

# AUSTRALIA Reader's Digest

**RD  
TALKS**  
OUR STORIES  
AS PODCASTS

**PHYSIO  
OR PILLS?**  
No Simple  
Choice

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## Weird and Wonderful Inventions

*These innovations  
will blow your mind!*

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My Year  
of Saying  
**THANK YOU**

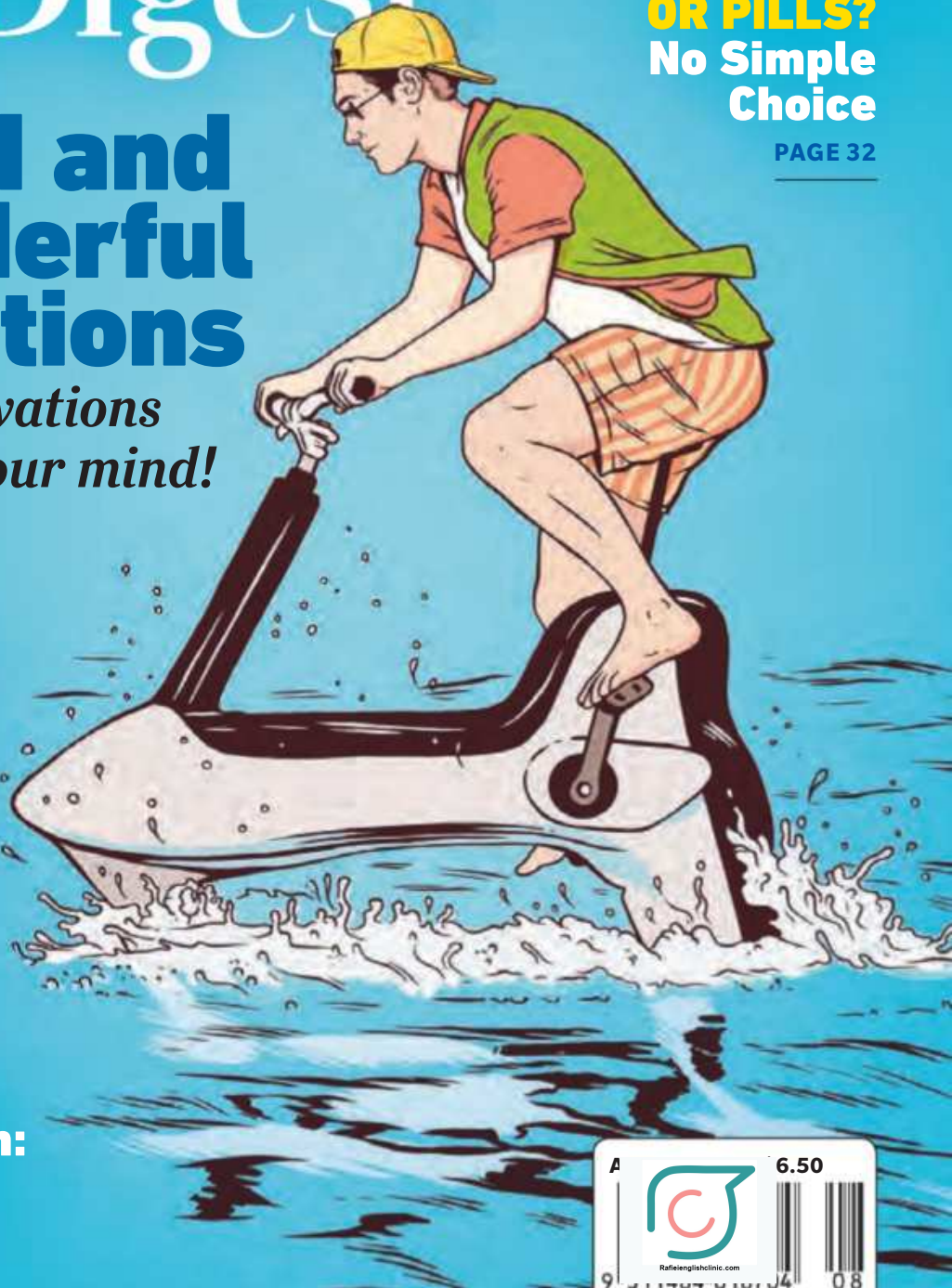
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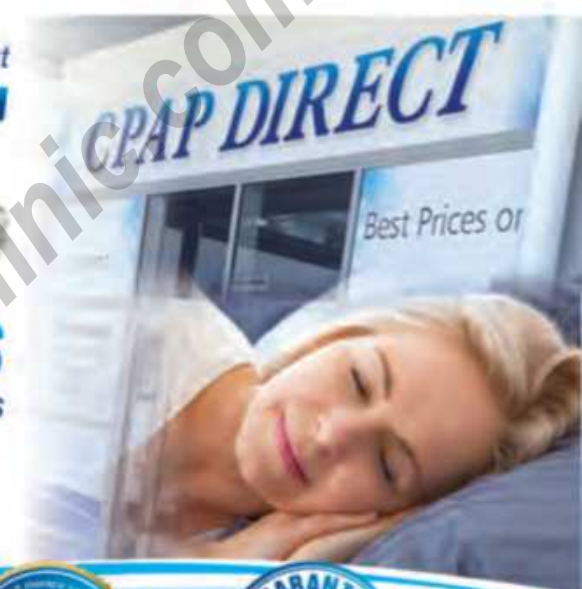
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## EDITOR'S NOTE

# *Paying It Forward*

**THE POSITIVE BENEFITS OF GIVING BACK**, returning a favour and paying it forward are values Reader's Digest celebrates. Repaying a good deed with kindness to others can be a powerful force. It's something our hero in this month's Drama in Real Life, 'Nature's Deadly Venom' (page 38) by Diane Godley, proved was possible even after the most harrowing of experiences. Not many victims of a deadly funnel-web spider bite would want to see another of the little creatures ever again. Not so Adrian Main, who saw the need to help scientists continue producing the life-saving antivenom that spared him from death. Today, he regularly ventures out to collect funnel-web spiders and delivers them, unharmed, to be milked to create future antivenom. The capacity to give back in this way has helped Adrian make sense of his ordeal – and being able to turn something unfortunate into good has helped his recovery.

With the flow of everyday life slowly resuming to a steady pace, the world we now find ourselves in has changed. Even if your slice of the world hasn't changed too much, then most likely your perception of it has. Maybe, like Gina Hamadey, the author of 'My Thank You Year' (page 26), you've experienced a change of heart about a few things, and come to value the small things, which Gina proves, really matter.

This month's issue has plenty of helpful advice ('Watch What You Eat', page 104), amazing adventures ('A Message in a Bottle', page 81) and a few good laughs ('Phat Phil's Road to Slim', page 98). There's plenty of great reading guaranteed to entertain the entire family.

*Louise*

LOUISE WATERSON  
Editor-in-Chief



# AUSTRALIA Reader's Digest

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## LETTERS

### *Reader's Comments and Opinions*

#### **Healing Ideas to Heed**

**It is no wonder that Reader's Digest is 'the world's best loved magazine'. '18 Foods Proven to Heal' (February) sure has educated this old girl – many of us readers have medical conditions and I am heeding every wise word.**

**The three articles in 'News Worth Sharing' had me shedding a sentimental tear as kindness really changes the world.**

LORRAINE POINTON



#### **Inside the Minds of Dogs**

I was so pleased to read that a dog has a mind that is equivalent to a human aged between two and two-and-a-half-years ('What Pets Want You to Know', June). I have been describing my dog as being a cheeky two year old for the last seven years.

I thought it was my 'bad training' and soft touch that enabled her convenient disobedience.

Thankfully, it seems that is just the way dogs are!

ARI HUDSON

#### **Joys of Walking**

'The Walking Cure' (June) reminded me of various stages of my life linked with this exercise. Hiking during my teenage years in the Macedon Ranges and Hanging Rock were wonderful times in the Australian bush.

Three years of working and walking on a mountainous island in Vanuatu gave me a deep appreciation of its tropical abundance.

Long corridors and flights of

**Let us know if you are moved – or provoked – by any item in the magazine, share your thoughts. See page 8 for how to join the discussion.**



stairs needed rapid walking to reach each classroom in time to teach the next lesson back in Melbourne. Later, I walked our grandchildren to and from school. Yes, walking is wonderful.

EULALIE HOLMAN

### More About Foolscap Origins

The Editor’s Note (June) regarding the origin of the word foolscap requires elaboration. Foolscap was a traditional paper size (most commonly 216 x 343 mm) used in Europe and the Commonwealth before the adoption of the international standard of A4 paper. In North America, foolscap is lined, legal-size paper. In South American countries, it is called *oficio* because it was used for official documents.

SYED RIFAQUAT ALI

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### SPOT ON

We asked you to think up a funny caption to this photo.

He heard me say the office is a jungle!

MARY VICKERS

It won’t take us long to get him up to speed.

VINCENT BEAUMONT

They did say we could bring our pets to work!

PATRICIA LORD

Job well done. We have devoured the competition.

SATISH NAIR

Congratulations to this month’s winner, Patricia Lord.



### CAPTION CONTEST

Come up with the funniest caption for the above photo and you could win

\$100. To enter, email

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or see details on page 8.

### Revisiting Japan

Rosalind Ho's 'A Life Immersed' (My Story, June) was the first article I read when I opened the latest copy of Reader's Digest. Sipping a cup of freshly brewed matcha tea in the comfort of my living room and reading about her experiences reminded me of my own, and I was transported back to the times I visited Japan.

I have fond memories of the onsen bath I took on a freezing evening in Hokkaido and the many new things I learnt in Japan.

