lost Boys had ever been on a plane, and many were airsick. Ter recalls feeling disoriented and depressed. After they landed, a representative from Lutheran Social Services escorted him and another Lost Boy to an apartment. They didn’t know how to use the lights; running water was new to them. Ter remembers sitting there in silence, even though he and his roommate had known each other for years. They were in shock.

The boys stayed inside for days. But soon Ter realized he had to get out: He needed to find a job. According to documents, Ter was 21 years old—too old for high school or to be placed with a family. He’d have free rent for three months, and then he was on his own. That age, however, was arbitrary. Officials gave many of the Lost Boys ages based on height. Ter was tall, so it was decided he was born in 1980. (Years later, after he reconnected over the phone with one of his brothers, he learned he was actually five years younger.)

Ter was very happy to accept

Young's invitation. And he eagerly accepted when Lohse, whom he'd met at Young's gathering, invited him out for ice cream. "We thought this would be a great way to introduce him to something of the United States," Lohse recalls. "He took one bite, and said, 'Ugh, too sweet!'"

They kept talking, though, and when Lohse asked Ter what he needed, he said a GED study guide. So they went to a Barnes & Noble, where Ter, a book lover, was amazed. It would become one of his favorite spots in the city.

Lohse also called a friend, fellow churchgoer Mark Biery. Biery runs a warehouse that packages and distributes shredded Mylar, and he'd been hiring refugees since the 1980s. Biery says, "It was a place for them to get a minimum wage and get started, and then after six months to a year, I'd encourage them on to other jobs." He hired Ter, and the young man from Sudan with the wide smile quickly became one of his favorite employees.

"Peter was thankful to God to be alive," Biery recalls. "He found thankfulness in everything he did."

Ter loved the job. He manned the forklift, moving large packages from one location to another. "I learned how to drive a forklift before I could drive a car," he recalls. "It was amazing.



"He's like just another one of our kids," says Gary Fane, with wife Sandy and Ter.

I'd drive through the aisles ... it was like dancing"

Meanwhile, he and Lohse became closer friends. Lohse taught him how to play football and brought Ter books on history, which Ter loved. Lohse invited him to Thanksgiving at his mom's house. Meanwhile, Ter taught the American a few words of his Nuer language. When Lohse proposed to his girlfriend, Ter was one of the first people he told. At some point, it was clear that the relationship was no longer about one man helping the other.

SANDY FANE was teaching a citizenship class at a Jacksonville school when a polite young man stopped her in the hall in April 2002 and asked where the GED class was. Fane, a friendly woman who had retired from teaching, was struck by his bearing.

“He was very quiet, very soft-spoken, but his posture was gorgeous,” she recalls. She talked with him for a few minutes and found out his name and background. Fane and her husband, Gary, had recently returned from a vacation in Tanzania and Kenya; they’d also just seen a documentary about the Lost Boys. Something moved her to offer Ter her help. She says, “I’m a mother. I said, ‘If you ever need anything, if you have even a simple question, give me a call.’” She also dropped off a spare computer for him at the refugee services office.

The Fanes invited Ter and his roommates to their home. Gary Fane, an accounting professor, was also impressed by Ter. He offered to help him study for the GED test, and he later connected him with a local junior college. He saw something of himself in Ter—Fane had worked his way through college and graduate school. “He’s like just another one of our kids,” Gary Fane says. “Our kids were all grown. He’s the fourth.” He helped Ter with his taxes and got the phone calls when the younger man had car trouble.

Ter’s friends multiplied. The Fanes helped him find a job at a natural food store, which had better hours for school than the warehouse (and turned Ter into an organic-foods

devotee). There a friend said she would pay for him to get his teeth fixed by Daniel Schellhase, DDS, a local orthodontist. But Dr. Schellhase, who had supported other low-income youths, agreed to do the work pro bono. Ter wrote him a moving thank-you note, and the two became friends. “We could be having the worst day, with everyone grumpy, and when Peter came into the office, everyone was happy,” Dr. Schellhase recalls.

“He is just a delightful person.”

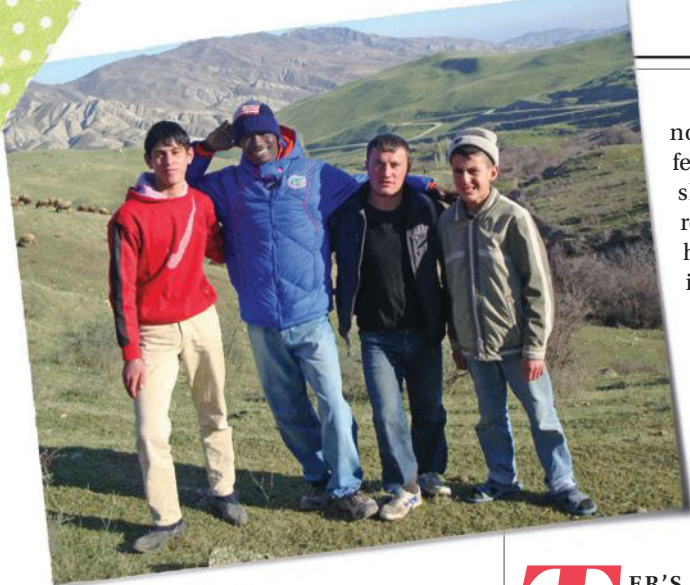
When Ter was accepted in 2004 to the University of Florida, Dr. Schellhase paid for his room and board. The Sudanese man fit in with everyone from old-school racists to star University of Florida basketball players. His friends laugh at the

memory of Ter telling them, very matter-of-factly, that he’d met some guy named Noah, who had offered him tickets to a basketball game—he was talking about campus celebrity Joakim Noah, who now plays for the Chicago Bulls. Ter accepted, but when Noah invited him to party after the game, Ter politely declined, saying he had to study.

Still, when Ter, a political science major, traveled to Israel for a summer course, Dr. Schellhase was “a nervous wreck.” He says, “I mean, Peter doesn’t

“

Ter’s story illustrates a fact about humans: We reach out to each other, often across great divides.



Ter joined the Peace Corps to give back to the United States; with some of his students in Azerbaijan.

exactly blend in. But the first picture I get? Peter with his arm around a guy with a machine gun.”

That first photo was with Israeli soldiers. And the next? With Palestinians. “That’s so Peter,” Dr. Schellhase says, laughing.

The border crossing was tense, Ter recalls. The Israelis were wary about a Sudanese man entering their country, despite his American passport. (Many Sudanese have attempted to flee to Israel.) So Ter asked if he could take his photo with them. They were curt, but he persisted with what Bieri calls his “God-given gift with people.”

Ter was polite. He joked, and he listened. He radiated respect as well as humble self-confidence. After all, as one of his friends explained, there was

nothing left for Ter to fear. One woman soldier sharply rebuffed his request, saying that her husband would kill her if she had her picture taken with a strange man. “Kill you?” Ter asked. “But you’re the one with the gun!”

Everyone laughed. They took the pictures and waved the car through.

TER’S STORY is a perfect example of what scholars say is now a scientifically recognized fact about the human condition: People reach out to others and often do so across great divides. For centuries, social theorists have explained human behavior through a grim lens, declaring that people were inherently violent and territorial. But in the past few years, academics in a variety of fields have produced evidence bolstering an alternative perspective. Central to our existence is what researchers call prosociality: a complex mix of empathy, gratitude, kindness, love, altruism, and cooperation. They’ve also found that prosocial behavior often spreads, with recipients doing what we call paying it forward.

With college graduation looming, Ter was considering exactly that. He wanted to give back to the country

that, as he puts it, restored his dignity, and he thought about entering the military. He told a favorite professor, Dennis Jett, a former U.S. ambassador to Peru and Mozambique, who suggested another idea: the Peace Corps. Jett says, "I thought he had the kind of adaptability to get through it. He's a sweet kid and a fine young man; it's hard not to like him."

Ter applied and was accepted. He was assigned to teach English in Azerbaijan. As was his nature, he jumped fully into the job. He learned Azerbaijani, at that point his third language.

