ANNIVERSARY ISSUE

Reader's Digest

FEBRUARY 2022

THE FIGHT TO SAVE The Texas Coral Reefs

From TEXAS MONTHLY

When Heart Disease Runs in the Family

From THEHEALTHY.COM

Trapped in Floodwaters

A DRAMA IN REAL LIFE

Our Two Cents on Cryptocurrency

An RD ORIGINAL

100

YEARS OF PEOPLE, STORIES, AND LAUGHTER

* David Steinberg on humor
* Henry Louis Gates Jr. on Alex Haley
* Brian Mockenhaupt on our soldiers
* Steven Pinker on the future

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Reader's Digest

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FROM TOP: SERGE BLOCH. TMB STUDIO/K. SYNOLD

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DEAR READER

A Century of Stories



Clockwise from above: *Reader's Digest* dispenser in 1961; the first issue of *Reader's Digest*; the April 1960 issue

I COULDN'T BE MORE excited to join *Reader's Digest* as we celebrate our 100th anniversary. Since 1922, this magazine has shared stories about remarkable people across the country and the kind and heroic things they do for one another.

I grew up in a family of storytellers. My father, a police officer in our central Illinois town, came home every day with stories about the people in our community: funny anecdotes or dramatic stories that revealed the lives of the individuals in our town and what they went through every day.

My mother was a gifted storyteller and her job in the front office of our local middle school provided a lot of material. My sister and I heard about classmates who were caught skipping school or forced by the principal to confess to pranking an unpopular teacher. She would deliver the play-by-play to us, laughing about kids and the things they do.

My sister and I learned how to find and tell our own stories in a way that held Mom and Dad's attention and earned their laughs. I suspect those conversations pushed me toward journalism, a way of telling stories to an audience beyond the dinner table.

In this special anniversary issue, we look at some of the incredible stories from famous writers, politicians, everyday heroes, and average Americans that have filled the pages of *Reader's Digest* for a century. We also talk about humor, health, and how to feel hopeful about the next century. Of course, there is too much for one issue, so be sure to visit us online at rd.com/100th for even more from the *Reader's Digest* archives.

Most of all, thank you for being a part of the first 100 years of *Reader's Digest*. I look forward to hearing—and sharing—your stories for years to come. R



Jason Buhrmester,
CHIEF CONTENT OFFICER

Write to me at letters@rd.com.

TMB STUDIO/K. SYNOLD (MAGAZINES). TMB STUDIO/MARK DERSE (BUHRMESTER). KEYSTONE/GETTY IMAGES (DISPENSER)



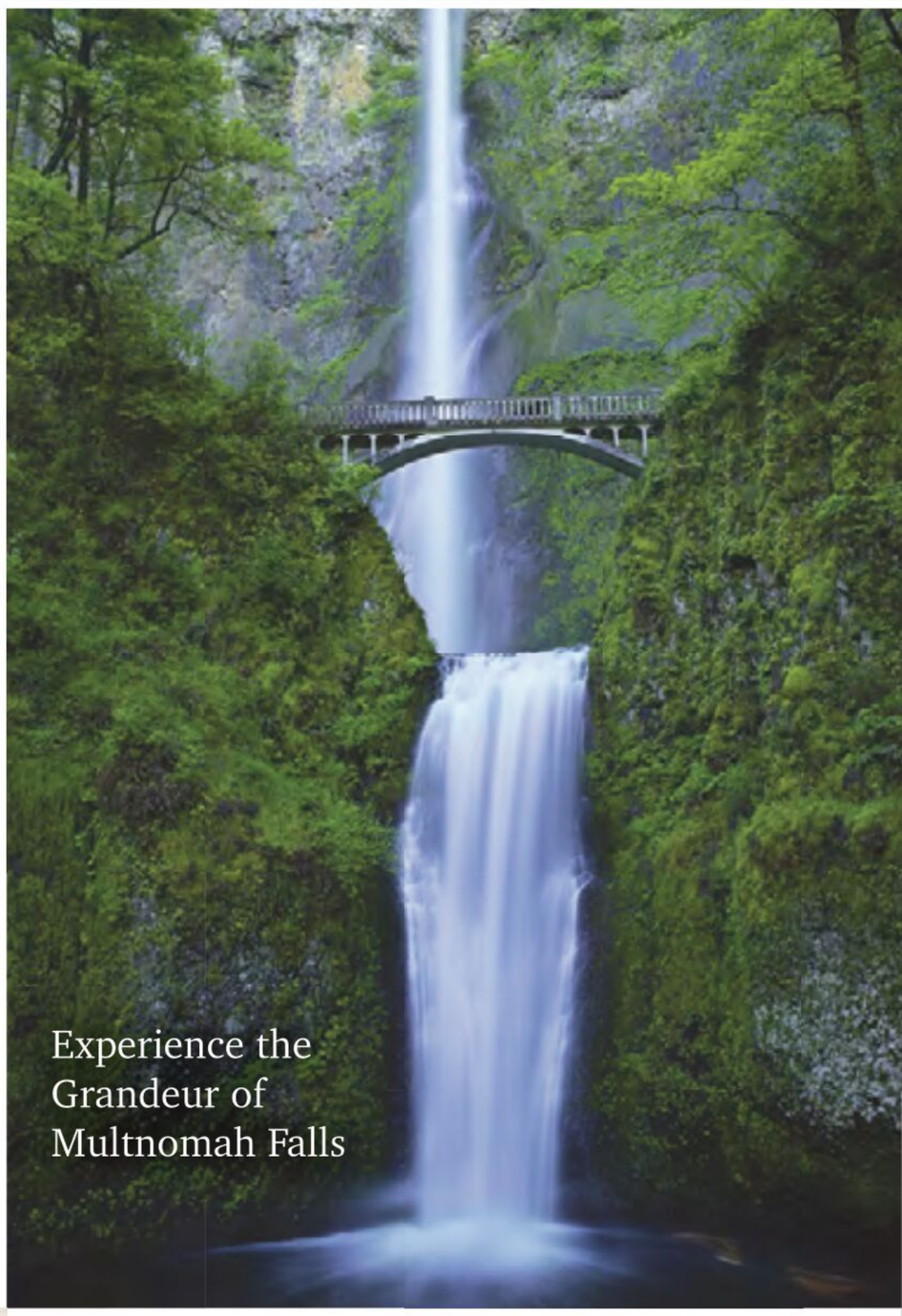
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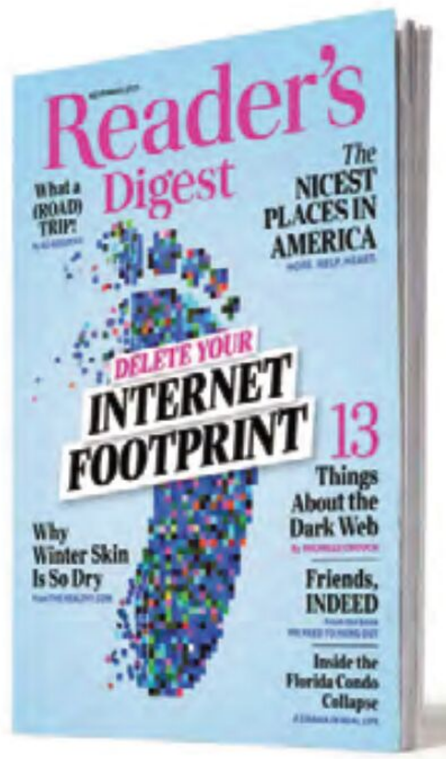
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LETTERS

NOTES ON PAST ISSUES



My Most Unforgettable Road Trip

When I read about the traveler who was treated to a free Thanksgiving meal while passing through Wyoming *(November)*, I knew it was Michael Lujan's restaurant, Michael's Big City Steakhouse. He has done community Thanksgiving meals for years, and also delivers to those who can't come in. Years ago, my mom passed on Thanksgiving morning. Mike delivered enough food to feed us for days, free of charge.

—CARLA TOWNSEND *El Paso, Texas*

Everyday Heroes

Ben Kuo's locating a lost hiker based on a photo he'd texted to a friend *(November)* made me think of our own hiking hack: taking a screenshot of our compass app to see our elevation and coordinates. When lost, send it to someone who can help track you down.

—CINDY JOHNSTON *Gilbert, Arizona*

Work Out Your Worries by Writing

My mother also wrote through her unease, as this story suggests *(November)*. But she'd place her "notes to God" in our Bible, which she eventually gave to me. While looking for a home 30 years later, I wrote a list of everything we wanted (including a pool, per my husband's request) and placed it in the Bible. We found our ideal home, but I forgot to ask that the pool be in perfect condition and filled with water. Now we make our writing very detailed!

—KARI LAURI *Phoenix, Arizona*

Run Over by a Speedboat

The story about a snorkeler losing his arm after getting hit by a speedboat *(October)*—and then forgiving the driver—was among the most compelling I've ever read. Here was a story of health and loss, sea and shore, healing and the hope to endure out of the darkness into the light. Simply marvelous!

—LEANDER JONES *Northport, Alabama*

Where, Oh Where

I'm a rail fan and I immediately recognized this photo of a steam locomotive crossing a bridge *(November)* as Boone County, Iowa. This bridge crosses the river valley between

TMB STUDIO

Boone and Ames, and I've been over and under it multiple times.
—RICHARD HUNTER
Aurora, Colorado

We Found a Fix

You suggested using toothpicks to raise a pot lid and prevent the pot from boiling over *(October)*. I prevent boilovers by just laying a wooden spoon over the open pot. The spoon will pop most of the bubbles on contact—hasn't failed me yet!
—PAM SNELLGROVE
LaGrange, Georgia

13 Things

My computer was recently the subject of an attack similar to what's described in item 11 on your list of facts about the dark web *(November)*. Luckily, I was able to escape any fraud, but it took a few days to get my computer back. However, I didn't know there was a place to report it until I read this article, so thank you for that.
—DOROTHY COLLINS
Lihue, Hawaii

Coping with Dry Eye

Your article *(November)* mentioned a doctor's visit for "heat and compression" treatment. I bought an inexpensive microwavable moist-heat eye compress online and use it for several minutes at bedtime to help open the oil glands. Plus, the warmth and ritual help me relax and fall asleep. No more messy washcloth compresses for me!
—JULIE EVANS
Minneapolis, Minnesota

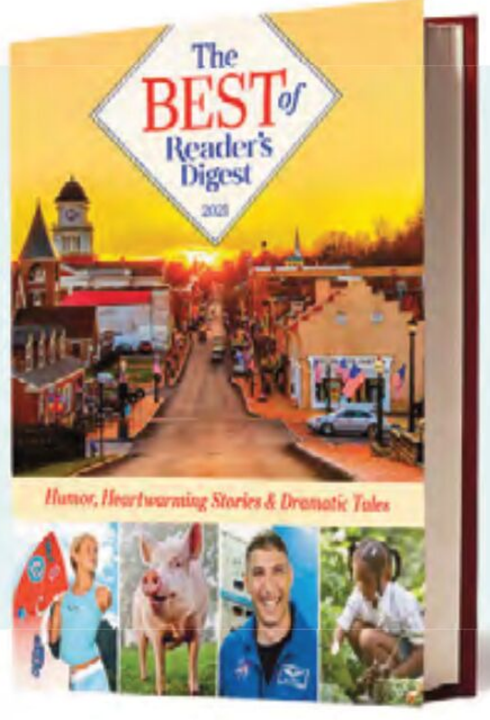


JESSICA TEZAK (QUALITY INN). JOLEEN ZUBEK (BOOK)

SO NICE YOU HAVE TO READ IT TWICE

✦ The Quality Inn in Kodak, Tennessee, turning into a shelter during a historic winter storm showed so much kindness that I read the story twice *(November)*. For Sean Patel to open his hotel to locals in need during the storm and power outage, at Christmastime and for just $25 [the lowest price the corporate regulations would allow], was priceless. The town is a better place because of Patel and his staff.

—Annette Wolfe
SHELTON, CONNECTICUT



100 Years of Number Ones

If this special centennial issue has sent you happily down memory lane, then pick up a copy of *The Best of Reader's Digest* for even more of our all-time favorite stories, jokes, and reader tales from the past 100 years. For a limited time, it's just $10—and shipping is on us. To order, visit **rd.com/RDFEB**.

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World of
GOOD
REASONS TO SMILE

Bearing Gifts

JESSY LARIOS ISN'T the first person to walk for a good cause. But he's the first one to hoof it from Los Angeles to New York City while wearing a 70-pound bear suit. Larios, 33, quit his job at a health insurance company to raise money for the disabled, the environment, cancer, mental health, and autism. His journey began on July 5 and ended in Times Square on November 14, raising $85,287 via pledges from people who followed his trek on the news and via social media. Bearsun, as Larios dubbed his furry alter ego, "makes people happy," he says. "And I'm all about laughter and smiles." R



COURTESY OF BEARSUN

EVERYDAY HEROES

She Fell for Him

An injured trail runner finds help—and love—from a knight on a mountain bike

BY *Caroline Fanning*

EVEN ROGERS HAD just whipped around a curve on his mountain bike in April 2020 when he was stopped short by the sight of a woman sitting on the side of the trail. She was cute and had long auburn hair and big expressive eyes. What he didn't know then was that she was also in agony.

Sydney Linden, 28, had been jogging down Adobe Jack Trail in Sedona, Arizona, when she hopped over a rock and her leg hyperextended on the landing. The pain was instant. Her right leg collapsed and she hit the dirt hard. Linden tried to stand but collapsed. She wasn't sure if she had torn her ACL, broken her leg, or something else. All she knew was that the pain was a 15 out of 10.

Linden dragged herself to the shade, "like an animal preparing to die," she says. She'd called a friend, but after 30 minutes, her friend was lost. That's when she saw the mountain biker.

Rogers was trying to play it cool. "I didn't want to be creepy," he says, "so I was just going to casually ride by—at a slower speed." But Rogers, 33, an active-duty airman, sensed her distress and asked if he could help. Linden explained her predicament. That's when he noticed the swelling under her leggings. She needed a hospital—now.

Leaning on Rogers, Linden tried to hop along, but the pain was searing. She'd never make it to the trailhead this way. Rogers had another idea. He ditched his bike on the side of the trail and, after a brief discussion, lifted her

PHOTOGRAPH BY *Matt Nager*

Though Even Rogers had biked 14 miles, he knew he had the strength to get the injured hiker to safety.

over his shoulder. Then they began the steep 0.6-mile descent over rocky terrain and desert scrub. Although it was spring, the Arizona sun beat down relentlessly. But they made the best of it, distracting themselves from the discomfort by getting to know each other.

They both had ended up in Sedona through unusual circumstances, they learned. Linden had moved spontaneously from Denver and enrolled in massage therapy school. Rogers was in town from Colorado Springs to care for his ailing stepfather.

"I REMEMBER BEING IN THE HOSPITAL AND WISHING HE WAS THERE WITH ME."

The pair discussed life goals and future plans, eventually touching on the heady subject of lucid dreams, where one knows they're dreaming even though asleep. Perhaps they were in one right now? Both remember laughing a lot. "It was like I'd known him forever," says Linden.

After a 30-minute trek to the parking lot, they found Linden's friend waiting with the car. Rogers carefully loaded Linden into the front seat. Though she was sobbing in pain, Linden looked at Rogers through glassy, expectant eyes, wishing he would make the first move. Rogers wanted to ask for her number, but the timing didn't feel right. Instead, Linden's friend rushed her to the hospital and Rogers went to retrieve his bike.

At the hospital, Linden learned she'd fractured the top of her shinbone. An operation would leave her with a metal rod beneath her knee, and an eight-inch scar. While waiting for surgery, Linden looked for Rogers on Facebook. "I remember being in the hospital and wishing he was there with me," she says. But no dice: Rogers was social-media averse.

Meanwhile, Rogers was googling her, with no luck. On the trail, they'd fallen so deeply and suddenly into conversation that details such as last names had seemed trivial. Linden contacted the local newspaper, which published her story the day after the surgery with the headline "Runner Looking for Trail Hero."

That same day, the journalist e-mailed Linden. Rogers had read the article and wanted to get in touch.

A month later, Rogers and Linden had their first date. They've been inseparable ever since. Linden moved to Colorado Springs to be with Rogers and pursue a master's degree. Rogers planned a trip to Portland, Oregon, for their one-year anniversary, since Linden has always wanted to see the cherry blossoms in bloom. He booked a hotel 0.6 mile from the cherry blossoms—the very distance they'd covered to the Adobe Jack trailhead. This time, though, they'd do it hand in hand. R

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Taking a Scalpel to Medical Debt

BY *Andy Simmons*

JEFF JENSEN WAS in a quandary. The entrepreneur and Boy Scout leader was hobbled by painful nerve damage in his leg and foot. He needed surgery, but he doubted he could afford it, even with insurance. "There's nothing more depressing than seeing a bill for 18, 20, 24,000 dollars and going, 'How much of this will my insurance cover and how much is mine to cover?'" Jensen told WWAY-TV.

Luckily for Jensen, his doctor is Demetrio Aguila. The nerve specialist gives patients at his Healing Hands of Nebraska practice in Papillion the option to pay for surgery though volunteer work. He calls it his M25 Program, inspired by the Bible verse at Matthew 25:40: "Amen, I say to you, whatever you did for one of these least brothers of mine, you did for me."

"We can't ignore the people in our own backyard," Aguila told CBS. "We want to be able to offer hope to patients who have lost hope medically."

Using an algorithm, the clinic calculates community service hours based on the price of the surgery. In Jensen's case, the $12,000 operation equaled



Dr. Demetrio Aguila is helping his patients help their communities.

560 hours of helping out at one of the local charitable organizations registered with the M25 Program.

Like 10 percent of Aguila's patients, Jensen opted for the community service. And because hundreds of hours of community service can seem daunting, Aguila, 50, not only lets others help, he encourages it. "I had this hope that we would rekindle in our neighbors and in ourselves a sense of volunteerism," he told CNN.

Jensen, whose surgery was completed in February 2020, was helped by more than 100 friends and strangers who volunteered at Orphan Grain Train, which donates food, clothing, and medicine nationally and globally.

Count Dave Harvey, founder of the homeless aid organization Least of My Brethren, as one who is awed by Aguila. "His helping us by sending volunteers our way?" he told KMTV in Omaha. "What a cool thing." R

COURTESY HEALING HANDS OF NEBRASKA

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BEST PET PALS

Buster the Bull

SPARTANBURG, SOUTH CAROLINA

TO BE CLEAR, Buster wasn't my bull. He escaped his pasture next door and showed up in my barn. I was afraid of the loose behemoth that day, but—maybe because I was new to the area—he soon became my therapist, teacher, and friend.

Once he was back in his pasture, we'd chat over the fence, covering such topics as hard days at work and exciting happenings at home. He did most of the listening, giving knowing glances and huffs when appropriate. When it was time to end the conversation, he'd turn and walk away. He had impeccable timing.

I posted Buster photos and stories on Facebook—he had quite a following. One admirer's dying wish was to muster the strength to meet him. The fan arrived bearing apples. Buster rarely ate apples except from one tree in his pasture, but he gobbled them up that day. In return, Buster stopped eating long enough to pose for photos with the ailing man who thought the world of him.

In 2020, at just seven years old, Buster fell ill and drifted to the woods to be alone when it was his time. I miss Buster. There will never be another like him. R

—Nominated by WYNNE SMITH

Think your pet can't top Buster's story?
Don't be so bullheaded! See terms and submit your story at rd.com/petpals.

COURTESY WYNNE SMITH

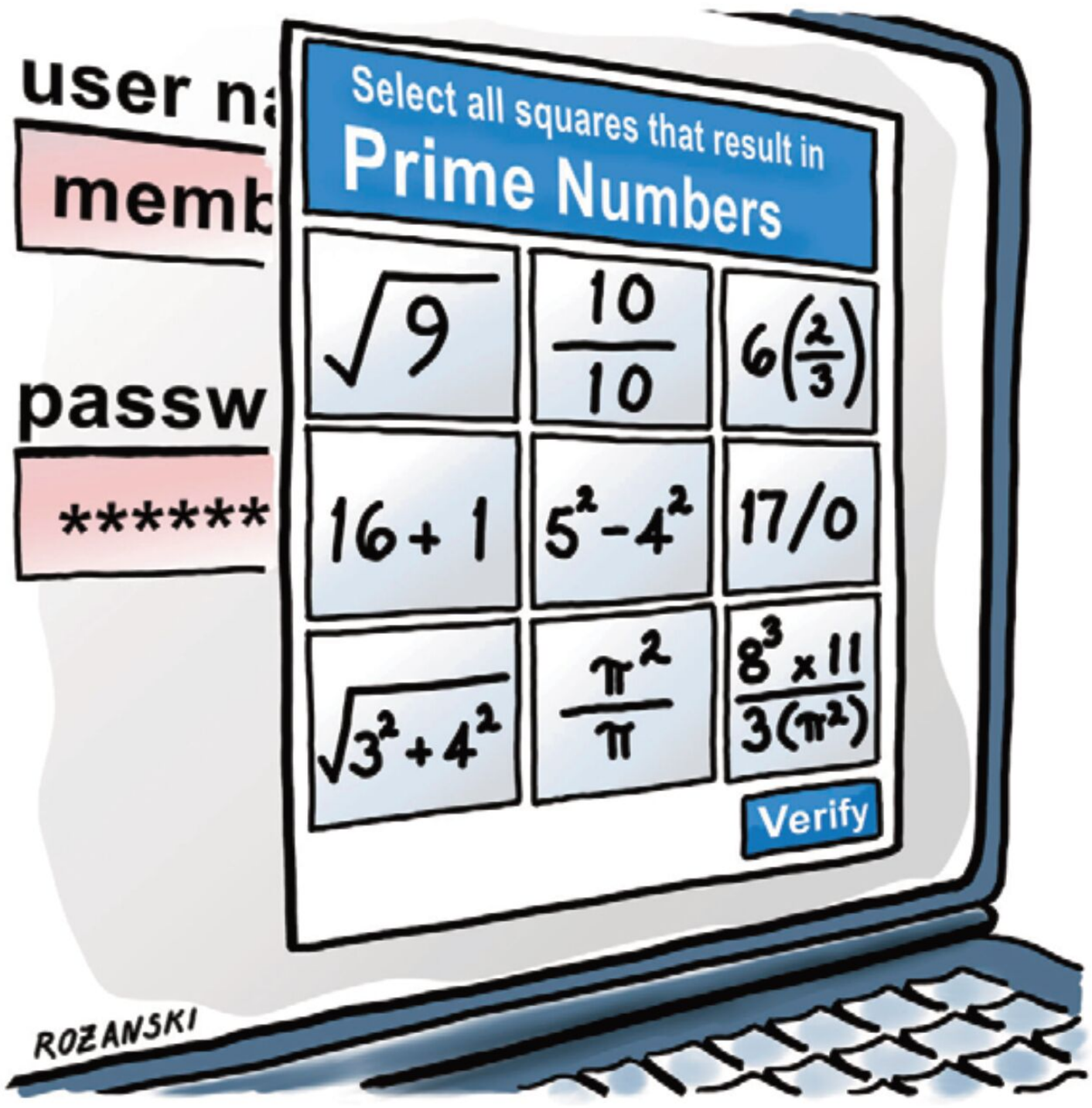
LIFE IN THESE *United States*

For Valentine's Day: Keeping the spark alive!

✦ **"I didn't take** the last of it because I know that's your favorite antacid" is how my husband and I say "I love you" now.
—@THEARIBRADFORD

✦ **I asked my wife** if she would still love me when I was old and wrinkled. She replied, "Of course I do."
—GORDON ROSE
Fishers, Indiana

✦ **Dating text:** Send a pic of what you're wearing right now.
Marriage text: Send a pic of the exact kind of bone broth I'm supposed to pick up.
—@THECATWHISPRER



MENSA login security

I was standing on the subway when the woman seated in front of me got up. As she exited, I spied a glove where she had been sitting. Grabbing it, I ran to the door, shouted, "Miss, your glove!" and tossed it to her on the platform just as the doors slammed shut. Pleased with my good deed, I sat back down. That's when I felt a tap on my shoulder from the woman sitting next to me. "That," she said, "was my glove."
—JUDITH TEDINO
Calabasas, California

Before my wife became pregnant, I always assumed Braxton Hicks was a country music artist.
—@THEDADVOCATE01

A random home inspection revealed low levels

CARTOON BY *Alan Rozanski*

of carbon monoxide leaking into my sister's home. She got it resolved, but our mother couldn't help asking the obvious: "Why didn't you have a working carbon monoxide detector?"

"We did," my sister said. "But it wouldn't stop beeping."

—FROM REDDIT

When Grandpa died, my mother and aunts decided he deserved a new suit for his burial. Off they went to JCPenney, where a salesman helped them pick out the perfect outfit. Smiling broadly, the salesman told them, "Today is your lucky day. This suit comes with *two* pairs of pants."

—JACK MOSS
Columbus, Ohio

TMB STUDIO/MARK DERSE

GOT A FUNNY STORY *about friends or family? It could be worth $$$. For details, go to* **RD.COM/SUBMIT.**

Questions my cat still hasn't answered: "Who's a cat?" "Are you a cat?" "Are you the littlest girl?" "Are you the sweetest potato?"

—@CAPEYBARA

GOOD QUESTION

✦ **Six-year-old** (finishes dinner): What's for dessert?
Me: We don't always have to have dessert.
Six: Then why have dinner at all?

—@XplodingUnicorn



✦ **My son and I were** walking in the cemetery when we came upon an ornate mausoleum. New to reading and interested in words, my son pointed to the name carved at the top and asked, "What does that say?"

I told him the family name: "Eaton."

Now horrified, he responded, "By what?"

—AUDREY MALDONADO
Canajoharie, New York

✦ **(My seven-year-old** staring at my face)
Me: What is it, sweetie?
Seven: Is my nose weird, too?

—@thisonesayz

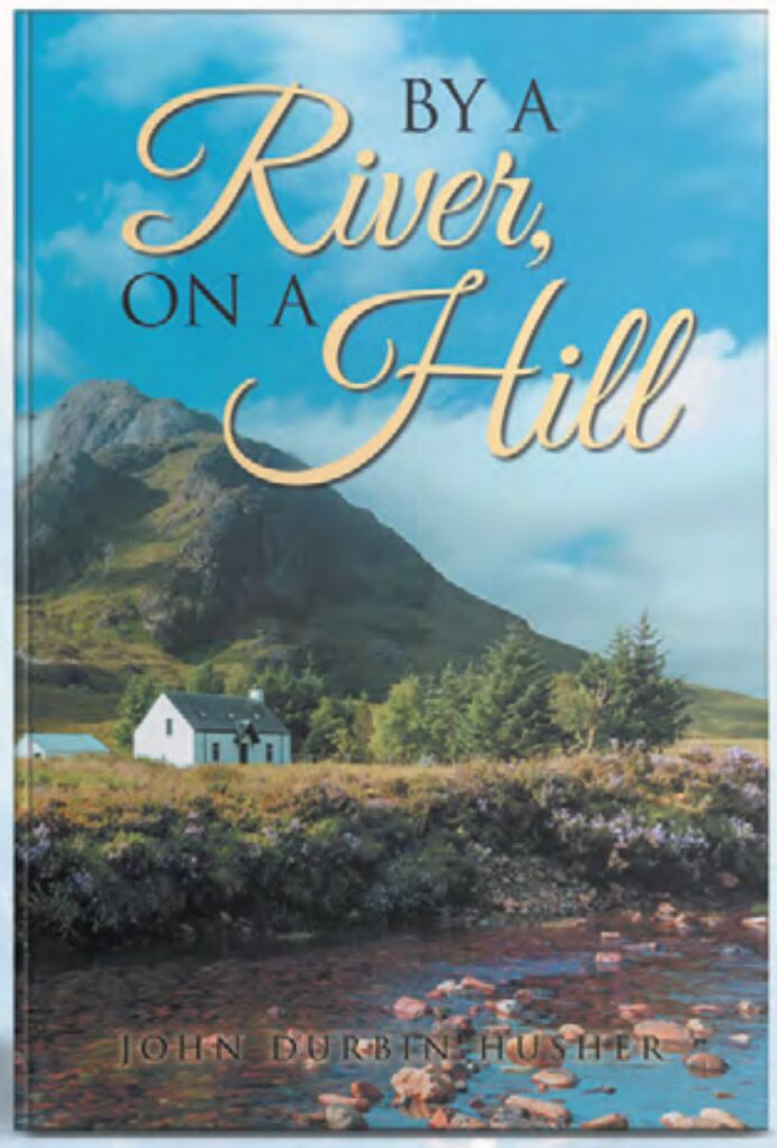
✦ **After we passed the** same off-ramp for the third time, it was clear that I was lost. My little girl asked, "Daddy, do you know where you're going?"

"No," I said.

Her reply: "Then why are you still going there?"

—DAVE ARANDA-RICHARDS
Fallbrook, California

Winter Specials

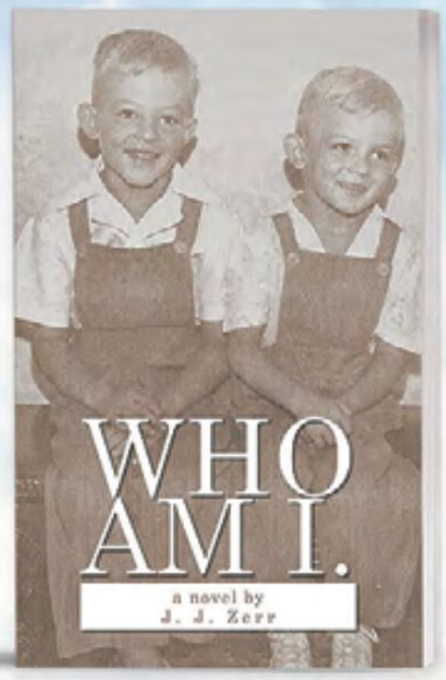


By a River, On a Hill

John Durbin Husher

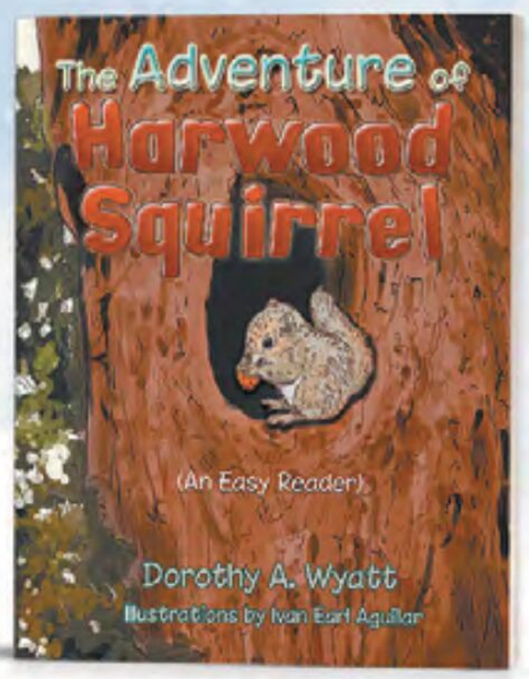
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By a River, On a Hill brings you into the lives of twins born during the depression in a small steel mill town in Western Pennsylvania and carries you through the depression, the war, the building of the Golden Gate Bridge and on to two completely different routes of success of each to his chosen profession.



Who Am I.