NELLY OH

### Soothing Sounds

I can't imagine life without music ('The Healing Power of Music', June). It has always been there when I have needed it the most and is the best medicine of all.

MICHAEL WOUTERS

### Timely Advice on Epilepsy

'The Many Faces of Epilepsy' (Health, March) was an article that hit close to home. My mother, who has three to four epileptic seizures each year, had just suffered another one the week before.

Reading about sleep deprivation, stress and managing triggers has given us much needed assurance that practical measures can be taken. My father has always suspected it was to do with rest and not getting enough sleep. Thank you for the insightful article.

LIZAMARIA RAPHAEL PARRIKAL



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## NEWS WORTH SHARING



### Stowaway Tabby Cat Receives the Goodwill of Strangers

**T**abby cat P-Puss used up at least one life when she set off on a 2500-kilometre adventure around Queensland in June this year. P-Puss, who loves to climb into open cars, jumped into a removal truck being packed to move neighbours to Brisbane – 1200 kilometres away from her Longreach home. Her owner, Georgia Whip, thought it strange that P-Puss didn't come in on that cold Friday evening but when she missed breakfast the next morning, her suspicions grew.

Although the removalists initially said that there was no sign of the cat in their load, Georgia received a call on Sunday afternoon to say that P-Puss had been found. But the tabby was not

ready to head home yet. Half an hour later, Georgia was informed that P-Puss had escaped from the container and was loose in the Brisbane depot.

While Georgia was in panic mode, P-Puss was busy tripping motion sensors and setting off warehouse alarms. When this continued into a second night, security staff took on the mission of catching her. A few hours of cat and mouse ensued with the tabby finally tempted out with a can of tuna. President of Central Queensland Animal Society Loz Batley arranged P-Puss's passage to Emerald through a network of animal lovers, where she was then passed on to a friend for the last leg along the Capricorn Highway – and home to a grateful Georgia.

COMPILED BY VICTORIA POLZOT

## Covid-19 Lockdowns Lower Global Carbon Emissions

**A** prediction by the WMO (World Meteorological Organisation) that global carbon emissions would fall by up to six per cent because of Covid-19 may have been grossly underestimated.

A global study of 69 countries found daily emissions had declined by an estimated 17 per cent between

January and April 2020, compared with 2019 daily averages, to levels last observed in 2006. It's a drop that scientists believe could be the largest in recorded history.

"Globally, we haven't seen a drop this big ever, and at the yearly level, you would have to go back to World War II," said the study's lead author Corinne Le

Quéré, a professor of climate change science at the University of East Anglia in the UK.

Fewer cars on the road and drastic changes to air travel and industrial activity are behind the decline, but whether these changes last depends on how the world responds when the pandemic ends.



## Being Audacious Can Make the World a Better Place

**A**udacious, a free programme run by New Zealand's Startup Dunedin, builds entrepreneurial skills and confidence in students at the University of Otago and Otago Polytechnic so that their enterprising ideas can be made a reality.



More than 50 per cent of Audacious projects are focused on sustainability or mental wellbeing. The programme, which has run for ten years, is behind businesses such as Globelet, which supplies ongoing reusable products for stadiums around Australia and New Zealand.

One aspiring entrepreneur is researching how to turn discarded shoes into high-end leather belts and wallets, while two others are developing an online resource so that teachers can share their lesson plans with those outside their immediate circles.



## MY STORY



# Elephant Perspective

*Revisiting these magnificent beasts was deeply cathartic*

BY JJ Rose

Back in 2008, my wife, four-year-old daughter and I signed up for an elephant riding experience near Luang Prabang in Laos. We met our living transports in a jungle camp. We fed the elephants bananas before saddling up and

heading off for a mildly adventurous trek. Being animal lovers, we enjoyed spending time with these regal and gentle giants.

The *mahouts* (elephant trainers) lived in a dingy and basic camp, but all were friendly, and the elephants didn't seem unhappy.

We'd convinced ourselves that the elephants barely felt the sharp hook the mahouts occasionally dug into their skulls as we rode. The elephants looked thin, but we thought it was just because of the season, or that they were exercised a lot and were really fit.

As a journalist, I had cause to do more research on these beautiful creatures after our trip and I

discovered things that made me uneasy about our tourist experience. What we didn't know was that those elephants were probably unhappy, hungry, and probably abused.

I felt angry and ashamed that we had played a part in this horrible theatre of mistreatment and I became determined to do something about it.

I learned that Asian elephants can grow up to six metres in length and weigh up to 5000 kilograms. In the wild, they live up to 70 years. They are highly evolved social animals and often live in herds of between 20 and 100 females and juveniles; males tend to live alone or in loose male groups when mature. A mature elephant will walk up to ten kilometres every day foraging for the 150 to 300 kilograms of food it needs. In any single day, elephants are on the move as much as 18 hours and generally only sleep a few hours.

Such needs are difficult for many tourism operators to meet. Instead, elephants are kept in small pens or otherwise fenced in, denied proper social interaction, fed poor and inadequate amounts of food, and are deprived exercise.

As life and family took over, my indignation dissipated and I forgot

about the tourist elephants of Luang Prabang for many years.

In 2019, however, I went back to Luang Prabang, determined to investigate the treatment of elephants in the tourism sector and to see if things had improved. I assumed things would be the same, but to my delight it appeared things had changed for the better. Eleven years earlier, there were signs along Sisavangvong Road – Luang Prabang's main tourist strip – inviting visitors to ride elephants. Now many were touting 'no ride' policies and promoting sustainable experiences. It seemed that the sector had actually made progress – at least at shopfront level.

I had come across a report by an animal rights group which identified the most humane elephant tourism operators. One was in Luang Prabang, so I tracked it down and signed on for the next available elephant experience.

This operator looks after eight adult elephants and one juvenile at a property just outside the Ban Xieng Lom village. Their charges consume most of their food roaming freely in the wild and their diets are supplemented (about one-third of the total daily intake) by a variety of local produce, 'treats' like pineapples and banana trees. Restrictive chains are banned during the day, but the elephants are apparently

---

JJ Rose has worked around the world in areas of social justice and human rights for almost three decades. He believes all species deserve rights and respect.

## READER'S DIGEST

sometimes chained at night for 'health' or 'welfare' reasons.

The day of my elephant experience it was raining heavily. We drove for about an hour – sloshing on muddy roads, through thatched villages with jungle crushing in from all sides – to get to our destination. At the camp, we stepped gingerly into motorised river rafts and crossed a seething, brown river to get to the elephant feeding area. The animals aren't rounded up for voyeuristic tourists – they come by choice. Unlucky visitors might not see any elephants or may have to walk some distance to find one. A few generally show up, however, to enjoy the juicy delights on offer.

Despite the horrible weather, two faithful grey beasts turned up to check us out and have a feed. There weren't any chains in sight, or any restraint on the animals' movement, other than the gentle nudging and grunts of their mahouts.

We were forewarned about elephant etiquette and behaviour, such as never approaching an elephant from the rear, or recognising that gently flapping ears is a sign of them being happy and relaxed, while ears out and still is quite the opposite.

We were allowed to mingle as the elephants munched through what looked like whole banana trees as thick as fence posts. To make the food manageable, the elephants

stomped on the trees, twisted them with their trunks and crunched on them – all the while eyeing us intently.

We went looking for others in the herd, while the two elephants we'd just fed plodded alongside us, walking through walls of rain and on tracks of red, slippery earth. Eventually, the humans in the group were turned back by the elements – a raging, uncrossable stream.

I loved the fact that the elephants were in control here. We had to go to them and, only if they chose, they came to us. It struck me this is how a wildlife experience should be. It should be up to us to make the effort and to work around creatures in their natural habitat.

While not all tour operators have such high standards, it is obvious that the last decade has brought significant improvements across the tourism sector – in the lives of elephants at least.

Having the opportunity to revisit what had become an emotional trigger point for me and to redress something I denied thinking about was deeply cathartic. For me, it brought an uncomfortable experience full circle. These beautiful animals deserve no less.

---

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## SMART ANIMALS

*These clever critters know when it's time to arrive – and leave*



### Echidna Escape

ANNE MARR

One Saturday evening, there was a knock at my door. My friend Jacqui was standing there holding a blood-stained towel wrapped around something. “I saw him being hit by a car and roll to the side of the road,” she said. “It’s an echidna, he may have lost a leg.”

Birds are my usual specialty. I know a lot about the local native varieties that live around the caravan park I manage. The Parks and Wildlife officers and tourists often drop off injured birds to me to nurture back to health, but I’d never handled an echidna, a mammal also known as a spiny anteater.

I took the bundle, carefully unwrapped him and, to my relief, saw that all four legs were intact. There was blood streaming from his nose. A few hours later, I arrived home from the local vet, armed with a small oxygen tank and mask attached to the echidna’s nose, who was nestled inside a cage.

The next morning, I removed the oxygen mask. He seemed alert and his condition was much improved. Luckily, we had an empty aviary in the garden, and inside it was a large

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bath. I figured the bath was the best place to keep him. I placed lots of leaf litter in the bottom of the bath for him to dig and bury himself in, as well as worms, grubs, slater beetles and a shallow dish of water.

When I checked on him the next day, all the leaf litter was piled up at one end of the bath and a large hole had been dug along the side of the aviary. There was no echidna. I eventually found him attempting an escape under our front gate. He was obviously ready to go home, so Jacqui and I drove to the spot where she'd found him and placed the cage on the ground, and watched as he happily waddled off.



## Surprise Breakfast Guest

LAURENCE ROBERT

It was another humid start to a mid-January day in Brisbane. I was at home sitting at my kitchen table surveying my few surviving pot plants through the open front

door while eating my muesli. As I was finishing my second spoonful, a magpie walked onto my patio. I coughed, which caught the magpie's attention. He turned towards me, cocking his head from side to side. "Good morning, magpie," I said.