In that country, he found himself defending the United States to the skeptics he met. He says, "I would tell people, 'Look, I was not born in America. I was born into war, poverty, disease. America adopted me. How can you think of America as a bad society?'"

In the small town where he lived, he caught the attention of local security forces. They taunted him, but in his way—polite but firm—he pushed back. "They'd shout, 'Why is America killing Muslims?' I'd say, 'That is not a good question.'" He suggested that

there were criticisms he could raise about their government and that perhaps the two sides could treat each other's homelands with respect.

One day, the security officials asked him in for tea. They became friends—across layers of cultures, attitudes, and languages. Ter extended his two-year stint in Azerbaijan to three years.

Today he is a graduate student at Brandeis University, in Waltham, Massachusetts, working toward a dual master's degree in sustainable international development and in coexistence and conflict resolution. Someday he might return to Sudan to see his biological family. (In 2004, Ter discovered that his parents and siblings had survived the war. He spoke with his father, who'd walked 400 miles to find a telephone to call him.)

At the moment, however, his life is here. He wants to continue giving back, perhaps through work in the State Department. In May, he will move to Turkey as part of a State Department-sponsored study program.

There, he hopes, the map of kindness will continue to grow. **R**

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A KNOCKOUT DIET

I want to keep fighting because it is the only thing that keeps me out of the hamburger joints. If I don't fight, I'll eat this planet.

GEORGE FOREMAN

Laugh Lines

WEATHER OR NOT

Why does moisture destroy leather? When it's raining, cows don't go up to the farmhouse yelling, "Let us in! We're all wearing leather! We're going to ruin the whole outfit here!"

JERRY SEINFELD

If I'm on the course and lightning starts, I get inside fast. If God wants to play through, let him.

BOB HOPE

It's been raining so much in Los Angeles that the Chia Pet I threw in the garbage is now blocking my entire driveway.

JAY LENO

Electricity is really just organized lightning.

GEORGE CARLIN

Don't knock the weather. If it didn't change once in a while, nine tenths of the people couldn't start a conversation.

KIN HUBBARD

I don't get why anyone goes skiing. "Hey, let's find the worst weather we can and exercise in it!"

@BAZECRAZE



PHOTO

OF LASTING
INTEREST



Photograph by Robert L. Cunningham

Chosen by Steven Hartov, *author, with Cunningham, of Afghanistan: On the Bounce*

"Robert took this photograph at a forward operating base in eastern Afghanistan, capturing the silence and solemnity of a hero-ramp ceremony. Just fallen in combat, draped in an American flag, a soldier passes through a cordon of comrades. This is a moment of secrets kept, for only his warrior brothers and sisters know that he is gone. It will be some time before his wife gasps with the news. His parents and children haven't yet been informed. Only later will they know that 200 souls wept here with him and served as his most devoted bearers to that final flight."



They're coming by the millions—strange, creepy creatures that appear to be impossible to kill. They started in Texas, but they don't intend to stay there ...



BY JON MOOALLEM FROM THE *NEW YORK TIMES*
PHOTOGRAPHS BY ADAM VOORHES



THE FIRST TIME Mike the Hog-a-Nator (whose real name is Mike Foshee) noticed the ants, it was two summers ago, and they were piled outside his cardiologist's office in Pearland, Texas, a suburb of Houston. There was a forbidding, fibrous heap of dead ants on either side of the building's double doors, each a couple of feet long. Legions of living ants shuffled over the dead ones—though



Mike the Hog-a-Nator had to bend down to see these. So many ants were moving so chaotically and so fast that the entire reddish-brown tangle at his feet looked as if it were shimmering.

Six years earlier, a doctor had found a tumor on Mike the Hog-a-Nator's aorta. It was inoperable. Mike, who was only 36, was told to live every day as if it were his last. He narrowed his joys and priorities to two: The first was putting smiles on the faces of people who needed them, so he started a program he calls Therapy Through the Outdoors. Ever since, he has been taking kids with terminal diseases and veterans with injuries or PTSD on adventures in the 60-acre woodland across from his house. The other was shooting as many feral hogs as he possibly could.

Mike hates feral hogs and has always found it very satisfying to clear those hideous, rooting thugs off a piece of land. He has always been good at it,

too—that's how he got his nickname. Feral hogs are among the most gruesome and destructive invasive species in the United States. The federal government estimates that there are now five million hogs in 35 states, resulting in \$1.5 billion in damages and control costs every year. The ants were an entirely different sort of invasive species. They arrived at Mike's house a few months after he first saw them at his cardiologist's office. One day, his air-conditioning stopped working. A musty smell seeped from the vents. He powered up his Shop-Vac to clear them, and by the time he'd finished, he'd sucked out five gallons of ants.

Soon he and his wife were waking up to find vast, frantic networks of



ants zipping around the kitchen floor. When the picture on their 50-inch television started flickering, Mike took off the back panel and found the guts throbbing with ants. He got rid of the television.

Outside, dead ants began pooling around the house in heaps so high, they looked like discarded coffee grounds. Mike laid out poison, generating more heaps of dead ants. But new ants merely used those dead ants as a bridge over the poison and kept streaming inside.

People don't want to visit the Foshees anymore, and if they do, they leave quickly, before the ants can stow away in their cars and accompany them home. This summer, Mike had to cancel Therapy Through the Outdoors. Recently, he and his wife were sitting outside when Mike looked down and saw one of his bare feet overtaken by ants. He ran inside, then ran back out with the AR-15 assault rifle he uses to take out hogs. He was about to open fire on the ants until his wife chuckled, and he realized how ridiculous the situation had become.

"The distressing part," he told me, "is the feeling of something always crawling on you. It's psychological, and yet you actually do have them on you."

He tried leaving different foods on his floor overnight, to figure out how he might bait and kill the ants, as he did with the feral hogs. He tried doughnuts, crushed-up Cheerios, bread crumbs—"anything a normal ant would be attracted to," he told me. He claims they touched none of it.

"They run around like they're on crack, and then they die," he said. "They're freakin' crazy, man."

Some people
in Texas have
become
so frustrated
with crazy ants
that they've
considered
selling their
houses.

ENTOMOLOGISTS report that the crazy ants, like other ants, seem drawn to electronic devices—car stereos, circuit boxes, machinery. But with crazy ants, so many will stream inside a device that they form a single, squirming mass that completes a circuit and

shorts it. Crazy ants have ruined laptops and, according to one exterminator, have temporarily shut down chemical plants. They are most likely climbing into these cavities to investigate possible nesting sites. But David Oi, a research entomologist at the Department of Agriculture, told me that the science-fiction-ish theory that the bugs are attracted to the electricity itself can't be ruled out.

Crazy ants don't have a painful bite, but they terrorize people by racing



up their feet and around their bodies, coursing everywhere in their impossibly disordered orbits. Some people in Texas have become so frustrated with crazy ants that they've considered selling their houses.

Crazy ants decimate native insects. They overtake beehives and destroy the colonies. They may smother baby birds struggling to hatch. In South America, where scientists now believe the ants originated, they have been known to obstruct the nasal cavities of chickens and asphyxiate the birds. They swarm into cows' eyes.

So far, there is no way to contain them. In the fall, the worker ants are subject to magnificent die-offs, but the queens survive, and a new, often larger crop of crazy ants pours back in the spring. Crazy ants were first discovered in Texas in 2002 by an exterminator. Within five years, they appeared to be spreading through Texas much faster than even the red fire ant, which costs the state roughly \$1 billion a year. Crazy ants have also been spotted in Louisiana, Mississippi, Florida, and Georgia.

As the ants began to advance, a division of the Department of Agriculture convened a task force. On October 9, 2008, eighteen people, including representatives from state and federal

agencies and several academic entomologists, met to assess the problem.

At the time, the American economy was crumbling. Six days earlier, President Bush had approved \$700 billion for the Troubled Asset Relief Program. "I don't think the government had a lot of money to spend on bugs," says

one task force participant. In fact, the conversation hit a Catch-22: The government didn't want to release money to research or combat the ants until it knew what species it was dealing with. The scientists insisted that they needed funding to figure that out.