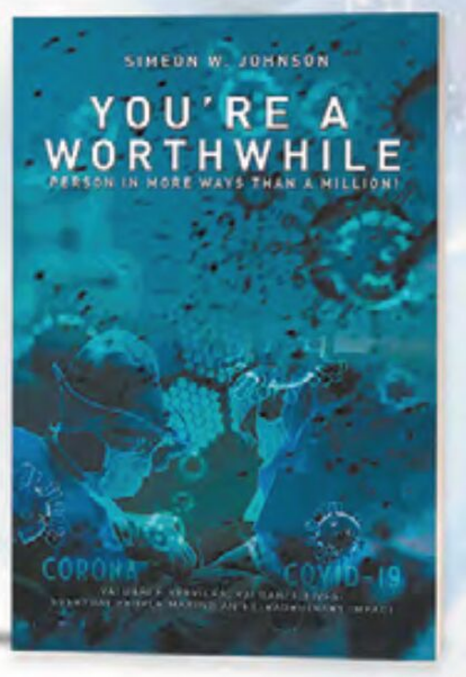
J. J. Zerr



The Adventure of Harwood Squirrel

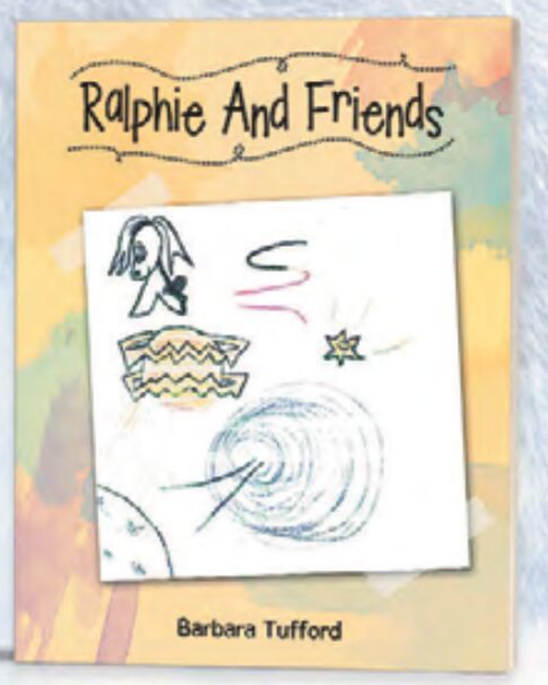
An Easy Reader

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HELPS, HACKS, & HOW TO

1 Run Interference at Your Super Bowl Party

ENTERTAINING The Hail Marys have been thrown. The final whistle has blown. Somebody is going to Disney World. Yet guests continue to crack cold ones at your Super Bowl bash as if it isn't still a Sunday night. Chef and Food Network host Sunny Anderson suggests putting out dessert and coffee at the game's two-minute warning to give stragglers a countdown of their own. "Something about the smell of coffee and sweets on the table denotes the end of anything, so people get it; the party is over and it's time to go home," she says.

TMB STUDIO

PHOTOGRAPHS BY *K. Synold*

2

"Bounce" Pan Scorch Marks

CLEANING Accidentally flambéed your best pan so badly that not even a long soak will lift those scorch marks? Put down the hammer and chisel. Place a dryer sheet in the bottom of the pan, then fill it with hot water. Dish soap and the sheet's conditioner will soften even the most singed scorch residue.

3

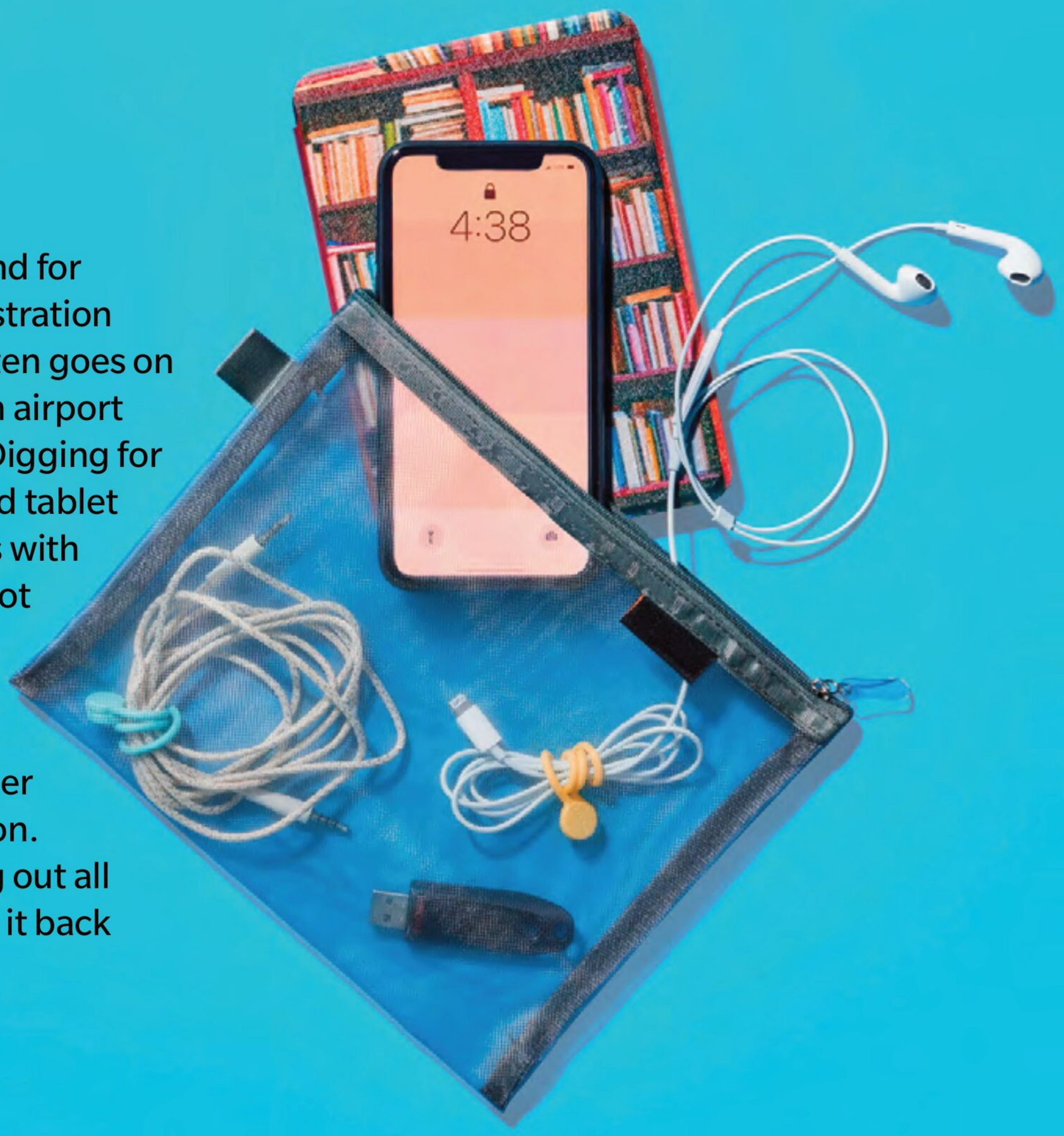
Take Advantage of Cruise Control Without It Taking Advantage of You

AUTO Cruise control can help you save money on gas by maintaining a constant speed. But avoid using the feature while navigating hills or mountainous inclines, as it sends your engine into overdrive and causes your vehicle to burn fuel faster. Conserve gas on hilly highways by allowing your speed to slightly decrease as you go up and slowly increase as you go down, as nature intended. After all, it's not called climb control.

4

Minimize Airport Security Mayhem

TRAVEL TSA should stand for Total Scramble Administration because that's what often goes on when you pass through airport security checkpoints. Digging for your laptop, phone, and tablet while standing in socks with a hole in the toe does not alleviate the pressure. Electronics go in a separate bin anyway, so pack them in a smaller tote within your carry-on. You can pull everything out all at once and easily slide it back in once you're clear.





5 Tweezer-Free Splinter Removal

HEALTH A splinter sure can hurt, but using tweezers to dig it out—or accidentally dig it deeper—is painful too. If the tip of the splinter is sticking out, sticky duct tape might be just the thing to remove it. Place a piece of duct tape over it, then quickly pull the tape off. If you're lucky, the splinter will come out—painlessly.

6 Keep Your Landscapes Level

HOME Sometimes you don't want to have to squint your eyes and tilt your head to properly appreciate a photo or piece of artwork. If you're hanging something new on the wall and you can't get the frame to sit straight, try a pinch of mounting putty on each of the bottom corners. Once the frame is centered and balanced, press the sticky corners into the wall and it will hold steady without damaging the surface.

7 Make Your Camera Roll Searchable

TECH Finding a specific photo on your iPhone camera roll is like looking for a needle in a needle stack. Fortunately, there's an easy way to identify images so you can find them later: Add a caption. To get started, swipe up on an image or video. Write your caption, and it'll save automatically. Photo evidence of summer '08 or your trip to Mykonos is now just a keyword search away.

8 Mix Up Your Baking

BAKING Why whip up brownie batter in a mixing bowl before pouring it into a pan to bake? No matter how hard you try to be neat, you can't help but dribble ooey-gooey batter everywhere. Instead, mix all the ingredients together right in the pan, after spraying it with baking spray, and save yourself the extra cleanup. R

13 THINGS

Our Two Cents on Cryptocurrency

BY *Kat Tretina*



1 WHILE CRYPTOCURRENCY is often associated with shady deals on the dark web, it's a digital form of money that anyone can use. It's virtually immune from counterfeiting or government interference, but the main appeal is the potential profit from trading it, making cryptocurrency more commodity than cash.

2 MOST CRYPTOCURRENCIES work using blockchain technology—a type of database that serves as a permanent ledger for transactions.

ILLUSTRATION BY *Serge Bloch*

But their value is based on the activity of their users: The more "coins" people buy, the more those coins are worth.

3 THE BEST-KNOWN cryptocurrency, or crypto for short, is Bitcoin, which has grown nearly 12,000 percent in value over the past five years. By contrast, the value of Amazon stock grew by 465 percent during that same period. One of the first-ever crypto purchases was made with Bitcoin. Back in 2010, a man bought two takeout pizzas for 10,000 bitcoins, which would be worth about $639 million today.

4 THE CREATOR of Bitcoin goes by Satoshi Nakamoto, but (almost) no one knows who Nakamoto is because it's a pseudonym. Many think it's a group rather than an individual. One theory is that four Japanese companies, *Sa*msung, *Toshi*ba, *Naka*michi, and *Moto*rola, all collaborated on it and took a part from each of their names.

5 THERE ARE more than 7,000 kinds of cryptocurrency. Among the largest based on the number of coins in circulation are Ethereum, Binance Coin, Cardano, Tether, Solana, and Dogecoin. That last one may sound familiar if you watch *Saturday Night Live*. When Tesla CEO (and major Dogecoin investor) Elon Musk hosted the show last May, he joked that the coin is a "hustle," sometimes slang for a shady way to make money. By the next morning, the price of Dogecoin had plummeted by 30 percent.

6 DESPITE THAT kind of volatility, crypto has become an increasingly popular investment option. More than 30 million Americans bought or traded it in the past year. People are also increasingly interested in spending crypto, and one of the biggest reasons is for the privacy it affords its users. You can transfer cryptocurrency without an intermediary and, unlike credit cards, crypto obscures both your identity and the amounts you spend with it.

7 BUSINESSES THAT allow customers to pay with crypto include PayPal, Tesla, and Xbox. Sotheby's, the venerable auction house, announced last year that it would accept bids made in bitcoins or ethereums. Even some big name charities, including The Water Project, The Red Cross, and Save the Children, accept donations made in cryptocurrency.

8 ONE WAY to earn cryptocurrency is through mining, but it's an intensely complicated process that releases new coins into circulation using advanced computer

equipment. (Just like other mined materials, the total amount of some cryptocurrencies is finite.) So the way most people get their cryptocurrency is by buying it on online exchange platforms.

9 IN ORDER to trade cryptocurrency, you'll need an individual investment account with a crypto exchange. Popular exchanges include Coinbase, Kraken, and Gemini, all of which charge fees, just as traditional brokerages do. You could also use a cryptocurrency broker and, instead of owning the coins, speculate on their prices, betting on how they will rise and fall.

10 WHILE THE stock market has set trading hours, cryptocurrencies do not—they can be traded 24 hours a day, seven days a week. But the government doesn't back cryptocurrency as it does the dollar, and cryptocurrency investments don't carry the same legal protections as traditional payment methods.

11 ANOTHER KEY difference is that investors are responsible for storing their cryptocurrencies, which is easier said than done. Because the coins aren't insured by the FDIC, you could lose them (through theft, system failures, or simply by forgetting your key code to access them) and, thus, lose your investment. Once cryptocurrency is lost, it's nearly impossible to recover, which then makes the remaining accessible coins even more valuable.

12 THE WAY to store cryptocurrency is in a digital wallet. These wallets can either be "hot" (meaning that they're stored online), or "cold" (stored on an external device that isn't connected to the Internet). Cold wallets are more secure since hackers can't use the Internet to access them.

13 MANY PEOPLE start trading cryptocurrency because they think these investments are exempt from taxation. But since 2014, the IRS has treated crypto as property for federal income tax purposes. Just like any other investor, one who buys cryptocurrency and later sells it at a profit will incur capital gains taxes. Even in cyberspace, the IRS always gets its due. R

Spread the Word

Charcuterie is French for "I shouldn't have done this right before dinner."

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FOOD FOR *Thought*

The Hottest Kitchen Tip? *Freezing*

BY *Kate Lowenstein* AND *Daniel Gritzer*

OUR ABILITY TO make things extremely cold has granted us modern luxuries such as ice water, Popsicles, and, most important, a way to keep food from rotting. But there's more to freezing than meets the eye, and chefs and mixologists have been making magic with subzero temperatures for centuries. You can cryo-blanch herbs such as basil for more flavorful pesto, cryo-shuck bivalves such as clams (which pop open as they thaw), and cryo-tenderize notoriously tough seafood such as octopus (thanks to ice crystals that make micro-tears throughout the meat). Freezing also makes it much easier to thinly slice meats and dice slippery pork fat.

New York chef Lucas Sin has been popularizing long-held techniques from northeastern China that involve freezing different foods, including Asian pears, sweet potatoes, and tofu. The cold alters their texture, sweetness levels, and juiciness in interesting and delicious ways. Tofu becomes spongier and better absorbs the liquid it's cooked in. Asian pears become soft and juicy once the ice crystals defrost, taking on a poached texture while maintaining their fresh flavor. Sweet potatoes, which are roasted after freezing, come out sweeter and more caramelized.

Ultra-cold temperatures are also the secret to making apple-based liquors. Behold applejack, a high-proof alcohol sold in stores that's seasonal and warming in this delicious hot toddy recipe. Applejack is made from freezing hard cider and progressively removing more and more of the water as it ices over, leaving the alcohol behind. What's left is a concentrated solution with quite the boozy punch—similar to distillation but without the need for a still, fire, and the technical know-how that the traditional evaporation-based method requires. In a cold climate, you can leave your hard cider out in the wintertime deep freeze and "jack" it into something that resembles a spirit. If that's not the epitome of cool, we don't know what is. R

Kate Lowenstein is a health journalist and the editor-in-chief at Vice*; Daniel Gritzer is the culinary director of the cooking site Serious Eats.*

TMB STUDIO

PHOTOGRAPH BY *K. Synold*



APPLEJACK HOT TODDY

Stud a ⅛-inch-thick lemon wheel with 3 cloves. Fill a mug with boiling water to pre-heat; discard water. Add 1 ounce honey and 5 ounces fresh boiling water to warmed mug and stir until thoroughly combined. Stir in 2 ounces applejack, then add the prepared lemon wheel and 1 piece star anise. Stir in fresh lemon juice, ½ teaspoon at a time, to taste. If desired, garnish with half a vanilla bean pod, then serve.

ALL *in a Day's* WORK



"I'm afraid it's curiosity."

It was the first week of school, and one first grader was having trouble adjusting. As his teacher offered comfort and reassurance, the boy looked up at her and demanded, "Who signed me up for this anyway?"

—FROM SCHOOLSPUN HUMOR, TOLD TO OPAL YOUNG BY JAN SEIGLA

I was working at a 7-Eleven when a man tucked four six-packs of beer under his arms and bolted without paying. I called the police, then went home when my shift ended. The next day, the police came to the store with a suspect in tow. They asked the clerk working then, "Is this the man who stole the beer?"

The perp shouted, "How would he know? He wasn't here when I ran out the door."

—R.N.
via e-mail

After ordering a sandwich at a deli, I remembered I wanted to split it with my wife, so I asked the clerk to cut it in fourths.

"Too late," he said, handing me the sandwich. "I already cut it in half."

—RODNEY BISHOP
Webb City, Missouri

Customers ... do we really need them?

✦ **A customer complained** that their fries tasted too much like potatoes.

—@LEPRESIDIO

✦ **A customer got** huffy with me because she didn't know

CARTOON BY *Vaughan Tomlinson*

that saber-toothed cats are extinct and thought our museum would have a live one on display.
—@ADDISON_PEACOCK

✦ **Library patron of the week:** the fella who came in, wandered around for a while, then asked pleasantly, "What is this place?"
—@ALIXHAWLEY

✦ **Flight attendant:** For dinner we have chicken curry or beef stroganoff.
Passenger: I'll have the lamb.
—FROM OVERHEARDINTHEOFFICE.COM

✦ **Woman:** I'll take the QAnon salad.
Server: Ma'am, I really hope you meant the quinoa salad.
—@REALOVERHEARDLA

GOT A FUNNY JOKE?
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RD PHOTO STUDIO

DON'T CALL US, WE'LL CALL YOU

Looking for a job? Be sure to proofread your résumé. Below, we've strung together actual blunders made by job seekers.

Joe Schmo
STATE OF DELUSION

SOURCE: ROBERT HALF INTERNATIONAL EMPLOYMENT AGENCY

OBJECTIVE	I would like to work for a company that is very lax when it comes to tardiness.
SKILLS	I can edit and improve any document someone puts in front of me. I love animals too!
WORK EXPERIENCE	Drove a toe truck. Restaurant supervisor: Made recipes for sandwiches and coffee. I even had a sandwich named after me.
EMPLOYMENT HISTORY	My long period of unemployment had to do with a variety of unexpected time-consuming events—an IRS audit of my finances, in particular.
REFERENCES	My girlfriend.
SALARY REQUIREMENTS	I am looking for a rate of either $120 per day or $120 per hour.
AWARDS/ ACCOMPLISHMENTS	Dum major with my high school band.
EDUCATION	I took all of the required classes in high school, including government, literature, and history of rock.
MISCELLANEOUS	My shirt is always tucked in.

I feel so lucky to be a writer's assistant but so unlucky that a room full of people have to watch me try to type the word *lieutenant*.
—@LIBBYDOYNE

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When Heart Disease Runs in the Family

What you can do with the cardio cards you've been dealt

BY *Charlotte Hilton Andersen and Karla Walsh*

"I HAD NO IDEA what was going on," recalls Jenny Petz, a mother of two. She remembers thinking at the time, Why is my mother sitting on my chest to talk to me? She knew that made no sense, but it was the only explanation she could think of for the extreme chest pressure and heaviness she felt as she lay on the nursery floor in 2008, drifting in and out of consciousness. Later she learned that her mother was there, but she wasn't talking to Petz. She was on the phone with

ILLUSTRATIONS BY *James Steinberg*

a 911 operator, summoning an ambulance. Petz—young, fit, and healthy—had given birth eight days earlier. At age 32, she was having a heart attack.

An EKG at the hospital revealed the severity of Petz's condition. Her heart attack had been caused by spontaneous coronary artery dissection (SCAD). "It's as scary as it sounds," she says. "One of the main arteries to my heart exploded." Another artery to Petz's heart was 90 percent blocked, and when the pregnancy put extra strain on her heart, the clogged artery increased the work for the remaining arteries, and the extra pressure eventually became too much.

Petz was rushed into surgery, where doctors placed a stent in the blocked artery and repaired the one that had ruptured. She was lucky to be alive. Next came the search to figure out why someone who didn't appear to have risk factors for heart disease had suffered such a potentially cataclysmic event. The culprit: her cholesterol, which measured 317 mg/dl, far into the high-risk category.

"I'd never had my cholesterol tested, because I'd never seen a reason to," she says. "I had no obvious risk factors."

A genetic test showed familial hypercholesterolemia, a life-threatening condition that leads to high cholesterol. A mutation means the body can't remove the LDL (low-density lipoprotein), or "bad" cholesterol, from the blood as it normally would. Heart attacks or strokes often follow.

Familial hypercholesterolemia affects about 1 in every 250 people, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), although many, like Petz, are never diagnosed until serious symptoms arise. Many people are never diagnosed at all, their elevated cholesterol chalked up to bad lifestyle choices.

Familial hypercholesterolemia is only one of many heart conditions that can be passed down from parents to children, including cardiomyopathies (diseases of the heart muscle), arrhythmias (irregular heartbeat), and more.

OF COURSE, LIFESTYLE also plays a powerful role in determining heart health. Inactivity, obesity, and smoking contribute. According to the CDC, heart disease is the leading cause of death in America, where it is responsible for one death every 36 seconds. "The risk for heart disease can increase even more when heredity combines with unhealthy lifestyle choices, such as smoking cigarettes and eating an unhealthy diet," says Satjit Bhusri, MD, founder of Upper East Side Cardiology in New York City.

Knowing your family history can help you assess your risks and take steps to lower them. The American Heart Association has a free downloadable "My Family Health Tree" PDF to make this easier to track.

"Make a systematic assessment of the health of your relatives. In addition to your parents, siblings, and



kids, also remember your grandparents, aunts and uncles, cousins, and nephews and nieces," says Carolyn Yung Ho, MD, the medical director of the Cardiovascular Genetics Center and an associate professor of cardiology at Harvard Medical School in Boston. "Make note of which side of the family you are talking about, and any important medical illnesses, as well as age and circumstances of how people passed away. Being organized can help you and your doctor identify important patterns," she says.

Fortunately, even the most problematic genes can lie dormant in most people if they make positive health habits a priority. A 2016 study in the *New England Journal of Medicine* reported that those with high genetic risk for heart disease had about double the risk for a heart attack or stroke. But they could trim their risk by a whopping 46 percent with healthy lifestyle choices, including not smoking, exercising regularly, eating a well-balanced diet, and maintaining a body mass index (BMI) of less than 30.

"Try to reduce the risks that you can control," Dr. Ho says. "Being healthy and active is the best defense and offense."

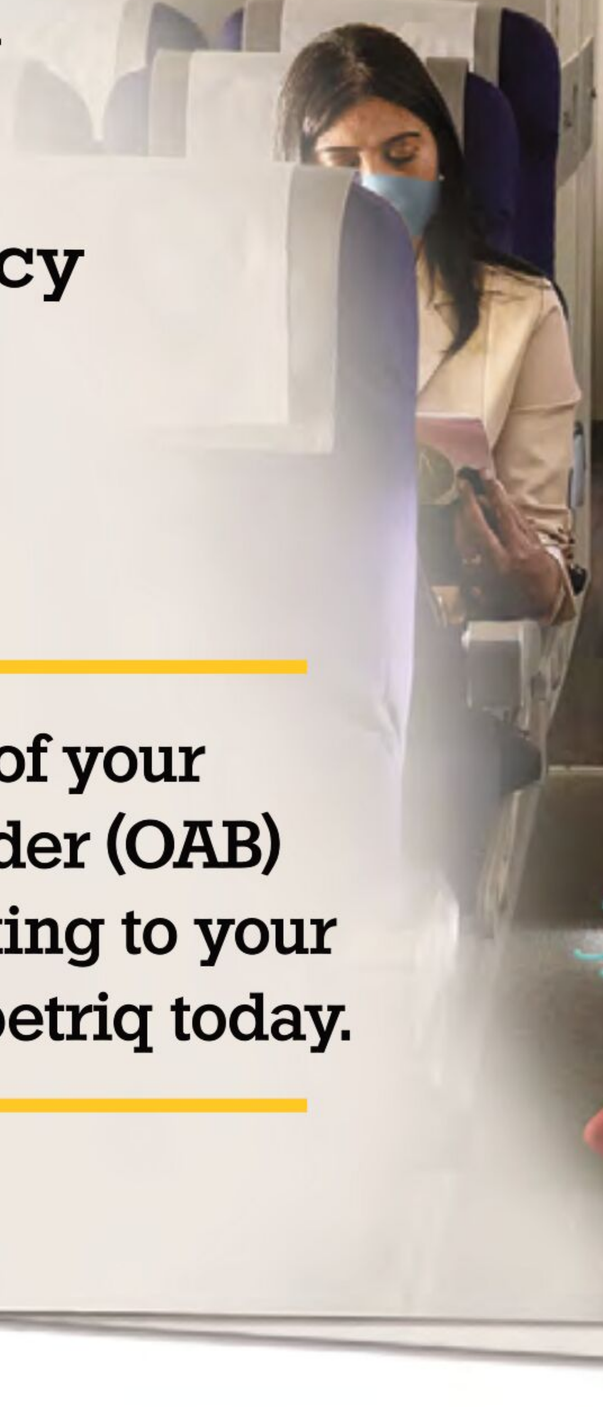
JENNY PETZ, now 46, has done just that. After her terrifying heart attack, Petz went through cardiac rehabilitation and suffered no lasting heart damage. She began taking a statin to lower her cholesterol, and a drug to lower blood pressure. She does her best to exercise regularly and eat a healthy diet.

"Thanks to these changes, my total cholesterol has stayed around 150 mg/dl—right in the healthy range—for years now," she says. Petz had her two children tested for the genetic condition that caused her heart attack, "and, fortunately, they did not inherit it," she says. R

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USE OF MYRBETRIQ

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

IMPORTANT SAFETY INFORMATION

Do not take MYRBETRIQ if you are allergic to mirabegron or any ingredients in MYRBETRIQ.

MYRBETRIQ may cause your blood pressure to increase or make your blood pressure worse if you have a history of high blood pressure. You and your doctor should check your blood pressure while you are taking MYRBETRIQ. Call your doctor if you have increased blood pressure.

MYRBETRIQ may increase your chances of not being able to empty your bladder. Tell your

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IMPORTANT SAFETY INFORMATION (continued)

doctor right away if you have trouble emptying your bladder or you have a weak urine stream.

MYRBETRIQ may cause an allergic reaction with swelling of the face, lips, throat or tongue with or without difficulty breathing. Stop using MYRBETRIQ and go to the nearest hospital emergency room right away.

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

Before taking MYRBETRIQ, tell your doctor about all of your medical conditions, including if you have liver or kidney problems.

The most common side effects of MYRBETRIQ include high blood pressure, pain or swelling of the nose or throat (nasopharyngitis), urinary tract infection, and headache.

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

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

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Serious Side Effects

■ **increased blood pressure–** You and your doctor should check your blood pressure while you are taking Myrbetriq. Call your doctor if you have increased blood pressure ■ **inability to empty your bladder (urinary retention)–** Tell your doctor right away if you are unable to empty your bladder ■ **angioedema–** Myrbetriq may cause an allergic reaction with swelling of the lips, face, tongue, or throat with or without difficulty breathing. Stop using Myrbetriq and go to the nearest hospital emergency room right away.

Tell your doctor about all of your medical conditions, including:

■ liver problems or kidney problems ■ very high uncontrolled blood pressure ■ trouble emptying your bladder or you have a weak urine stream ■ if you are pregnant or plan to become pregnant. It is not known if Myrbetriq will harm your unborn baby. Talk to your doctor if you are pregnant or plan to become pregnant. ■ if you are breastfeeding or plan to breastfeed. It is not known if Myrbetriq passes into your breast milk. Talk to your doctor about the best way to feed your baby if you take Myrbetriq.

Myrbetriq may affect the way other medicines work, and other medicines may affect how Myrbetriq works. Tell your doctor about all the medicines you take, including prescription and over-the-counter medicines, vitamins, and herbal supplements. Tell your doctor if you take: ■ thioridazine (Mellaril™ or Mellaril-S™) ■ flecainide (Tambocor®) ■ propafenone (Rythmol®) ■ digoxin (Lanoxin®) ■ solifenacin succinate (VESIcare®)

Most Common Side Effects

■high blood pressure ■pain or swelling of the nose or throat (nasopharyngitis) ■urinary tract infection ■headache

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

These are not all the possible side effects of Myrbetriq. For more information, ask your doctor or pharmacist. ***You may report side effects to the FDA at 1-800-FDA-1088 or www.fda.gov/medwatch***

Directions

■Take Myrbetriq exactly as your doctor tells you to take it ■Take 1 Myrbetriq tablet 1 time a day ■Take Myrbetriq with water and swallow the tablet whole ■Do not chew, break, or crush the tablet ■You can take Myrbetriq with or without food ■If you miss a dose of Myrbetriq, take it as soon as possible. If it has been more than 12 hours since taking the last dose of Myrbetriq tablets, skip that dose and take the next dose at the usual time ■If you take too much Myrbetriq, call your doctor or go to the nearest hospital emergency room right away

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

Inactive Ingredients

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

For more information about Myrbetriq, talk to your health care provider.

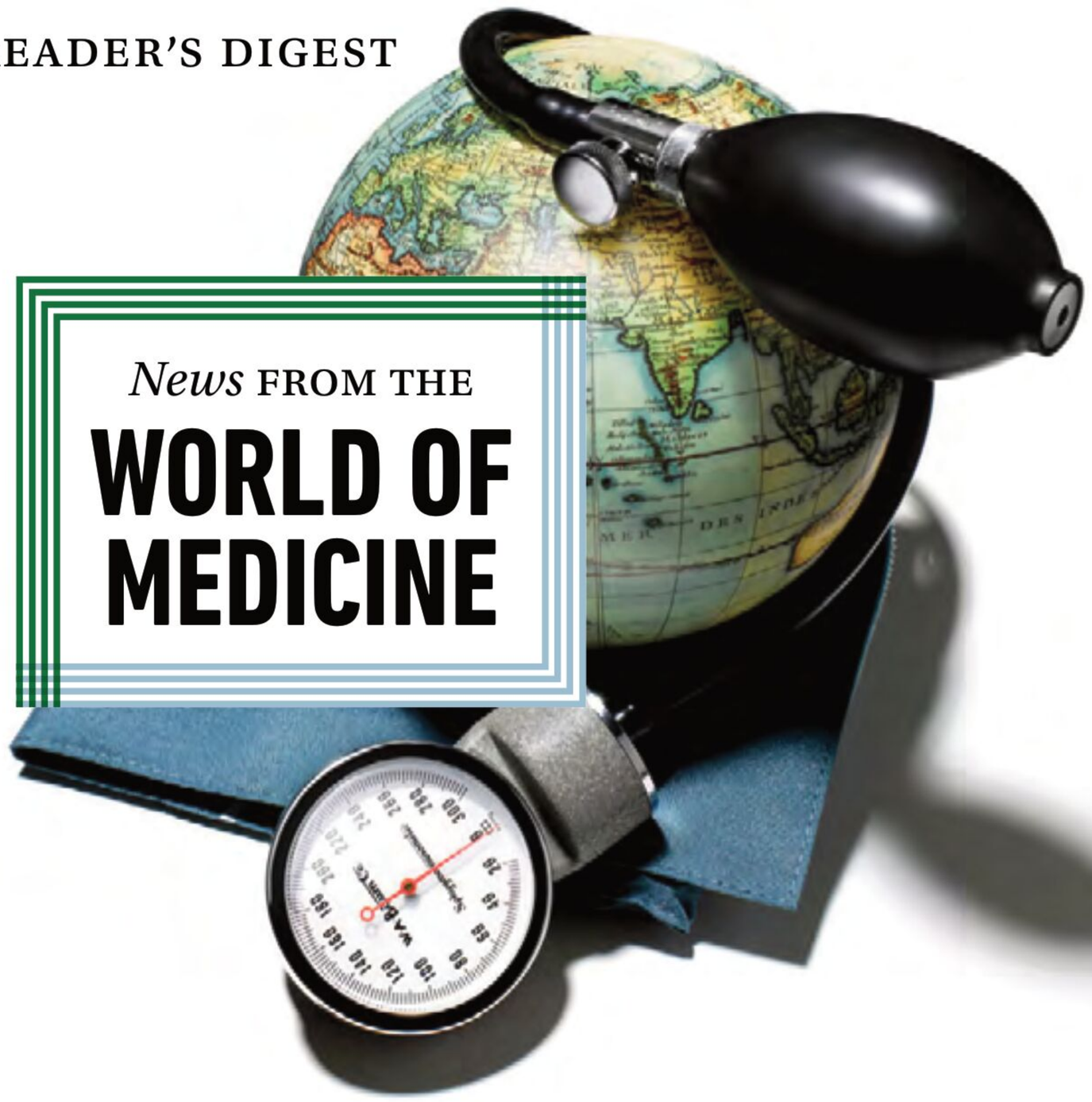
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057-4598-PM 4/21

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



News FROM THE

WORLD OF MEDICINE

HEART HEALTH IN THE SPICE AISLE

If you like to use herbs and spices when you cook, you're not just flavoring your meals—you're doing your heart some good. In an American study of adults with obesity and other risk factors for heart disease, participants who added an average of 6.6 grams of dried herbs and spices to their meals every day lowered their blood pressure. And people with type 2 diabetes who added ginger, cinnamon, or turmeric to their diets lowered their cholesterol levels, another review found. One caution: Check the labels of prepackaged herb and spice mixes and avoid those with salt and sugar additives that will have the opposite impact on your heart health.