It walked to my open door and stopped at the entrance, cocking its head as it looked up towards me. After a short time, it curiously entered the room, stopping to briefly examine each item as it walked past.

I returned to my breakfast, scooping a spoonful of muesli into my mouth. Noticing my action, the brazen bird flew up onto the table and stood looking up at me and my breakfast. Without warning, it picked out the largest raisin from my bowl and then stared beadily at me. *Are you laughing at me or thanking me?* I wondered, before letting out an amused "Hey!"

Startled, the magpie jumped to the floor with the raisin held firmly in its beak and hopped out the front door, before flapping its wings and flying away.

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# PETS

## Find Your Perfect Match

*Consider your lifestyle and needs when choosing a pet*

BY *Dr Katrina Warren*



**Our regular pet columnist, Dr Katrina Warren, is an established and trusted animal expert.**

**VETERINARIAN DR KATRINA WARREN** shares her advice about selecting the most appropriate pet.

**DOGS AND CATS** Both are undoubtedly the most popular pets and come in a wide choice of pure and cross breeds. There is an enormous array of sizes, energy levels, coat types and personalities. While the characteristics of many purebred animals can be reasonably predicted, all dogs and cats are individuals, so their behaviour can vary greatly. These factors mean it is important to choose carefully, thinking about your lifestyle and needs, now and into the future.

**MIX OF PEOPLE AND PETS** Consider whether you have children or elderly people in your home. Young children should always be supervised around dogs. Large and boisterous dogs generally don't tend to mix well with young children and the elderly, as the dogs have the potential to knock them over.

**SPACE** You must be certain you are permitted to keep a pet where you live, as some apartments do not allow dogs and cats. You need adequate space to keep a dog. While they can be kept primarily indoors, you need to be realistic, and choose an appropriate breed and plan how you will manage them. You must also be able to



keep a dog secure to prevent them from roaming. In some areas, this also applies to cats. If you plan to keep a dog or cat indoors, it's a good idea to select a breed or an individual that's calm and not very active.

**EXERCISE** Think carefully about how much daily exercise you can provide a dog and choose accordingly.

**GROOMING AND FEEDING** Coat length is particularly important as this will affect the impact of shedding in your home and determine how much grooming you will have to do. Cats are naturally exceptionally clean, but longer coated breeds are likely to require daily grooming, so you need to allow time for that activity. Likewise, medium- to long-coated dogs can require frequent brushing. Some dog breeds are non-shedding, but require professional

**Indoor rabbits are very sociable and can be trained to use a litter box**

clipping, which is an additional expense to consider. Keep in mind that larger dogs consume more food, so are more expensive to maintain.

**HOME ALONE** Dogs and cats are social animals and need company. Dogs that are left outside on their own all the time are more likely to become bored and a nuisance. If you're not going to be able to spend time with your dog or cat, you should consider an alternative pet, or perhaps no pet at all.

## DR KATRINA'S TIPS FOR OTHER PETS

- Fish, birds and other small pets such as mice, rats, rabbits and reptiles are popular and can be kept in smaller spaces.
- All pets, no matter how small, need

consistent care and attention.

- Some species have specific care needs, require licences and are better suited to enthusiasts. Some reptiles and birds can

live for up to 50 years or more.

- Children can learn a great deal by caring for pets, but the care and ongoing maintenance should always be supervised by an adult.

HEALTH

# In Cold Blood

*Why do some people always have chilly hands, even when it's warm?*

BY *Vanessa Milne*

It's one thing to have cold hands on a winter's day, but it's another thing to feel cold throughout the year. Many people get cold hands year-round due to a number of causes, from genetics – the tendency runs in families – to chronic illnesses.

Common benign reasons people might experience this discomfort include being elderly, so are more likely to have a slower metabolism, and being thin or underweight, and therefore may lack adequate body

fat and muscle to insulate them from cold temperatures. For some people, lifestyle changes can help: avoiding nicotine and caffeine, which constrict your blood vessels, and getting regular exercise to improve circulation.

If your hands are regularly cold or numb, however, it's a good idea to see a doctor to rule out more serious causes. Cold hands are one of the symptoms of both anaemia and hypothyroidism. Diabetes, which reduces blood circulation, can also



trigger it. And if your heart is weak from heart disease, your body may prioritise sending blood to your core over your limbs.

For many others, cold hands are a sign they have a largely harmless condition called Raynaud's disease. When any of us goes out in the cold, our bodies activate the muscles in our smallest blood vessels, which make them even smaller – a survival mechanism

to keep blood, and thus warmer temperatures, in our core. For people with Raynaud's, this reaction is too strong, and instead of just a bit less blood going to their fingers, far too little gets there.

Named after Maurice Raynaud, the French doctor who first discovered the condition in the mid-1800s, Raynaud's disease is surprisingly common. Cardiologist Dr John Osborne says it affects between four and 20 per cent of all people.

One notable characteristic of the disease is fingers changing colour. "They call it the French flag," says Osborne. "The fingers turn white because there's no blood flow, then blue due to lack of oxygen and then red as the blood comes back into the fingers." The onset of symptoms can be cold winter air, overly air-

conditioned spaces in the summer or even just grabbing a bag of frozen vegetables at the supermarket.

Raynaud's is more common in women, and it most often develops before the age of 30. In fact, if you develop Raynaud's when you're older, usually after 40, it can be a sign of another underlying issue. That could be a smaller problem – a previous incident of frostbite, the onset of carpal tunnel syndrome or a side effect from drugs such as beta blockers or some migraine medications – or a sign of a more serious autoimmune condition, like lupus.

## ONLY TEN PER CENT OF PEOPLE WITH RAYNAUD'S DISEASE SEEK TREATMENT

A rare, more severe form of Raynaud's affects less than one in 1000 people. In these cases, blood can become completely blocked, causing sores on the hands. If they go untreated, it can lead to gangrene and, very rarely, amputation. Thankfully, there are effective medications for these cases that help increase blood flow – including losartan, usually used for high blood pressure, and sildenafil, often prescribed for erectile dysfunction.

For the majority of people living with Raynaud's, however, medication won't be necessary. "For them, it'll be more annoying than anything else," says Dr Osborne.

**HEALTH**

# Is Activated Charcoal Good for You?

*The substance is showing up in toothpaste, cleansers, deodorants and even our food*

BY *Rebecca Philips*



At your local supermarket, you'll see activated charcoal in cleansers, deodorants and even toothpaste. Activated charcoal is created by burning carbon-rich materials such as wood, peat, coconut shells and olive pits, and transforming them into a concentrated black substance. Then the charcoal is 'activated' by steaming it at high temperatures, which opens up its carbon structure and makes it porous, which allows the binding of gunk like dirt and oil on its surface.

Here's the thing: despite anecdotal reports of clear, glowing skin from nutritionists, personal trainers and celebrities, there simply hasn't been any substantive research to investigate the claims.

Likewise, there is no solid evidence showing that using charcoal products for oral health will make your breath fresher or teeth whiter – in fact, they may be damaging to tooth enamel.

Activated charcoal is also being used by restaurants to turn ice cream, pizza crusts, ramen broth, juices and other things deep black. But before you shell out extra cash, remember that you're paying for the look – there's no scientific evidence for the 'detox' action it promises.

"It's not going to hurt you," says dietician Abby Langer, "but it's not going to have the effect you might think, so what's the point?"

PHOTO: GETTY IMAGES





# BLOATING OR CONSTIPATED? INDIGESTION AND HEARTBURN? FOOD INTOLERANCE? FODMAP?



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## WORLD OF MEDICINE

### UNWILLINGNESS TO TRY NEW FOODS LINKED TO RISKS

There is a scientific term for a reluctance to try food you haven't encountered before: 'food neophobia'. A study from Finland and Estonia associated this behavioural trait with lower quality diets, which may explain why it was also linked to an increased risk of type 2 diabetes and more inflammatory biomarkers in the blood. To add more variety to your diet, you need to be persistent. "An individual may need to try new food ten to 15 times before getting accustomed to it," says co-author and dietitian Heikiki Sarin.

### PENICILLIN ALLERGIES CAN BE OUTGROWN

Nearly 90 per cent of patients with self-reported penicillin allergies have been found not to be allergic upon formal testing. According to several studies, many patients with a penicillin allergy documented in their medical records were found not to have a true allergy. The assumptions were often based on non-allergic side effects of antibiotics, such as

nausea or diarrhoea, according to Dr Christopher Bland, a researcher at the University of Georgia. In other cases, patients who had an allergy once – such as a rash, hives, swelling in the throat or even anaphylaxis – grew out of it. "Five years after the event, 50 per cent of people will no longer have a reaction," says Dr Bland. "After ten years the number goes up to 80 per cent." A skin test can indicate whether you still have a penicillin allergy: positive tests result in an itchy red bump.

### HOW TO SHIFT YOUR BODY CLOCK AHEAD

'Night owls' taking part in a trial were able to adjust their cycles by an average of two hours within three weeks. Each day, they got up earlier than usual, had breakfast soon afterwards, took in as much morning outdoor light as possible, ate lunch at a set time, avoided caffeine and napping, ate dinner before 7pm, and went to bed early. The tweaked routine

saw them performing better and feeling less sleepy, less stressed and less depressed.



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INSPIRATION

# MY Thank you YEAR

*How writing  
365 notes of appreciation  
reconnected me to what's  
important in my life*

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BY Gina Hamadey

PHOTOGRAPHS BY Andrew Hetherington



In

January 2018, I was commuting to work by train each day. I have two small children and a busy consulting business, so a quiet train ride felt like a mini break. Yet I found myself spending that precious time slack-jawed, scrolling through my social media feeds.