The exterminator said it's "too late" to stop the crazy ants—the entire Gulf Coast will be inundated.



Finally, one man spoke up. "I said, 'You all sound like a bunch of idiots,'" he recalls. He was 52, with a graying, bristly mustache and leathery skin, and on paper at least, he had no business being there. He wasn't a bureaucrat or a scientist. He'd never even gone to college. But Tom Rasberry was the exterminator who'd discovered the ants—and he'd named them after himself: Rasberry ants.

Tom Rasberry speaks in an unflappable drawl—the same one that airplane pilots use to make mechanical difficulties sound like no big deal. Two years ago, he appeared on *The Early Show* on CBS and explained that it's "too late" to stop the crazy Rasberry

ants and that “the entire Gulf Coast is going to be inundated.” He added that the ants had been seen at a Houston medical center and that researchers at Texas A&M had shown that the ants can transfer pathogens from room to room. Then he sat there, stone-faced. “Sometimes,” Raspberry said, “I wish I would have never heard of them.”

RASBERRY first spotted the crazy ants while on a job at a chemical plant in the Houston suburb of Pasadena in 2002. Outside the office, he saw a few hundred ants traveling in erratic swirls. “I just sprayed ‘em with my can—no big deal,” he remembered. The following summer, he was called back to the same spot. “There were literally billions of them,” he said.

The ants quickly sprouted in surrounding areas, most likely transported in landscaping and soil, building materials, or cars. Raspberry called state and federal agencies, trying to communicate his alarm. But the government didn’t respond as quickly or determinedly as he expected.

The breadth of America’s battle against invasive species can be hard to fathom, involving 13 federal agencies and departments, including not



Exterminator Tom Raspberry devoted himself to proving the experts wrong.

only the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the Forest Service but also the Treasury Department. Cornell University ecologist David Pimentel and his colleagues have estimated that invasive species cost the nation \$120 billion a year. In 1999, the National Invasive Species Council had to be created to coordinate all these agencies’ efforts. Says the council’s assistant director, Chris Dionigi, “Sometimes things can fall through the cracks.”

Raspberry crazy ants seem to have come pouring through one of those cracks. By appearing first in suburban



neighborhoods and not, say, national forests or wildlife refuges or farmland, they colonized the territory between various agencies' jurisdictions. The government's system is reactive, not proactive, and so only recently has the species surged into regulatory view. The Department of Agriculture still doesn't consider the ants a "pest of agricultural significance." Plus, there was a bigger problem: Even when the government did look straight at the ant, it didn't know what it was looking at.

Tom Raspberry collected samples of the ant at the Pasadena chemical plant in 2003 and sent them off to Texas A&M to be identified. But figuring out what species the ants were, and where they came from, quickly became vexing. Academics from other institutions swarmed in to debate, for example, the significance of four tiny hairs on the ant's thorax. For years, they hurtled through a series of wrong answers, but the consensus eventually leaned toward a certain invasive ant, called *Nylanderia pubens*, which has been in Florida since the 1950s.

Raspberry was convinced this couldn't possibly be the same ant. His ant was ripping through Texas like a violent dust storm; their ant had been entrenched in Florida


for more than 50 years, barely causing any trouble. Why would the bug suddenly behave so differently? Raspberry began his own investigation, spending thousands of hours out in the field or examining samples with a microscope. "It was an obsession," his daughter, Mandy Raspberry-

Ganucheau, said. As long as there was evidence that the ants were pubens and not something new, the government felt it was reasonable not to act.


State and federal agencies have now financed very limited research, and the Environmental Protection Agency has tweaked its

regulations to allow the use of a high-powered pesticide against the ant. The taxonomy question was settled in September 2012, when scientists concluded that the Raspberry crazy ant is not the same ant that was collected in Florida in the 1950s—it's *Nylanderia fulva*, a species native to Brazil. Raspberry was vindicated.

Last winter, the federal research entomologist David Oi and the researcher who led the taxonomy study, Dietrich Gotzek, gave *fulva* a common name. Everyone was already calling it Raspberry crazy ant, but that hardly mattered: Naming a bug after a person is strongly frowned upon. Besides, Oi told me, the name was too confus-



Ants were spiraling up my sneakers and onto my socks. I tried shaking them off, but nothing worked.




ing: "People thought it was supposed to be the fruit." He and his colleague rechristened it the Tawny crazy ant, a name almost no one in Texas appears to use—especially not Tom Rasberry, who took Oi's maneuver as a personal attack. "It may sound arrogant," Rasberry told me, "but I think they're irritated that someone without a college degree one-upped all the PhDs."

Meanwhile, the bugs, whatever they were called, just kept advancing. As Roger Gold, a veteran Texas A&M entomologist, said, "All this work about scientific names and common names has never killed a single ant."

I SAW MY FIRST crazy ants in a rural area south of Houston called Iowa Colony, named by a land corporation in the early 1900s as a marketing ploy to sell acreage to Midwesterners. Strom Duke, the man who invited me out, had turned 65 the day before. He wore a yellow T-shirt, a yellow cowboy hat, and gold-framed tinted glasses. His story was typical: One evening, his iron stopped working, then sparks shot from the appliance and a tide of ants came rushing out. Strom's neighbors had similar stories. The ants had caused \$1,600 of electrical damage to one woman's car; infiltrated one house's alarm system, causing the alarm to blare; and shut off the water at Strom's brother Melvin's house by disabling the pressure switch on his well. As we strode up to Melvin's place, we could see

ants puddled under the doorframe and behind the tires of Melvin's Camry—thick, tapering drifts of them, two or three feet across. Edward LeBrun, an ecologist at the University of Texas at Austin, believes a single "supercolony" of crazy ants occupies as many as 4,200 acres in Iowa Colony and is spreading 200 meters a year in all directions.



Wherever the Dukes pointed, there were ants: under the door of a microwave oven, crawling out of the electrical outlets, heaped in the flower beds where I mistook them for fresh topsoil. "You don't feel them crawling up your clothes?" Melvin's wife, Charlene, asked. She was walking around barefoot and in shorts, and I could see ants trickling across her feet and ankles and legs—spelunking between her toes. Soon ants were spiraling up my sneakers and onto my socks. I tried to shake them off, but nothing disturbed them. Before long, I was sweeping them off my calves. I kept instinctively taking a step back from some distressing concentration of ants, only to realize there was nowhere to go. I got in my car and left.

ONE AFTERNOON last fall, I met Rasberry for a barbecue lunch. It was the third day of the government shutdown, and he explained that his technician wasn't able to get into NASA's Johnson Space Center in Houston, where they had managed to tamp down a crazy-ant

infestation. Rasberry worried that if they were locked out for three or four weeks, the agency was “going to have a mess out there.” He said it without any hint of foreboding, or even much interest. He told me he has cut back his work hours, coming into the office only three days a week and spending the rest of his time at his house in the woods.

Rasberry is convinced that the next, obvious wave of damage from the crazy ants will be ecological: They will decimate ground-dwelling bird species, just as fire ants devastated Texas’s quails, and they’ll usurp nearly every other insect species until it’s all Rasberry crazy ants, everywhere. “You knock nature off balance, and ain’t nobody there to catch her,” he said. Entomologists speculate that crazy ants may eventually run into predators along the Gulf Coast. If that happens, their

populations may crunch down to manageable sizes. But, these scientists add, the damage done before that happens could be enormous. On

the other hand, maybe this is as dystopian as the ant situation gets, and this summer will be better. We understand so little about these crazy ants; it’s hard to say what’s possible.

Not long ago, Rasberry told me, he got a call from a woman who said, “I know how to fix the ant issue.” He

could have been furious—it was 11:38 p.m.—but he invited her to go on. She said her plan was to import anteaters. Rasberry paused, then started troubleshooting, working all the angles, reeling her in. Would we lead them around on leashes? “And how many do you think we’ll need to import?” he asked her. “A million? Two million?” The woman thought it over. “If that’s what it takes,” she said. **R**



“You knock nature off balance, and ain’t nobody there to catch her,” the exterminator said.