Hit the Sauna Instead of the Gym?

A Coventry University study reports that sitting in a sauna for at least 30 minutes three times a week is as beneficial as low-to-moderate-intensity exercise. Like hiking or riding your bike, using a sauna raises your body temperature, increases your heart rate, and helps keep your blood sugar at normal levels. Over time, this may lower your risk of type 2 diabetes, dementia, and heart disease.
Of course, it's still good to exercise, but hopping into the sauna as often as you can is a good complement to a workout routine, and a helpful option for people who can't do regular exercise.



FROM TOP: CLAIRE BENOIST. GOIR/GETTY IMAGES

Lower Stress with the Help of a Friend

We often think of "fight or flight" as the common response to stress. But, according to a University of Illinois study, many women also use a strategy that researchers call "tend and befriend." That is, they are likely to turn to a caring female friend to talk about a problem, which successfully lowers their cortisol levels—and as a result, their stress. While this strategy is associated more with women, it can help men as well. In fact, studies from the University of California, Berkeley, and a group of international researchers suggest that male animals that form strong social bonds increase levels of oxytocin—sometimes called "the cuddle hormone" because it's released in the brain when we connect emotionally. So the next time you feel stressed, call a friend. It might help you feel better, short-term and long.

TAI CHI TRIMS BELLY FAT

If walking on a treadmill or lifting weights seems repetitive and monotonous, consider tai chi, which offers a more fluid and graceful way to stay fit. A Hong Kong study found that this centuries-old form of exercise—often described as "meditation in motion"—trims abdominal fat as effectively as conventional exercise. In fact, older adults who did tai chi three times a week for 12 weeks reduced their waistlines as much as those who did regular aerobic exercise and strength training, while also boosting their HDL, or good cholesterol. Since excess belly fat is linked to heart disease and type 2 diabetes, doing tai chi can have some important health benefits.

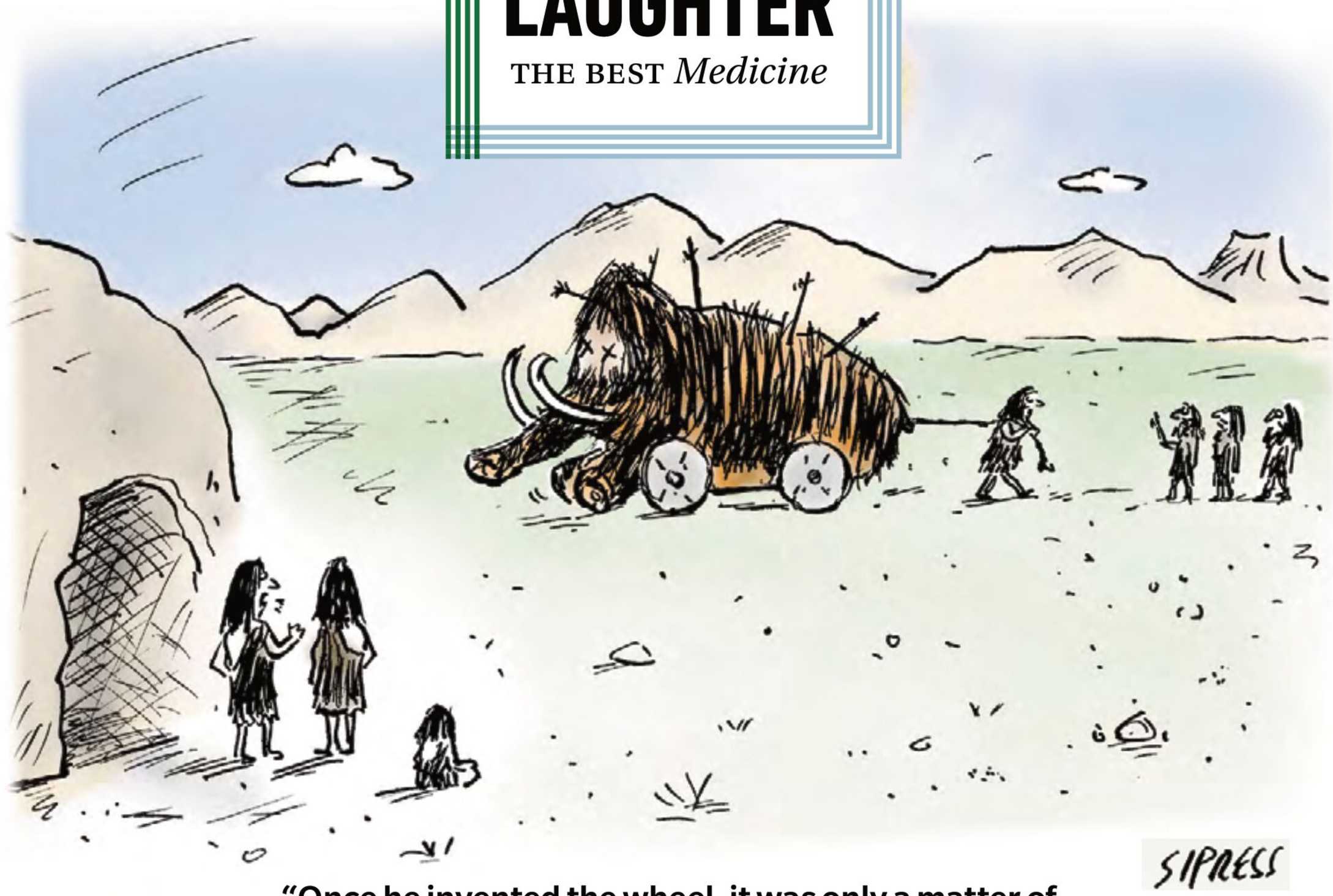
"Beckham Boot" Beats a Cast for Broken Ankles

According to a recent British study, a removable plastic brace—often referred to as a "Beckham boot" after soccer player David Beckham used one to treat an injury—is as effective for immobilizing and treating broken ankles as a traditional plaster cast. The added bonus of the removable brace is that it enables patients to perform ankle movement exercises several times a day, reducing the muscle loss and joint stiffness that follow prolonged immobilization. R



ALEX LIVESEY/GETTY IMAGES

LAUGHTER
THE BEST *Medicine*



"Once he invented the wheel, it was only a matter of time before he came up with the food truck."

"How come you're late?" the boss asks his assistant as she walks in the door.

"It was awful," she says. "I was walking down the street and saw a terrible accident. A man was lying in the middle of the street badly injured. There was blood everywhere. I'm just glad I took that first aid course."

"What did you do?"

"I sat down and put my head between my knees to keep from fainting."

—SOURCE: JOBHUNTEXPRESS.COM

In England, "booster shot" is spelled "borchestershire shot."

—@SARAHSURGEY1

Grandpa always said, "When one door closes, another one opens." Great man, horrible cabinetmaker.

—Submitted by
BUD FRAMPTON
Lewes, Delaware

Stop, Drop, and Roll: A Beginner's Guide to Bowling

—@STEVIEKNIP

DAVID SIPRESS/CARTOONSTOCK.COM

HORROR MOVIE REBOOTS FOR MIDDLE AGE

- Dawn of the Dead Car Battery
- Stepchildren of the Corn
- Rosemary's Baby Shower
- The Last Co-Op on the Left
- Night Sweats of the Living Dead
- Mortgage Payment of the Damned
- Final Destination Wedding
- Small Talk About Remodeling the Cabinet of Dr. Caligari
- Bridal Shower of Frankenstein
- The Sixth Sensible Meal
- The Bababook Club
- The Blair Witch School Project

By MAURA QUINT AND JESSIE DEAN ALTMAN *from McSweeney's*

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

AT WIT'S END

A long-running *Reader's Digest* section called Picturesque Speech featured wit from writers of the day. In celebration of our 100th year, here are a few favorites from the 1930s and '40s.

- He looked as if he had been poured into his clothes and had forgotten to say "when."
—P. G. WODEHOUSE, *humorist/novelist*

- Occasionally he's stumbled over the truth, but he always picked himself up and hurried on as if nothing had happened.
—WINSTON CHURCHILL, *British prime minister/author*

- His idea of conversation is talking to himself in the presence of others.
—DONALD REINES, *sci-fi writer*

- He looked at me like I was a side dish he hadn't ordered.
—RING LARDNER, *humorist/novelist*

- He came from the shady side of the family tree.
—JOSEPH MITCHELL, New Yorker *writer*

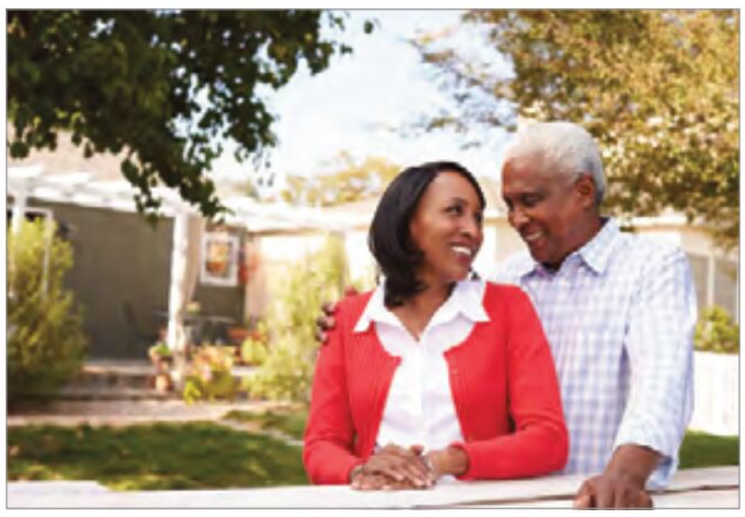
- The story was designed in a light vein that somehow becomes varicose.
—THE BOSTON GLOBE

Realization: The asteroid that ended the dinosaurs was technically the highest ratio of killing birds to one stone in Earth's history.
—@CUBOSH

PAID ADVERTISEMENT

More Than 1 Million Seniors Have Taken Advantage of This "Retirement Secret"

It's a well-known fact that for many older Americans, the home is their single biggest asset, often accounting for more than 45% of their total net worth. ***And with interest rates still near all-time lows while home values remain high, this combination creates the perfect dynamic for getting the most out of your built-up equity.***



But, many aren't taking advantage of this unprecedented period. According to new statistics from the mortgage industry, senior homeowners in the **U.S. are now sitting on more than 9.57 trillion dollars* of unused home equity.**

Home Values at All Time Highs

With home prices back up again, ignoring this "hidden wealth" may prove to be short-sighted when looking for the best long-term outcome.

All things considered, it's not surprising that more than a million homeowners have already used a government-insured Home Equity Conversion Mortgage (HECM) loan to turn their home equity into extra cash for retirement.

It's a fact: no monthly mortgage payments are required with a government-insured HECM loan; however, the borrowers are still responsible for paying for the maintenance of their home, property taxes, homeowner's insurance and, if required, their HOA fees.

Today, HECM loans are simply an effective way for homeowners 62 and older to get the extra cash they need to enjoy retirement.

Although today's HECM loans have been improved to provide even greater financial protection for homeowners, there are still many misconceptions.

Available if You Still Owe on Your Home or Owe Nothing

For example, a lot of people mistakenly believe the home must be paid off in full in order to qualify for a HECM loan, which is not the case. In fact, one key advantage of a HECM is that the proceeds will first be used to pay off any existing liens on the property, which frees up cash flow, a huge blessing for seniors living on a fixed income. Unfortunately, many senior homeowners who might be better off with a HECM loan don't even bother to get more information because of rumors they've heard.

Use the Extra Cash for Almost Anything

The cash from a HECM loan can be used for almost any purpose. Other common uses include making home improvements, paying off medical bills or helping other family members. Some people simply need the extra cash for everyday expenses while others are now using it as a safety net for financial emergencies.

If you're a homeowner age 62 or older, you owe it to yourself to learn more so that you can make the best decision for your financial future.



We're here and ready to help. Homeowners who are interested in learning more can request a FREE, no-obligation Reverse Mortgage Guide by calling toll-free at

800-790-7619

*https://www.yahoo.com/now/senior-housing-wealth-exceeds-record-195300439.html

A reverse mortgage increases the principal mortgage loan amount and decreases home equity (it is a negative amortization loan). NMLS# 9392 (www.nmlsconsumeraccess.org). American Advisors Group (AAG) is headquartered at 18200 Von Karman Ave, Suite 300, Irvine CA 92612. Licensed in 49 states. Please go to www.aag.com/legal-information for full state license information. Advertisement not intended for OR residents.

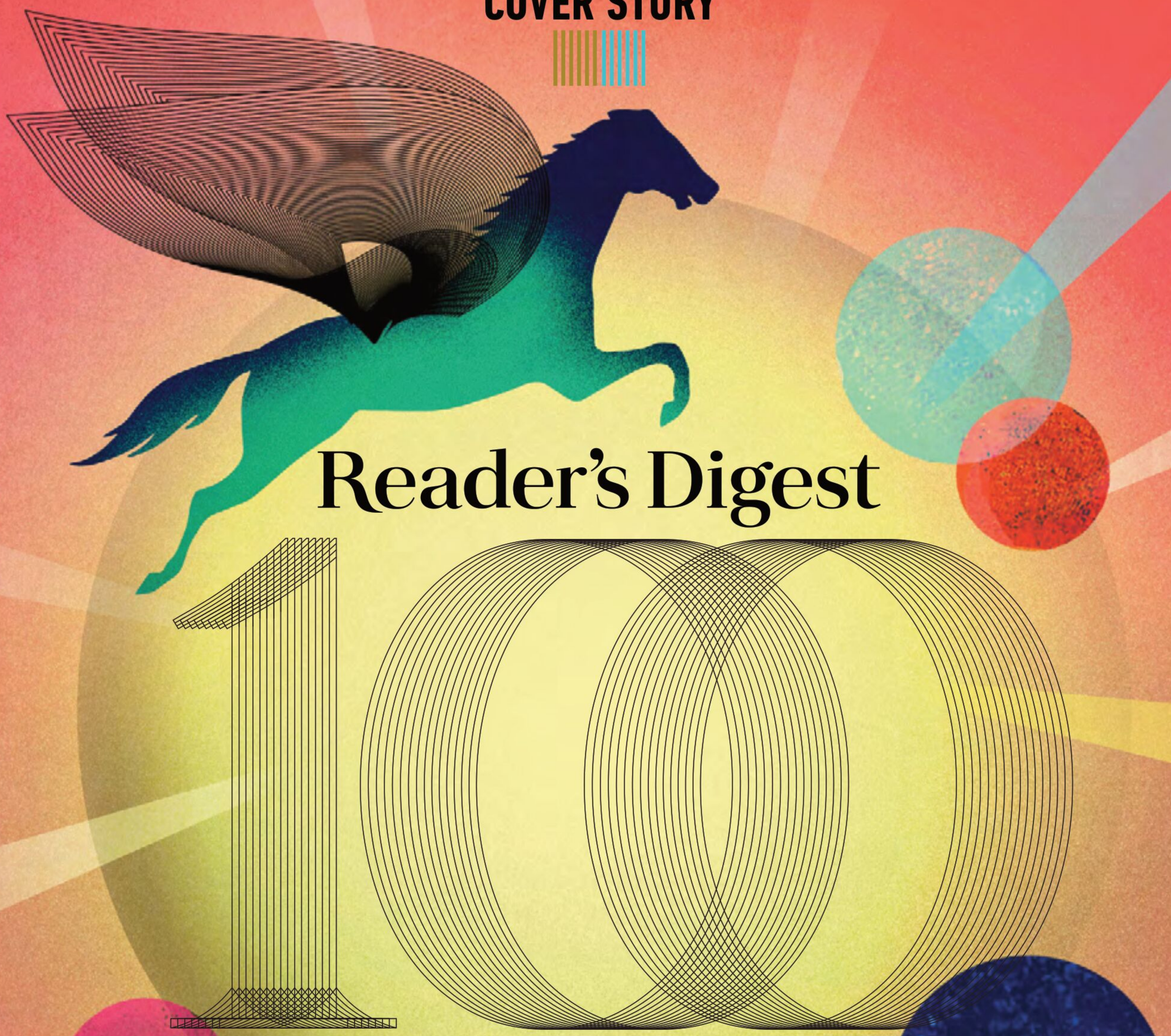
AAG Retire Better

These materials are not from HUD or FHA and were not approved by HUD or a government agency.

EQUAL HOUSING LENDER

COVER STORY

Reader's Digest 100 YEARS



ILLUSTRATIONS *by Brian Stauffer*

BEFORE THERE WAS A MAGAZINE, there were stacks of three-by-five-inch slips of paper onto which *Reader's Digest* founder DeWitt Wallace would jot notes and quotes from everything he read. After he returned from serving in World War I, Wallace decided to share his condensed versions of articles. He and his wife, Lila Acheson Wallace, worked together on the first issue of *Reader's Digest*, published in February 1922, and many others afterward. We continue their mission of sharing amazing stories with our millions of readers. For more looks back—and ahead—turn the pages, and visit rd.com/100th. Onward, for another century and beyond!

COVER STORY



Little Magazine, BIG STORIES

A look at the significant, memorable, prescient articles and authors from 100 years of Reader's Digest

BY *Caroline Fanning*

By our very rough calculations, *Reader's Digest* has published some 35,000 articles in nearly 1,200 issues. Our century-long table of contents features stories of every stripe, from short essays to sprawling book excerpts. And that's not counting all the jokes, anecdotes, and other elements that help make what DeWitt Wallace called his "Little Magazine."

These small pages have held some very big names, including U.S. presidents, first ladies, world leaders, poets, comedians, sports legends, musicians, inventors, and, indeed, the biggest contributors of all, everyday Americans with a story to tell. These are some of our proudest moments.

READER'S DIGEST



How to Keep Young Mentally

Condensed extracts from The American Magazine

MARY B. MULLETT

Alexander Graham Bell gives his rule for self-education, which, he says, is a life-long process. It applies to everyone and is the mind's "Fountain of Youth."

ALEXANDER GRAHAM BELL, the famous scientist and inventor, will be seventy-five years old in March. Yet an intimate acquaintance said, "The most remarkable thing about Doctor Bell is that he is younger, in mind, than most men of half his age. Mentally, he seems to have discovered a Fountain of Youth, which keeps him perennially alert and vigorous."

I repeated to a very able and highly educated man Doctor Bell's ideas on how to study and to learn. This man said with emphasis:

"If anyone would follow that plan consistently, he would learn more than he would get through any college education. It is the best rule for everybody, at any age, and in any walk of life, that I have ever heard."

"The education of the mind," said Doctor Bell, "is, after all, not a mere question of remembering facts which someone else gives us. The mind should conduct its own education to a larger extent. And it cannot do this unless it thinks for itself. A mind that does not reason is comparatively useless.

"I have given the subject of self-education a great deal of thought and have evolved what you might call a 'Rule of Three' in regard to it. The rule is simply this: 'Observe! Remember! Compare!'

"First, observe concrete facts; then use the memory of these facts to compare them, and to note their likenesses and differences.

"Think that over, and you will see that it is the way in which all knowledge is gained. The successful business man is the one who has observed, remembered, and compared the facts of business. All the achievements of science have come from doing these three things. The extent to which *anyone* does them will measure the extent of his education and of his ability to continue to educate himself.

"The very first essential of any real education is to observe. Without that you have no material out of which to manufacture knowledge. Remember what you have observed. Compare the facts you have observed; and you will find yourself thinking out conclusions. These conclusions are real knowledge; and they are your own.

"That was what made John Burroughs a great naturalist, Morgan a great financier, Napoleon a great general. It is the foundation of all education. And the wonderful thing about it is that gaining an education in this way is not a penance, but a delight.

"As an illustration: What is a detective story, if it is not a record of observing, remembering and comparing facts—and of then drawing conclusions? Practically all of us enjoy reading these books, because, while we read, we ourselves are all the time observing, remembering, comparing, and trying to draw the correct conclusion.

"We can pursue knowledge in just the same way, and can have even more pleasure doing it. The great advantage in pursuing knowledge is that we may capture something that will contribute to the welfare of the world.

"In any case we enrich ourselves; we open new windows through which to behold interesting things. Never look on any object or idea without gaining more than the one definition you were looking for. I do. I have the experience when I see or an idea.

"We cannot act without h

The Reader's Digest

DeWitt Wallace didn't finish college, but he never stopped learning.

How to Keep Young Mentally

By Mary B. Mullett, from the American Magazine, *February 1922*

The first article in the first issue highlighted inventor Alexander Graham Bell and his belief in lifelong learning: "The first essential of any real education is to observe. Observe! Remember! Compare!" It was an apt beginning, reflecting our self-educated founder's endless curiosity.

DOES TOBACCO INJURE THE HUMAN BODY?

By Irving Fisher, from the Dearborn Independent, *November 1924*

AS THE '20S ROARED ON, Americans found even more reasons to light up. While doctors appeared in ads extolling the benefits of certain brands of smokes, *RD* was blowing the whistle. The story cites a study that finds smoking is "one of the very significant reasons why fewer men than women attain old age." Our drumbeat warning continued, with anti-smoking articles through the decades, including "Juul Hooks a New Generation," from the *New York Times* in May 2020.

Cigarette advertising on TV and radio was outlawed in 1971 and print ads were later restricted, but that didn't affect *RD*'s bottom line because the magazine had never accepted tobacco ads. Funnily enough, *RD's* persistent coverage of the ills of tobacco is the primary plot line in *Mad Men*'s pilot episode.

Bread, de Luxe *By J. D. Ratcliff, December 1939*

Margaret Rudkin began baking bread for her allergy-prone son in 1937, grinding wheat in a coffee mill to preserve the bran and B vitamins lost in commercial flour. After this article about the success of her small business, so many readers wanted a slice that Rudkin borrowed $15,000 to move to a larger location. To buy her bread today, look for Pepperidge Farm on grocery shelves.



Lila and DeWitt Wallace

If the 2020s have Jack Dorsey, the 1920s had the Wallaces. The founders of *Reader's Digest* and world's first "content curators" collected the very best in print, condensing it all into "the *Reader's Digest* version."

THE DOCTOR OF LENNOX

By A. J. Cronin, September 1939

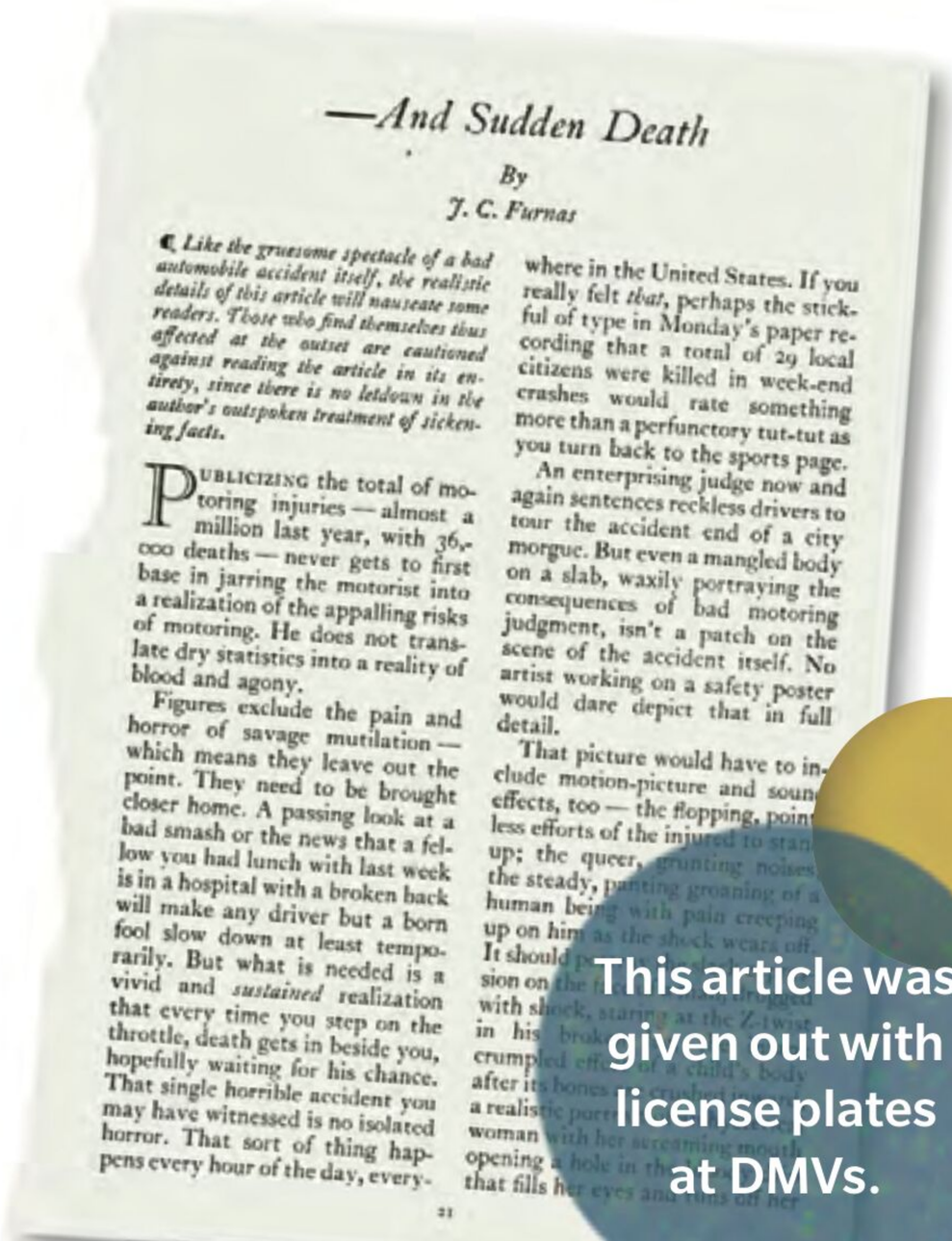
IN OUR ENDURING series "My Most Unforgettable Character," contributors wrote about the person who made the biggest impact on their lives. For Cronin, who wrote the first in the series, it was his shy boyhood friend Carry, who became a well-respected country doctor. Other "Unforgettables" include baseball manager Branch Rickey by Jackie Robinson; Thomas Edison by his son Charles Edison; Eleanor Roosevelt by journalist Emma Bugbee; and Chuck Jones by his cartoon creation Bugs Bunny.

BETTMANN/GETTY IMAGES

—And Sudden Death

By J. C. Furnas, August 1935

The editor's note at the beginning of the issue sets up this graphic account of the preventable carnage of a car wreck: "Like the gruesome spectacle of a bad automobile accident itself, the realistic details of this article will nauseate some readers." Within three months, four million reprints of the story had been handed out with license plates at motor vehicle departments around the country. The *New York Times* later calls it "perhaps the most widely read magazine article ever published anywhere."



—*And Sudden Death*

By
J. C. Furnas

Like the gruesome spectacle of a bad automobile accident itself, the realistic details of this article will nauseate some readers. Those who find themselves thus affected at the outset are cautioned against reading the article in its entirety, since there is no letdown in the author's outspoken treatment of sickening facts.

PUBLICIZING the total of motoring injuries — almost a million last year, with 36,000 deaths — never gets to first base in jarring the motorist into a realization of the appalling risks of motoring. He does not translate dry statistics into a reality of blood and agony.

Figures exclude the pain and horror of savage mutilation — which means they leave out the point. They need to be brought closer home. A passing look at a bad smash or the news that a fellow you had lunch with last week is in a hospital with a broken back will make any driver but a born fool slow down at least temporarily. But what is needed is a vivid and *sustained* realization that every time you step on the throttle, death gets in beside you, hopefully waiting for his chance. That single horrible accident you may have witnessed is no isolated horror. That sort of thing happens every hour of the day, everywhere in the United States. If you really felt *that*, perhaps the stickful of type in Monday's paper recording that a total of 29 local citizens were killed in week-end crashes would rate something more than a perfunctory tut-tut as you turn back to the sports page.

An enterprising judge now and again sentences reckless drivers to tour the accident end of a city morgue. But even a mangled body on a slab, waxily portraying the consequences of bad motoring judgment, isn't a patch on the scene of the accident itself. No artist working on a safety poster would dare depict that in full detail.

That picture would have to include motion-picture and sound effects, too — the flopping, pointless efforts of the injured to stand up; the queer, grunting noises; the steady, panting groaning of a human being with pain creeping up on him as the shock wears off. It should [illegible] sion on the [illegible] with shock, staring at the Z-twist in his [illegible] crumpled effect of a child's body after its bones [illegible] a realistic portrayal [illegible] woman with her screaming mouth opening a hole in the [illegible] that fills her eyes and runs off her

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This article was given out with license plates at DMVs.