One day, I put down my phone and started writing thank-you notes to people who had contributed to a fundraiser I had organised.

When I got off the train that day, I was in a noticeably better mood. The next day, I wrote more thank yous – and felt the same afterglow. When I finished writing the notes, I counted them up. There were 31 – one for every day of the year so far. Something clicked. What if I kept it up?

I decided to write one thank-you note for every day of that year. I had no shortage of people I was grateful for. So I picked out a different theme for each month to keep on task. January was charity – and, thankfully, I had already completed that goal.

February would be dedicated to neighbours, I decided, and I thought of a dozen names right away. I remembered the time when the owners of our local bookshop let me and my five-year-old son, Henry, in before the shop opened and offered to play his favourite soundtrack, which is *Mary Poppins*.

I recalled when our 14-year-old babysitter dropped off a bag of old board games for our kids.

Writing the notes wasn't all that time-consuming: each was two or three sentences long, taking just a few minutes to compose. I focused on the person I was writing to and what I wanted to say, and the words came fairly easily. I quickly learned I couldn't do it while listening to a podcast or toggling between articles. That focus felt refreshing. It was good for my brain, which had been trained to wander, alighting on this feed or that email, darting from app to app. It felt meditative to look at a blank white space with a pen in my hand, thinking about a person and the way he or she had helped me.

While writing the notes, I eventually realised why this task was the perfect antidote to my social feeds. What was I actually doing when I scrolled through Facebook? Too often, I was spiralling into rage. Writing thank-you notes was time spent on something purely positive. What





**I wrote each note by hand, with a pen, never on a computer, and mailed or hand-delivered them all**

was I doing when I scrolled through Instagram? More often than not, I was admiring other people's lives - their beach holidays, their chubby babies, their organised kitchens. Writing thank-you notes was an act of noticing and honouring my own life.

After handing the first batch of notes to my neighbours, I spent a few days trying to remember times when

## My Thank-You Year

other neighbours did something nice for me. And funny enough, I started noticing kindnesses that were happening in real time.

There was the driver who waited for me as I bolted down the street to catch his shuttle bus. There was the cashier at the supermarket who chased me with a bag of groceries I'd left behind.

On the day I delivered that card to the supermarket, my mother-in-law, Louise, dropped off a week's worth of dinners. OK, I thought, *Louise is not technically a neighbour*. But if I was going to thank a cashier for three minutes of his time, I needed to acknowledge Louise for hours of hers.

It was important for these months to be flexible, I decided. I would use each month's theme as a starting point, but I'd also watch for anyone going above and beyond, regardless of whether he or she fitted into the monthly theme.

So in the ensuing months, as I wrote to friends, doctors, career mentors and parenting role models, I also

## READER'S DIGEST

dashed off missives to my husband, Jake, as well as my siblings, in-laws, and parents. And I found that doing so changed the fundamental dynamics of these relationships in small but impactful ways. I was smoothing out any prickly bumps and buffing them to a new shine. It is a powerful thing, I learned, to fully appreciate and feel fully appreciated by the people closest to you.

By the time I got to July, my 'food' month, I had become adept at retrieving memories and identifying people to thank. Among that month's recipients was a chef, Julie, who had cooked at my favourite but now defunct restaurant. Here's what I wrote to her:

*Dear Julie,  
I've been finding myself missing Little Giant lately, as if it were a person. Thank you for creating such a warm and special place, and for hosting me and cooking beautiful and thoughtful food.*

*The Little Giant menu has informed my cooking – I am always trying to recreate some of that magic. Jake and I will never forget when you sent out biscuits shaped into the Roman numeral VI for our sixth anniversary. We talk about it every year.*

*Thank you. We miss Little Giant and you.  
Love, Gina*

## Better How to Write a Thank-You Note

- ◆ Don't bother to buy expensive cards.
- ◆ Don't make a preliminary outline – it's fussy and takes too long.
- ◆ Do spend a minute or two focusing on the recipient before you start writing.
- ◆ Don't worry about crafting poetic or perfect sentences.
- ◆ Do speak from the heart.
- ◆ Do clear away distractions. Turn off the TV and your phone while you're writing.
- ◆ Don't fret about your messy handwriting, and if you make an error, just cross it out.
- ◆ Don't expect a response – but enjoy a grateful surprise when you receive one.





I was delighted to receive a note back from her. Julie replied, “I don’t think I’ve ever received such a touching letter before. Out of the blue and incredibly thoughtful. And so needed at a time when I’m struggling professionally. Your letter was a fabulous reminder that looking back is a good motivator for moving forward.”

### I COMPLETED MY GOAL WITH HOURS TO SPARE, WRITING TO JAKE ON DECEMBER 31



It was one of many responses throughout the year that said something along the lines of, “I’m going through a tough time right now, and this helped.” It turns out a lot of people are going through something a lot of the time. And I wouldn’t have known if I hadn’t reached out.

Part of the magic of what I am calling my Thank-You Year was

reconnecting with people like Julie – people on the periphery of my life who nevertheless made a lasting impact. And here’s another huge bonus: I was reminded to acknowledge people in the moment, too – to smile or say hello, or thanks, or “Here, let me help you with that”.

I admit, I fell behind more than once during the year. But I completed my goal with hours to spare – writing my last card, which was to Jake, on December 31. That night, we hosted a big New Year’s Eve dinner, and I looked around at my guests. There was Alonso from Berlin, whom I’d written to in my ‘travel’ month. There were Nick and Ro, in from out of town, who’d received cards in my ‘friends’ and ‘career mentors’ months. There was Mollie, who racked up notes as a mentor, friend and neighbour. There was Jake, of course. Henry had fallen asleep on the couch; his brother, Charlie, was upstairs in bed. I snapped a picture of the scene so I could remember the feeling welling up inside me. Gratitude. **R**

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### Marriage Lines

**The longest union in history is believed to be 90 years: Karam and Kartari Chand of Bradford, England, were married in India in 1925 and were together until Karam’s death in 2016. [WWW.BBC.COM](http://WWW.BBC.COM)**

**Whoever came up with the idea of combining diamonds with marriage must have been pretty smart. What better way to symbolise marriage than the hardest thing known to mankind?**

MARK DUGAN, COMEDIAN



# No Pills REQUIRED

*How physiotherapy  
can relieve the pain of  
some conditions – and  
even prevent surgeries*

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BY Susan Catto



Profilejennings.com



## IT WAS THE PROSPECT OF BEING FORCED

to give up cooking that made me try physiotherapy. My hands and wrists had ached ever since I'd binged on note-taking by hand and on my computer at university. I could still use a computer, but I had given up opening jars, my handwriting efforts had dwindled, and even chopping a single clove of garlic left my forearms throbbing with pain.

My doctor gave me a blood test to rule out rheumatoid arthritis, but she had no idea what to do next. My husband, Andrew, had been urging me for years to try physiotherapy – he had used it to recover from tennis-related injuries – but I assumed I had the kind of permanent damage that only painkillers or surgery could address. Still, I finally made an appointment with a physiotherapist.

The results are hard to exaggerate. I left that first session with a diagnosis of tendonitis and instructions for three stretches. The exercises were easy – in one, I simply touched my fingers to a wall and then lowered my palm to the wall ten times – but they relieved so much muscular tension that I looked forward to my thrice-daily ritual. In weekly sessions at the clinic, my physiotherapist stretched my shortened muscles and added strengthening exercises to curtail future problems. I experienced some pain relief within days and a near-total return to normal after just two months.

I realised that physiotherapy can even treat long-term problems, and that I wasn't looking at months and months of expensive treatment. In my case, and in many others, appointments taper off rapidly once the problem is identified and at-home exercises begin.

Most people are familiar with physiotherapy's role in recovery from accidents, treatment of sports injuries and stroke rehabilitation. But in recent years, the science of evaluating and treating issues related to physical function and movement has started to play a new role in health care. And it can prevent some unnecessary surgeries.

Here are some of the ways that physiotherapy treats a variety of conditions and diseases.

### HELPS BAD KNEES

In 2009, *The New England Journal of Medicine* published the results of a landmark study. A randomised, controlled trial by Canadian researchers showed that physiotherapy combined



## Advances in physiotherapy and rehabilitation are assisting a broader range of patients

with medication was just as effective as arthroscopic surgery in treating osteoarthritic knees. “Many arthritic joints are helped by work on flexibility and strength,” says orthopaedic surgeon and study co-author Dr Robert Litchfield. Physiotherapists can often remove the source of the knee pain by identifying a cause such as muscle tightness around the knee and treating it with exercises or stretching.

“We’ll do a biomechanical assessment looking at everything from muscle tightness to weakness to how joints move,” explains physiotherapist Greg Alcock. “Based on that, we’ll prescribe a course of action that may include exercise to calm an inflamed joint or muscle or address the factors contributing to the problem.” Physiotherapists are very good

at “looking at the whole picture”, says Dr Litchfield.

### LESSENS CHRONIC PAIN

Depending on the cause, a programme of physiotherapy can ease chronic pain by strengthening the muscles that surround painful joints or muscles. A Danish study of women with osteoporosis whose chronic pain was linked to spinal compression fractures found that patients used significantly less pain medication and reported improved quality of life after just ten weeks of a physiotherapy programme designed to improve balance and stabilise the lumbar spine.