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There are plenty of ways to meet your Maker that are out of your control. These ten? Totally avoidable.

How Not to Die

BY JEFF WISE FROM *POPULAR MECHANICS*

A VENDING MACHINE OVERTURNS. A tree suddenly splinters. A generator emits toxic gas. It may seem far-fetched to worry that any of these random events could kill you, but unintentional injuries of this nature take the lives of 120,000 people annually, according to the most recent data. Read on for cautionary tales and expert tips that can keep you from becoming a statistic.



Reader's
Digest
THE
GUIDE TO
SURVIVAL

1 IF YOU SEE A BEAR, FREEZE

On July 6, 2011, Brian Matayoshi, 57, and his wife, Marylyn, 58, were hiking in Yellowstone National Park when they came upon a grizzly bear and fled, screaming. Brian was bitten and clawed to death; Marylyn, who had stopped and crouched behind a tree, was approached by the bear but left unharmed. The lesson? If you come face-to-face with a wild animal, resist the urge to run, which can trigger the beast's predatory instinct.

Even better: Reduce the risk of an attack by giving bears a chance to get out of your way. "Try to stay in the open," says Larry Aumiller, manager of Alaska's McNeil River State Game Sanctuary. "If you have to move through thick brush, make noise by clapping and shouting." And always carry repellent pepper spray when hiking; it can deter a charging bear from up to 30 feet away.

2 DON'T DRIVE ATVs ON PAVED ROADS

On July 14, 2013, Taylor Fails turned left in his 2004 Yamaha Rhino ATV at a paved intersection near his Las Vegas-area home. The high-traction tire treads gripped the road, and the vehicle flipped, ejecting 20-year-old Fails and a 22-year-old passenger. Fails died at the scene; the passenger sustained minor injuries. Surprisingly, one out of three fatal ATV accidents takes place on a paved road. That's

because the vehicle's "soft, knobby tires are designed for traction on uneven ground and will behave unpredictably on pavement," says Paul Vitrano, executive vice president of the ATV Safety Institute. His advice: "If you must cross a paved road, go straight across in first gear."

3 DON'T CUT DOWN LEANING TREES

Even lumberjacks worry about an effect known as a barber chair. If a leaning tree falls too fast, the trunk won't make a clean break. Instead, the fibers of the tree will split, and the rear half of the trunk will snap backward. Says Mark Chisholm, chief executive of New Jersey Arborists, "It's very violent, and it's very quick."

4 CROSS STREAMS STRATEGICALLY

Water-related deaths outnumber all other fatalities in U.S. national parks—even a shallow stream can pack a surprising amount of force. Once you've been knocked off your feet, you can get dragged down by the weight of your gear, hit rocks in the water, or succumb to hypothermia.

When you encounter a stream, first toss a stick into the current; if it moves at a rate faster than a walking pace, don't cross. If the tide seems safe, enter at a straight, wide section of water, and unhitch your backpack's waist and sternum fasteners before crossing; a wet pack can pull you under.

5 DON'T SHAKE SNACK MACHINES

Vending machines caused 37 deaths between 1978 and 1995, crushing customers who rocked and toppled the dispensers. Word to the wise: Don't risk your life for a bag of chips.



6 CLIMB LADDERS CAREFULLY

More than 700 people die annually in falls from ladders and scaffolding. The biggest mistake? Carrying something while climbing the rungs. In a word: Don't.

7 USE GENERATORS SAFELY

After Hurricane Sandy, numerous homeowners who'd lost power left portable generators running overnight near their homes, allowing odorless carbon monoxide to waft inside. The gas induces dizziness, headaches, and nausea, but "when people go to sleep, there's no chance for them to realize something's wrong," says Brett Brenner, president of Electrical Safety Foundation International. Carbon monoxide from consumer products, including portable generators, claims nearly 200 lives a year; of the Sandy-related deaths, 12 were due to carbon monoxide poisoning. Breathe easy by keeping generators more than 20 feet from your house.

8 STAY ON THE DOCK

On May 20, 2013, Kyle McGonigle was on a dock on Kentucky's Rough River Lake. A dog swimming nearby yelped, and McGonigle saw that it was struggling to stay above water. The 36-year-old dived in to save the dog, but both he and the animal drowned,

victims of electric-shock drowning (ESD). Cords plugged in to an outlet on the dock and a houseboat had slipped into the water and electrified it.

The number of annual deaths from ESD in the United States is unknown, but anecdotal evidence indicates that ESD is widespread. Look for outlets before diving in, and if you feel a tingle or numbness while swimming in freshwater near a boat marina, get out of the water immediately.

9 AVOID CLIFFING OUT

Hikers scrambling up an incline may find themselves "cliffed out"—stranded on a steep patch, unable to go up or down. "Hikers can get into trouble when they try to take a shortcut or see an area they want to explore," says Ken Phillips, National Park Service branch chief of Search and Rescue. If you do get trapped, don't risk the ascent or descent. To avoid this precarious position, scout your route before you set out on your hike, tell someone where you're going, and carry a radio so you can call for help.

10 DON'T MOW HILLS SIDE TO SIDE

Most lawnmower-related deaths don't involve the whirring blades. Rather, they result from riding mowers toppling over sideways, crushing the driver. To avoid that fate, mow a hill up and down, not side to side. **R**

Connections

your link to values and insights each month

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Just when his condition threatened to devastate him completely, he received a letter from an unlikely source

The Senator's Savior



MARK KIRK is the junior U.S. senator from Illinois and a member of the Republican Party. He began his six-year term in January 2011.

BY MARK KIRK, AS TOLD TO ALISON CAPORIMO

I WAS ONCE A PESSIMIST. I'm not that man anymore. And that change started with a bout of misfortune and the sudden appearance of a little boy.

On a Saturday morning, January 21, 2012, my left arm went numb, and I started to feel dizzy. After I called my doctor, an ambulance arrived in front of my home, in Highland Park, Illinois. An MRI quickly revealed that the lining of my carotid artery had peeled off, preventing blood from flowing to my brain. The doctor said I had a stroke on the way and that we would just have to let it come. There was no stopping it. I stayed at Northwestern Memorial Hospital in Chicago for a few days, waiting for the stroke to hit as waves of paralysis came over me. As I slowly lost control of my body, I thought about how unbelievable it was. I was 52. I didn't even know anyone who'd had this happen to him.

After the stroke (and the two operations that relieved the swelling in my brain), I was transferred to the Rehabilitation Institute of Chicago (RIC) on February 10. Though I had lost the use of my left arm and leg and couldn't see out of my left

ILLUSTRATION BY JOE MCKENDRY (KIRK)



eye, the only thought on my mind was that I needed to leave the hospital and return to my job serving the citizens of Illinois. But the reality was that I needed to relearn how to stand and see first. So there I was, with blood clots forming in my legs, held upright by a track and a harness, trying with all my strength to take one tiny step forward. I had always been a glass-half-empty kind of guy, and this just made me feel like recovery was impossible, like I would never again return to the Senate.

A few days after my first discouraging physical therapy session, my stepmother, Bev, came into my room with a letter. She had the job of poring over countless cards and notes from fellow politicians and strangers alike and was struck by one. It was a neatly typed letter, and the author was a nine-year-old boy named Jackson Cunningham from the central Illinois town of Champaign, my hometown. In the note, Jackson told me about the stroke he'd had only a year earlier. He, too, had been paralyzed on his left side and had made great strides at RIC. But, beyond telling me what he had lost, Jackson shared what I would gain. "Here's some advice," Jackson wrote. "Do not give up on yourself. All the hard work is worth it."

And the advice kept on coming. He told me to attend therapy on the hospital's "grown-up" floor, where "they make you work hard and you get lots of things back fast." He even had recommendations for his favorite local pizza places, just in case I had a craving. Here I was, a grown man

and a senator of Illinois, getting advice from a young boy I had never met. But his words were exactly what I needed. He gave me such strength. I used my dwindling energy to write him back by pen.