Surprise Endings

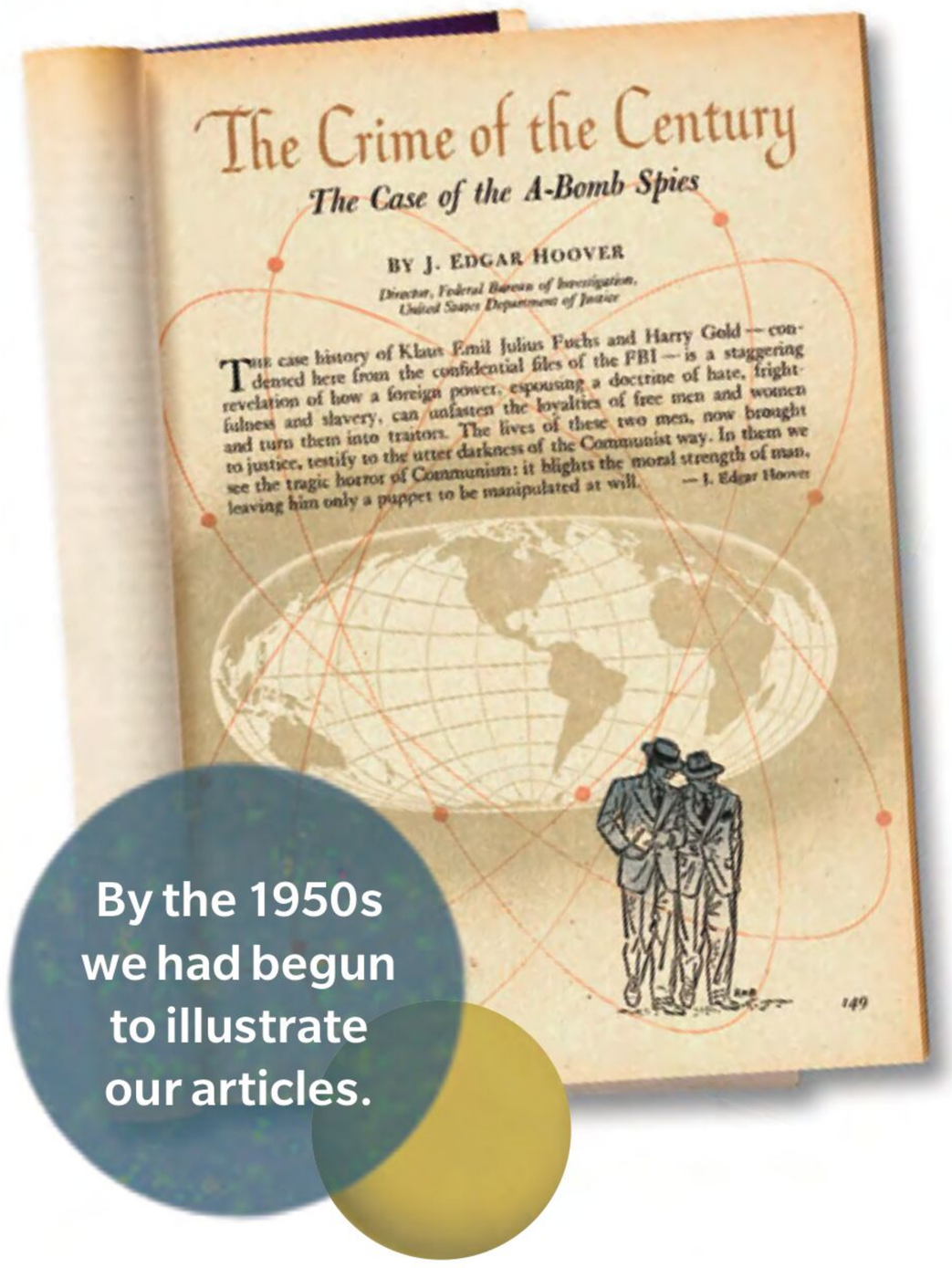
By Anthony Abbot, from True, *December 1945*

The first Drama in Real Life told the story of Il Diavolo, a Chicago mob boss who bizarrely lost 50 pounds in a prison hunger strike. Diavolo believed if he was light enough at his hanging, his accomplices could revive him. Police found a doctor, nurse, and medical supplies in the hearse. "Fiction writers, of course, do not tell such tales. Because who would believe them?" wrote Abbot.

TUNNEL TO FREEDOM

By Flight Lt. Paul Brickhill, Royal Australian Air Forces, as told to Allan A. Michie, December 1945

IN THE REAL-LIFE *Great Escape*, 76 Allied prisoners sprung themselves from a German POW camp by digging a 336-foot tunnel under a stove. The tale became a 1963 film starring Steve McQueen and Richard Attenborough.



Crime of the Century

By J. Edgar Hoover, May 1951

The head of the FBI reconstructs how the criminals who stole atomic bomb secrets from the United States were apprehended.



John Steinbeck

The June 1964 Book Section excerpts *Travels with Charley*, Steinbeck's last book before his death in 1968. The work chronicles his road trip with his trusty poodle, Charley. According to Steinbeck's son, the author knew he was dying and wanted to see his country one last time. "From start to finish, I found no strangers. If I had, I might be able to report them more objectively. But these are my people and this is my country."

FRED STEIN ARCHIVE/GETTY IMAGES

Mr. Muhammad Speaks *By Alex Haley, March 1960*
Our new contributing editor was the first to write for a major national publication about the Nation of Islam, its leader Elijah Muhammad, and brash young spokesman Malcolm X. This laid the groundwork for *The Autobiography of Malcolm X*, ghost-written by Haley. (Read more about Haley's legacy on page 58.)

THE GIRL WHO WAS ANNE FRANK

By Louis de Jong, October 1957

THE DIRECTOR OF the Netherlands State Institute for War Documentation told of Anne Frank's life before she and her family went into hiding, adding often-overlooked context to her famous diary. Her father, Otto Frank, didn't want it published, but when friends pointed out that his daughter had wanted to publish a book about the annex, he agreed. "Oh, Mr. Frank," wrote one American girl, "she is so much like me that sometimes I do not know where myself begins and Anne Frank ends."

DARK YESTERDAYS, BRIGHT TOMORROWS

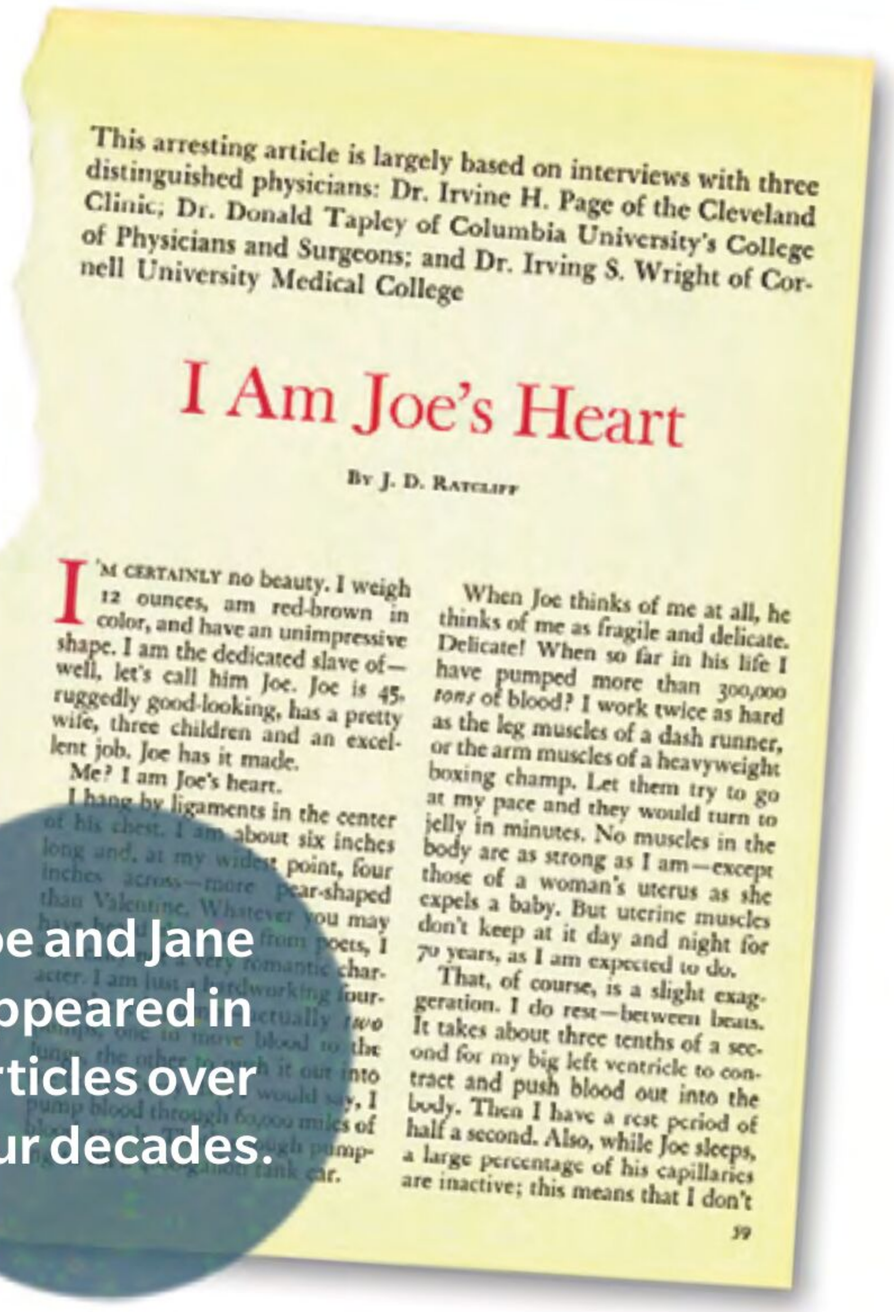
By Martin Luther King Jr., from the book Strength to Love*, June 1968*

PROPHETIC WORDS, both poignant and powerful, were excerpted from Martin Luther King Jr.'s collection of sermons as the country reeled from his assassination.

I Am Joe's Heart

By J. D. Ratcliff, April 1967

"I'm certainly no beauty. I weigh 12 ounces, am red-brown in color, and have an unimpressive shape. I am the dedicated slave of—well, let's call him Joe. Joe is 45, ruggedly good-looking, has a pretty wife, three children and an excellent job. Joe has it made." So began the first article of the popular health series that would continue until 1990, in which readers heard detailed accounts from 36 body parts of Joe and of his female counterpart, Jane.



This arresting article is largely based on interviews with three distinguished physicians: Dr. Irvine H. Page of the Cleveland Clinic; Dr. Donald Tapley of Columbia University's College of Physicians and Surgeons; and Dr. Irving S. Wright of Cornell University Medical College

I Am Joe's Heart

By J. D. Ratcliff

I'M CERTAINLY no beauty. I weigh 12 ounces, am red-brown in color, and have an unimpressive shape. I am the dedicated slave of—well, let's call him Joe. Joe is 45, ruggedly good-looking, has a pretty wife, three children and an excellent job. Joe has it made.

Me? I am Joe's heart.

I hang by ligaments in the center of his chest. I am about six inches long and, at my widest point, four inches across—more pear-shaped than Valentine. Whatever you may have read from poets, I [illegible] very romantic character. I am just a hardworking four-[illegible] actually *two* pumps: one to move blood to the lungs, the other to push it out into the body. I would say, I pump blood through 60,000 miles of [illegible] each year. Although pump-[illegible] gallon tank car.

When Joe thinks of me at all, he thinks of me as fragile and delicate. Delicate! When so far in his life I have pumped more than 300,000 *tons* of blood? I work twice as hard as the leg muscles of a dash runner, or the arm muscles of a heavyweight boxing champ. Let them try to go at my pace and they would turn to jelly in minutes. No muscles in the body are as strong as I am—except those of a woman's uterus as she expels a baby. But uterine muscles don't keep at it day and night for 70 years, as I am expected to do.

That, of course, is a slight exaggeration. I do rest—between beats. It takes about three tenths of a second for my big left ventricle to contract and push blood out into the body. Then I have a rest period of half a second. Also, while Joe sleeps, a large percentage of his capillaries are inactive; this means that I don't

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Joe and Jane appeared in articles over four decades.



Erma Bombeck

Erma Bombeck's writing career began modestly—one of her earliest columns appeared in the *Dayton Shopping News*. But when the beloved author needed a kidney transplant in 1996, no fewer than 30 readers volunteered theirs (alas, no matches). Bombeck is also responsible for some of the funniest headlines to appear in our pages, including "If Life Is a Bowl of Cherries—What Am I Doing in the Pits?" (July 1978) and "65 Million Women Want My Husband!" (May 1980).

OUR HAUNTED HOUSE ON THE HUDSON

By Helen Herdman Ackley, May 1977

THIS SPIRITED ACCOUNT of the ghostly companions residing in her family home came back to haunt the author when her home buyer got spooked. The now-famous "Ghostbusters case" determined that failing to disclose that a house is haunted might be a legit reason for a buyer to back out of a deal.



"I Intend to Make It!"

By Betty Ford with Chris Chase, from the book The Times of My Life, *February 1979*

First Lady Betty Ford was putting the finishing touches on her autobiography, *The Times of My Life*, which was to be copublished by the Reader's Digest Association, when she discovered that the real ending had yet to be written. Ford entered a rehab facility to treat her alcohol and prescription drug addiction, then bravely shared her story. In her own memoir, Barbara Bush wrote of her fellow first lady, "She transformed her pain into something great for the common good. Because she suffered, there will be more healing. Because of her grief, there will be more joy."

MICHAEL OCHS ARCHIVES/GETTY IMAGES

Return of a Runaway Child

By Gary Turbak, November 1982

Georgia teenager Tammy Hendley recognizes one of the missing children in a July 1982 *RD* article ("Missing: 100,000 Children a Year," from *Kiwanis Magazine*) as Tammy Ann Pickerman, a nurse's aide who worked alongside her mother. The story and Hendley's eagle eyes would soon reunite Pickerman—real name Marian Wavie Batson—with her family, who had spent two and a half years looking for her.

MAYA'S JOURNEY HOME

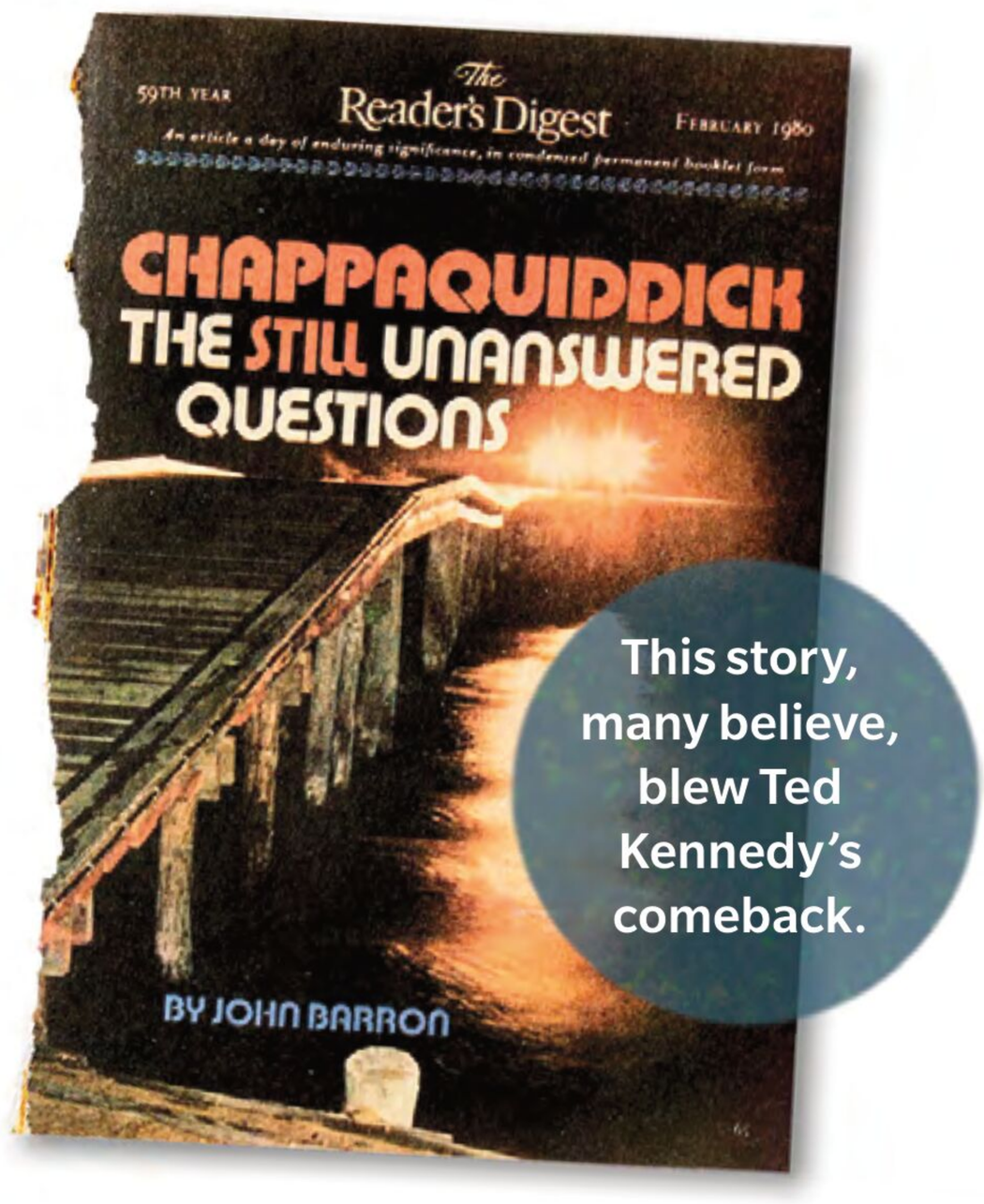
By Maya Angelou, from the book I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings, *September 1982*

"**CREATIVITY IS ALL** of a piece, beginning in childhood. ... Some terrible and wonderful things happened in Stamps, Arkansas, to Maya Angelou as a little girl. There, as she relates in *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings,* her nascent creativity was first threatened and then forged..." reads an introduction by PBS host Bill Moyers. This excerpt reveals how Angelou and her classmates, feeling disrespected by a guest speaker at their high school graduation, proudly joined together for "Lift Ev'ry Voice and Sing."

Chappaquiddick: The Still Unanswered Questions

By John Barron, February 1980

In November 1979, Senator Edward Kennedy was poised to seize the Democratic nomination for president from incumbent Jimmy Carter. Then came this story, which recounted in shocking detail the 1969 car accident that left campaign worker Mary Jo Kopechne dead, contradicting Kennedy's account. Barron, a naval intelligence officer and Cold War spy turned investigative reporter, joined *RD*'s Washington, DC, bureau in 1965 and filed more than 100 articles before his retirement.



This story, many believe, blew Ted Kennedy's comeback.



"I've Come to Clean Your Shoes"

By Madge Harrah, from Guideposts, *December 1983*

The morning of a family funeral, an acquaintance shows up unannounced and says, "I've come to clean your shoes." He spends the day quietly shining every pair in the house. The writer ends with this: "Now, whenever I hear of an acquaintance who has lost a loved one, I try to think of one specific task that suits that person's need—such as washing the car, taking the dog to the kennel, or house-sitting during the funeral. And if the person says, 'How did you know I needed that done?' I reply, 'It's because a man once cleaned my shoes.'"

I Still See Him Everywhere

By Richard Morsilli with Jo Coudert, July 1984

After Richard Morsilli's 13-year-old son, Todd, was killed by a drunk driver, the brokenhearted dad spoke honestly and graphically about the incident to students at Riverdale Country School in New York City. This was our sixth article in four years to warn of the dangers of drunk driving, and it led to a national campaign in which we offered $500,000 in scholarships to high school students who developed the programs that best promoted sober driving.





John Updike

The two-time Pulitzer Prize winner frequently graced our pages. In February 1997, we republished "Paranoid Packaging" from the *New Yorker*, sharing Updike's commentary on one of America's most vexing issues: how increasingly hard it is to open things. "All this time, childproof pill bottles had been imperceptibly toughening and complicating, to the point where only children had the patience and eyesight to open them."

STRANGE ENCOUNTER ON COHO CREEK

By Morris Homer Erwin, May 1987

A PROSPECTOR SPENDS days camping in the Alaskan wilderness, working hard to earn the trust of a mother wolf snared in a trap before she and her four pups starve to death. Eventually, he is able to free her. Four years later, he encounters a wolf in the same meadow. Yes, the same wolf. When we shared this classic on rd.com in 2019, it went viral, and it has now been read by many millions online and in print.

PICTURE ALLIANCE/GETTY IMAGES

"NOT IN OUR TOWN!"

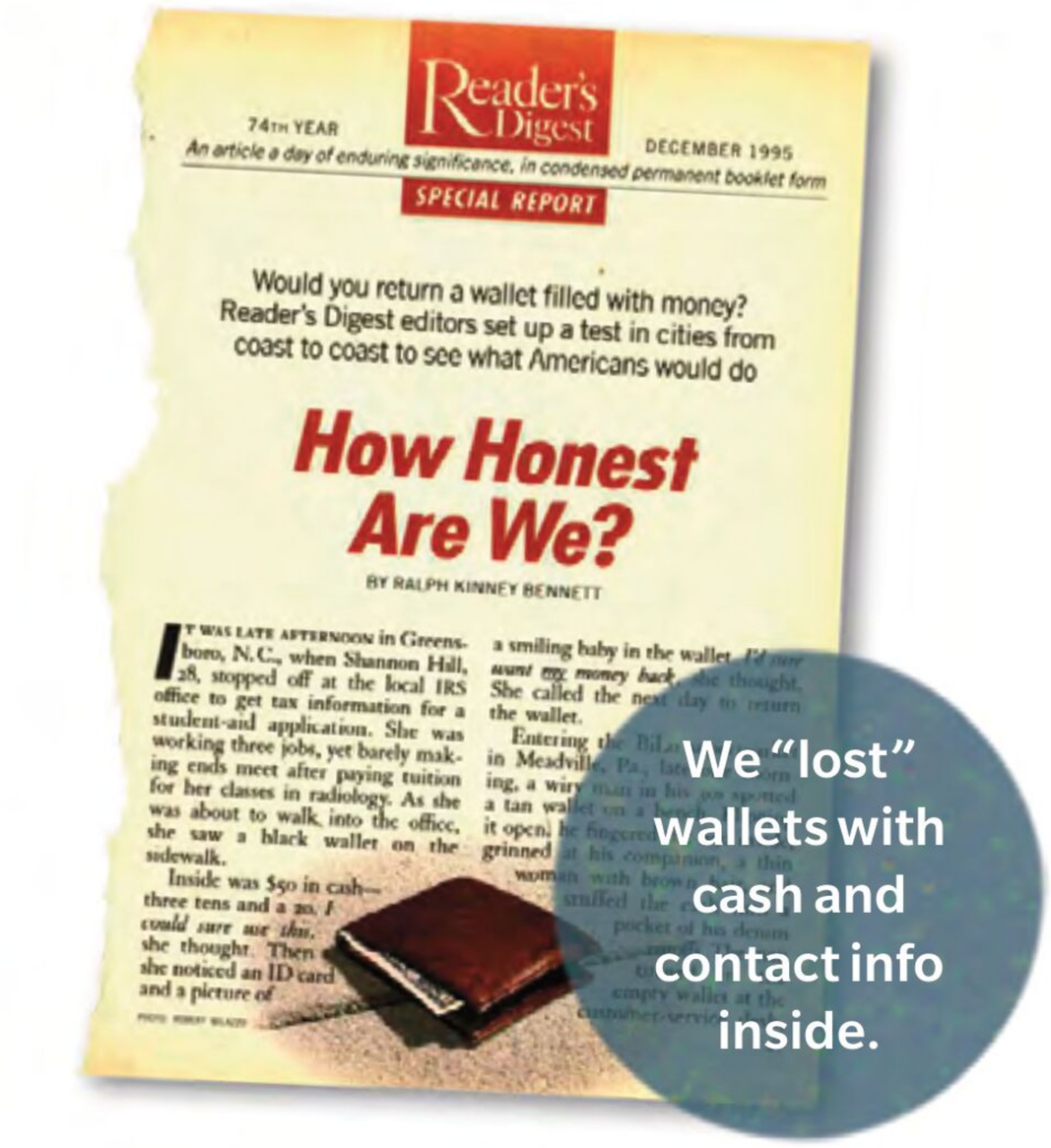
By Edwin Dobb, November 1994

WHEN A SPATE of anti-Semitic vandalism swept Billings, Montana, the residents struck back by placing a menorah in the window of every home in town. Their actions were inspired by King Christian of Denmark, who was said to have instructed his citizens to wear the Star of David after Nazis ordered Jewish citizens to wear them. The Billings show of solidarity ignited the Not in Our Town movement, an effort that continues today, helping community leaders around the country fight intolerance and create safe, inclusive communities.

Papa Was an American

By Leo Buscaglia, February 1992

This quintessential immigrant story tells of Rocco Buscaglia, who landed in the United States in 1911 and was as enthusiastic about becoming an American as he was about being born an Italian. His son Leo grew up to be a renowned self-help author who praised the power of relationships and earned the honorary title Dr. Love.



HOW HONEST ARE WE?

By Ralph Kinney Bennett, December 1995

OUR FAMOUS "wallet drop" set up the ultimate test of honesty: If we left wallets in cities around the country, how many would be returned? Well over half, it turned out—67 percent. The most honest city? Seattle, whose upstanding residents returned nine out of ten wallets. We repeated the experiment internationally, with less-impressive results: Just 47 percent of wallets were returned.

Horror in the Heartland

By Henry Hurt, May 1996

Henry Hurt, who had been an *RD* editor-at-large since 1971, reported on everything from espionage to natural disasters. But his favorite subjects were the poignant stories of people when the human spirit shone through circumstances that seemed hopeless. Hurt was able to combine these themes when he described the life and capture of Oklahoma City bomber Timothy J. McVeigh, the lives of some of the victims, and the lasting effects on the family, rescuers, and survivors of what remains the worst act of terrorism carried out on U.S. soil by an American.



DESIREE NAVARRO/GETTY IMAGES

P. J. O'Rourke

The beloved satirist is unafraid to challenge core American values, from why "The Beach Is for the Birds" (July/August 2017) to the two-party system in this Point to Ponder: "The Democrats are the party that says government will make you smarter, taller, richer, and remove the crabgrass on your lawn. The Republicans are the party that says government doesn't work, then they get elected and prove it."

The Nicest Places in America

(November 2017 to November 2021)

In 2017, *RD* launched our Nicest Places in America contest, a nationwide search for places around the country where people come together and kindness and civility win, even in the face of challenges. Our Nicest Places, through the years: Gallatin, Tennessee (2017), Yassin's Falafel House in Knoxville, Tennessee (2018), Columbiana, Ohio (2019), Buchanan, Michigan (2020), and The Quality Inn in Kodak, Tennessee (2021). For the past five years, our readers have inspired us, nominating thousands of towns, neighborhoods, stores, and even front porches with stories that demonstrate the best of humanity.



And we're ramping up for 2022's Nicest Places in America—nominate your favorite place at **rd.com/nicest**. We might add it to our list.

RUNAWAY TRAIN

By William M. Hendryx, March 2002

THROUGH AN IMPROBABLE series of events, a locomotive carrying 200 tons of molten phenol barrels down a busy railroad at 50 mph with no conductor at the helm, doomed to crash once it reaches the residential town of Kenton, Ohio. Can a seasoned conductor and the new guy catch it? The ending may already be spoiled if you saw the 2010 film *Unstoppable*, starring Denzel Washington and Chris Pine, inspired by this story.

Amy's Choice

By Rena Dictor LeBlanc, September 2000

A 19-year-old fights for—and eventually wins—custody of her four younger siblings, managing to keep the family together after her drug-addicted mother landed in prison. The story spurred hundreds of donations for the family from our readers, and was adapted into a Lifetime movie, *Gracie's Choice*. R



CELEBRATING 100 YEARS

WHAT *Roots* MEANS TO ME

Alex Haley's landmark book began in Reader's Digest, *where he worked as a senior editor. The repercussions are still being felt today.*

BY *Henry Louis Gates Jr.*

I FIRST HEARD OF Alex Haley sometime around 1967 when I was a student in high school. My brother, Paul, who was a student at the School of Dentistry at West Virginia University, called to tell me that this man had given a dazzling lecture on campus, and he was so excited that he wanted to share the experience with me. The lecture was part of a book the author would be publishing, based on stories he had heard from his aunt. He was on the circuit, he told his audience, trying to raise enough money to complete it.

"It's one word," Paul said of the book's title. "I can't remember what the word is, but it's bad, man! You are gonna eat this up."

I said, "Well, what's the word?"

"I can't remember," he said, "but I'll remember."

A couple of days later he called me back and said, "It's Roots!" I thought, Oh, man—Roots! My mind began racing. Roots! What a brilliant title. I had been interested in my own "roots" since I was nine years old, when I interviewed my parents and drew up my first family tree, on the very day after we buried my father's father.

So when I read the *Reader's Digest* excerpts of *Roots* in 1974, I was mesmerized—that's the only word for it. In 1977 the television adaptation premiered, and I became part of the biggest audience for a miniseries in the history of the medium at that time. Starting with that phone call from my big brother, I had a serious bout of envy toward Alex Haley. I wanted to be like him: I wanted to reverse the Middle Passage and find out where my ancestors were from in Africa, the motherland.

I HAD A SERIOUS BOUT OF ENVY TOWARD ALEX HALEY. I WANTED TO BE LIKE HIM.

Frederick Douglass, in his 1855 book, *My Bondage and My Freedom*, says, "Genealogical trees do not flourish among slaves." In the first chapter of his slave narrative, published a decade earlier, he tells us twice within a few paragraphs of the "whisper" that his father was also his master, but he didn't know for sure, and that haunted him. One of the last train trips he made was to a descendant of his master's, to see if his master's records had any mention of his birth—because the



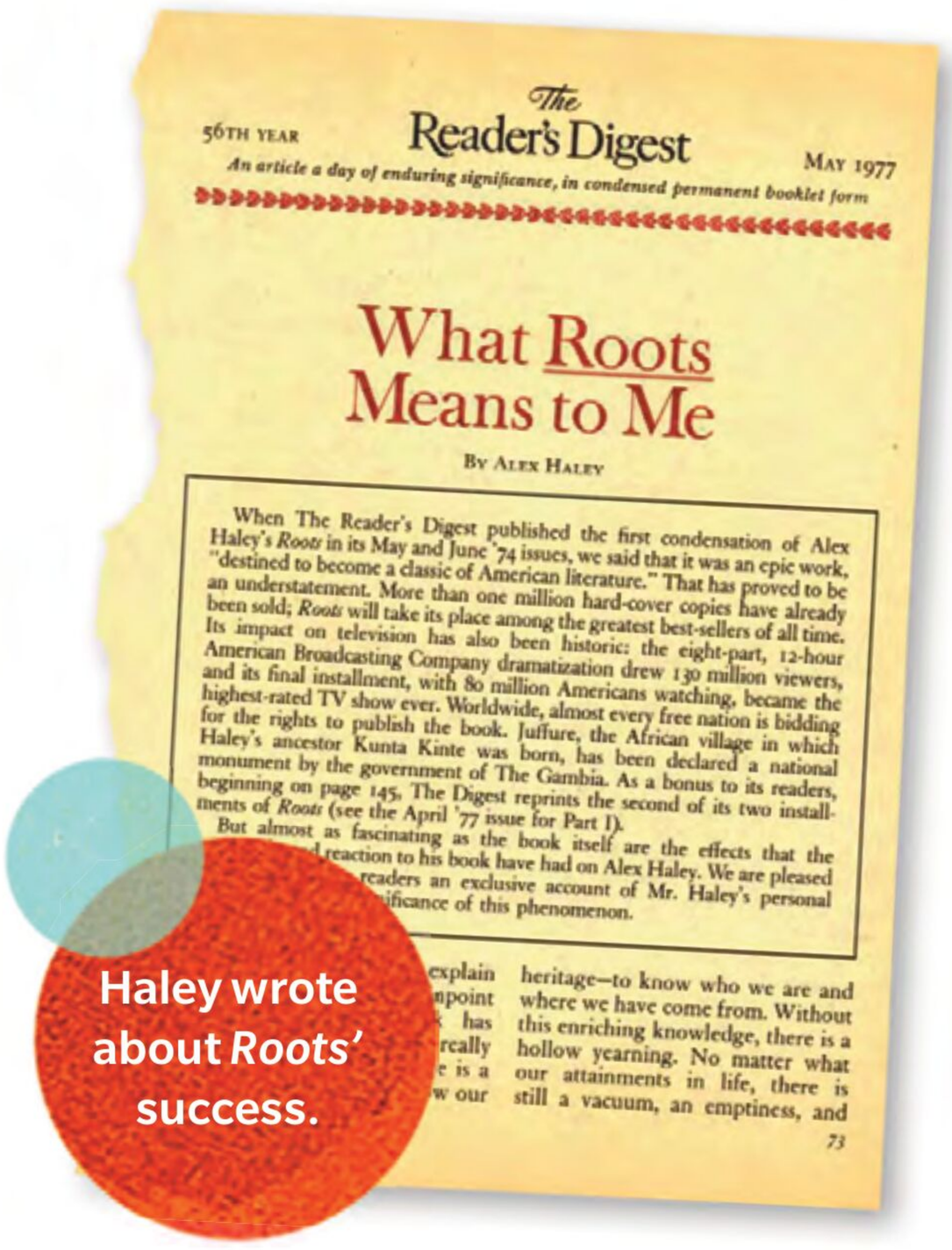
"In my long and troubled journeys to complete *Roots*, I owe an undying debt to *The Reader's Digest*. Without its help and encouragement, *Roots* could not have been written with the scope that it has." —*Alex Haley*

BETTMANN/GETTY IMAGES

other thing that haunted him was that he didn't know his birthday. Slaves, Douglass writes, could only approximate the dates of their birth with the cycles of the seasons: "planting-time, harvest-time, cherry-time, spring-time, or fall-time." He tells us that not knowing was a source of trauma and that it would remain so for the rest of Douglass's life.