### COMBATS BACK PAIN

Problems such as poor posture, muscle strain or arthritis can cause back



**Physiotherapists may provide hands-on help, but patients need to follow up by doing strengthening exercises and stretches at home**

pain. Treatment will depend on the source of the problem, but some common principles apply. Paul Van-Wiechen, director of exercise physiology at the Cleveland Clinic Canada, advises a three-fold approach: weight management to reduce stress on joints, muscle strengthening to improve mobility and reduce recurrence, and ‘re-patterning’ of muscles.

That involves changing the coordination of all the muscles in a particular area, usually through a series of dynamic exercises. “There are about two dozen muscles in and around the lower back that really matter,” he explains. “Strengthening two or three muscles doesn’t have as much of an effect as teaching all 24 how to work together.”

## **RELIEVES PELVIC FLOOR DISORDERS**

One fast-growing area of practice uses physiotherapy techniques to address pelvic floor disorders, which can occur when pelvic muscles tighten, shorten or fall into spasm after pregnancy, childbirth or abdominal surgery.

Dysfunctions can manifest in conditions such as painful intercourse, urinary or bowel incontinence, or general abdominal or groin pain. Physiotherapists can use a massage technique called ‘trigger point release’ directly on the affected pelvic floor muscle to relieve the spasm. Many also run integrated practices that include core-strengthening exercises and relaxation techniques through, for example, Pilates.

## PROVIDES EASIER BREATHING

That whole-picture approach doesn't stop with our joints and muscles. Physiotherapy also addresses conditions in the autonomic nervous system – the involuntary muscles and nerves that control our organs.

Patients with asthma or sleep apnoea, for example, can be treated by cardiovascular physiotherapists, who may use breathing control exercises – a simple one might be blowing up a balloon – or focus on improving the mobility of chest and neck muscles through stretching and strengthening programmes. In a study published in *The Lancet* in 2018, researchers in the UK had 655 asthma sufferers, aged 16 to 70, participate in a randomised, controlled trial for one year. They wanted to learn if the subjects' quality of life would improve with physiotherapy breathing

retraining. The results showed that the breathing therapy, even when delivered to the patient via self-guided digital programs rather than in person, was successful.

But you do have to do your part if physiotherapy is to be successful. Stretches and strengthening exercises done at home are crucial to treating most problems. That's where physiotherapy can lose adherents. "A lot of my clients want to be fixed yesterday – they don't want to put a lot of effort into it," says physiotherapist Karen Orlando.

It takes time and effort to stretch or retrain muscles that have a long-established bad habit. But doing so can prevent a recurrence of the injury.

I know that in my case, whenever I was tempted to skip my exercises, I'd remember there was a good chance they could be what I needed to help prevent riskier interventions. **R**

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### Inspirational Creatures

We think of country names as coming from – well, where do they come from? Other than Iceland. That one is easy. It turns out that the names of some countries were inspired by animals.

A few examples:

**ALBANIA:** Land of the Eagle

**BHUTAN:** Land of the Thunder Dragon

**CAMEROON:** River of Prawns

**SINGAPORE:** The Lion City

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DRAMA IN REAL LIFE



# NATURE'S DEADLY VENOM

**With a long weekend fast approaching, and a camping trip to pack for, one false move almost cost Adrian Main more than just his holiday**

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BY *Diane Godley*

PHOTOS: COURTESY HORNSBY SHIRE COUNCIL







**Tall eucalypt forests and bushland north of Sydney are home to a variety of fauna**



**F**or the Thursday before an Easter long weekend in 2016, it was unseasonally hot. By mid-afternoon the sun was beating down and the clear blue skies showed no signs of the forecast rain. Adrian Main was doing what he loved, working outside in the rugged bushland that surrounds the leafy suburbs on the northern outskirts of Sydney.

Guided by a love of mountain bike riding, Adrian founded Synergy Trails, a construction company specialising in installing narrow, winding, dirt bike trails in bushland for weekend and competition riders. It was dusty, dirty work at times, but with the trees providing a canopy of shade and only the noise of his team and the local birds nearby, there wasn't any place he'd rather be.

Over the years, the 40-year-old sub-floor carpenter had encountered many local fauna hazards while digging around in soil, including venomous arachnids and snakes, but he knew how to identify the mild from the wild ones. Adrian was also trained in first aid, though he never seriously thought he or anyone working for him would ever be bitten.

With the clock ticking down towards the start of the four-day long weekend, Adrian had some light digging left to do. His shovel was in his vehicle, parked some 50 metres away. He considered getting it, but the job

was small, and just needed a light dig to get beneath the shallow soil and leaf litter. So he used his hands instead.

But just as his fingers slid under the pile of leaf litter, he felt a sharp deep pain in his left hand. He quickly lifted out his hand to see a spider wrapped around his left index finger. The five-centimetre-long glossy black creature had its fangs firmly embedded, piercing through to his knuckle. The pain felt as if a nail was being hammered into his finger.

But that wasn't the worst of it. He knew straight away that the spider was a Sydney funnel-web (*Atrax robustus*) and here he was with it wrapped firmly around his finger. Adrian frantically flicked his hand up and down to remove the spider, but it didn't come off. He persisted, shaking his hand even harder and, after three or four seconds, it finally let go of its grip and dropped to the ground at Adrian's feet.

He looked down just in time to

quickly double-check the spider's identity before it buried itself back under the leaf litter. It was a fully grown male Sydney funnel-web, the deadliest spider in Australia.

After 15 years working in the bush, encountering different types of spiders and snakes, Adrian never thought he'd ever get bitten. But all it took was one brief moment when he was trying to do a simple job quickly, and he became a victim.

He called out to his crew mate, Phil, who was working close by. Phil dropped his shovel and ran over. The pair calmly walked to the four-wheel-drive while Adrian pinched down hard at the base of his knuckle to slow the spread of venom into his blood stream. They both knew a bite like this could cause death within an hour if left untreated.

Fortunately for Adrian, the trail where they'd been working was only a short distance from Hornsby Kuring-gai Hospital. Regardless, Phil raced through the off-road terrain, jostling them about inside the cab. Once they reached the suburban streets, he mounted a footpath to take a shortcut onto the main road

to get his boss to hospital as fast as he could.

Adrian walked into the emergency department with blood still streaming down his finger. He calmly told the triage nurse at reception that he'd been bitten by a funnel-web, and was quickly moved to a bed.

He felt lightheaded and strange, as if he was going to pass out at any minute, but he was coherent enough to talk with the nurses, who had hooked him up to an array of monitors to start assessing his vital signs.

During summer, the emergency care unit (ECU) at the hospital treats patients with spider bites about once a week, but only rarely do patients have symptoms of envenomation, what we know as venom poisoning. Still, they waited and watched.

"About ten minutes after arriving at hospital, Adrian suddenly became incoherent and couldn't finish his sentences," says Dr Clare Skinner, director of emergency medicine at Hornsby Kuring-gai Hospital. Then his face and tongue started twitching, he felt nauseous, and he started sweating and drooling. Dr Skinner explained to Adrian that his system



**Funnel-webs dig funnel-shaped burrows, lined with silk webbing**

## READER'S DIGEST

was starting to react to the funnel-web venom – the envenomation process was taking hold. It was time to give him the first of two vials of antivenom. If his symptoms and signs didn't improve, the emergency staff were ready with two more vials to repeat the procedure.

**ABOUT AN HOUR** north of Hornsby Ku-ring-gai Hospital is the Australian Reptile Park (ARP) – one of Sydney's major tourist attractions. But behind closed doors, the staff at ARP are doing very important work, a service that keeps individuals safe from death's door if they find themselves, like Adrian, unlucky enough to be bitten by a male funnel-web spider.

Since the 1980s, the ARP has been milking Sydney funnel-webs and sending the venom to BioCSL in Victoria, where the spiders' poison is turned into antivenom.

Milking the spiders is not for the faint-hearted – many people go weak at the knees and scream at the sight of a harmless huntsman spider crawling across their bedroom walls, let alone a killing machine like the Sydney funnel-web.

But the staff at ARP are not like most people. They care about the

welfare of their spiders, similar to how we might care for a pet dog or cat. They ensure the spiders are kept in ideal conditions – moist, humid enclosures – and feed them crickets and cockroaches, because their ultimate goal is to keep people safe from harm.

Funnel-webs' natural habitats are rainforests and wet sclerophyll forests, but if your garden is shady and well-vegetated, they are more than happy to share it with you. Funnel-webs dig burrows, which they line with their silk webbing in a funnel shape – hence their name – and which can reach up to 60 centimetres in length. Numerous thicker lines are anchored to nearby rocks and tree roots

and act as trip-lines, snaring any unfortunate insect that happens to stumble upon one.

**OF ALL THE FUNNEL-WEB SPECIES,** the Sydney funnel-web is the most aggressive and the only one that can cause fatalities in humans. Each year between 30-40 people are bitten by funnel-web spiders, which are found along the east coast of New South Wales, mostly between Newcastle and Wollongong. After a total of

**“AT NIGHT  
AFTER RAIN,  
WHEN IT'S  
HUMID AND  
WET, THEY GO  
SEARCHING  
FOR FEMALES”**

13 recorded deaths and years of research, an antivenom for the Sydney funnel-web was finally developed in 1981. If disturbed, a funnel-web spider will rear up in a defensive position, raising its front legs, ready to strike with its fangs. This is exactly the reaction needed for venom to be produced, and the stance required for ARP 'milkers' to extract the life-saving poison.

"What we do is gently tickle the spider with a pipette, which is a glass cylinder like a straw with a funnel on the end," says Tim Faulkner, general manager and head of conservation at ARP.

"It rears up, and venom starts to build up, producing a tiny droplet on each fang," he says. "At that point you put the funnel part of the pipette near the venom and it is sucked up."