After a few weeks of correspondence, I arranged for us to meet in the RIC cafeteria.

He seemed nervous at first as he sat across from me with his parents, Craig and Judy, but all the awkwardness quickly melted away. Jackson showed me how he could run, and I immediately felt inspired. It made me believe that one day, I would run again too. I felt so emotional seeing him face-to-face, this kindred spirit of mine. I thought back to when I was his age, and I could see a lot of myself in him. One thing I immediately admired was the energy and dignity radiating from him. Looking at Jackson for the first time, I saw a young boy who could have been my son.

As for my recovery, it came just as Jackson said it would. After a year of

“

Here I was, a grown man and a senator, getting advice from a young boy I had never met.

”

intense physical therapy, I climbed to the top of the Capitol and returned to work on January 3, 2013. With every step I took, I thought of Jackson and his strength. He helped me climb those steps that day.

Back in Washington, DC, I could feel Jackson affecting my every day. Whenever I was tired or discouraged, I thought of him, the world's strongest boy. I had always been proud to represent the state of Illinois, but I felt even more passionate knowing that I was representing him. When Jackson visited the Capitol a few months after my return, we climbed those big steps together. It felt so special to see DC through his eyes. Here he was, my battle buddy, and we had fought our strokes together. As I showed him around, we made a pact that there would be a footrace between us in the tunnel that connects my office to the Capitol. The next thing I'll really have to think about is how I'm going to beat him.

It might sound strange, but I'm almost grateful for my stroke because

it gave me the opportunity to meet Jackson and to count him as a friend. He is my hero, and I am so excited to see what becomes of him. When we talk today, Jackson, now 11, tells me about his highest video game scores—he is obsessed with “slaying zombies”—and how he has been moving his left arm (I'm quite jealous). The one topic we can't discuss: girls, though I think that might change someday. I tell him that I can read and walk again, that I'm coming back to life. I also tell him that if he doesn't listen to his physical therapist, he'll have to testify before Congress.

When I think of his future, which I do often, I hope that he has a life of advocacy on behalf of disabled individuals. And I hope that he finds strength in knowing that there's a guy in Washington who will always be in his corner. After visiting me in DC, he expressed some interest in politics. I asked him if he'd like to be the president of the United States someday. He just shrugged and said, “Eh. More like a senator.” **R**



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Happy “Don't Worry About the Dishes, Honey, You'll Find Time for Them Tomorrow” Day!

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WHO ? KNEW



50 Secrets Pets Won't Tell You

BY MICHELLE CROUCH

Mistakes Even the Most Loving Owners Make

1 You think my tail wagging is always an invitation for you to pet me more. Wrong! Italian researchers found that dogs wag their tails slightly to the right when they see something they like and to the left when they're confronted with something they want to back away from.

2 You might buy any old dog-grooming brush at the pet store, but you should really pick the right one for my coat. A rubber brush will promote circulation and loosen dirt. A bristle brush removes dead hair.

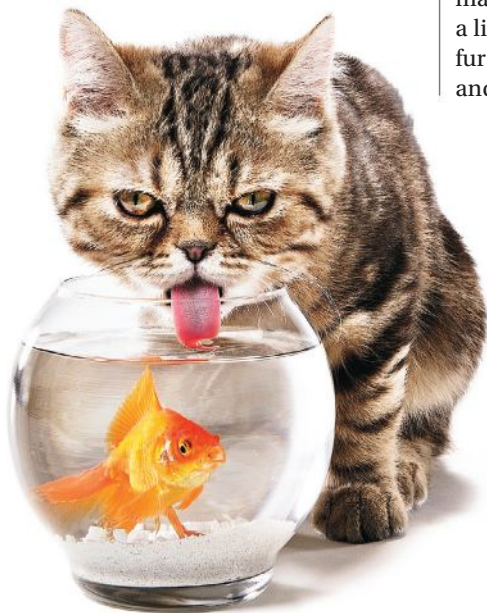
3 Your favorite cat game to play with me involves a laser pointer. The result: I get really frustrated because I can't catch it, and I live for the hunt. So if you're going to use a pointer, please sub in an actual toy at the end so I have something to catch and kill. It makes the game worth it.

4 You're giving me too much food. How can you tell? I don't seem motivated by food treats when you're trying to train me. Cut back, and I'll start to pay attention.

5 Grooming day means you bring out the big blow-dryer. Don't! To make dogs like me look fluffy, shake a little cornstarch into the base of the fur and then brush. It will absorb oil and grease and detangle matted fur.

6 Please don't rush me when I'm going to the bathroom—there's a reason dogs circle around before getting down to business: We have an instinct to be aligned with the earth's magnetic field before we poop. In fact, researchers watched 70 of us engage in 1,893 defecations over a two-year period just to figure this out.

7 You may think it's nice to let me sleep all day, but too much nap time can affect my personality. A lot of behavioral



problems can be solved by just taking your dog on a daily walk or by playing with your cat for 20 minutes every day.

8 Since I'm an old dog, I get to eat whatever I want, yes? No! If I have arthritis, I'll be much happier if you give me a daily supplement that contains glucosamine and chondroitin sulfate, which protect joint cartilage. And switch me to a food formulated for an animal my age.

Ways I Wish You'd Keep Me Safe

9 If you lose me, the first thing you should do is call every animal shelter within 100 miles of home, and visit the nearest shelters every day if you can. Many animal control bureaus euthanize animals if they go unclaimed for a specific amount of time. (For good measure, be sure to get me a microchip when I'm young.)

10 If you're getting me spayed, ask your vet if she can remove just my ovaries, not my uterus. A much less invasive procedure, it's the way cats and dogs are spayed in Europe, and many U.S. veterinarians have already made the switch.

11 Because I'm a creature of habit, even a subtle change in my behavior is a red flag that I might be sick. So if it takes me an hour to eat

my food instead of 60 seconds as usual, if I'm tiring out faster when we play, if there are more urine clumps in the litter box than usual, or if I seem to be drinking more water, call the vet right away.

12 There's no question that if you keep me inside and don't let me wander the neighborhood, whether I'm a dog or a cat, I'll have a better chance of living a longer life. I won't get hit by a car, stolen, or just plain lost. But once I've been allowed to roam free, it'll be hard to change me.

How to Really Make Me Your Best Friend

13 Please introduce me around when I'm young so I'm not afraid of strangers. Some experts say I should meet 100 new people of different sizes, genders, and ethnicities in my first 100 days at home, even if it's just a quick greeting. Make sure you include people wearing hats and sunglasses, since those accessories can look awfully scary to me.

14 You may think it's cute when I rub my butt on the carpet, but it probably means that I'm itchy and would like to see a vet.

15 When you're choosing a new furry friend, ask a vet or trainer for simple tests you can do to gauge temperament. For example,

you can try rolling me over on my back to see how I handle it. If I really struggle, I'm probably going to be tougher to train than an animal who lies there placidly.

Surprising Things That Dogs Love ...

16 Forget the Milk-Bones! If you want me to really pay attention when you're training me, use a treat that's moist, something so gross, you don't even want to hold it in your hand, like a piece of greasy chicken.

17 While some of us gulp down grass only if we've eaten something that doesn't agree with us and we're trying to regurgitate it, others of us just love to munch the lawn. So let me graze—just make sure the grass I'm eating is free of pesticides.

18 Beware, Mom, because I will eat your underwear, especially if they've been worn. Veterinarians surgically remove hundreds of pairs from dogs' bellies every year.

19 Please, please can I choose my own bed? The most comfortable one will depend on how I sleep. Let me try out a few in a pet store. If I usually sleep with my legs sprawled out, I'll be more comfortable on a flat bed without side bumpers. But if I like to curl up, I'll probably love a bumper bed.

... And What They Secretly Hate

20 You say I'm great with kids. But if I'm licking, pulling my ears back, turning my head away, or yawning (all signs of anxiety) while they play with me, I'm probably just barely tolerating them. If you keep letting them pull my tail, one of these days, I might lose it.