The fact that most fundamental genealogical information was systematically deprived from our people has, I think, produced an understandably inordinate compulsion among African Americans to find out not just from whence we descend in Africa, but details on our family tree on this side of the ocean. Alex Haley, writing in the pages of this magazine in May 1977, called it "a hunger, marrow-deep, to know our heritage—to know who we are and where we came from." By then, *Roots* had sold over one million copies in hardcover. With his phenomenally successful book, Alex Haley seemed to be answering Frederick Douglass: *No, Fred, genealogical trees do flourish under slavery. You just have to know how to look for them.*

My PBS series, *Finding Your Roots*, which I named in homage to the title of Alex Haley's book, can trace its own roots to that family tree I crafted with my parents' help back in July 1960, and to a letter I received forty years later from a brilliant African American geneticist named Dr. Rick Kittles. "Dear Dr. Gates," he wrote, "have you



ever watched Alex Haley's *Roots*?" I thought, What kind of idiot does this guy think I am? Everybody's watched *Roots*! Dr. Kittles went on, explaining that scientists can now do, in a test tube in a laboratory, what Alex Haley purported to do in *Roots*, and that we could trace an African American's African ethnic origins on his mother's mother's line, or the father's father's line, through DNA. He was looking for volunteers. So, I picked up the phone, called his laboratory, and said, "You've got the right man."

Three years after Dr. Kittles tested my DNA (at that time they had to take blood; now, of course, you just spit into a test tube), I got the idea for the show, which from the beginning was a huge hit. It had the same energy as *Roots*; it was *Roots* for the 21st century. Thanks to advances in DNA analysis,

a journey that once took 12 years—that's how long Alex Haley spent working on the book—could now be traversed in a matter of hours or days. When he was on his long and lonely journey, he could not have imagined that he was walking around with the secret to his genealogical identity "written" in his genome. It turns out we just had to turn inward, instead of standing at the Statue of Liberty and trying to figure out which way Africa sits far across the ocean.

So how would Alex Haley, who died in 1992, feel about this revolutionary technology? I think he would have greeted it with glee. He was a good and generous man. He was a profound humanist. He had a lot of light in his eyes; I met him only a couple of times, but I'll never forget what an honor it was. And he loved learning. With *Roots*, I think he followed all the clues as diligently as he could, and he reached his conclusions in good faith. Many scholars have questioned his research since the book was published, but its importance as a *phenomenon* lay beyond its quote-unquote historical accuracy. The book is a landmark in American history, a signal accomplishment as a profound act of the imagination.

Roots continues to be important because we are a nation of immigrants. Even Native Americans came here from somewhere else; they walked across the Bering Strait some 15,000 years ago. Our African ancestors, of course, did not emigrate here willingly—after all, none of our ancestors arrived on the *Mayflower*—and as enslaved human beings, they were unwilling immigrants, but immigrants

TMB STUDIO/K. SYNOLD



The *Roots* TV series won nine Emmys.

ABC PHOTO ARCHIVES/GETTY IMAGES

ROOTS CONTINUES TO BE IMPORTANT BECAUSE WE ARE A NATION OF IMMIGRANTS.

nonetheless. That's one of the recurring truths in *Finding Your Roots*, and I think it was also the message of Alex Haley's *Roots*: African Americans are immigrants too. We have ancestors with names and birth dates tracing deep into the American past—names and dates that slavery sought to rob—and now the tools exist to help us find them. And through our DNA, we can begin to understand the depth and complexity not only of our African ethnic roots, but of our European and Native American roots as well.

Alex Haley stood on the shoulders of Frederick Douglass, who searched so desperately for his roots until the very end of his life. And today, all of us who embark on the exhilarating path in search of our roots stand on the shoulders of an intrepid author named Alex Haley. R

Henry Louis "Skip" Gates Jr. is an American literary critic, professor, historian, and filmmaker. He serves as the Alphonse Fletcher University professor and director of the Hutchins Center for African and African American Research at Harvard University, and is the host of Finding Your Roots *on PBS.*

COVER STORY

CELEBRATING 100 YEARS

QUOTABLE QUOTES

Wit and wisdom from our archives



Power is holding someone else's fear in your hand and showing it to them.

—Amy Tan, AUTHOR

APRIL 2002

Humor plays close to the big hot fire which is Truth.

—E. B. White, WRITER

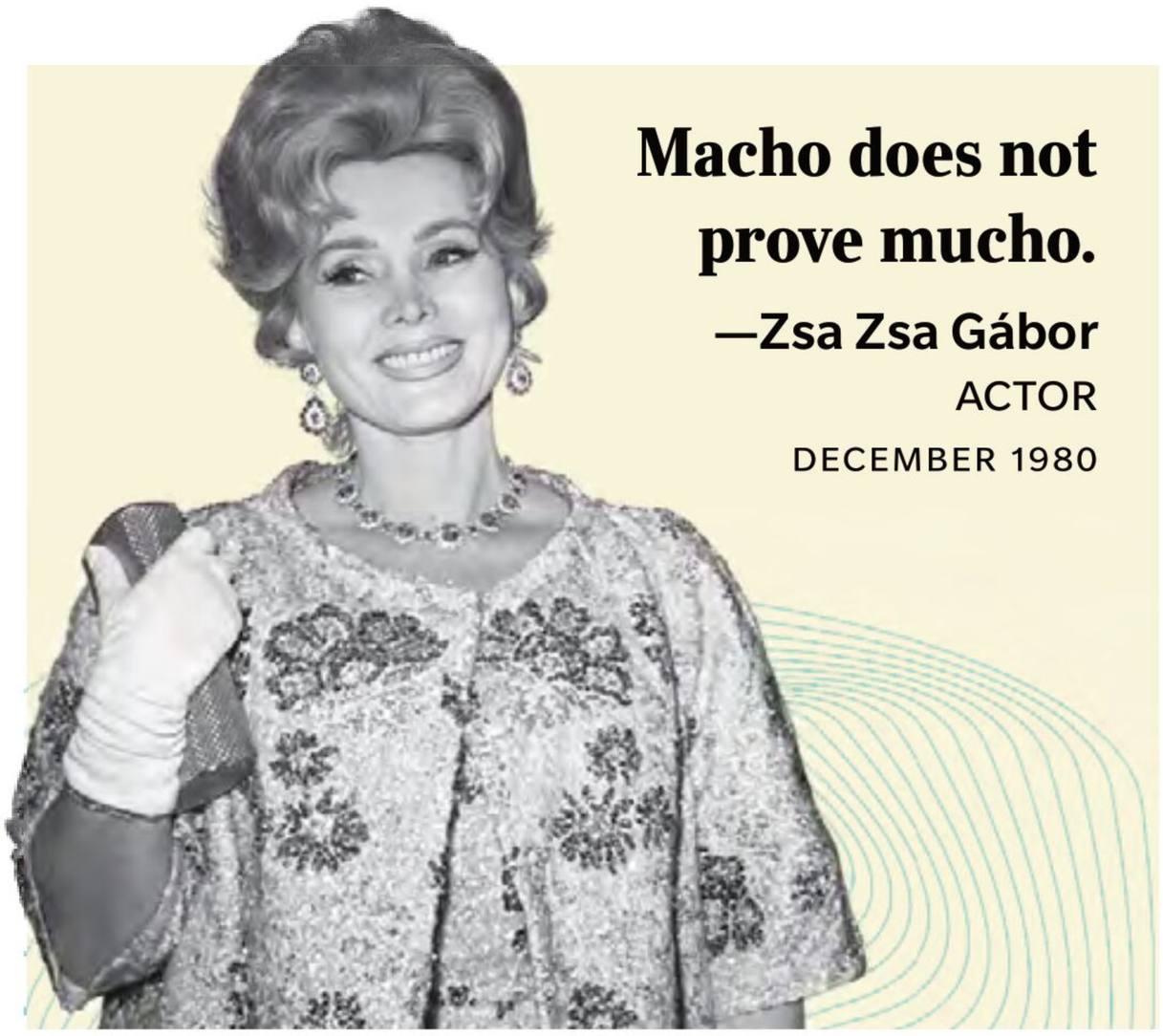
JANUARY 1990

I don't believe in the generation gap. I believe in regeneration gaps. Each day you regenerate—or else you're not living.

—Duke Ellington, MUSICIAN

JANUARY 1975





Macho does not prove mucho.

—Zsa Zsa Gábor

ACTOR

DECEMBER 1980

I use not only all the brains I have, but all I can borrow.

—Woodrow Wilson, PRESIDENT

FEBRUARY 1963

JEAN BAPTISTE LACROIX/GETTY IMAGES (TAN). GRAPHIC HOUSE/GETTY IMAGES (GÁBOR). BETTMANN ARCHIVE/GETTY IMAGES (ELLINGTON)

A gentleman will not insult me, and no man not a gentleman can insult me.

—Frederick Douglass
ABOLITIONIST
AUGUST 1940



Happiness makes up in height for what it lacks in length.

—Robert Frost
POET
MARCH 1959

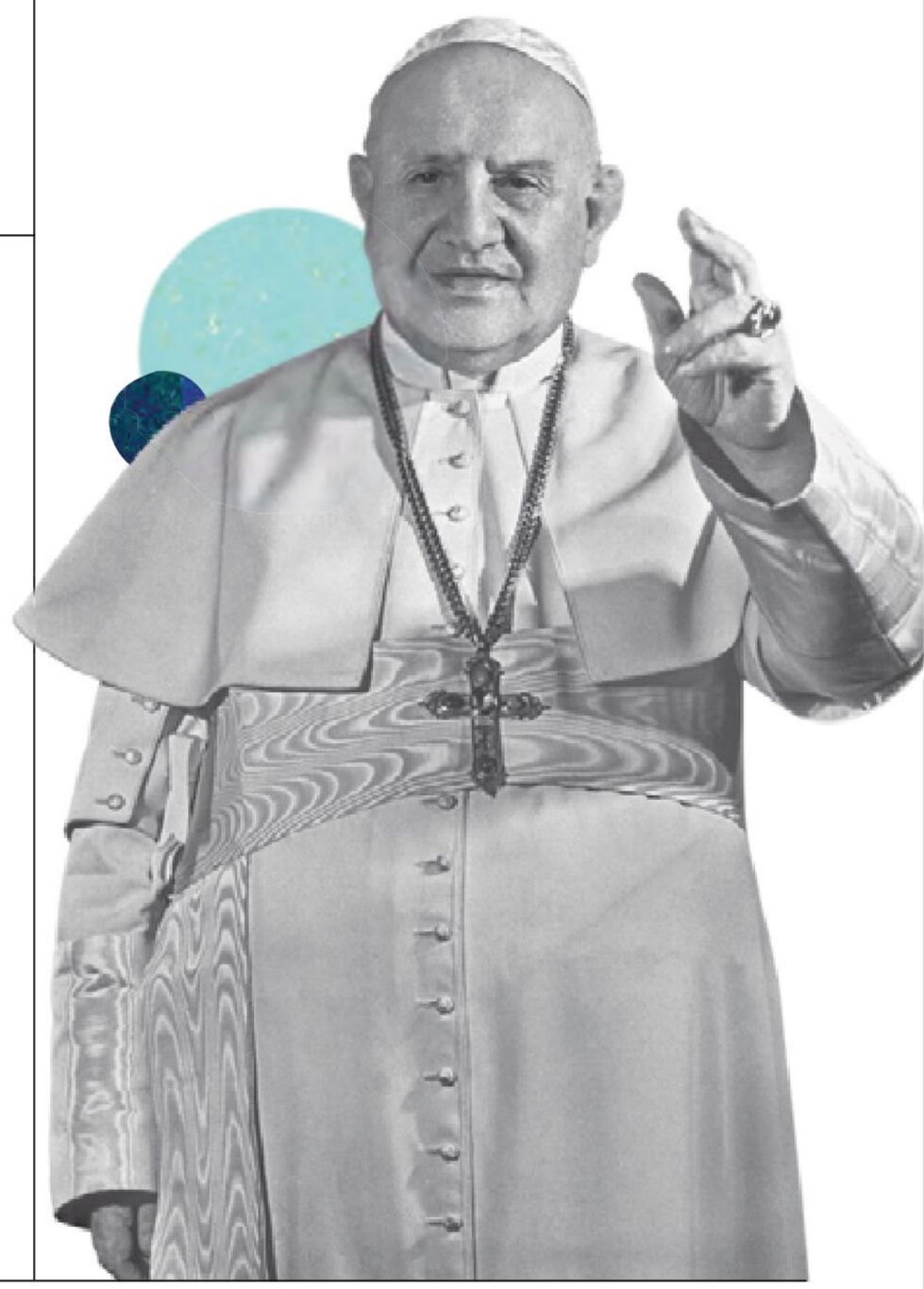


The way you overcome shyness is to become so wrapped up in something that you forget to be afraid.

—Lady Bird Johnson
FIRST LADY
MAY 1985

See everything, overlook a great deal, correct a little.

—Pope John XXIII
POPE
DECEMBER 1962



Exhaust the little moment. Soon it dies. And be it gash or gold, it will not come again in this identical disguise.

—Gwendolyn Brooks
POET
NOVEMBER 1998



HULTON ARCHIVE/GETTY IMAGES (FROST). PHOTOQUEST/GETTY IMAGES (JOHNSON). BETTMANN ARCHIVE/GETTY IMAGES (JOHN)
ARCHIVE/GETTY IMAGES (BROOKS). BETTMANN ARCHIVE/GETTY IMAGES (JOHN)

To read 100 of the most inspirational quotes from the pages of *Reader's Digest* over the past century, go to **rd.com/100th**.

CELEBRATING 100 YEARS

Laughing MATTERS

Humor connects us to one another. But how has what we find funny changed over the past 100 years?

BY *David Steinberg*

MAKING PEOPLE LAUGH connects us to one another. But what humor endures? For me, it's personal life stories and experiences. Life, twisted and molded until you find the funny, will always evolve, and therefore endure. I've found that the closer it cuts to the bone, the funnier it is. The beauty of life is that everyone is similar in some way. While we may not have the same experiences, everyone can relate to observations on life, family, and the varieties of behavior we all encounter every day as we go about life.

Humor is very helpful in one's everyday life. It can end tense situations. In my life, humor has ended arguments at home and on too many working sets to mention. Finding the humor can break tension immediately. My dad was a rabbi, and he found humor so important during his sermons. It always broke the ice and brought the congregation together. At home, being funny brought the family closer.



Jerry Seinfeld once told me how his dad collected jokes in a box. He would write them down on cards so he wouldn't forget them and then tell jokes at the dinner table. I could relate to that. My older brother Fishy used to bring home joke books and read them to me when I was 10 or 11 years old, and it had a great impact on me.

Why do we want to make other people laugh? I asked Judd Apatow this once and he said making other people laugh was "an instant way to know you think I'm OK." That sounds about right to me. It's a bonding experience. Laughter is good for your health. And most important is just being able to laugh at yourself.

Great comedians look at that prism of life in different ways. For instance, Chris Rock can tell a relatable story about life and it will be funny. It will resonate with the audience and Chris will get huge laughs. Steve Martin or Jerry Seinfeld will look at a similar observation in life and tell a very different story from a very different angle with a very different delivery. Comedians look at life through a giant prism and they each look at that prism from a different angle. The best of them keep working it out until they find the humor that suits them and strikes the right chord and, hopefully, the laughter chord of an audience.

PEOPLE WILL ALWAYS RELATE TO THE HUMAN STORY, WITH ALL ITS CHALLENGES.

People will always relate to the human story, with all its challenges. The good thing about life is that it changes and evolves. Many of the issues and characters change. Humor has a natural way of evolving. Life itself never gets old and is always fodder for a laugh. Robin Williams, when talking about his mother, said, "She was a Christian Scientist. (I used to call her a Christian Dior Scientist.)" Then there were the Catskills comics such as Alan King, Henny Youngman, and Mal Z. Lawrence, who all had so much fun with humor about family life. Henny Youngman's great line, "Take my wife, please." Perfect, relatable, and funny for the time.



"Live every week like it's shark week."
—Tina Fey

JOHN LAMPARSKI/GETTY IMAGES

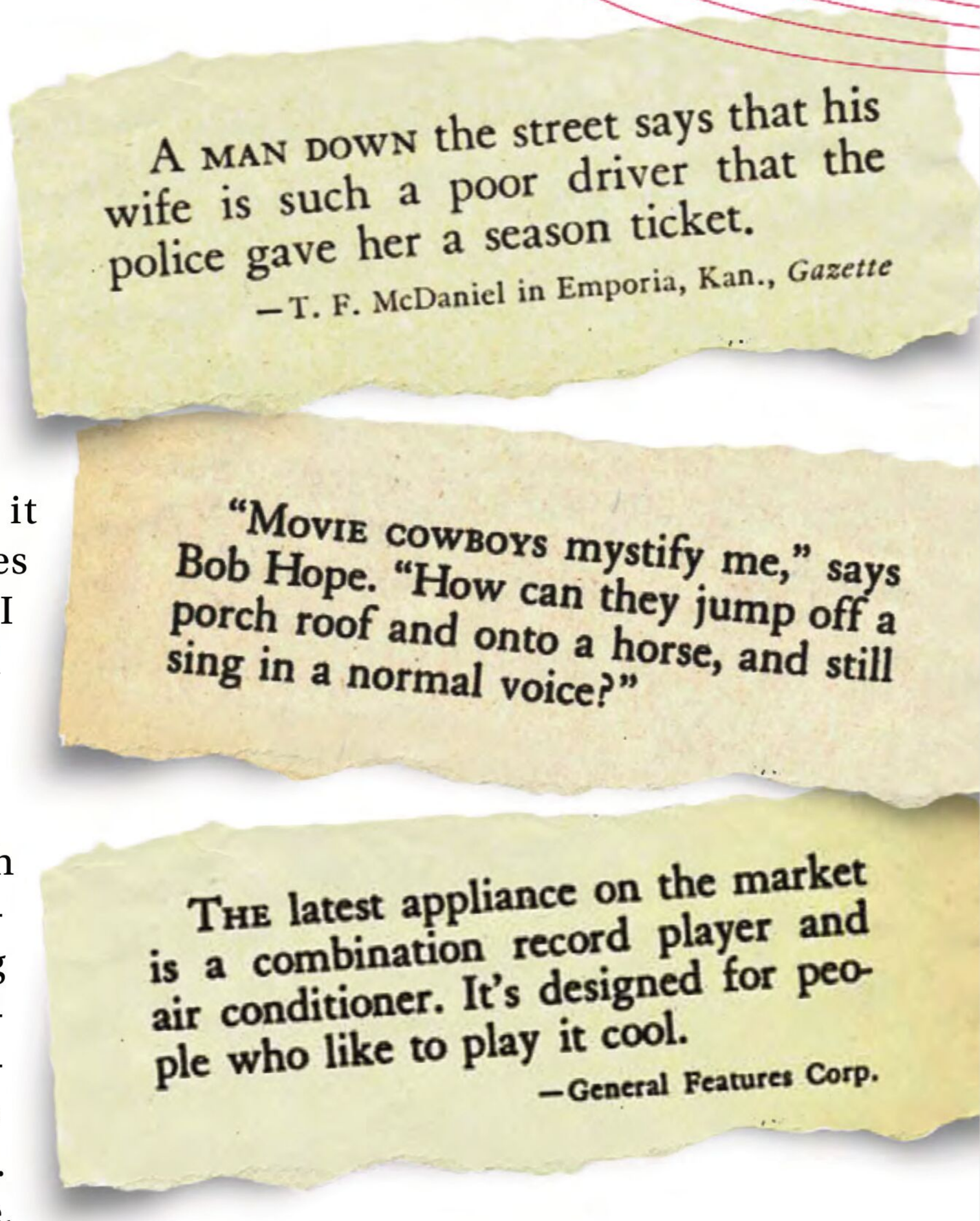
Politics was an important source of material for me, especially the Nixon era—his mannerisms, his duplicity, all of it. The Nixon years were a fun and fruitful part of my career. I was just a comedian. I had no idea I was even on Nixon's radar, but it turns out I was on his enemies list. That was shocking to me. I shared a lot of Nixon material with Johnny Carson on *The Tonight Show*. I guess Nixon was listening.

But humor has to adapt with modern life. As a result, comedians are constantly pushing the envelope. They have to because what the previous generation found funny becomes a cliché to the new generation. As comedy evolves with life, the edge keeps moving as well. As groundbreaking and revolutionary as Lenny Bruce was in his time, he feels tame compared with Richard Pryor. George Carlin pushed the boundaries of humor with "Seven Words You Can Never Say on Television," but I believe we say most of them now. That's what time does to comedy. And now with a whole new generation the challenge is the same. Humorists must keep pushing that envelope, and we will.

My hope for comedy is that we don't become comedy cops and that we just focus on being funny and pushing that moving envelope. Comedy will endure—it must—as long as the edge keeps moving outward.

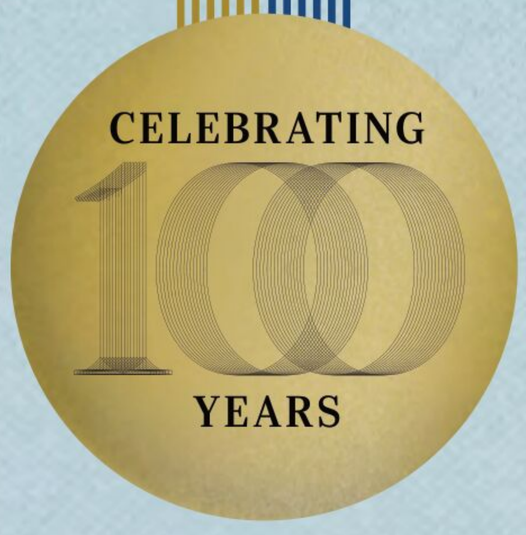
Go with laughter. R

David Steinberg is a comedian, actor, writer, author, and director. His directorial portfolio includes Friends, Seinfeld, Mad About You, Newhart, Designing Women, and Curb Your Enthusiasm. *He was also the host of the show* Inside Comedy. *His latest book,* Inside Comedy: The Soul, Wit, and Bite of Comedy and Comedians of the Last Five Decades, *is available now.*
@david_steinberg



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"READER'S DIGEST Saved My LIFE!"

Grateful readers recount how our magazine got them diagnoses, treatment, and—most importantly—their lives back

BEFORE DR. GOOGLE, there was Dr. Reader's Digest—"the public's leading source of medical information," as the influential Duke psychologist Kelly Brownell, PhD, called *Reader's Digest* in a 2009 study. Indeed, millions of people might read one of our health articles and then—when a mysterious symptom raises questions—recall its advice and be alerted to act. Sometimes they're even able to help inform their doctors.

When we asked readers how this magazine has influenced their lives, the responses included very specific, vivid tales of how (in their words) "*Reader's Digest* saved my life." These are some of the stories they shared:



THE PATIENT'S STORY

The Chronic Choke

Nick Metcalf, 22-year-old student at the University of Iowa

One night in March of my sophomore year of high school, I was eating spaghetti when I suddenly couldn't swallow. Somehow, the food came back up my esophagus and choked me, so I had to run to the bathroom and regurgitate. I tried to eat again, but the same thing kept happening.

Over the next week or so, I ate only small amounts of food—and most of it would come back up. I tried to hide it, but I finally got scared enough to tell my mom, and she took me to our family physician. He had no idea what was going on, so he referred me to a specialist. The rest of that year became a whole big mess of going for every esophageal test you could run. Still, no one knew what this thing was.

I hid what was going on from my friends, but I'm sure they wondered why I went to the bathroom five times a meal. I even had trouble swallowing water. Eventually, my whole diet was just peanut butter and honey sandwiches; for some reason, they were the only thing I could get down. I was six feet tall and dropped to 115 pounds—skin and bones—and I got very depressed.

Normal high school things became impossible. One day, I took a tiny sip of water on my way to class, and as soon as I sat down, I realized I had to throw up. I tried to leave, but my teacher chewed me out, so I just sat there fighting it down. I felt so humiliated and misunderstood. I was in the play *Father of the Bride*, and show week was horrible: On rehearsal nights, the parents would bring pizza, and I ate so little that some of the cast wondered if I had an eating disorder. I felt like I had no future because I'd always have this problem.

That December, I was sent for a new test called a barium swallow—an X-ray test for which I had to drink a chalky fluid so the doctors could watch it go down and try to see what was wrong. I regurgitated the fluid right away. The doctor told me th… knew "something … He said he thou… called achal… order. Aft… answer… scribe… Th… vers… opti… mak… qui… for … ripp… there… a Hel…

When doctors were stumped, this article helped our reader find out what was wrong.

"I yelled at my husband, 'This is what I have!'"

—Deborah Barber, of East Pharsalia, New York, after reading an April 2013 article about a patient being diagnosed with achalasia. The condition causes one in 100,000 people mysterious, excruciating indigestion and vomiting. Barber had surgery the next week. "My family was amazed that I found out what was wrong in Reader's Digest, *after years of going to five different doctors," she says.*

"I WAS STARTING TO DRIVE away after visiting a friend when her mom ran out to our car. 'I just want to thank you again,' she said. 'Big Bob has lived 20 more years because of you!' It was because of *Reader's Digest* too. I remember the incident like it was yesterday: My friend and I were watching TV in their basement when we heard a thud. Her dad had fallen and was mumbling incoherently. Her mom didn't want to trouble the doctor so late, but I was thinking that I'd read about all his symptoms in an *RD* story about strokes. When my friend said I was worrying them for nothing, I questioned myself—but the symptoms were there. Her mom finally called the doctor, who discovered that Bob's blood pressure was off the charts. My advice: Stick to your guns. It was a stroke."
—Andrea Hess, Brunswick, Maine
[In 1994, the National Stroke Association said our article "will literally be saving hundreds of lives."]

"Cigarettes were killing me. I had a chronic hacking cough and could never clear my throat. When I had a scary heart episode, to calm myself I had a smoke. Crazy, huh? Then my *Reader's Digest* arrived, with an article that suggested that to quit smoking, you should breathe deeply, as if you were taking a draw off a cigarette. It worked! I stopped cold turkey that day. I'm sure it saved my life." *—Rita Chapman Black, Hanceville, Alabama*

"My health advice is pray and pick up a *Reader's Digest*."

—G.P.B. of Ooltewah, Tennessee, who helped his mother's doctors diagnose her ministrokes by showing them an article that prompted them to discover a congenital flaw in her heart and perform lifesaving surgery.

"WHEN MY HUSBAND and I first married, he started complaining of feeling foggy-headed and having a metallic taste in his mouth. Then I came across an *RD* article about 'fish fog'—mercury poisoning from too much fish. It clicked. His favorite snack was tuna salad. He cut out tuna and his fog lifted. I hate to think what might have happened if I hadn't read that article."
—Jennifer Messeder, Lee, New Hampshire

"My eyes had chronic broken blood vessels. The skin on my arms tore at the littlest bump. My hair fell out, and coarse black hair began growing on my face, thighs, and arms. Warts covered my fingers and the heels of my feet. I started gaining weight at an alarming rate.

I was tested for von Willebrand disease, a blood disorder similar to hemophilia. Negative. My thyroid was tested. Negative. The symptoms continued to pile up. After 14 years I had consulted five different physicians, all of them stumped.


Misdiagnosed

It took 15 years before Joyce Dixon finally learned what was really wrong with her | BY VICTORIA SPENCER

FOR YEARS, no matter what diet she tried, Joyce Dixon just seemed to gain weight. In 1996 the five-foot-three mother of two weighed more than 200 pounds. But her self-esteem was the least of her problems. Her legs were so swollen and weak that she could barely climb the stairs in her own

When Joyce Dixon was ill (in a snapshot from 1996) old friends didn't recognize her.

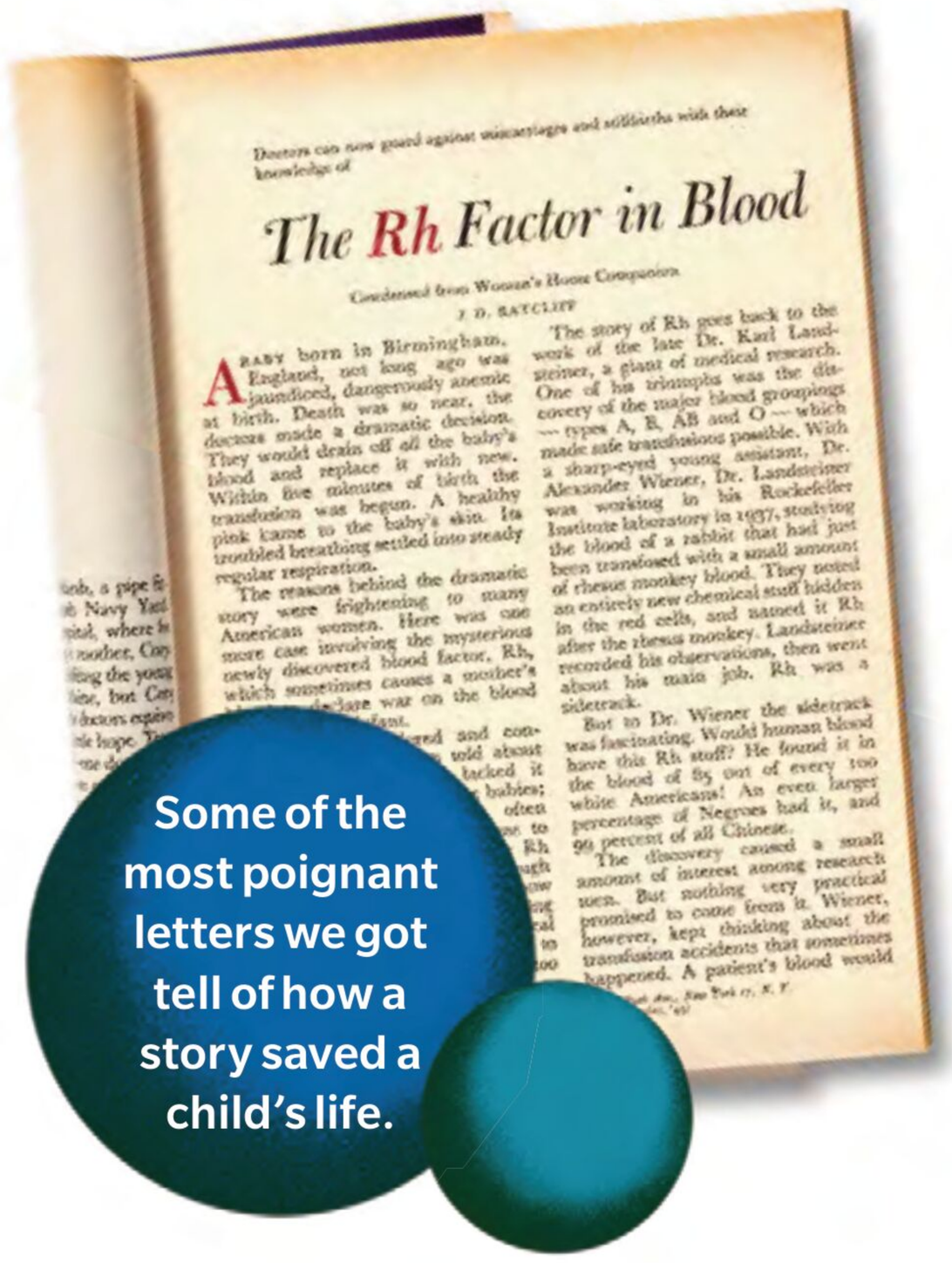
One woman suffered for 14 years with mysterious symptoms, until she read this article.