Spiders are milked once a week. But to produce one vial of the funnel-web antivenom, such as the one that Dr Skinner gave Adrian, a spider needs to be milked between 50 to 100 times as each spider produces varying amounts. And this is where it gets complicated for Faulkner and his team at ARP.

The natural life expectancy of male funnel-web spiders is just four years, and they don't mature until they're at least three, which gives ARP, the sole supplier of funnel-web venom in the world, between six and 12 months to extract the spiders' venom. "We only milk mature male funnel-webs, because the male is six times more venomous than females. And the antivenom is made to combat male venom," says Faulkner.

It's when the mature males start looking to mate that those of us living in the right conditions might be unlucky enough to come across one. "They're out at night after rain, when it's nice and humid and wet and they go searching for females. That's when they turn up in your pool, in your house, in your shoes, in beach towels left out-

side," says Faulkner.

And if an adult man needs at least two vials of antivenom to reverse the effects of a bite, that's a whole lot of spiders that need to be milked. A few years ago, a young boy on the Central Coast, not far from where ARP is located, was bitten and needed 12 vials of antivenom.

This is why Faulkner is always



**When funnel-webs rear up in defence, venom forms in droplets from each fang**

## READER'S DIGEST

looking for volunteers living between Newcastle and Wollongong to become collectors of male funnel-webs for his milking programme. They don't jump, as many people believe, nor do they run particularly fast, and according to Faulkner, they are easy to catch. "We rely on the community, the beneficiaries of the programme, to get spiders to us," he says. "We have tried over decades to send out teams to collect spiders." But, unlike the female spider, who spends her entire life underground, the male spider wanders above ground and so his whereabouts is more unpredictable.

**AFTER BEING OBSERVED** for 24 hours, Adrian was discharged from hospital and allowed to go home. The first thing he did was pack the car, so he and his family could set off on their Easter long weekend camping trip. Although pain is usually the main ongoing symptom from funnel-web bites, Adrian refused pain killers because they don't agree with him. Still, he felt

### WHAT TO DO IF BITTEN

First aid for a funnel-web bite is the same as for a snake bite, you need to apply a pressure-immobilisation bandage. Wrap the entire affected limb firmly with a bandage and, if possible, restrict movement by using a splint. For first-aid tips on Australian venomous creatures, download the **Australian Bites & Stings** app.



nauseous and a little dozy, and it took another three weeks before his full strength returned.

So, wasn't taking a camping holiday away from civilisation a bit risky?

Not for an outdoor type like Adrian. "For me it wasn't a big issue," Adrian admits. "But I did take notice of where the closest hospital was."

Since being bitten, Adrian does a couple of things differently. He always uses a shovel when digging, and he and his team catch funnel-webs whenever they can and deliver them to the ARP. "That antivenom saved my life – and may save it again one day." **R**

### Going Over the Limit

The world's first speeding ticket was written in 1896 in the village of Paddock Wood, England. The violator was caught driving eight mph through a two-mph zone and fined ten shillings.

GUINNESS WORLD RECORDS

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## LIFE'S LIKE THAT

*Seeing the Funny Side*



### **Eggxactly Right**

It always irked my mother, who lives on her own, that her local supermarket didn't carry eggs in cartons of six – just by the dozen. Then one day, her wish came true. She walked into the supermarket and found fresh eggs in cartons of six.

"I was so excited," she told us later, "that I bought two!"

SUBMITTED BY THOMAS HASSMANN

### **Mail Order**

My sister and her husband were travelling and stopped at a fast food drive-through. My sister gave her order through the intercom but couldn't hear what the employee was saying. She mentioned this several times, but it wasn't helping, so she got out of her car to speak louder into the intercom – and realised she was talking into a letterbox.

SUBMITTED BY DONNA THOMPSON



## Call It a Day

People say, "I'm taking it one day at a time." You know what? So is everybody. That's how time works.

HANNIBAL BURESS, COMEDIAN

## Cutting Remark

After my 91-year-old mother finished having her hair cut and shaped, the stylist announced, "There, now you look ten years younger." My mother, unimpressed, replied, "Who wants to look 81 years old?" SUBMITTED BY CALVIN UNRUH

## Delayed Results

It's been six months since I joined the gym and no progress. I'm going there in person tomorrow to see what's really going on.

@\_CAKEBAWSE

## WITTY KITTIES

Need a star-studded pet name? Consider these feline monikers, found on a database of insured pets:

- ◆ *Isaac Newton*
- ◆ *Farrak Pawcett*
- ◆ *Yoyo Meow*
- ◆ *Obi Wan Catnobi*
- ◆ *The Great Catsby*
- ◆ *Winston Purrchill*
- ◆ *Reese Whiskerspoon*



## THE GREAT TWEET OFF: PASSWORD EDITION

It's no laughing matter when you can't remember your computer passwords.



Glad my car insurance company requires a ten-character password to log in. Wouldn't want someone to hack in and ... pay my insurance bill.

@SORTABAD

I hate it when I forget my password and can't answer my secret questions right. It's like I don't even know me.

@KWIRKYKERRI

Apparently my password needs to be capitals only so I've changed it to LONDONMADRIDROME.

ON THE INTERNET

I needed a password eight characters long, so I picked *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs*.

NICK HELM

I've just reset my password to *Delicate Luggage Handler*, as I was told it had to be case-sensitive.

@JULIANLEECOMEDY



*I Am the*  
**FOOD ON  
YOUR TABLE**

*I Am Butter...*  
**Silky  
Smooth and  
Ready for  
Any Stage**

BY *Kate Lowenstein*  
AND *Daniel Gritzer*

PHOTOGRAPHS BY *Joleen Zubek*

**S**ome foods were never meant to be liked. The lima beans of the world, the powdered coffee creamers, those black-bean-lentil cakes that call themselves burgers, all born into sad-sackery. Me, though, I am a superstar, a talented actor with celebrity charisma. I'm the one people gravitate to at the dinner party. The smooth one who inspires superlative idioms and gets featured in dramatically lit portraits on *Time* magazine.

So why am I slogging it out with other fats just to stay relevant? When you've needed something silky and spreadable to moisten your bread, I've been there. When you've hankered for creamy sauces, I've melted myself right into them. And yet you've forsaken me. Butter consumption declined during the 20th century, mainly because of the rising popularity of margarine, which, until recent years, was perceived as being healthier.

Take that *Time* cover. That was actually a good moment for me. It was captioned 'Eat Butter,' which I loved. I had survived the low-fat craze of the '80s and '90s, had endured margarine's half century in the sun, celebrating when she finally got locked away in health gaol. Butter was back, the article said. But as soon as it hit newsstands, Harvard University nutritionists and other wonks were so eager to tear me down again. They recommended 'moderation' and reasserted

that that sanctimonious chump extra virgin olive oil was healthier than me.

I'm telling you, you should audition me again. I'm from the cream skimmed off milk. Does it get any better than that? Cream contains tiny fat globules that float around ignoring one another. Yet when you shake, beat or churn them enough, amazing things happen. First you incorporate air, whisking up whipped cream; churn longer and the fat globules start sticking together until blobs of golden dairy fat are floating in watery milk - buttermilk. Drain, wash, give it a knead or two, add some salt and *ta-dah!*: me!

Among cooking fats, my genius dominates for a reason - I alone am an emulsion of fat, water and milk solids. Being so emulsified might sound like meaningless nonsense, but this is wildly important. Every other fat you cook with is pretty much just fat. But if you've dipped lobster in melted butter, you know I contain multitudes: I'm the white foam on top (sugar and proteins), the cloudy liquid at the bottom (water), and the clear yellow stuff in between (ghee).

It's the way I shape-shift among these parts that makes me so good. I'm solid and firm when cold, so you can layer me into puff pastry; when baked, I melt, leaving behind tender and flaky layers. I can be softened at room temperature just enough to be creamed with sugar, trapping air for the lightest biscuit dough.

By melting me very carefully to maintain my emulsified state, chefs made me the foundation of sunny hollandaise and herbal béarnaise and just about every other classic sauce with body but no greasiness. I've always known when to act subtly. My ghee, unlike my easy-to-scorch milk solids, has a high smoke point and is frying-friendly, so I'm *the* cooking fat in India.

In Europe, I first was peasant fare, as the rich were well-larded with poultry and pork fat. But when medieval Catholics OK'd me for meatless Lent, I got a toehold in the upper-class diet.

But then Emperor Napoléon III ran low on butter for his troops and put out a call for someone to approximate my sublime flavour and texture. Some idiot flavoured milk with beef tallow (ew), and a long line of poor imitations followed. Later, scientists altered vegetable oils to hydrogenate them, making them spreadable. Yes, margarine pushed itself onstage. Butter rationing during World War II helped margarine, too, especially when the government allowed producers to add yellow colouring to its unappetising pale grey shades.

Read the headlines today and you'd think I'd made a comeback, but my saturated fat continues to be a controversial in the face of healthier options like the monounsaturated fats in hohum olive oil. But live a little, would ya? I'm butter, baby!