21 Hold those clippers! No matter how high the mercury climbs or how long my hair is, I don't need to be shaved. My undercoat actually insulates me from heat, so it helps me stay cool. Just make sure you keep my coat brushed and mat-free to promote good air circulation.

22 If you leave me in the backyard when you're not home, don't fool yourself that I'm going to run around and have fun. The truth is, I'm probably going to sit in one spot and wait for you to return. Dogs are den animals, and many of us prefer to be inside, ideally with you.

23 I love to fetch and would like to learn how to catch a flying disc, but those hard plastic Frisbees can hurt my teeth and gums. Instead, look for a soft one at a pet store.

24 If I'm not used to strangers and you reach out toward me when you first meet me, your hand

may as well be a meat cleaver. Instead, crouch down on one leg and look slightly away. Then let me approach you and give you a sniff.

Cats: Our Biggest Mysteries, Solved!

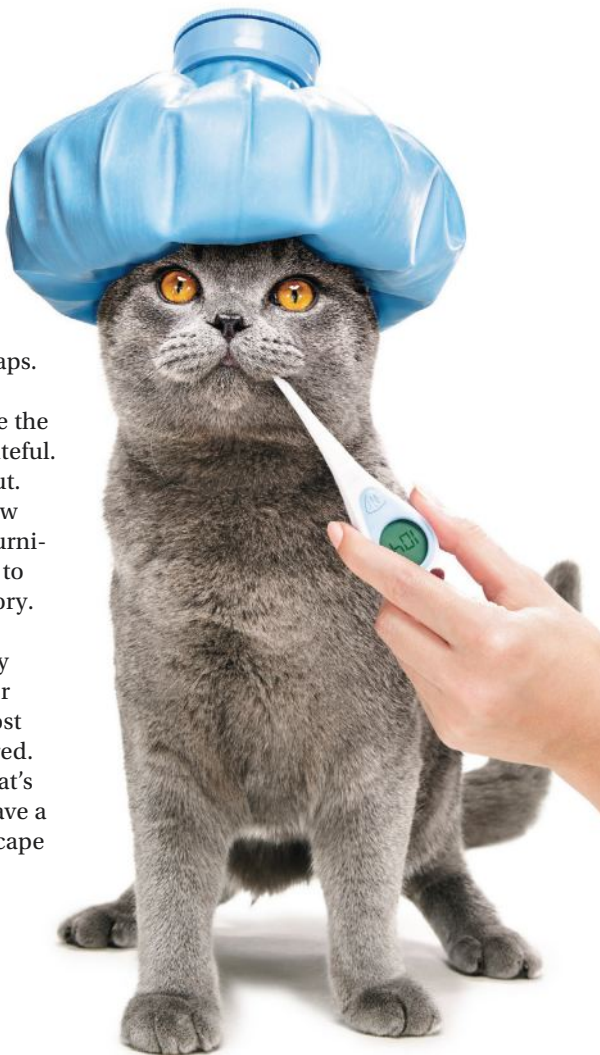
25 Let's get one thing straight: Declawing is not the same as cutting our nails. It's a hideous, painful surgery that's much more like amputating the last two knuckles of your fingers. If my scratching is really bad, try glue-on nail caps.

26 If I'm spraying outside the box, I'm not being spiteful. Something is stressing me out. It may be a new person, a new pet, or even a new piece of furniture in the house that seems to be encroaching on my territory.

27 Before you buy a fancy cabinet to put my litter box in, keep in mind that most of us don't like to feel cornered. I prefer an uncovered box that's out of the way but where I have a view of the room and can escape if I see anything threatening.

28 Excuse me, but I am not untrainable. I can learn to sit, come, touch a target with my nose, jump

through a hoop, give you a high five, and even use the toilet—as fast as or even faster than a dog. Check YouTube for some great tutorials.



29 If I stiffen every time you run a hand down my back, take the hint. A 2013 study published in *Physiology and Behavior* found that cats who didn't like the sensation but allowed their owners to stroke them anyway were more stressed-out than those who avoided touch.

30 Remember, I see the world as vertical, not horizontal. So instead of getting mad when I knock things off the mantel, build me a cat superhighway around the room. Put up a shelf that leads up to a bookcase that leads to a mantel that leads to a chair that gets me down.

31 Just because I'm purring doesn't mean I'm happy and content. I also purr when I'm in pain or mortally afraid because it's a self-soothing mechanism.

32 Thinking about getting me a buddy? I'll get along best with a cat who's of the opposite sex and slightly younger than I am, but don't just throw us in a room together. Talk to your vet or a trainer about how to introduce us gradually. If I'm an older cat and I've lived alone with you for years, I don't need a friend. Really. I'm already too set in my ways.

33 Excuse me for putting my bottom in your face, but you should actually consider it an incredibly high compliment. It harks back to

when I was a kitten and would do the same thing to Mom so she could clean my bottom. It means I perceive you as a maternal figure.

34 I love the Cat Dancer and other fancy toys and gadgets, but I can have just as much fun with a paper bag with the handles cut off, an aluminum foil ball, or a plain box. It's actually quite easy to create a homemade toy that I'll love. Anything that is shiny or that I can scratch is going to make my day.

Training Tricks That Help Us Learn

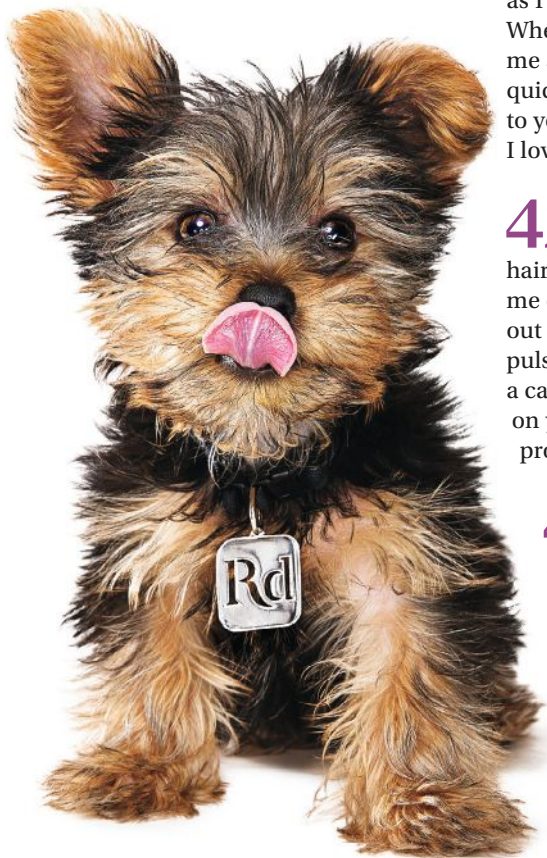
35 Don't wait until I'm six months old to start correcting bad behavior. By then, I'll be used to drinking out of the toilet and chewing shoes. Experts say it's easier to instill good habits from the beginning than to untrain bad habits.

36 I'm confused. When I jumped up on you earlier, you gave me such a nice pet. But now you're mad at me for jumping on Aunt Martha. Am I allowed to jump up or not?

37 To stop me from scratching a piece of furniture, cover the entire area with an old bedsheet, aluminum foil, or strips of double-sided tape, because those don't feel good under my paws. Then put a tall scratching post right in front of it.

38 If you let me on the furniture now, while I'm young and cute, I will always think it's OK, no matter how big I get.

39 What do you mean you can't teach an old dog new tricks? My owner taught me to fetch the newspaper from the driveway and take it to him when I was ten.



40 Remember when I was little and you shoved my nose in a puddle of pee I left? I have no idea why you did that. Instead, get me outside as quickly as possible and praise me whenever I pee outdoors.

41 Want me to learn to walk by your side on a leash? Well, give me some incentive. As soon as I start to pull ahead, stop walking. When I turn and look back, offer me a treat right next to your leg. I'll quickly figure out I need to stay next to you in order to keep doing what I love most: moving and exploring.