Our *Reader's Digest* arrived in the mail, and as I read 'Misdiagnosed,' the cover story about a woman with Cushing's disease, I knew this was me. My symptoms matched hers. I went straight to my doctor's office and gave her the article. She told me that Cushing's was very rare, and she didn't think I had it. I started crying, and my doctor said it couldn't hurt to test me. My results came back. I had a pituitary tumor and Cushing's, just like the woman in the story.

I had brain surgery and am now an active and healthy 66-year-old. Thank you. I am forever grateful."
—Deva Andrews, Thousand Oaks, California

TMB STUDIO/K. SYNOLD

"I was born in Pittsburgh in 1945, and the doctors didn't know why I was dying. My mother asked about the 'Rh baby' stuff she'd read in *Reader's Digest*. She knew she was Rh-negative, but for some reason the doctors didn't. When my parents heard that news, they got a doctor involved who happened to be doing research on Rh factor, and she saved me. My mother always told everyone the story how *Reader's Digest* saved my life. I am supposedly the oldest Rh baby in the world."
—Peggy Honts, Rockville, Maryland


Doctors can now guard against miscarriages and stillbirths with their knowledge of

The Rh Factor in Blood

Condensed from Woman's Home Companion

J. D. RATCLIFF

A BABY born in Birmingham, England, not long ago was jaundiced, dangerously anemic at birth. Death was so near, the doctors made a dramatic decision. They would drain off all the baby's blood and replace it with new. Within five minutes of birth the transfusion was begun. A healthy pink came to the baby's skin. Its troubled breathing settled into steady regular respiration.

The reasons behind the dramatic story were frightening to many American women. Here was one more case involving the mysterious newly discovered blood factor, Rh, which sometimes causes a mother's ... declare war on the blood ... fant.

... and con- ... told about ... tacked it ... babies; often ... to ... Rh ... ough ... ow ... ing ... al ... to ... oo

The story of Rh goes back to the work of the late Dr. Karl Landsteiner, a giant of medical research. One of his triumphs was the discovery of the major blood groupings — types A, B, AB and O — which made safe transfusions possible. With a sharp-eyed young assistant, Dr. Alexander Wiener, Dr. Landsteiner was working in his Rockefeller Institute laboratory in 1937, studying the blood of a rabbit that had just been transfused with a small amount of rhesus monkey blood. They noted an entirely new chemical stuff hidden in the red cells, and named it Rh after the rhesus monkey. Landsteiner recorded his observations, then went about his main job. Rh was a sidetrack.

But to Dr. Wiener the sidetrack was fascinating. Would human blood have this Rh stuff? He found it in the blood of 85 out of every 100 white Americans! An even larger percentage of Negroes had it, and 99 percent of all Chinese.

The discovery caused a small amount of interest among research men. But nothing very practical promised to come from it. Wiener, however, kept thinking about the transfusion accidents that sometimes happened. A patient's blood would

...ch, a pipe fr... ...b Navy Yard ...pital, where h... ...mother, Cory ...ifting the young ...hine, but Cory ...doctors explain ...ttle hope. T...

Some of the most poignant letters we got tell of how a story saved a child's life.

"**I WAS PREGNANT** with my first child and having terrible headaches and nausea. My OB/GYN couldn't see me until the following week, and I couldn't Google my symptoms because it was before the Internet. I called my dad about my symptoms, and he said, 'I just read an article in *Reader's Digest*, and it sure sounds like you have toxemia or preeclampsia.'

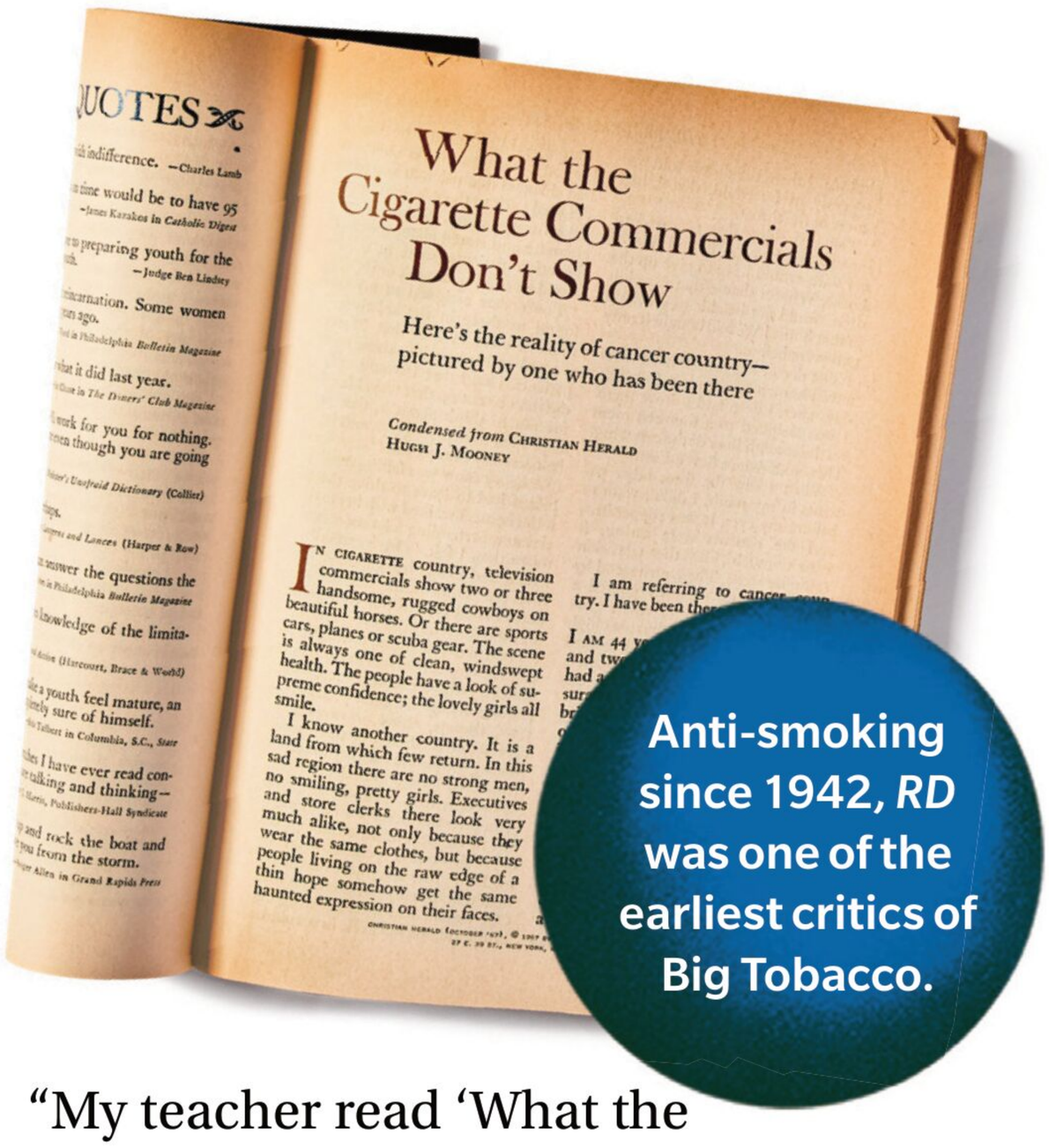
My dad demanded I go to the ER. I did and was promptly admitted with—drum roll—preeclampsia. I almost died, but instead I gave birth to a boy two months premature. I had one more child, a daughter, who was also born premature, due to toxemia. If *RD* hadn't printed that story, my dad wouldn't have read it, I would have waited a week to seek medical attention, and I would likely not be here to e-mail you."
—Leslie Bowman, Missoula, Montana

"Suicidal thoughts came. But when I read your story, you told me that it will end."
—Michael Niño Ramirez of Quezon City, Philippines, writing to editor Bonnie Munday, whose first-person account of recovering from panic attacks was published in international editions of Reader's Digest. *"Your story came out in 2018, but it saved me in 2020," Ramirez told her. "You encouraged me to face my fears."*

“Miraculously, his airway cleared. My wonderful son lived. And now he’s a doctor.”

—Judy Hoopman of Fredericksburg, Texas, describing how her two-year-old son was choking when she remembered reading about the brand-new Heimlich maneuver and “frantically applied the technique.”

“I WAS 11 MONTHS OLD. The bathtub had only six inches of water. My mother left to warm my bottle and returned to find me facedown and blue. She remembered reading in *Reader’s Digest* that you could blow air into drowning victims, which she did. A recent immigrant, she’d subscribed to improve her English. After that she swore to subscribe for the rest of her life. Another woman saved a child in Sausalito, California, when she remembered the same article [‘The Day My Son Drowned,’ August 1958].”
—Monika Kinstler, Manchester, Connecticut



“My teacher read ‘What the Cigarette Commercials Don’t Show’ to us. It’s by a 44-year-old man with throat cancer due to smoking. He describes his horrifying hospital stay, his wife’s pain, his children’s pain, and the battle to save his voice, which he loses along with his larynx and pharynx. He also describes the beautiful people in the smoking ads on TV. All the people in my family were smokers. Not me—every time I wanted to smoke, I reread the article. Many years later, I taught biology and read it to my students. I told them if they were ever tempted to smoke, to remember what I read to them.”
—Elise Vitow, Lawrence, New York R

Overheard in the elevator of a New York City office building: “I just finished that article on cigarette smoking in the *Reader’s Digest*, and I’ve decided to give up reading.”
—Willis Wing, June 1950

TMB STUDIO/K. SYNOLD

COVER STORY

CELEBRATING 100 YEARS

The VOICE of the AVERAGE GRUNT

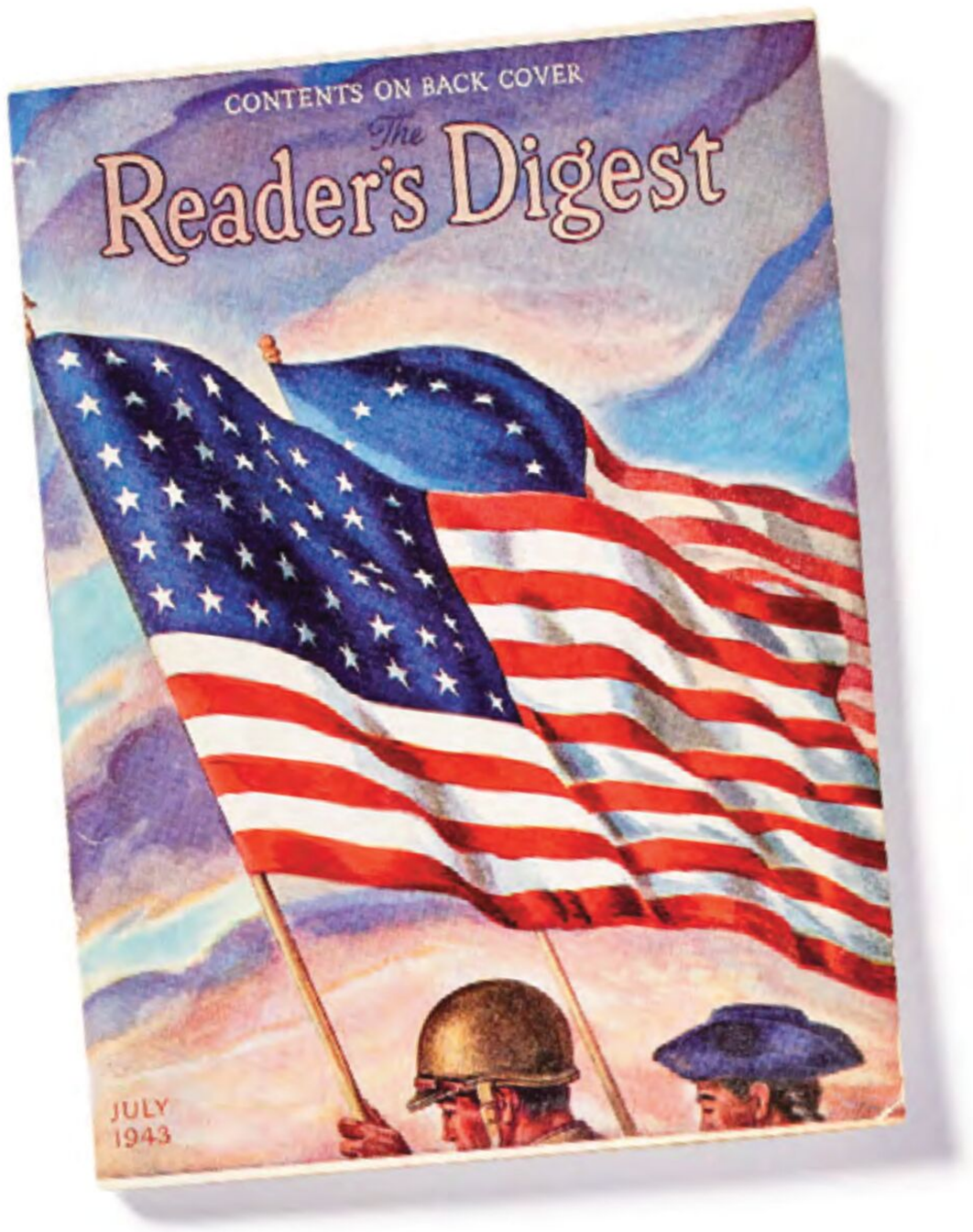
From World War II to Afghanistan, America's fighting men and women were always accompanied by a familiar friend

BY *Brian Mockenhaupt*



AFTER WARREN WIEDHAHN works through his *Reader's Digest*, cover to cover, with a Marine's precision, he passes it along to the employees at his travel company, which gives tours of military sites around the world. Now 92 years old, Wiedhahn first flipped through the magazine in the 1930s in his family's outdoor privy in upstate New York. And he's been passing his copies of the magazine around to others since he fought in the Korean War—when the ground was too frozen to dig foxholes but the mail still arrived, an always-welcome morale boost.

He shared his magazine again in the steamy jungles of Vietnam, where he was awarded the Silver Star for rallying his men to drive back the North Vietnamese troops who had surrounded them. The mail was delivered to even the most far-flung outposts, and if the choppers couldn't land, crewmen dropped the mailbags out the open doors.



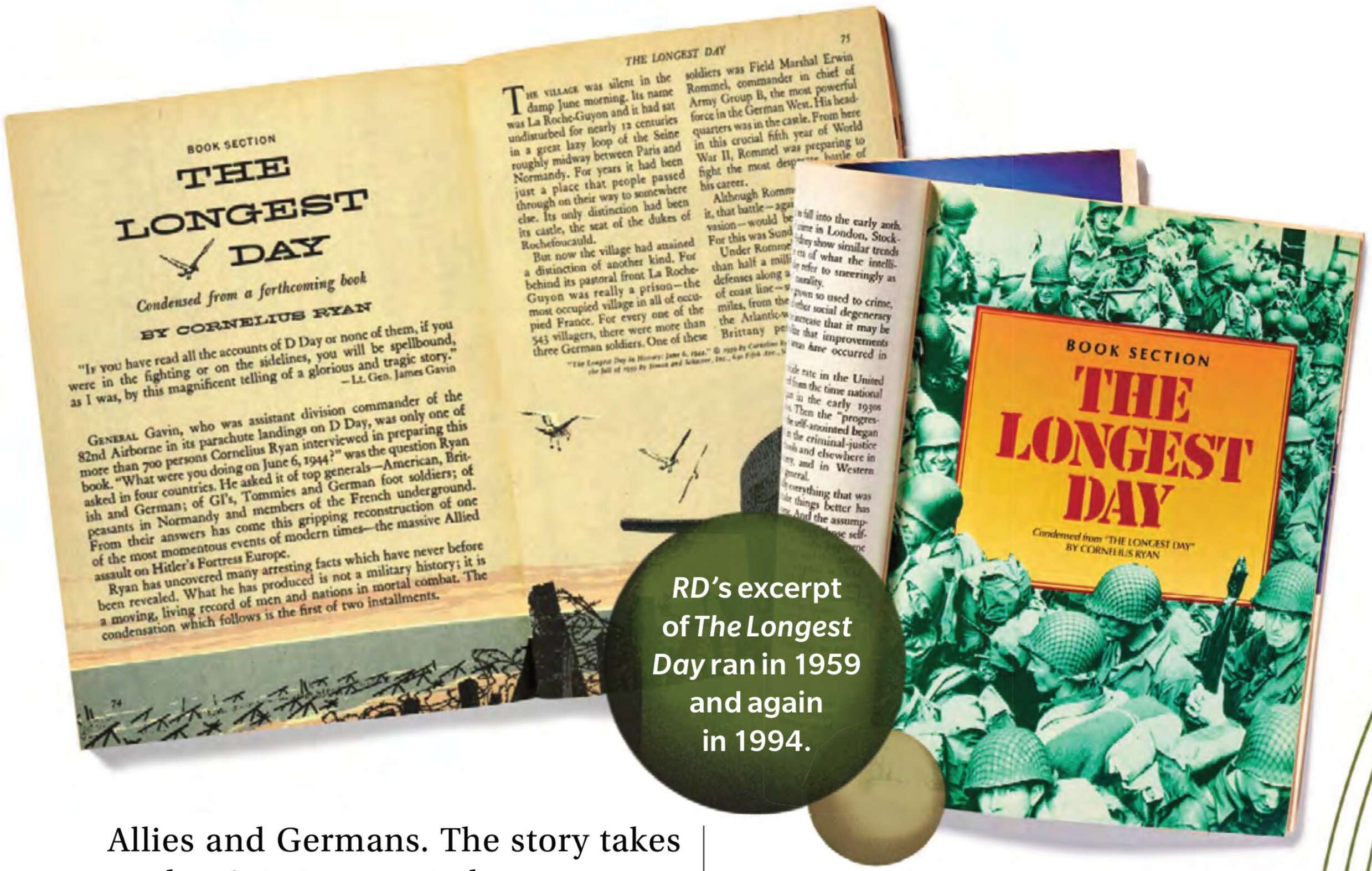
"Throughout it all," says Wiedhahn, who lives just outside of Washington, DC, "I had my *Reader's Digest* in my pocket."

THAT SERVICE MEMBERS should connect with the magazine is fitting: The idea for *Reader's Digest* was fine-tuned in war. The founder, DeWitt Wallace, had joined the Army in 1917. A year later, he was severely wounded during the massive Meuse-Argonne offensive. As he lay in a French hospital for four months recuperating from shrapnel wounds to his neck, back, and shoulder, he read American magazines and practiced trimming down the articles.

After the war, Wallace honed his idea for a magazine filled with articles condensed from other publications—one that would blend human interest, advice, and humor, and tackle problems of the day. He couldn't find a publisher to take a chance on him, so he and his wife, Lila Acheson Wallace, published it themselves.

Since the magazine's debut in 1922, Wallace always made space for pieces about the military. In 1959, the magazine devoted nearly 60 pages across two issues to America's most storied day of battle, with a condensed version of Cornelius Ryan's book *The Longest Day*, a sprawling retelling of D-Day based on 700 interviews with

TMB STUDIO/K. SYNOLD



RD's excerpt of *The Longest Day* ran in 1959 and again in 1994.

Allies and Germans. The story takes readers into transport planes as paratroopers tumble out, into German command posts wrought with confusion and disbelief, and, finally, onto those bloody beaches. "I'll be all right, won't I?" a mangled soldier asks Alfred Eigenberg, a 19-year-old medic faced with so many wounded that he doesn't know where to start. "Sure," says Eigenberg, and sticks the dying man with morphine. "You'll be all right."

The magazine followed up in 1974 with more stories from D-Day, including a letter from a woman whose father had been killed on Omaha Beach. "I never knew my father," she wrote. "For years I hated him because I was tired of Mother talking about what the war was like and what a big hero my father was." But her feelings

"THROUGHOUT KOREA AND VIETNAM, I HAD *READER'S DIGEST* IN MY POCKET."

changed after reading "The Longest Day" in the magazine. "My father became real to me. I cried because I love him, and he might have loved me. I cried, too, because his life was over before mine ever really began, yet he gave me my life. Thank you for giving me my father after all these years."

Such sentiments help explain why the magazine has resonated for so long among military families. It gives those at home a glimpse of what their

TMB STUDIO/K. SYNOLD

loved ones are doing, while connecting service members to the world they'd left behind, and to which, if their luck held, they'd be returning.

I started writing for the magazine a few years after I got out of the Army in 2005, after my own time overseas, and each story felt like an opportunity to introduce readers to their neighbors,

STORIES OF SERVICE MEMBERS WERE TOLD WITHOUT AGENDA, WITHOUT PAGEANTRY.

to men and women not so different from the veterans they might have in their own families. I wrote about military chaplains ministering to troops on the battlefield, and dads tending the home front while moms were away at war. I wrote about a stealth fighter pilot and his unlikely friendship with the Serbian man who shot down his plane over the Balkans. After my former squad leader was killed in Afghanistan, I visited his platoon and wrote about the men he'd left behind, and their devotion to each other.

A magazine's stories often carry subtle (and not so subtle) undertones of how readers are supposed to feel about a topic. While *Reader's Digest* had plenty of that through its early years (articles railing against Communism, cigarettes, and marijuana, for example), its coverage of service members feels different to me—stories told without agenda, presented without pageantry. It was the magazine for the grunt, not the general. And the magazine has long celebrated an aspect of military life perhaps least understood by civilians and overlooked by other publications: the day-to-day absurdities of military life.

Over the decades, since the September 1953 issue, hundreds of thousands of service members and veterans have submitted stories to "Humor in Uniform" about the peculiarities, frustrations, and inside jokes of military life.



"As a U.S. Army officer, I even contributed one or two items to 'Humor in Uniform,' but my stories did not make the tough cut."
—*Colin Powell in the 75th anniversary edition of* Reader's Digest, *1997*

BROOKS KRAFT/GETTY IMAGES

Like the one about a soldier who turned 21 on the front lines of the Vietnam War. Amazingly, a birthday cake from his sister found him in his jungle outpost, miles from the nearest base. The cake was encased in Tupperware and came with this note: "Dick, when you're finished, can you mail back my container?"

Warren Wiedhahn, the former Marine, learned to appreciate the absurd while trying to survive one of the fiercest battles of the Korean War. On November 27, 1950, Wiedhahn and a buddy spent the night at a listening post on a mountain ridge, out beyond their front lines. With dawn breaking, they heard a cacophony of whistles, bells, and bugles rising up from the other side of the valley. "What the hell is that?" Wiedhahn asked, and they soon saw thousands of Chinese soldiers flooding down the mountainside, heading straight for them. They quickly returned to their unit.

More than 120,000 enemy troops surrounded 30,000 American and allied troops, as temperatures plunged to 35 degrees below zero, in what became known as the Battle of Chosin Reservoir. The Marines couldn't evacuate their casualties, and doctors wrestled with who could be saved. Those too badly wounded were placed outside the tent, deemed a more humane death, to sleep and not wake up. Two weeks later, after suffering more than 17,000 injuries and deaths, the American and allied troops broke through the enemy lines and withdrew.

Soldiers and veterans began sharing their funny stories in September 1953.



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I'm proud of the fact that I served my country, and I'm proud of the fact that I survived," Wiedhahn says. "But I'm also proud of the fact that I was able to laugh."



Adolf Hitler, German Hypnotist

Condensed from the Outlook and Independent (October 15, '30)

Harry Larin Binsse

IN THE 1928 German elections, one of the minor party groups, the National Socialists, won 12 seats in the Reichstag. In 1930, the same party won 107 seats, almost 20 percent of the Reichstag, and definitely became the second strongest party in the land. And the man responsible for the change is Adolf Hitler, man without a country, mysterious leader of the "Bolsheviki of the Right," the German Fascisti.

Who is Adolf Hitler? What has he done? What does he look like?

The last question is the most easily answered. He is a completely unimpressive figure. He resembles a "Moravian traveling salesman." He has a little Charlie Chaplin moustache; a vacuous face. Of recent years he has grown fat. But when h… mouth, every… becomes … a ravin… voted… dis… no…

25 years old, and his occupation has been variously described as sign-painter, carpenter, draughtsman, and locksmith. He volunteered for service in the German army, thus losing his Austrian citizenship, served through the war with distinction, was once wounded and once gassed.

After the Armistice, he is said to have returned to Vienna, where his oratorical gifts were turned to good use by some interested party, who sent him to Liechtenstein to persuade that diminutive principality to become part of Austria. If this story is true, i… records. Hitler's only orator… failure. Liechtenstein, with 11,500 inhabitants and a… about equal to Staten Island … still an autonomous state.

However that may be, we kn… that in January, 1922, Hit… …lished himself in Mun… …d his German politic… …in 18 months he h… …rge part of urba… …eculiar brand … …al Socialist… …people, who… …the abyss … …onsummate … …ical. E… …some l…

Making Germany Gas-Proof

Condensed from The Saturday Review [London]

Charles E. Hewitt, Jr.

IT IS 10 o'clock at night in any large German city. The streets are deserted; cinemas, theaters and restaurants closed; not a motorcar is in sight. All lights are out and Storm Troops patrol the streets in gas masks. Suddenly the roar of airplanes cuts the air; sirens whine and a hundred searchlights slice the sky. The population crouches in cellars, waiting the official signal for release.

These "drill evenings," already enjoyed in major German cities, are promised the entire nation before the year is out. The Tempelhof section of Berlin boasts two anti-gas troops, each with a converted fire engine to carry gas-fighting equipment. Rehearsal takes place as follows:

A bomb attack is reported to the poison-gas station by the "gas guard" of a large apartment house. Two men, attired in rubber from head to foot, speed to the spot in a police car. Springing to the imaginary shell-hole, they take a sample of the gas-impregnated earth and rush it back to the chemical laboratory for analysis. Ten minutes later equipment for counteracting the gas is on the spot.

If the diagnosis has been ordinary poison gas, a car resembling an ordinary "sprinkler," manned by a rubber-uniformed crew, wets down the entire suspicious area. A second truck is loaded with chloride of lime, which the gas warriors shovel over the same surface. A final rinsing from the sprinkler, and the district is declared free from gas menace. Different methods are used for tear gas, mustard gas, etc. Speeches follow, in which the large audience of curiosity seekers is admonished to join the "air-protection league."

Most of Germany's 65,000,000 citizens have been embraced in this organization in the last three months. In the big cities there is a Block Leader for every group of houses, and a House Captain for each dwelling. In emergencies all in the house must follow his commands at risk of extreme penalties. Each house has two "fire guards" to insure as much safety as possible from fire bombs. The "fire guards" must see that attics are free of burnable junk; they must put barrels of sand, shovels and axes on the roofs. Their chief assistant is the first-aid man, also compulsory for every dwelling, who is thoroughly trained in gas-case treatment.

Each house or house group will in the future boast a "gas-proof cellar." Many German homes do so already. Detailed construction plans are explained in hundreds of weekly lectures. Government credit is readily advanced to any homeowner who will dig a gas cellar. So readily, in fact, that the present budget of Berlin alone contains 8,000,000 marks for the "provision of suitable gas attack retreats for the populace."

With goose-step efficiency, G… many is making herself gas-proof

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(The Saturday Review, August 4, '34)

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Where Does Hitler Get the Money?

Condensed from The New Republic

Paul Crozier

NAZI GERMANY has recently assured the world that she is unable to pay $250,000,000,* the annual interest and amortization on her foreign debt. At the same time, however, she is carrying out a lavish program of rearmament that costs at least five times as much. Where, then, does this money come from?

There is no doubt that the German government is poor; the extent of its internal indebtedness is now about $25,000,000,000, or one third of the entire national wealth. In the endeavor to increase revenues, threats of severe penalties have been made against taxpayers who seek to evade their obligations. While Herr Goebbels loudly boasts that German taxpayers are so patriotic that taxes even exceed the estimates, the tax collectors state publicly that 30 percent of the tax declarations are fraudulent.

The utmost that could be expected from normal tax revenues being inadequate for military expenses, it has been necessary to find the money in other quarters. Accordingly, at the beginning of 1934, a law was put into effect that all enterprises were to "hold at the disposal of the government" all dividends exceeding six percent. As might have been expected, industry invariably showed profits of less than six percent. Thereupon the industrialists, under threat of jail, were ordered to turn over not less than $250,000,000 to the government.

Some concerns will be able to pay their share without difficulty, particularly the war industries. Others, especially the producers of consumers' goods, are threatened with extinction.

In addition, the savings banks have been forced to absorb about $250,000,000 of rearmament notes, and an equal amount of these dubious "securities" has been forced upon the insurance companies. The trade unions and cooperative associations likewise are being forced to put their reserve funds into rearmament notes, as are also even the charitable organizations. This is believed to be one of the reasons why the Catholic orders have transferred part of their funds abroad, in violation of Nazi decree.

The masses of the people do not know the extent of the government's indebtedness, nor even

* Marks are translated into dollars at the rate of four to a dollar.

© 1935, The New Republic, Inc., 40 E. 49 St., N. Y. C.
(The New Republic, September 25, '35)

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Coverage of WWII helped a former POW understand his role.

more human," he says. "Even in the darkest days of combat, there was always somebody playing a trick, doing something stupid, or telling a joke. There you were getting shot at, and somebody told you a joke or you read something funny."

THE MAGAZINE, OF COURSE, was more than a reliable source of diversion. Its hard-hitting articles and essays were to be trusted. If it was in *Reader's Digest*, it had to be true.

George Burke was serving in the Army Air Force as a navigator on a B-24 Liberator bomber during World War II when his plane was shot down on a mission over northern France four days before D-Day. His captors marched him to a prisoner-of-war camp in Germany, where he was held until the war ended nearly a year later.

"He didn't talk about it," says his wife, Shirley Garrett, who is now 97 and lives in Clearwater, Florida. But she saw the effect the war had on him in the way his mood would drop so low, so fast. On weekends he would often retreat to his in-laws' attic and thumb through the neat stacks of old *Reader's Digest* magazines, which offered him respite.

"He could just slip away, read, and not be bothered by anybody," Garrett says. But those back issues offered more than refuge in prewar America. They offered insight into how and why Burke ended up dropping bombs on occupied France. In 1930, he read the article "Adolf Hitler, German Hypnotist," about the rise of the Nazis; in 1934, "Making Germany Gas-Proof," about German cities preparing for war; and in 1935, "Where Does Hitler

Get the Money?" about Germany's massive efforts to rearm. "I just don't understand how the U.S. didn't see this coming," he told Garrett. "It's all right here."

PERHAPS THE MOST endearing and enduring quality of *Reader's Digest* has been the role it's played in both war and peacetime, as the magazine that best exemplifies home for generations of readers, and a reminder of the familiar, the comforting, and the cherished. It was stories about life on the farm, relatable personal dramas, profiles of fascinating people. As Warren Weidhahn says, *Reader's Digest*, like no other magazine, "linked a lonely American Marine in a foreign country to home."

It's a sentiment that Beverly Dotson, of Charleston, Arkansas, still subscribes to. In the early 1990s, when her nephew Carl shipped off for months at sea aboard an aircraft carrier, Dotson figured he could use a dose of the home front, not to mention some humor to lighten his load.

For two years, from the Pacific to the Persian Gulf, Carl got a monthly rehash of the latest family happenings, along with clippings from *Reader's Digest*.