# Apple and Blackberry Pie

Time: 2h 15 min Servings: minimum 8

## FOR THE PASTRY

- ◆ 250g plain flour
- ◆ 150g Lurpak® Unsalted Butter, cold & cut into small pieces
- ◆ 1 tbsp caster sugar
- ◆ 1 egg yolk

## FOR THE FILLING

- ◆ 6 large apples, skin on and thinly sliced
- ◆ 250g blackberries
- ◆ 2 tbsp cornflour
- ◆ 100g caster sugar
- ◆ Zest of one orange
- ◆ Zest of one lemon

## TO FINISH

- ◆ 1 egg, lightly beaten
- ◆ Brown sugar

## PREPARATION

- ◆ In a large bowl, sift the flour and rub in the cold Lurpak® until the mixture resembles fine breadcrumbs. You can also do this in a food processor. Add the sugar, egg yolk and 1-2 tbsp cold water to form a dough.
- ◆ Knead very lightly to bring the pastry together, then press down with the palm of your hand to make a round disc. Cover with cling film and rest in the fridge for 30 mins.
- ◆ On a lightly floured work surface, roll the pastry out to the thickness of a one-dollar coin (around 3mm thick) and line the bottom of a loose bottomed 23cm fluted tart tin. Make sure the pastry hangs over the sides in case of shrinkage.
- ◆ Prick the bottom of the pastry with a fork and chill in the freezer for 30 mins. Reserve the leftover pastry, cover with cling film and chill in the fridge.
- ◆ Preheat your oven to 180°C/160°C fan force.
- ◆ To make the filling, mix together all of the ingredients, then tip them into the pastry-lined tart tin.
- ◆ Roll out the remaining pastry and cut into long strips about 1cm wide. Make a lattice on top of the pie and glaze with the beaten egg. Sprinkle generously with brown sugar and bake on the middle shelf for 45-50 mins or until golden.
- ◆ Serve with ice cream or double cream.

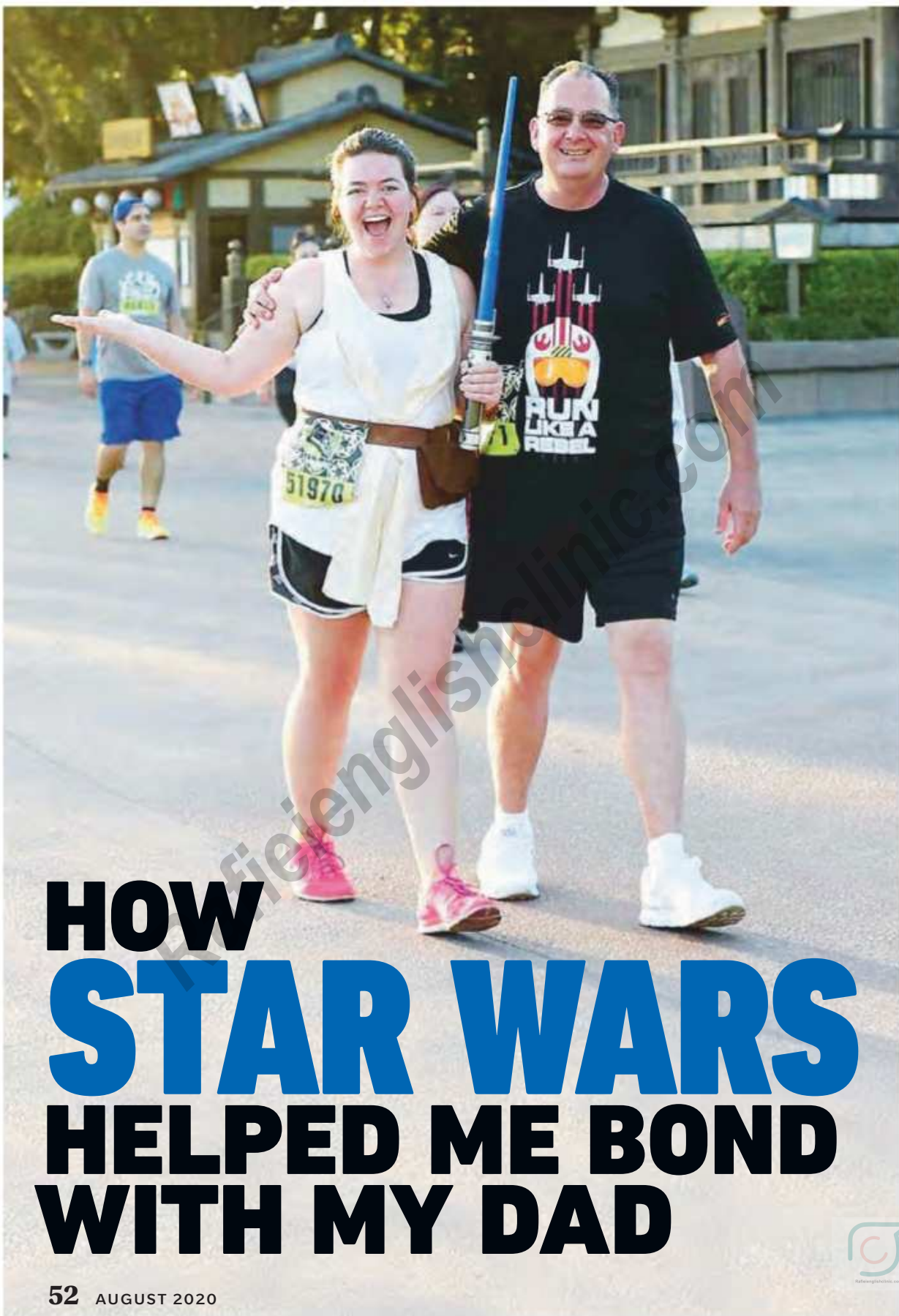
# BAKE UP SOME FEEL GOOD



GOOD FOOD DESERVES LURPAK®

FIND THE RECIPE  
ON THE LEFT





# HOW STAR WARS HELPED ME BOND WITH MY DAD

*The epic space films hold a special place  
in many people's hearts, but their place in my  
heart also includes my father*

BY Megan duBois

**M**y dad and I have always had a good relationship. He was the one who would let me experiment in the kitchen, the one who would travel to the Walt Disney World theme parks in Orlando, Florida. He would even sit back in his recliner and watch a movie with me late at night. Usually those movies were something from Disney, and those nights were always great. But when we started watching the *Star Wars* saga, everything changed.

My dad was introduced to the *Star Wars* universe when his grandpa took him to see *A New Hope* back in 1977, when it first came out in cinemas and it was still only called *Star Wars*. Fast forward more than 35 years later and my dad was taking me to see my first *Star Wars* film, *The Force Awakens*, when I was in my mid-20s. I had no idea that this franchise would become such a huge part of my life and help me become even closer to my dad.

### HOW IT ALL BEGAN

I have to admit, growing up, I'd never really been interested in *Star Wars*. In fact, I'd never even seen any of the films. The old-school graphics of the original movies seemed dull, and I felt that I already knew the main parts of the story, thanks to my love of the Disney parks and riding Star Tours at Hollywood Studios. That changed when my dad and I saw a preview for *The Force Awakens* in early 2015. I was intrigued, and my dad was, too - I could see that little twinkle in his eye he gets when he's excited about something.

When I told my dad I wanted to go see the movie with him, he started telling me about his love of the franchise, stories of waiting to see *A New Hope* with his grandpa, and memories he's had locked away in the back of his mind waiting for this exact moment. We made a date to go and see the film, and the anticipation mounted as our movie date day drew nearer. This was his turn to pass down something he had loved as a child to his own child.

The film was finally released that December, and sitting next to each other in the cinema – popcorn and drinks in hand – we laughed through parts with BB-8 and Rey, cheered when Finn defected from the First Order and gasped when Kylo Ren stared at a crumpled-up mask that once belonged to his grandfather, Darth Vader. By the time the movie was over, I was hooked. I spent the majority of the car ride back home asking my dad all sorts of questions about characters and plots from the previous films. We made a plan to watch the other six films in order at home so I could understand more of this expanding universe.

### A NEW TRADITION

Watching the movies wasn't enough. In our *Star Wars* giddiness, my dad and I decided to start a new annual tradition called 'Epic Star Wars Day'. On this day, usually at the beginning of the year, we drive the two hours from our house to Walt Disney World and do everything there is to do related to *Star Wars* at the parks and resorts.

When we did this for the first time in 2016, *Star Wars: Galaxy's Edge* was still three years away from opening. So, part of our first Epic Star Wars Day was spent at Disney Springs,

where we ate lunch at one of our favourite restaurants, then headed to the VOID. There, we literally stepped into *Star Wars* by wearing a virtual-reality helmet and a specialised vest and carrying a blaster to complete a mission with K-2SO and Cassian Andor from *Rogue One*. After our mission, my dad couldn't stop talking about it.

The rest of the day was filled with going on Hollywood Studios' Star Tours ride and looking around the *Star Wars* Launch Bay, where we waited in

line to meet Chewbacca, Kylo Ren, trade with Jawas, and marvel at some of the costumes and props from the *Star Wars* films. Once our Epic Star Wars Day was over, we hopped in the car to head home and started planning how we could make the next one even better. Little did we know then what *Star Wars: Galaxy's Edge* theme destination would eventually have in store for us.

### GALAXY'S EDGE

As a theme-park journalist, I got a sneak peek of *Star Wars: Galaxy's Edge* before it officially opened to guests in August 2019, and I couldn't wait to show it to my dad. On the big day, my dad's excitement was palpable. He was already smiling from ear to ear when we walked through the

**WHEN MY DAD  
PULLED US INTO  
LIGHT SPEED,  
I SHOUTED,  
“PUNCH IT, DAD!”**

---





**Megan and her father share a moment with Captain Plasma of the First Order**

passageway, heard the official John Williams score, and turned the corner to see a full-size X-Wing. Then we crossed the entire land to start out where most good *Star Wars* stories start: on the *Millennium Falcon*.

While in line for Millennium Falcon: Smugglers Run, I told my dad that it was highly unlikely that we would be getting the prized role of the pilot on the ride... but what I didn't tell him was that I had an idea for how to increase our odds of making that happen. When we got to the front of the line, I said to the Disney employee: "I heard Hondo is looking for a few new pilots. Well, I brought

my dad, who used to fly helicopters in the Navy back on Earth. He's the most skilled pilot in this group of nerf-herders, and I know he would bring in quite a few credits for Hondo. We could split the glory with you since you assigned us as pilot." Believe it or not, it worked! Moments later, we were handed two pilot cards. When my dad pulled us into light speed, I shouted, "Punch it, Dad!"