42 Whether I'm a cat or a dog, if you're tired of finding pet hair on your sofa and want to keep me off, try a Scat Mat, which gives out a small, harmless electrostatic pulse when it's stepped on. Or buy a car mat and turn it upside down on your couch, so the little rubber prongs are facing up. I hate those.

43 When I bark, jump, and grab the towel off the countertop, I'm not trying to be bad. *I'm just bored!* I want your attention! Please, get off your smartphone and play with me.

44 If I'm a dog who is scared of thunderstorms or loud noises, get me a snug-fitting Thundershirt. Or you can make your own. Wrap

an Ace bandage across my chest, cross it over the top of my body and then back under, going over and under until it's midway down my back, and then secure it. The constant pressure against the middle of my body will help ease my anxiety and calm me down.

The Best (and Worst) Foods for Us

45 Remember, my digestive system is very different from yours. Raisins and grapes can shut down a dog's kidneys. Other dangerous foods include chocolate, coffee, macadamia nuts, and avocado.

46 Want my coat to be thick and shiny? Make sure my diet has plenty of essential fatty acids. Most high-quality commercial pet foods have enough, but pets on low-quality foods or homemade diets that aren't balanced may develop a dull coat.

47 Every bag of pet food has an Association of American Feed Control Officials (AAFCO) statement on the label, although you might need a magnifying glass to read it. Look for one that says the food has undergone animal feeding trials rather than one that's been "formulated" by a computer. The trials are expensive, but they indicate that real dogs actually ate the food for six months with good results.

48 Check with a board-certified veterinary nutritionist before giving me a homemade-food diet. Researchers at the University of California, Davis, who examined 200 recipes last year for home-prepared dog food found that 95 percent had some serious nutritional deficiencies.

49 Did you hear the hype about grain-free cat and dog food? That's what it is: hype. There's nothing wrong with feeding me grains—they can actually be an important part of a balanced diet. Before you make any change, talk to your vet.

50 If you switch me to a raw diet, I may end up with cracked teeth or a bacterial infection. Also, exposure to my feces could put anyone with a weakened immune system at risk. That's why the ASPCA, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, and other institutions all strongly discourage raw diets. **R**

Sources: Jackson Galaxy, cat behaviorist and host of Animal Planet's *My Cat from Hell*; Brian Hare, PhD, codirector of the Canine Cognition Center at Duke University; Rebecca Remillard, PhD, DVM, DACVN, a veterinary nutritionist at North Carolina State University and founder of *petdiets.com*; Jorge Bendersky, a groomer and pet stylist in New York City; Spencer Williams, owner and president of West Paw Design, a company that makes pet toys and beds; Nancy Kay, DVM, author of *Speaking for Spot: Be the Advocate Your Dog Needs to Live a Happy, Healthy, Longer Life*; Jennifer Coates, DVM, veterinary adviser to *petmd.com*; Victoria Schade, dog-training and behavioral expert at *pet360.com* and author of *Bonding with Your Dog: A Trainer's Secrets for Building a Better Relationship*; Sophia Yin, DVM, a veterinarian and animal behaviorist and the author of *How to Behave So Your Dog Behaves*; K. C. Theisen, director of pet-care issues at the Humane Society of the United States; Amy Farcas, DVM, DACVN, a veterinary nutritionist at the University of Pennsylvania; Marilyn Krieger, cat behavioral consultant and author of *Naughty No More*; Karen "Doc" Halligan, DVM, author of *Doc Halligan's What Every Pet Owner Should Know*; Stephen Zawistowski, PhD, animal behaviorist and adviser at the ASPCA.

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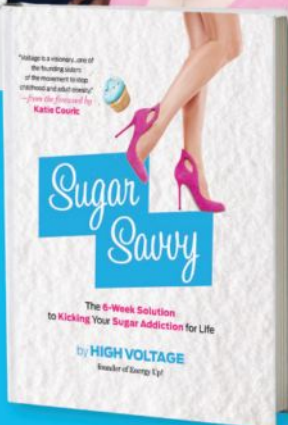


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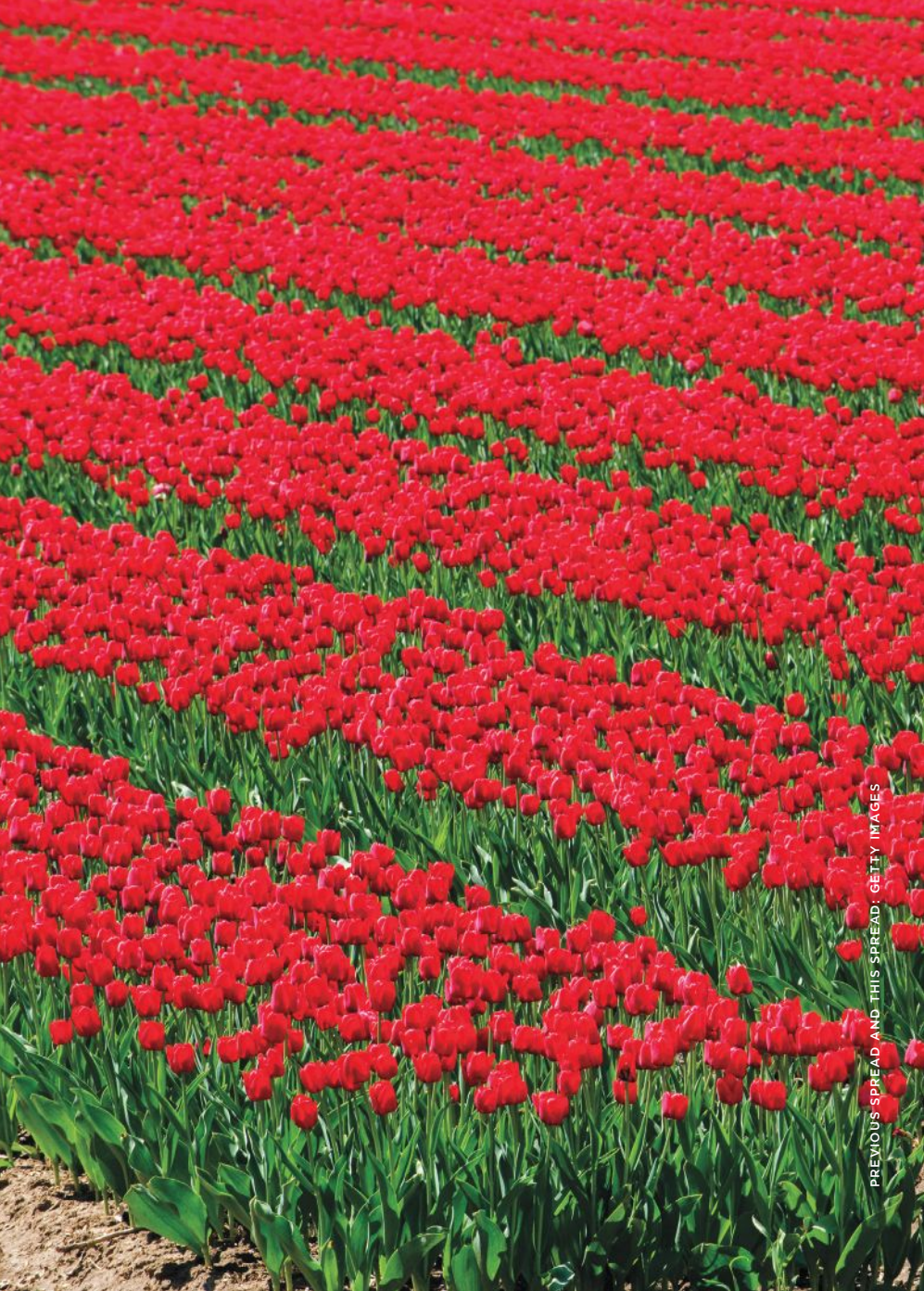




SEE

THE WORLD ...