"I think it's important," Dotson says, "when someone is out there, separated from their family, that they know they're not forgotten." And *Reader's Digest*, she says, with its "funny, helpful, and inspiring articles, understands where we're coming from."

Dotson kept up the morale boosting while her son and three nephews served in the Iraq War. And it continues today: She just sent another nephew, who serves in the Arkansas National Guard, a gift subscription. R

Brian Mockenhaupt served as an infantryman with the 10th Mountain Division from 2002 to 2005 and deployed twice to Iraq. He has written about the military for the Atlantic, Smithsonian, Outside, *and* Esquire.

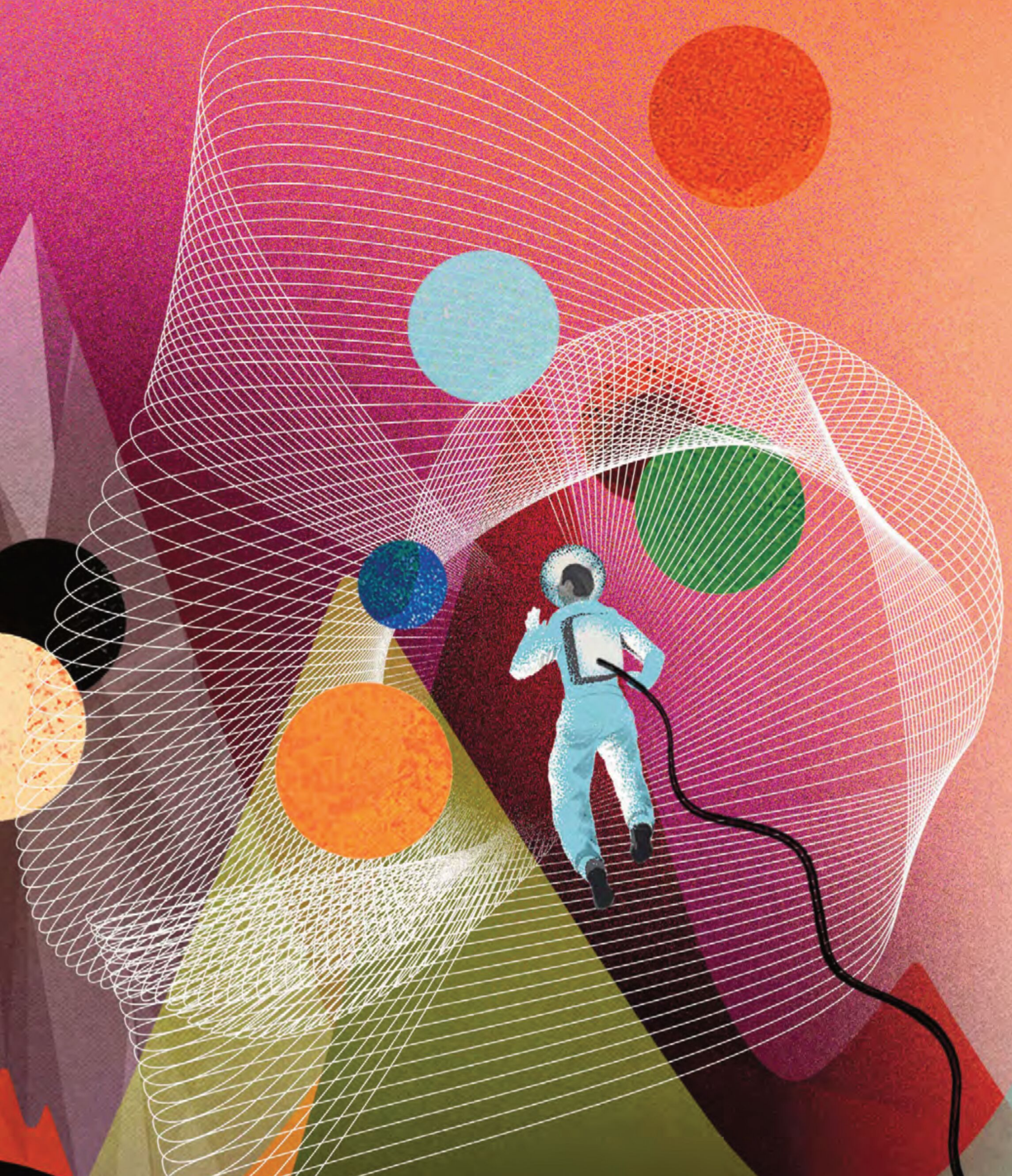


LIBRARY OF CONGRESS/GETTY IMAGES

"Patriotism, a sense of duty, and a feeling of obligation are the noblest and the most necessary qualities of any democratic system."

—Dwight D. Eisenhower, Reader's Digest, *September 1966*

READER'S DIGEST



COVER STORY

CELEBRATING 100 YEARS

LOOKING to the FUTURE

What will the next 100 years bring? Our collective future is actually pretty bright.

BY *Steven Pinker*

FROM THE BOOK **RATIONALITY**

When we look beyond the headlines to the trend lines, we find that humanity overall is healthier, richer, longer-lived, better fed, better educated, and safer from war, murder, and accidents than in decades and centuries past.

Having documented these changes in two books, I'm often asked whether I "believe in progress." The answer is no. Like the humorist Fran Lebowitz, I don't believe in anything you have to believe in.

Although many measures of human well-being, when plotted over time, show a gratifying increase (though not

always or everywhere), it's not because of some force or dialectic or evolutionary law that lifts us ever upward. On the contrary, nature has no regard for our well-being, and often, as with pandemics and natural disasters, it looks as if it's trying to grind us down.

"Progress" is shorthand for a set of pushbacks and victories wrung out of an unforgiving universe. It is a phenomenon that needs to be explained.

The explanation is rationality. When humans set themselves the goal of improving the welfare of their fellow beings (as opposed to other dubious pursuits such as glory or redemption), and they apply their ingenuity in institutions that pool it with others', they occasionally succeed. When they retain the successes and take note of the failures, the benefits can accumulate, and we call the big picture "progress."

Here are four areas of great progress we have made together. With this in mind, perhaps the future isn't as dire as doomsayers might imagine. In fact, we have much to hope for as we look to the future.

We live longer.

Beginning in the second half of the 19th century, life expectancy at birth rose from its historic average of around 30 years and is now 72.4 years worldwide—83 years in the most fortunate countries. This gift of life was not dropped onto our doorsteps. It was the hard-won dividend of advances in public health (motto: "Saving lives, millions at a time"), particularly after the germ theory of disease displaced other causal theories such as miasmas, spirits, conspiracies, and divine retribution. The lifesavers included chlorination and other means of safeguarding drinking water, the lowly toilet and sewer, the control of disease vectors such as mosquitoes and fleas, programs for large-scale vaccination, the promotion of handwashing, and developments in basic prenatal and perinatal care such as encouraging nursing and body contact.



"Progress consists of more than gains in our safety and material well-being. It consists also of gains in how we treat each other."
—*Steven Pinker*

T ROTH/GETTY IMAGES

When disease and injuries do strike, advances in medicine keep them from killing as many people as they did in the era of folk healers and barber-surgeons. Those advances include antibiotics, antisepsis, anesthesia, transfusions, drugs, and oral rehydration therapy (a salt and sugar solution that stops fatal diarrhea).

We have enough to eat.

Humanity has always struggled to grow and gather enough calories and protein to feed itself, with famine often just one bad harvest away. But hunger today has been decimated in most of the world. Undernourishment and stunting are in decline, and famines now afflict only the most remote and war-ravaged regions, a problem not of too little food but of barriers to getting it to the hungry. The additional calories that now exist did not come in heavenly manna or from a cornucopia held by Abundantia, the Roman goddess of plenty, but from advances in agronomy. These advances include crop rotation to replenish depleted soils; technologies for planting and harvesting such as seed drills, plows, tractors, and combine harvesters; synthetic fertilizer (credited with saving 2.7 billion lives); a transportation and storage network to bring food from farm to table that includes railroads, canals, trucks, granaries, and refrigeration; national and international markets that allow a surplus in one area to fill a shortage in another; and the Green Revolution of the 1960s, which spread productive and vigorous hybrid crops.

We have more money overall.

For most of history, around 90 percent of humanity lived in what we today would call extreme poverty. In 2020, less than 9 percent do—an amount still too high but targeted for elimination in the next decade. The great material enrichment of humanity began with the industrial revolution of the 19th century. It was literally powered by the capture of energy from coal, oil, wind, and falling water, and later from the sun, the earth, and nuclear fission. The energy was fed into machines that turn heat into work, factories with mass production, and conveyances such as railroads, canals, highways, and container ships.

PERHAPS THE FUTURE ISN'T AS DIRE AS DOOMSAYERS MIGHT IMAGINE.

Material technologies depended on financial ones, particularly banking, finance, and insurance. And neither of these types of technologies could have been parlayed into widespread prosperity without governments to enforce contracts, minimize both

force and fraud, smooth out financial lurches by creating central banks and reliable money, and invest in wealth-generating public goods such as infrastructure, basic research, and universal education.

We fight less.

The world has not yet put an end to war, as the folk singers of the 1960s dreamed, but it has dramatically reduced the number of wars and their lethality, from a toll of 21.9 battle deaths per 100,000 people in 1950 to just 0.7 in 2019. Peter, Paul, and Mary deserve only some of the credit. More goes to institutions designed to reduce the incentives of nations to go to war, beginning with Immanuel Kant's plan for "perpetual peace" in 1795.

One of them is democracy, which really does reduce the chance of war, presumably because a country's cannon fodder is less keen on the pastime than its kings and generals. Another is international trade and investment, which make it cheaper to buy things than to steal them—and make it unwise for countries to kill their customers and debtors. (The European Union, awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 2012, grew out of a trade organization, the European Coal and Steel Community.)

Yet another is a network of international organizations, particularly the United Nations, which knits countries into a community, mobilizes peacekeeping forces, immortalizes states, grandfathers in borders, and outlaws and stigmatizes war while providing alternative means of resolving disputes.

Brainchildren of human ingenuity have also underwritten other historical boosts in well-being, such as safety, leisure, travel, and access to art and entertainment. Though many of today's gadgets and bureaucracies grew organically and were perfected through trial and error, not one was

SOUND ARGUMENTS HAVE GUIDED, AND SHOULD GUIDE, MOVEMENTS FOR CHANGE.

an accident. People at the time advocated for them with arguments driven by logic and evidence, costs and benefits, cause and effect, and trade-offs between individual advantage and the common good. Our ingenuity will have to be redoubled to deal with the trials we face today, particularly carbon. We'll have to apply brainpower to develop technologies that make clean energy cheap, pricing that makes dirty energy expensive, policies that prevent factions from becoming spoilers, and treaties to make the sacrifices global and equitable.

But progress consists of more than gains in our safety and material well-being. It consists also of gains in how we treat each other: in equality,

benevolence, and rights. Many cruel and unjust practices have declined over the course of history. They include human sacrifice, slavery, despotism, blood sports, eunuchism, harems, foot-binding, sadistic corporal and capital punishments, the persecution of heretics and dissidents, and the oppression of women and of religious, racial, ethnic, and sexual minorities. None has been extirpated from the face of the earth, but when we chart the historical changes, in every case we see descents and, in some cases, plunges.

How did we come to enjoy this progress? Theodore Parker, and a century later, Martin Luther King Jr., divined a moral arc bending toward justice. But the nature of the arc and its power to pull the levers of human behavior are mysterious. One can imagine more prosaic pathways: changing fashions, shaming campaigns, appeals to the heart, popular protest movements, and religious and moralistic crusades.

A popular view is that moral progress is advanced through struggle—the powerful never hand over their privileges, which must be wrested from them by the might of people acting in solidarity.

Sound arguments have guided, and should guide, movements for change. They make the difference between moral force and brute force, between marches for justice and lynch mobs, between human progress and breaking things. And it will be sound arguments—both to reveal moral blights and to discover feasible remedies—that we will need to ensure that moral progress will continue, that the abominable practices of today will become as incredible to our descendants as heretic burnings and slave auctions are to us. R

Steven Pinker is a professor of psychology at Harvard University. From the book Rationality *by Steven Pinker, published by Viking, an imprint of Penguin Publishing Group, a division of Penguin Random House LLC.*
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A Trusted Friend

In celebration of our 100th anniversary, we've asked a group of artists to interpret the phrase "A Trusted Friend in a Complicated World." Longtime *Reader's Digest* contributor C. F. Payne provides the first installment in the series. **Turn to page 116 to see Payne's *Rosie*. Watch for a new artist feature every month this year.**

READER'S DIGEST

The author dives in the Flower Garden Banks marine sanctuary.

PHOTOGRAPHS BY *Benjamin Lowy*

NATIONAL INTEREST

The Fight to Save Texas's Spectacular CORAL REEFS

A team of unlikely allies came together to expand protections, but will it be enough?

BY *Juli Berwald*

FROM **TEXAS MONTHLY**



Almost 100 feet under the sea, I was flying. I glided through a seascape of vibrant corals and tropical fish, inspecting the reef's caves and nooks. I crossed a sandy area toward an emerald hillock, pushed my flippered feet downward, and hovered vertically. The coral before me was massive and majestic. I took in the matriarchs and patriarchs that surrounded me: enormous amber colonies as well as limestone thrones overlaid in jade green clusters.

To explore a grove of these ancients, possibly dating back 1,500 years, felt like hiking among the redwoods in California. Some scuba divers venture to this place for the manta rays as big as living-room carpets and whale sharks the size of school buses. But for me, these grand corals were the true giants.

The coral cover was so great that where the colonies bumped up against one another, a turf battle raged. Like jellyfish, corals have stinging cells in their tentacles. Some of those cells are



A school of fish swims through a coral-covered oil rig stanchion.

deployed against other corals, pushing back colonies that want to claim more territory. Given the demise in coral cover worldwide, it had been decades since I'd seen such boundary wars. Here, the battle-wrought margins signaled this reef's exceptional health.

The first time I heard of Flower Garden Banks National Marine Sanctuary—years ago, when I was an ocean scientist—it sounded like a Texas-sized tale: a collection of seamounts rich in coral, rising from waters hundreds of feet deep in the Gulf of Mexico, about 100 miles southeast of Galveston, Texas. A spectacular dive site with waters as crystalline as those at the most sought-out locations in the world, like the Indo-Pacific's Coral Triangle or Australia's Great Barrier Reef, with visibility that stretched 100 feet or more. A place bursting with life, where behemoths roamed: manta rays and whale sharks, as well as giant groupers and schools of hammerhead and blacktip sharks. All of this just a few hours by boat off the Texas coast.

Even when I wrote a book about the world's disappearing coral, spending three years traveling to reefs from the Dominican Republic to Indonesia, I left that story—the one closest to home—unexplored. But on January 19, 2021, the last full day of the Trump administration, the federal government announced it was nearly tripling the size of Flower Garden Banks National Marine Sanctuary by adding more reefs and banks to its protected area, already 56 square miles amid some of the world's richest oil and gas reservoirs. I knew that this place must hold ineluctable power.

Flower Garden Banks contains some of the healthiest remaining coral reefs on the planet. Yet most Texans, even the avid scuba divers, haven't heard of it. The reason these lively underwater habitats have evaded attention for so long is that they are farther from shore than most reefs and are located deeper than those preferred by occasional divers and snorkelers. Those same

attributes have also helped preserve Flower Garden Banks.

But like all coral environments—which are predicted to almost disappear by 2050—these reefs face threats from climate change, disease, and invasive species. In an effort to save Flower Garden Banks from such perils, an unlikely group of bedfellows worked together for more than a decade to build something almost as rare these days as the reefs themselves: progress through compromise.

THE POLYPS THAT MAKE UP coral reefs are solar-powered animals, fueled by symbiotic algae living in their tissues. At Flower Garden Banks, corals grow on the shallowest of the Gulf's salt domes because there is enough light there to drive their algal engines.

In the early 1900s, snapper and grouper fishermen looked down from the decks of their boats into that sky-blue water, where it wasn't hard to see the colorful tops of salt domes. They named the spot Flower Garden Banks for its vibrant floral appearance and returned to shore with reports that bits of coral were often entangled in their nets. Skeptics, however, thought the specimens were fossils.

Until the mid-20th century, scientists didn't take the claims of coral reefs in the deep Gulf seriously, but Tom Pulley, director emeritus of the Houston Museum of Natural Science, believed the stories. In 1960 he asked the Navy to lend him a destroyer headquartered in New Orleans and assembled a team of divers. During their descent to the tops of the salt domes, they dodged barracuda and sharks. On the way up, they carried more than 1,000 pounds of living coral and sponges. There *was* a coral reef in Texas, and it was very much alive.

The Bureau of Land Management, the federal agency responsible for regulating Gulf oil and gas leases at the time, wanted reconnaissance on these newly discovered reefs. In the early 1970s, the bureau tapped Tom Bright, a marine scientist at Texas A&M University who is now regarded as the father of Flower Garden Banks. He acquired a two-person submersible for those initial exploratory dives.

"The little submarine would go down to 600 feet," he said. "We crawled into it and made transects across all the banks. The result was a description of the biotic communities."

In 1979, a dive club in Houston submitted Flower Garden Banks as a candidate for the National Marine Sanctuaries Act, a federal program passed in 1972 that provided strong

ALL CORAL ENVIRONMENTS ARE PREDICTED TO ALMOST DISAPPEAR BY 2050.



Corals such as this brain coral are abundant in Flower Garden Banks.

protections for valuable undersea environments.

Some in the oil and gas industry expressed concerns. They argued that many protections were already in place. Operations disturbing the coral habitats were forbidden. Mud from drilling couldn't be discharged within a mile of the banks. Companies had to monitor ecosystem changes as part of lease agreements. Commercial fishing interests also worried that they might be subject to new regulations.

These tensions held up progress toward safeguards for Flower Garden Banks for a decade—until disaster struck. In 1983 a tugboat pulling a 200-foot-long barge dragged a huge anchor across East Flower Garden Bank. A dive team monitoring coral health watched it happen. Those divers took video of a gouge in the reef about 400 feet long, estimating it destroyed more than 200 coral colonies. Although harmful activities were supposed to be banned in Flower Garden Banks, bureaucratic confusion had let anchoring slip through the cracks.

Newly elected Texas congressman Solomon Ortiz introduced legislation, which, if it had passed, would have imposed new restrictions in the Gulf. The possibility of such regulations gave a big push to the yearslong effort to designate the area as a sanctuary. In 1992 President George H.W. Bush formally designated Flower Garden Banks as a national marine sanctuary. This move protected the East and West Flower Garden salt domes,

at about 16,000 and 19,000 acres, respectively, and about 12 miles apart. In 1996 Stetson Bank, a 540-acre coral community located about 30 miles northwest of West Flower Garden Bank, was added, boosting the sanctuary's size to about 56 square miles.

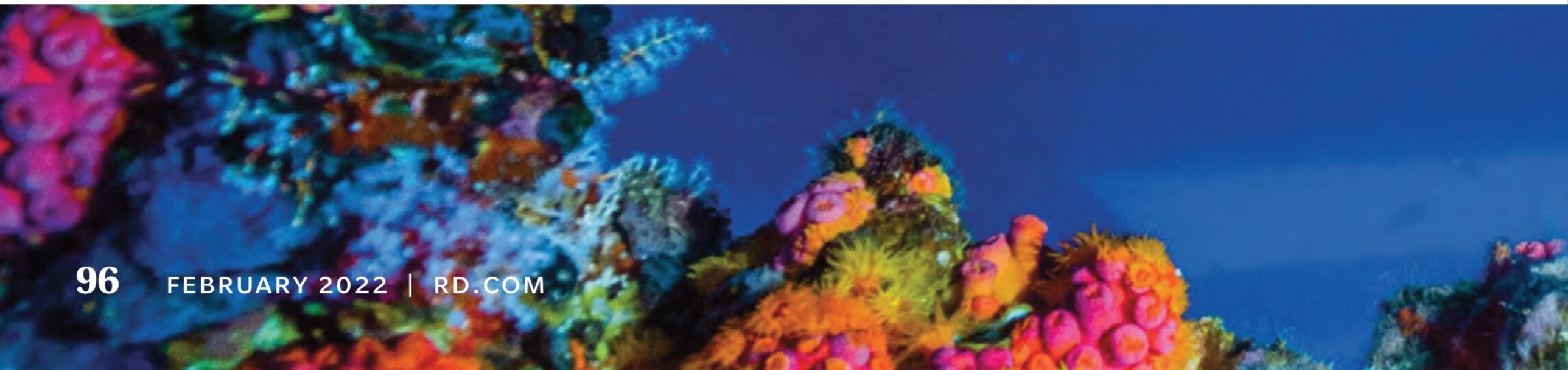
Today, the superintendent of Flower Garden Banks National Marine Sanctuary receives guidance from a group of 16 voting members as well as six nonvoting representatives from government agencies, all based in Texas and Louisiana. Called the Sanctuary Advisory Council, the group was established in 2005 by the U.S. Office of National Marine Sanctuaries. This council represents a disparate collection of stakeholders from the oil and gas industry, the diving community, recreational and commercial fishers, conservation groups, educators, and academic researchers.

In 2007 the council created a boundary expansion working group to explore whether it should recommend increasing the size of the sanctuary. The working group's chair was a tall, bespectacled Houstonian named Clint Moore.

Moore wasn't the first person you'd have in mind to steer a group charged with expanding environmental protections in an area rich in petroleum. As an oil and gas geologist at Diamond Shamrock, he became one of the first to drill in offshore salt layers. Later, with partners from Anadarko Petroleum, he cofounded the exploration company GulfSlope Energy, which continued to discover fossil fuels offshore.

A lifelong conservative, Moore served as a Texas delegate to the Republican National Convention in every election from 1996 to 2016. But Moore had a life-changing experience at Flower Garden Banks. During a diving trip about 30 years ago, a manta ray approached him. It behaved, he later said, like a dog looking for attention. Afterward, he traveled the world to dive and swim with mantas, participating in conservation and protection efforts in Mexico, the Maldives, and Micronesia. Knowing that Flower Garden Banks is home to both species of manta rays and is a critical habitat for juvenile mantas, Moore was committed to ensuring the safety of Flower Garden Banks.

In 2016 the expansion group discussed five options given by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), which ranged from keeping boundaries status quo to increasing the protected area about seventeenfold to encompass



sites scattered throughout the Gulf of Mexico all the way to the Florida border with Alabama. The council finally came to an agreement in 2018, and in 2020 NOAA announced that it was officially asking Congress to approve a plan that would triple the size of Flower Garden Banks to about 160 square miles.

Although the enlargement was not as big as the sanctuary staff had hoped for, 14 new areas—including Bright Bank, named after the early explorer—would gain the protections of a national marine sanctuary.

Ruth Perry, an oceanographer who works for Shell, represents oil and gas interests on the Sanctuary Advisory Council. She points out that the expansion process persisted through Democratic and Republican administrations (those of Barack Obama and Donald Trump) then went into effect under Joe Biden on March 22, 2021.

"These processes span election cycles, and there are all kinds of reasons they fail," she says. "But to get it through in a bipartisan manner—everybody compromising and reaching consensus—it's really incredible."

Steve Gittings, the first manager of Flower Garden Banks, who now works in the NOAA Office of National Marine Sanctuaries in Washington, DC, reflects on the compromise. "There was a lot of lively debate back and forth, push and pull. All that happened in a pretty productive way, I think. The sanctuary's ultimate boundaries are pretty limited to the banks themselves and not a lot of buffer areas around the banks, which doesn't make some people happy and makes other people plenty happy."

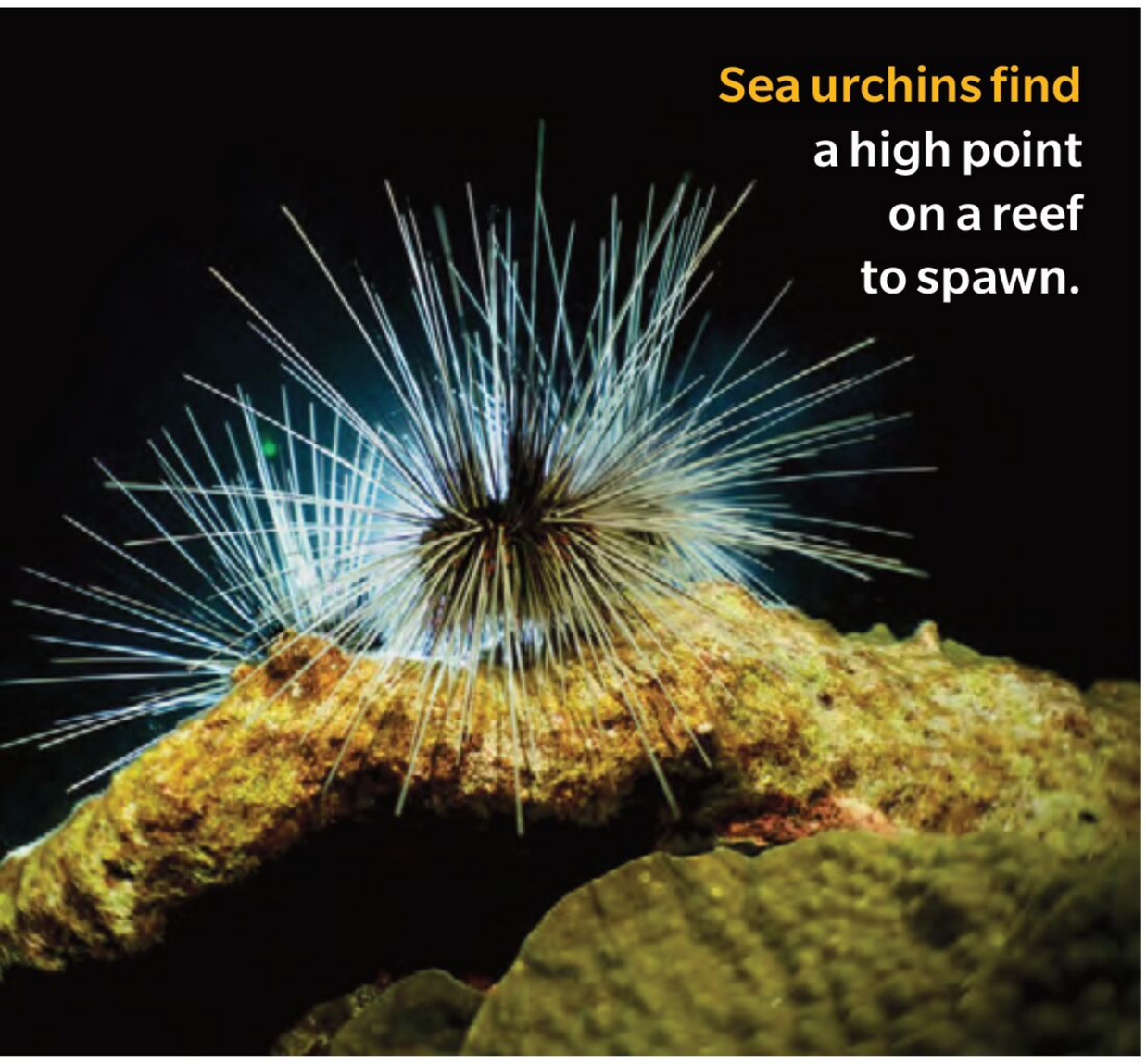
"WE ARE AMERICAN AND WE CAN DISAGREE. BUT THE SANCTUARY—THAT WE COULD AGREE ON."

He adds, "Would I have liked to see bigger buffers, as a conservationist? No question about it. But I came away pretty happy with the boundaries of the sanctuary."

ACCORDING TO A RECENT STUDY, coral is moving toward extinction more rapidly than any other animal category, including birds, mammals, and reptiles. Out of the seven seas, the North Atlantic, of which the Gulf of Mexico is considered a part, is among the most



stressed by overexploitation. That places Flower Garden Banks coral in what should be a precarious situation. And yet the coral in West Flower Garden Bank is even healthier than in the 1970s, increasing from covering about 50 percent of the sea floor then to 60 percent in 2019. Meanwhile, in the Florida Keys, the area of sea floor



Sea urchins find a high point on a reef to spawn.

covered by stony coral has decreased to just 2 percent. That discrepancy can make us feel grateful that Flower Garden Banks is thriving, but it also reminds us that the threats to it, and to all other coral environments, are rising.

Chief among those threats is one aimed at the solar-powered partnership between coral and algae. For reasons that are still the focus of intense research, when temperatures rise, the algal-coral partnership dissolves. This process is called bleaching. Without the pigmented algae, you can see through the clear coral tissue to its bone-white skeleton. If the water cools, the coral-algae relationship can be reestablished. But if the heat persists, the coral, deprived of its major energy source, starves to death.

Scientists predict that if nothing is done to curb climate change, the world's reefs will be in critical condition just a generation from now. As coral reefs are home to a quarter of all marine species, their decline threatens the livelihoods and food sources of millions of people. And because reefs are living barriers that disperse as much as 97 percent of the energy of ocean waves, their demise increases the vulnerability of coastlines to ever-more-intense storms.

Rising temperatures aren't the only threat. In 2016 a swath of coral on East Flower Garden Bank died when it was smothered by low-oxygen water that possibly originated in heavy spring rainfall. As stronger storms become more frequent, even coral on distant salt domes might not be safe.

What's more, a beast of a threat lurks nearby. In 2014 a new coral disease struck near Miami. Affected colonies' tissues melted away in sheets. Unlike most diseases, which infect just a few species, this one attacked about 20, mainly boulder and star corals. These same species, many of them centuries old, live in Flower Garden Banks. The pathogen is still unknown, though the disease has a

name, stony coral tissue loss disease, or SCTLD, usually pronounced as the deceptively whimsical "skittle-dee."

By 2020, SCTLD had spread from the Miami area to the tip of the Florida Keys. It jumped to coral throughout the Caribbean, including the eastern coast of the Yucatán. Sanctuary officials worry that anything from the Gulf loop current to a diver returning from a trip to an infected reef could transmit the disease to Flower Garden Banks. That might be catastrophic.

Before visiting Flower Garden Banks, I drove to Galveston to see the Moody Gardens aquarium and meet with Jake Emmert, the aquarium's dive safety officer and vice chair of the Sanctuary Advisory Council. I followed him to a room that looked like a hospital bay, with a biohazard notice posted on the door. Inside were several shallow tanks lined up like hospital beds. Resting on plastic supports were corals rescued from Florida ahead of the onslaught of SCTLD.

When asked whether they were planning to rescue coral from Flower Garden Banks if SCTLD arrived, Emmert nodded somberly. "We're already talking about it."

REACHING THE ROCKY REEF as I swam among the coral, I narrowed my focus. Bossy blennies, propped on their front fins atop the limestone, stared back at me with big, dark eyes. A stingray at least four feet across glided into my peripheral vision. None of the nearby divers with cameras noticed. I kept her to myself for a few moments. Then I whistle-hummed through my regulator to catch the others' attention so they could capture her grace on film.

In the weeks after my journey into Flower Garden Banks, the image that kept returning to me wasn't the gentle stingray, glowing ostracods, or even spawning urchins. It was the margins marking the turf battles between the massive colonies of coral, and how they signal a healthy reef.

Clint Moore passed away in 2019. Scott Hickman, who represents the commercial fishing industry on the Sanctuary Advisory Council, became its chair and saw the expansion process to completion. After my diving trip, I reached out to Hickman. We talked about fishing, oil platforms, biodiversity, and pollution. The conversation turned to the value of compromise—so unfashionable these days, and so essential to the expansion of the Flower Garden Banks sanctuary.

We also talked about Moore's legacy and his key role in the sanctuary's enhancement. "He loved Flower Garden Banks," Hickman told me. "He was a brilliant geologist and a hard-core conservative. We didn't always agree on political things, and that's OK because we are American and we can disagree. But the sanctuary—that we could agree on." R

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DRAMA IN REAL LIFE

SWEPT AWAY

For the parents of the bride, fear replaces happiness as a raging river scoops up their car on the way to the wedding

BY *Simon Hemelryk*

ILLUSTRATIONS BY *Steven P. Hughes*

My Mallorca Miracle

Marjon van Eijk was excited. The 57-year-old from the Netherlands had just landed on the island of Mallorca with her family for the wedding of her daughter Iris van Eijk. It was a day she'd dreamed about.

The intimate ceremony was taking place the next day, October 10, 2018. Twenty-one guests were planning to gather at a stunning villa in the hills near the picturesque town of Sant Llorenç des Cardassar, Spain, just under an hour's drive from the airport.

"I can't wait for the barbecue tonight, never mind the wedding," Marjon told her mother, Bets Kasiu.

Kasiu was a sharp, warm-hearted 84-year-old, but she wasn't in the best of health. A year earlier, she had had emergency surgery on a perforated intestine and now wore a colostomy bag. Hip problems meant she had to walk with crutches. But she was thrilled to be attending her granddaughter's wedding in such a beautiful setting. She also felt comforted by the fact that the family had brought along a nurse, Marjon Theunissen, to help her.

The three women and van Eijk's husband, Pieterjan van Eijk, walked out of the airport at around 6 p.m. and into a rental car. Iris and her fiancé, Coen Vlothuizen, were waiting at the property, thrilled to share such a magical event with the ones they loved.

On the road to Sant Llorenç, the family gazed at Mallorca's rugged countryside, with its rolling, rocky slopes peppered by wispy grasses and low green trees. As they crossed the hilly landscape, the sun had gone down and rain was falling heavily. But that didn't detract from the beauty of the island, off Spain's eastern coast. They chatted happily. Pieterjan, a quiet historian, kept them amused with witty observations from the driver's seat.

They had no inkling that the rainfall—more than nine inches would

fall that day—had already reached dangerous levels.

As they drove beyond the town of Sant Llorenç and up the winding road about half a mile into the hills, the rain came down harder and the sky grew darker. They were approaching a bridge over what was normally a small stream when, without warning, a wave of dirty, fast-moving water washed over the top of it. Within seconds, the little white car went sliding into the now-raging river and surged down the hillside.

It all happened so quickly that the people inside the car were too shocked to scream. As the car lurched and spun through the water, its roof scraping the underside of a couple of bridges, they clutched the seats and doors in numb disbelief.

The flood carried the car back through Sant Llorenç, which was now engulfed by several feet of water. On and on the vehicle went, a few hundred yards south of the town where, finally, it caught on a submerged object in the middle of the torrent.

Marjon, the mother of the bride, felt water swilling round her feet and looked down. Muddy brown floodwater was pouring into the car and rising quickly. Sitting in the backseat with her mother's nurse, she knew they all had to get out quickly before the waters rose too high in the car and they drowned.

Marjon was small but deceptively strong. Forcing the back door open, she jumped into the chest-high water. Theunissen, the nurse, followed. Marjon grabbed the front door handle and tried to open the door to reach Pieterjan and Kasiu in the front seat, but the water pressure on the door was too much.

THE CAR LURCHED THROUGH THE WATER, ITS ROOF SCRAPING THE UNDERSIDE OF BRIDGES.

Suddenly the rising, churning water flipped the car onto its roof, leaving Pieterjan and his mother-in-law hanging in their seat belts, seconds away from being submerged. This is the end, he thought.

But then, just as suddenly, another rush of water flipped the car right side up again. Braced against the current, Marjon got a grip on a back door handle and, using all her strength, pulled the door open. She hauled her husband and mother, one at a time, between the two front seats and out of the vehicle, coughing and sputtering. But the danger was far from over.

The four of them clung to the back of the car as the waters rushed over them. They were being battered by debris, including branches and pieces



of metal. The sky was completely dark, illuminated only by occasional flashes of lightning, as the rain continued to pelt down. The flooded stream was now more than 80 yards across; they were trapped almost in the middle.

Pieterjan yelled for help. But his wife was sure it was hopeless. I don't think anyone can even see us, let alone hear us, she thought. We don't stand a chance.

Gento Galmés stared out of the window of his small summer home. The 57-year-old, an administrator for the local city government, had just come home after making a harrowing one-mile drive from Sant Llorenç through rain so severe that it was almost impossible to see. The narrow, usually empty stream 100 yards or so away had surged over its banks, swamping the rocky ground toward his property.

He'd come to pick up his daughter, Margalida Galmés, 24, who was staying at the house, intending to return to his home in Sant Llorenç, where his wife was. But the floodwaters forced him to stay put with his daughter.

At around the same time, his neighbor Miquel Montoro stepped out of the door of his summer house. It was now well past 7 p.m. and dark, but during the frequent flashes of lightning, Montoro could make out 10 or more cars in the floodwaters. Suddenly, just above the roar of the water, he heard screams coming from a white car 40 yards or so out into the raging stream.

Galmés heard the screams, too, and rushed out to join his neighbor.

"We've got to do something," he told Montoro.

Montoro agreed. "If we don't try, we might hear those screams for the rest of our lives," he said.

Montoro ran to his van and shone its headlights across the water toward the car so they could get a better idea of what they were facing. But even with the headlights, they still couldn't really see any details—not even how many people they might need to rescue.

What they could see was how far they would have to go into the fast-flowing waters. Montoro grabbed a



long length of rope from his house and the two men tied themselves together like mountain climbers: Montoro, a strong 47-year-old blacksmith, would be the anchor, feeding Galmés the line as the latter pushed through the flood. Galmés, like his neighbor, had wound the rope around his middle but with enough remaining free so he could throw the loose end to those needing rescue.

They started into the water and toward the car. The stranded family spotted the van's headlights and screamed even louder for help. Along with the occasional flash of lightning, their cries were Montoro and Galmés's only real guide as to exactly where they were.

The two men could feel themselves sinking into churning mud but, according to plan, Montoro stood firm while Galmés fought the current to struggle ahead. Galmés was tough, but at barely five feet tall, he was soon chest-deep in the water.

"Don't go any farther!" Montoro shouted. "The current will take you." But Galmés ignored his friend and kept fighting the current.

Refrigerators, wooden pallets, and even whole trees cascaded by on either side of him. A gas cylinder smashed into Montoro's ribs. Both men knew that something bigger could send them to their deaths, but they were driven by pure adrenaline.

It took Galmés ten minutes to get within ten yards of the car. He could make out four people clinging to the back. They pleaded with him for help in what little Spanish they knew: "*Ayuda! Ayuda!*" "Help! Help!"

Bracing himself, Galmés threw the end of the rope toward the car, hoping someone would be able to grab hold. But it always landed just out of reach. After several attempts, Pieterjan, who was closest, caught the rope. Galmés gestured to him to tie it around his waist, then Galmés steadied himself as he pulled the Dutchman toward him.

Pieterjan stumbled on. Weighed down by a heavy jacket, he lost his balance and plunged under the water. Spitting out water, he struggled back to his feet and Galmés hauled on the



rope until he was close enough for Pieterjan to fling his arms around him like an octopus. Worried that Pieterjan would drag them both under, Galmés, with Montoro pulling on the rope, got him to safety quickly. They hoped that the tall 60-year-old might be able to help rescue the others, but Pieterjan was dazed and shaking with shock.

Galmés turned his efforts back to the three people still clinging to the car. After bringing Kasiu's nurse to safety, he went back for Marjon and her mother.

Suddenly, before anyone could stop her, Marjon dived below the surface and back into the car to grab her mother's medications. It was a foolish gambit, but she reemerged seconds later with the meds. She tied the rope around her waist, then grabbed hold of her mother.

With Galmés pulling, the two women slowly made their way toward him, Marjon straining to hold Kasiu aloft through water that was almost up to her neck. They made it safely to Galmés. Then, with Montoro heaving on the rope, they pushed through the rushing waters toward shore. But just as they reached shallower water, Kasiu lost her balance and fell to her knees, sinking into the mud. Galmés and Montoro tried to lift her but couldn't.

Desperate, Montoro untied himself and rushed to get a wheelbarrow. He and Galmés lifted Kasiu just enough to get her into it. With one man pulling and the other pushing the wheelbarrow, Montoro and Galmés dragged her through the sopping ground to dry land.

The rescued Dutch family, the nurse, and Galmés gathered in Montoro's house. The Spaniards gave them

THE MEN GOT KASIU INTO THE WHEELBARROW, THEN DRAGGED HER TO DRY LAND.

blankets and found dry clothes for them to put on.

Theunissen and Margalida, Galmés's daughter, who was also a nurse, tended to Kasiu. She was shivering and weak. She needed to get to a hospital. But with no cell signal, there was no way of calling an ambulance. Besides, the street leading up to the main road to Sant Llorenç had been washed away.

Montoro had no option but to try to restore the road himself, using his tractor. After an hour or so it was passable, and the Spaniards took the family up to a roundabout where local police were directing traffic around blocked roads. The Dutch group was taken to a shelter. Kasiu was rushed to a hospital, where she was checked over and released the following day.

Later that evening, Galmés drove to Sant Llorenç to reunite with his wife. The town looked as if an earthquake had hit it. Debris filled the streets and cars were piled on top of one another.

Back at his main house, a tired Montoro found his partner and friends glued to news reports and frantically contacting loved ones.

"I'm going to have a shower," Montoro said matter-of-factly as he walked to the bathroom. "I've just rescued four people."

Thirteen people lost their lives that day, during what was one of Mallorca's worst flash floods in memory.

In June 2019, King Felipe VI presented Galmés and Montoro with the Spanish Order of Civil Merit. In August of that year, in Sant Llorenç's town hall with the Dutch family looking on, the Dutch ambassador awarded the two men with the *Erepenning Yoor Menslievend Hulpbetoon* (Medal of Honor for Humanitarian Aid).

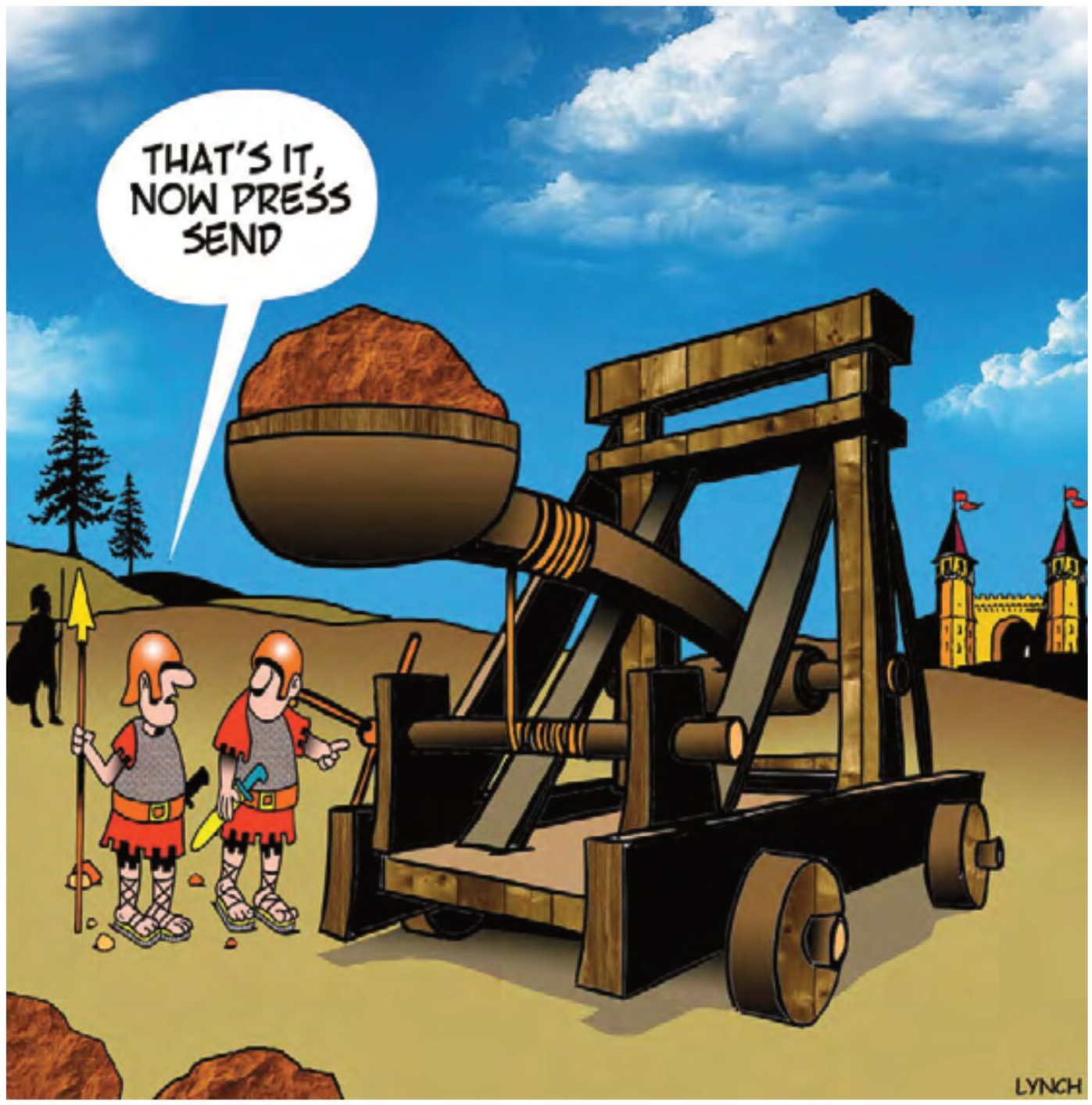
Iris and Coen were married in a simple ceremony in the Netherlands. R

Seatmates

Is nostalgia the key to a lasting marriage? British politician Tony Benn had known Caroline DeCamp only nine days when he proposed to her on a park bench in Oxford. After she said yes, Benn bought the bench and put it in their garden. They were married for 51 years.

RUSSIAN_BAGEL ON REDDIT.COM

HUMOR *in* UNIFORM



We were hanging out in the lounge of our naval supply ship when the executive officer walked in. He took one look at the pilot sitting atop a table and blew a gasket.

"Don't sit on the table!" he barked. "Is that what you do at home?"

"No, sir," said the pilot calmly. "But, then, we don't land helicopters on our roof, either."

—BRIAN LAVALLEY
North Branch, Michigan

During my teens, I was a squad leader at a military summer camp. We were required to wear our full uniform at all times, with no exceptions and no accessories or makeup allowed. One day as I inspected my team, I noticed that one of the female campers had exceptionally dark eyelids.

"Are you wearing eyeliner?" I asked.

"No!" she said defensively. Then, after a slight pause, "Why? Is it running?"

—ASHLEY HEAD
Arlington Heights, Illinois

Military Truisms:

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✦ Army food: the spoils of war

✦ If you see a bomb disposal technician running, try to keep up with him.

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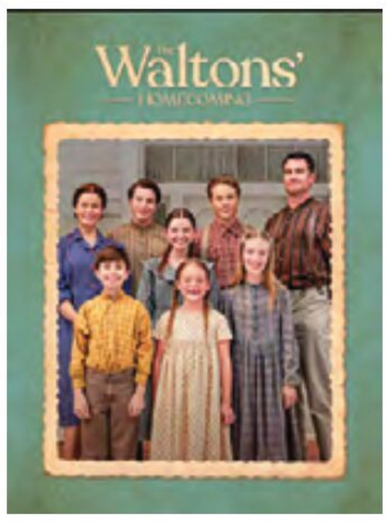
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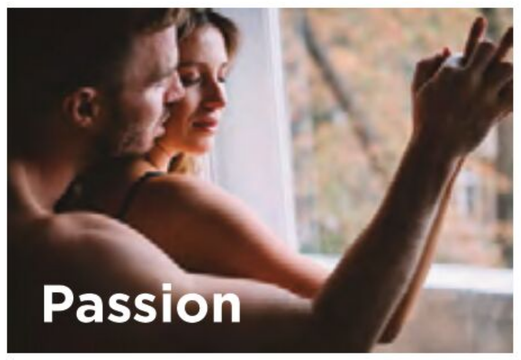
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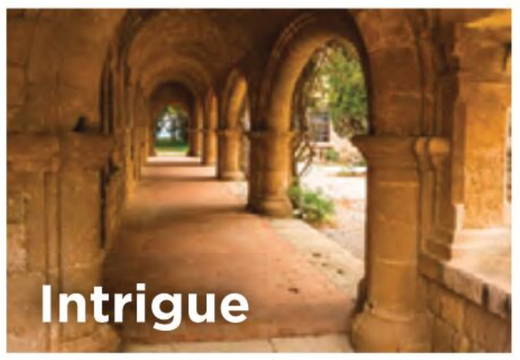
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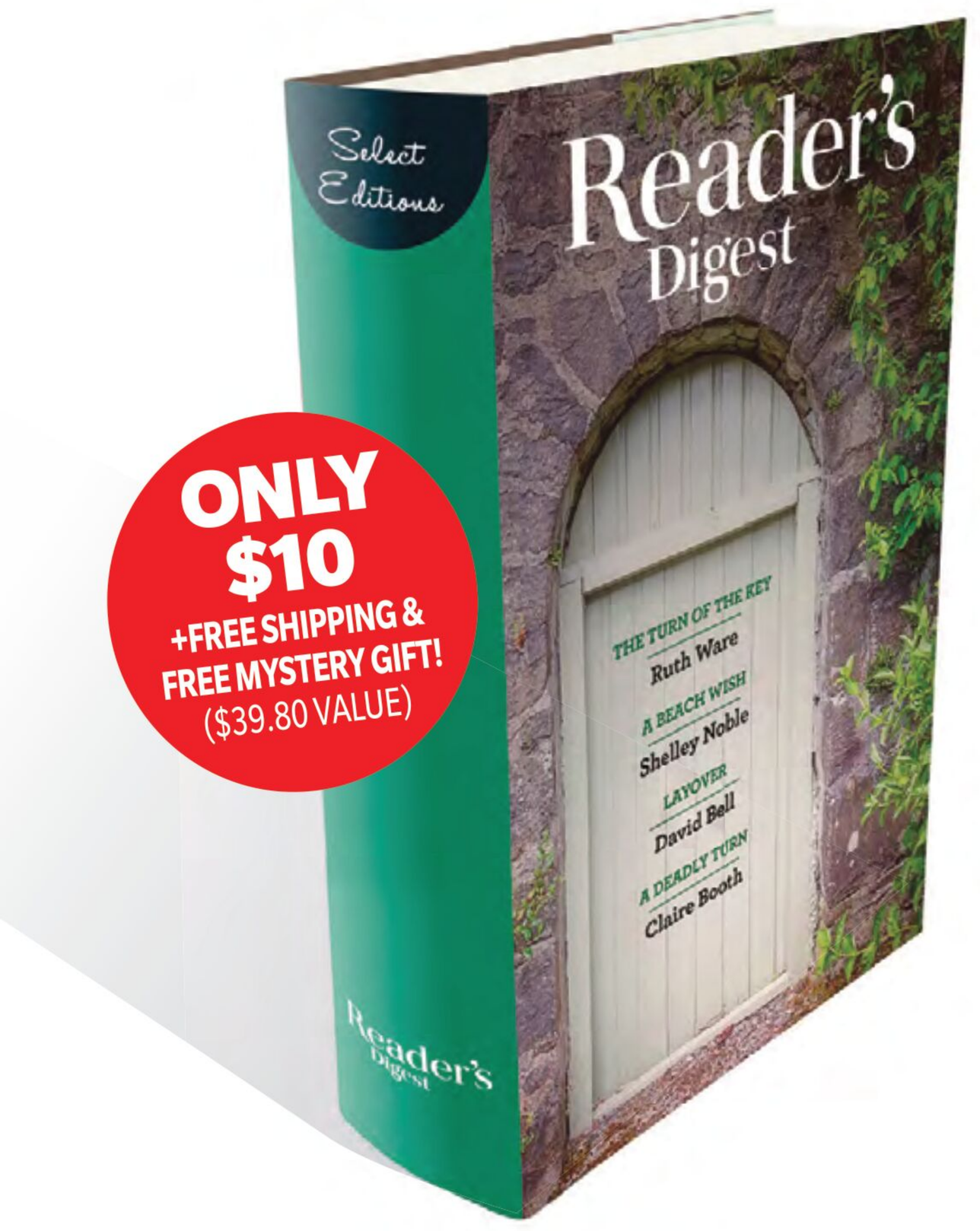
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WORD POWER

To celebrate our centennial, the centerpiece of this quiz is *cent*, from the Latin *centum*—think *centimeter*, *century*, or *centipede*—which often means "one hundred." But don't get complacent; this letter combo also turns up in words that have nothing to do with hundred. Turn to the next page for answers.

BY *Sarah Chassé*

1. beneficent *adj.*
(buh-'neh-fih-sent)
A charitable
B all-powerful
C blissful

2. centaur *n.*
('sen-tor)
A ancient sculpture
B king's adviser
C mythological creature

3. accentuate *v.*
(ak-'sent-shoo-wayt)
A make shorter
B highlight
C mispronounce

4. centigrade *adj.*
('sent-tih-grayd)
A Fahrenheit
B Kelvin
C Celsius

5. nascent *adj.*
('nay-sent)
A emerging
B fragrant
C bankrupt

6. epicenter *n.*
('eh-pih-sen-ter)
A brain stem
B exact opposite
C focal point

7. effervescent *adj.*
(eh-fer-'veh-sent)
A unimportant
B acidic
C high-spirited

8. incentivize *v.*
(in-'sen-tih-vyz)
A enrage
B motivate
C sell for profit

9. acquiescent *adj.*
(ak-wee-'eh-sent)
A obedient
B greedy
C shimmering

10. licentious *adj.*
(ly-'sent-shuss)
A disputed
B lewd
C infested

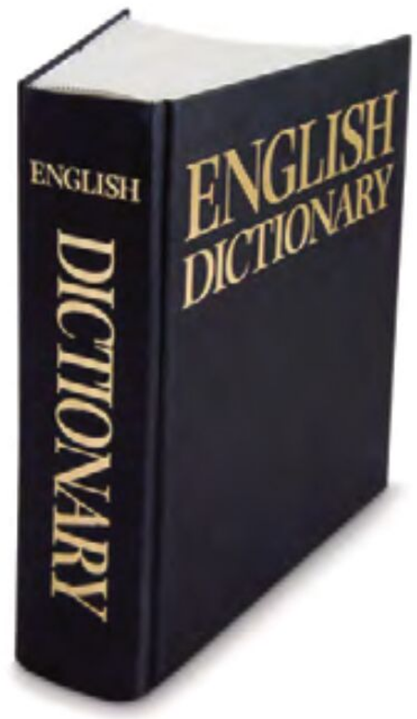
11. docent *n.*
('doh-sent)
A midwife
B nobleman
C tour guide

12. eccentric *adj.*
(ek-'sen-trik)
A offbeat
B selfish
C assorted

13. florescent *adj.*
(flo-'reh-sent)
A feminine
B flowering
C fermented

14. centrifuge *n.*
('sen-truh-fyooj)
A spinning machine
B bomb shelter
C hurricane's eye

15. reticent *adj.*
('reh-tih-sent)
A penny-pinching
B virtuous
C silent



Vintage Vocabulary

Language evolves, and new words are coined every year. So which words entered the vernacular in 1922, the year *RD* first landed in mailboxes? Some surprisingly modern ones, according to Merriam-Webster: *deep-fry, die-hard, down-to-earth, French kiss,* and *robot*. One that didn't stand the test of time is *nice-nelly,* describing a prudish or straitlaced person. What words will be coined in 2022, and will they have staying power? Check back in another 100 years!

Word Power ANSWERS

1. beneficent
(A) *charitable*
A beneficent person might volunteer at a food pantry or homeless shelter.

2. centaur
(C) *mythological creature*
According to ancient Greek lore, the centaur was half-man, half-horse.

3. accentuate
(B) *highlight*
Does this dress accentuate my waist?

4. centigrade **(C)** *Celsius*
Using the centigrade temperature scale, water boils at 100 degrees.

5. nascent **(A)** *emerging*
The nascent tech company put three major competitors out of business in its first year.

6. epicenter
(C) *focal point*
Last month's earthquake was so massive, it shook towns more than 50 miles from its epicenter.

7. effervescent
(C) *high-spirited*
With his effervescent personality, Dante is always the life of the party.

8. incentivize
(B) *motivate*
After months of remote work during the pandemic, how will employers incentivize people to return to the office?

9. acquiescent
(A) *obedient*
We're hoping a good dog trainer can turn Fido into a more acquiescent pup!

10. licentious **(B)** *lewd*
"I like the play, but it's a bit too licentious for high school actors," the drama teacher said.

11. docent **(C)** *tour guide*
"This painting is from Picasso's famous blue period," the docent said.

12. eccentric **(A)** *offbeat*
Clara's outfits are an eccentric mix of neon patterns, leather jackets, and lacy headbands.

13. florescent
(B) *flowering*
Luisa's garden is so florescent, you can barely see her house from the street.

14. centrifuge
(A) *spinning machine*
Many beekeepers use a centrifuge to extract honey from honeycombs.

15. reticent **(C)** *silent.*
Milo is a chatterbox, but his wife is more reticent.

Vocabulary Ratings

9 & BELOW: decent
10–12: on the ascent
13–15: magnificent

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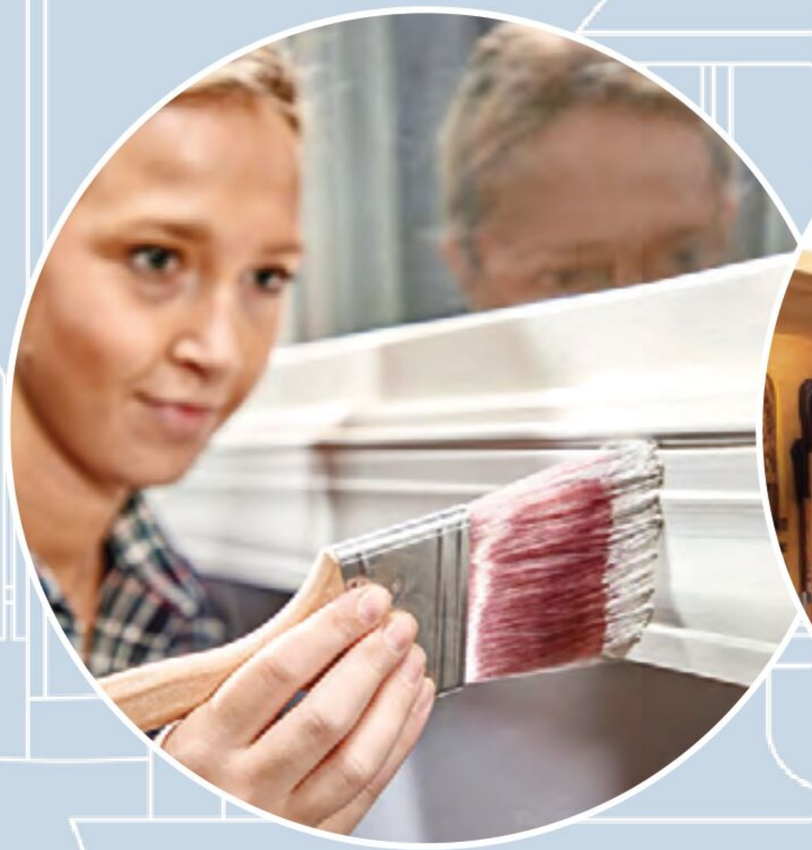


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Winner

Ken quickly discovered the one drawback to practicing Brahms's "Lullaby."

—DIANE SILBERNAGEL
Succasunna, New Jersey

Runners-Up

"Don't you just hate it when you get a song stuck in your head?"

—PAM ELL
Happy Valley, Oregon

Harold collapsed after a record finish of Chopin's "Minute Waltz" in 57.3 seconds.

—JON SCHONBLOM
Dallas, Oregon



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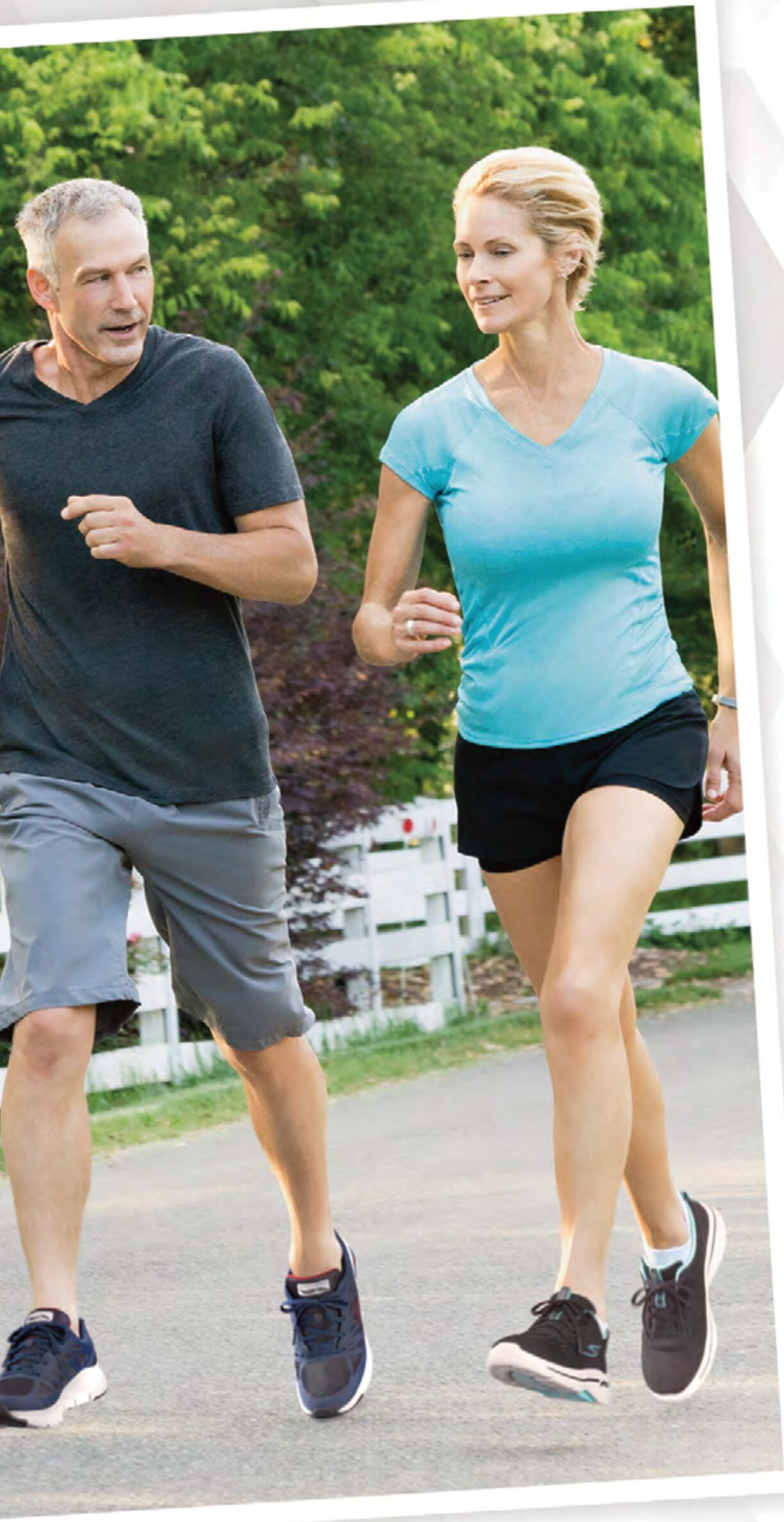
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