—
Turn the page ➔➔





... DIFFERENTLY

Spring has clearly sprung in Zuid-Holland, as these vast tulip beds attest. Although the flowers originated in Central Asia, they're big business—and a major tourist draw—in the Netherlands from April until early May. Some three billion bulbs (red, white, yellow, green, purple, and more) pop up there each year. But a tulip, like spring, is fleeting; it blooms for only a few weeks.



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CULTURE

Fascinating Facts About Twins

To tell twins apart, look at their belly buttons, which are not genetic (they're created after birth). Another way to know who's who: fingerprints. Exposure to different areas of the womb during development affects the individual ridges and whorls.

 MOST POPULAR ON FACEBOOK

WELLNESS

How to Calm a Sore Throat

If water mixed with lemon or honey doesn't work, mix ½ teaspoon of turmeric and ½ teaspoon of salt into 1 cup of hot water and gargle. Turmeric is a powerful antioxidant, and scientists think it has properties that fight many serious diseases.

 MOST RETWEETS ON TWITTER

DIET & WEIGHT LOSS

Make TV Time More Active

For every two hours of TV you watch, your risk of becoming obese jumps 23 percent, says Joel K. Kahn, MD, in *The Holistic Heart Book*. That's even if you exercise regularly! Try sit-ups or push-ups during commercials; at minimum, make ads a cue to move.

READ UP AT RD.COM/MAY

SAVING MONEY

The Best Time to Buy Anything

Memorial Day sales include discounted clothing and home goods, but May is also a great time to shop for gym memberships, cookware, dishes, and refrigerators.



HOME IMPROVEMENT

Naturally Bug-Free Pantry

Battle household pests with nontoxic repellents, like clove oil or cayenne for ants, and cucumbers or vanilla beans for cockroaches. Also, store food in closed containers, fix leaks to shut down a water supply, and rotate loose items like bags and towels to avoid nesting.

GETTY IMAGES (PINS)

IT PAYS TO INCREASE YOUR

Word Power

You can't change the weather—but you can at least talk about it sensibly and intelligently. Here's a flurry of useful terms you can try sprinkling into your everyday chitchat. Turn the page for a flood of answers.

BY EMILY COX & HENRY RATHVON

1. inclement (in-'kle-ment) *adj.*—

A: comfortably warm. B: severe.
C: ever-changing.

2. temperate ('tem-pret) *adj.*—

A: marked by moderation. B: steamy.
C: frigid.

3. aridity (uh-'ri-de-tee) *n.*—

A: harshness. B: blazing sunshine.
C: drought.

4. nimbus ('nim-bus) *n.*—

A: frostbite. B: rain cloud.
C: weather vane.

5. doldrums ('dohl-drumz) *n.*—

A: sounds of booming thunder.
B: stagnation or listlessness.
C: weather map lines.

6. inundate ('ih-nen-dayt) *v.*—

A: overheat or melt. B: form icicles.
C: flood.

7. abate (uh-'bayt) *v.*—A: decrease

in force, as rain. B: increase, as wind.
C: pile up, as snow.

8. convection (kun-'vek-shen) *n.*—

A: cyclonic movement. B: hot air rising.
C: meeting of weatherpersons.

9. striated ('striy-ay-ted) *adj.*—

A: jagged, as hail. B: banded,
as clouds. C: patchy, as fog.

10. hoary ('hor-ee) *adj.*—A: hazy.

B: white with frost or age. C: lightly
sprinkling.

11. leeward ('lee-werd) *adj.*—

A: by the shore. B: out of balance.
C: not facing the wind.

12. graupel ('grauw-pel) *n.*—

A: snow pellets. B: mudslide.
C: warm-water current.

13. insolation (in-soh-'lay-shen)


n.—A: sunstroke. B: shade.
C: winter clothing.

14. permafrost ('per-muh-frost)

n.—A: dusting of powdery snow.
B: stalled front. C: frozen subsoil.

15. prognosticate (prahg-'nahs-

ti-kayt) *v.*—A: forecast. B: chill.
C: take shelter.

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

Answers

1. inclement—[B] severe. Today's kite festival has been canceled due to *inclement* weather.

2. temperate—[A] marked by moderation. After that cold snap, we could really use some *temperate* conditions.

3. aridity—[C] drought. If this *aridity* continues, I swear I'll do my rain dance.

4. nimbus—[B] rain cloud. We took one glance at the looming *nimbus* and headed straight for shelter.

5. doldrums—[B] stagnation or listlessness. FYI, the everyday use of *doldrums* refers to the area around the equator where prevailing winds are calm.

6. inundate—[C] flood. After the storm, our tiny shop was *inundated* with water and debris.

7. abate—[A] decrease in force, as rain. "I do believe," said Noah, "that the downpour is about to *abate*."

8. convection—[B] hot air rising. Sea breezes are a common weather effect of *convection*.

9. striated—[B] banded, as clouds. You could almost climb the ladder suggested by those *striated* cirrus clouds.

10. hoary—[B] white with frost or age. Professor Parker's beard was almost as *hoary* as the windshield he was scraping.

11. leeward—[C] not facing the wind. We huddled on the *leeward* side of the island, well out of the stiff breeze.

12. graupel—[A] snow pellets. As I heaved my shovel in the winter nor'easter, *graupel* stung my cheeks like BBs.

13. insolation—[A] sunstroke. *Insolation* is a serious threat during summer football practices.

14. permafrost—[C] frozen subsoil. Excavating the *permafrost* in Alaska often requires a jackhammer.

15. prognosticate—[A] forecast. We might not always appreciate his opinion, but nobody can *prognosticate* like Punxsutawney Phil.

WEATHER-WISE

Meteorology is the study of weather—so what's that meteor doing in there? *Meteor* comes from the Greek *meta*, meaning "over, beyond," plus *aoros*, for "lifted." And the suffix *-ology* means "branch of knowledge, science." So meteorology is literally the science of what's above us (i.e., the weather).

VOCABULARY RATINGS

9 & below: Partly cloudy
10-12: Generally sunny
13-15: Clear blue skies



Reader's digest

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Humor in Uniform



“Never mind your bark—what’s your bite like?”

IN TOP GUN, Tom Cruise’s call sign was the very apt Maverick. In real life, Air Force pilots’ handles are also often appropriate—but definitely not as cool. Like these:

- **Boomer:** Accidentally broke sound barrier over a small town
- **SMAT:** Small Man Always Talking
- **Dobber:** The simplest tool in the F-16 (a switch in the cockpit)

Source: slate.com

I WAS STANDING WATCH when an old, run-down freighter named *Sagar Moti* passed by. An officer asked if I knew what it meant.

“Ocean Pearl,” I answered.

He nodded. “It does look like it’s been fished out from the bottom of the sea.”

SUNDER P. SHASTRY, *Mumbai, India*

WHEN I ENLISTED in my teens, I took up smoking cigars to make myself look more mature. Did it work? Well, one time, as I proudly puffed away at our NCO club, an older sergeant growled, “Hey, kid, your candy bar’s on fire.”

JAMES BUSHART, *Cassville, Missouri*

Send us your funniest military anecdote like James did—it might be worth \$100! Go to rd.com/submit for details.

How a Chicago Doctor Shook Up the Hearing Aid Industry with his Newest Invention

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Quotable Quotes



IF YOU WANT TO WALK FAST, WALK ALONE; IF YOU WANT TO WALK FAR, WALK WITH OTHERS.

AFRICAN PROVERB

Always go to bed with clean feet. That's from my grandma.

ALLISON JANNEY



LIFE BEGINS WHEN A PERSON FIRST REALIZES HOW SOON IT WILL END.

MARCELENE COX, columnist



Say "yes" as often as you can; "no" doesn't move you.

MICHAEL J. FOX

Someone is sitting in the shade today because someone planted a tree a long time ago.

WARREN BUFFETT

THE MOMENT OF NEAR DESPAIR IS QUITE OFTEN THE MOMENT THAT PRECEDES COURAGE.

CHRISTOPHER HITCHENS, author

Far and away the best prize that life offers is the chance to work hard at work worth doing.

THEODORE ROOSEVELT



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