Once we got off the attraction, we headed where all good pilots go to celebrate a job well done: the cantina.

We've planned tons of special *Star Wars* moments over the last few years, including a Star Wars Day at



### Theme parks give *Star Wars* fans the ultimate interactive experience

Sea on a Disney cruise to celebrate my dad's birthday last year. But one of my all-time favourite things to do with my dad is the Star Wars 5K run at Disney World. We ran our first one three years ago, and we haven't looked back.

On the morning of the run, we had to wake up early. We were up no later than 3.30 to drive to the start line in costumes I had painstakingly worked on for a month. My favourite was probably when my dad dressed up as General Orson Krennic, and I was Kylo Ren. The dark side of the Force was definitely with us that morning as we crossed the finish line.

By far the best part of the race was simply the time I got to spend with my dad. As we walked through the park with the sun just starting to peek over the horizon, we were laughing and joking around, waving lightsabres as

if we were actual Jedis. The moment we crossed the finish line was when I got the most emotional because I cherished the memories we just made walking five kilometres. The gratitude for the memory was a sentiment I'm sure my dad shared, too. Our race has been cancelled this year due to the coronavirus, so we're just going to have to use the Force even more for next year's race to make up for it.

## BRINGING US EVEN CLOSER

When *Star Wars: The Rise of Skywalker* was released last year, I was invited to a première and allowed to bring a guest. Obviously, I brought my dad. As we got settled into our seats, we reminisced about everything that had led us to that point. We watched the movie and saw C-3PO take one last look at his friends, Rey save Kylo Ren, and General Leia Organa fight for her son.

At that moment, I began to realise that *Star Wars* embodied so many of the characteristics I saw in my dad: the selfless sacrifice to help me however he could, the endless amounts of love, and the joy that comes with a job well done.

That trip had another surprise in store for us – and our relationship. The morning after the première, I was able to bring my dad to be among the first to experience a new iteration of Star Tours at Hollywood Studios and Disney's recently opened Star

## How *Star Wars* Helped Me Bond With My Dad

Wars: Rise of the Resistance. I loved giving my dad the gift of being able to see all of this first; not many people get to experience that thrill. After we escaped the clutches of Kylo Ren and the First Order and were welcomed back to Batuu, my dad couldn't speak for a few minutes. He loved it! It was also the moment that really made him understand what I'd been talking about for months and why I do what I do for a living. It took *Star Wars* to make that happen.

### THE NEXT CHAPTER

When 2020 rolled around, my dad and I set out on a new adventure to watch all of the *Star Wars* movies and series in story order, starting with the first three episodes, the animated series *The Clone Wars* and *Star Wars Rebels*, and then eventually making our way back to *The Rise of Skywalker*. Currently, we're rewatching *The Mandalorian*.

After all of this TV time, we've become self-proclaimed experts and have some pretty nerdy conversations at the dinner table, which my sweet mother tolerates for a few minutes each night.

Even though *Star Wars* Day might look a little bit different this year, we're still looking forward to it. Aside from some serious *Star Wars* viewing,

we're planning a pretty epic dinner comprised of dishes from *Star Wars: Galaxy's Edge: The Official Black Spire Outpost Cookbook*, including Dagobah Slug Slinger cocktails and Ronto Wraps.

For the past five years, *Star Wars* has brought my dad and I even closer than we were before. And it all started a long time ago in a galaxy not so far away when his grandpa took him to see the original film. If my great-grandpa could see what that one moment turned into, I bet he would think that was money well spent. **R**

**WE WERE JOKING  
AROUND, WAVING  
LIGHTSABRES  
AS IF WE WERE  
ACTUAL JEDIS**

### New Words for Highly Specific Things

'Funeral' and 'badminton' should just swap their first three letters.

@PERRYFELLOW (NICHOLAS GUREWITCH)

Pigeon: the distance a pig travels in one eon.

@MISFARBER (DROPPED MIKE)

They should make erasers for crayons called 'crayoffs'. @JB4REALZ

MEDICAL DRAMA

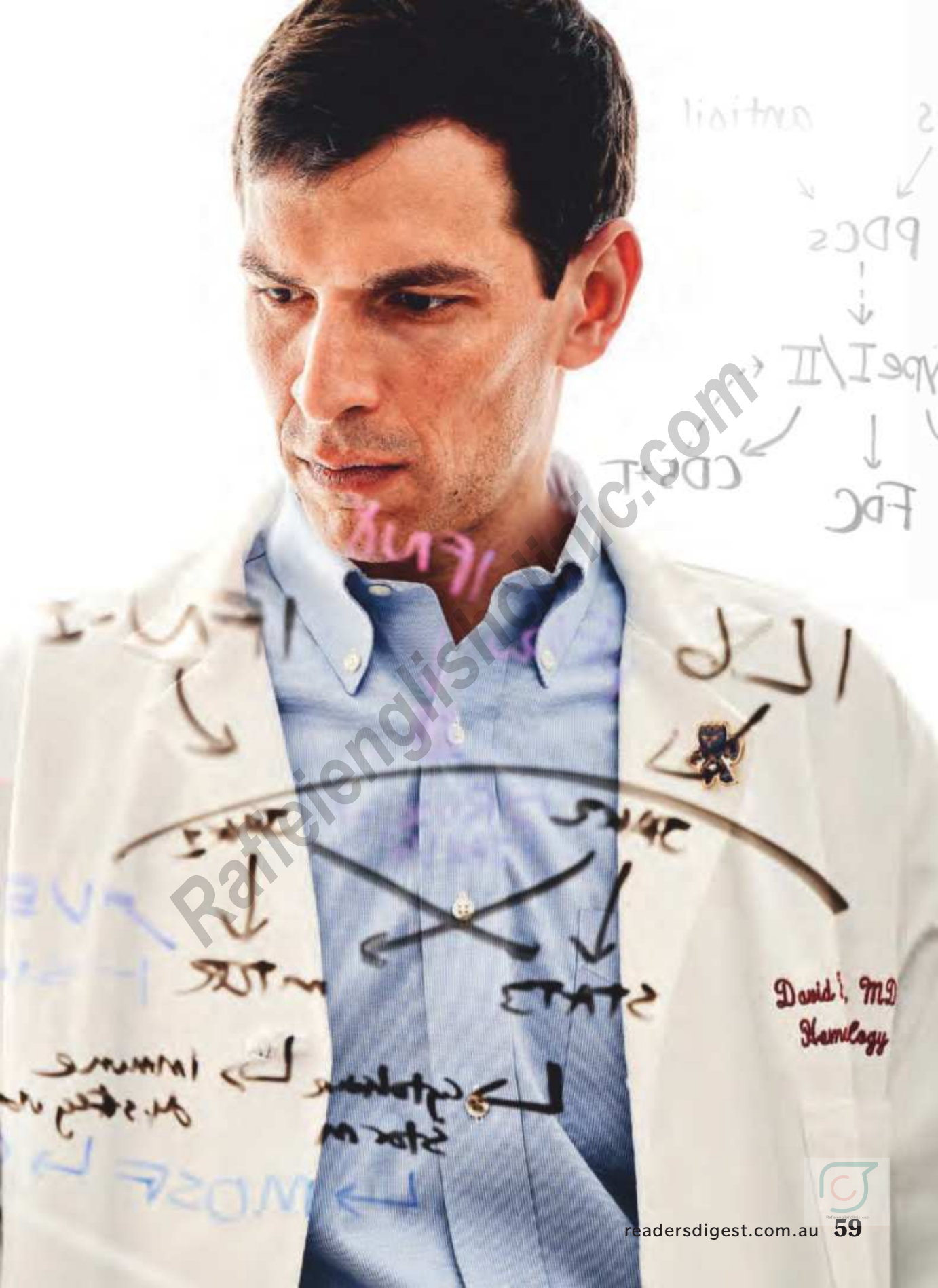
He ↓

# Cured His Own Disease

A medical student battling a deadly disorder finally got a lifeline – from his own research

BY *Ryan Prior*  
FROM **CNN.COM**

PHOTO: PETER MURRAY



Rafaelenglistic.com

David I. M.D.  
Hematology



*It was just after Christmas 2013, and David Fajgenbaum was hovering a hair above death.*

*He lay in a hospital bed at the University of Arkansas, his blood platelet count so low that even a slight bump to his body could trigger a lethal brain bleed. A doctor told him to write his living will on a piece of paper.*

David was rushed to a CT scan. Tears streamed down his face and fell on his hospital gown. He thought about the first patient who'd died under his care in medical school and how her brain had bled in a similar way from a stroke.

He didn't believe he'd survive the scan. But he did.

David was battling Castleman disease, a rare autoimmune disorder involving immune cells attacking vital organs. It wasn't the first time a relapse had threatened his life. Massive 'shock and awe' chemotherapy regimens had helped him narrowly escape death during four previous attacks, but each new assault on his body left him weaker and weaker.

PHOTOS: (OPENING SPREAD AND STORY, HAND LETTERING) MARIA AMADOR. THIS PAGE: COURTESY PEYTON WILLIAMS/ACCPHOTOS.COM



## He Cured His Own Disease

“You learn a lot by almost dying,” he says.

He learned enough to surprise his doctors by coming up with a way to treat his disease. Six years later, he’s in remission, he and his wife have a baby girl, and he’s devoting his medical career to saving other patients with Castleman disease.

As a boy, David spent Saturdays watching the North Carolina State Wolfpack football team with his dad, the team’s doctor.

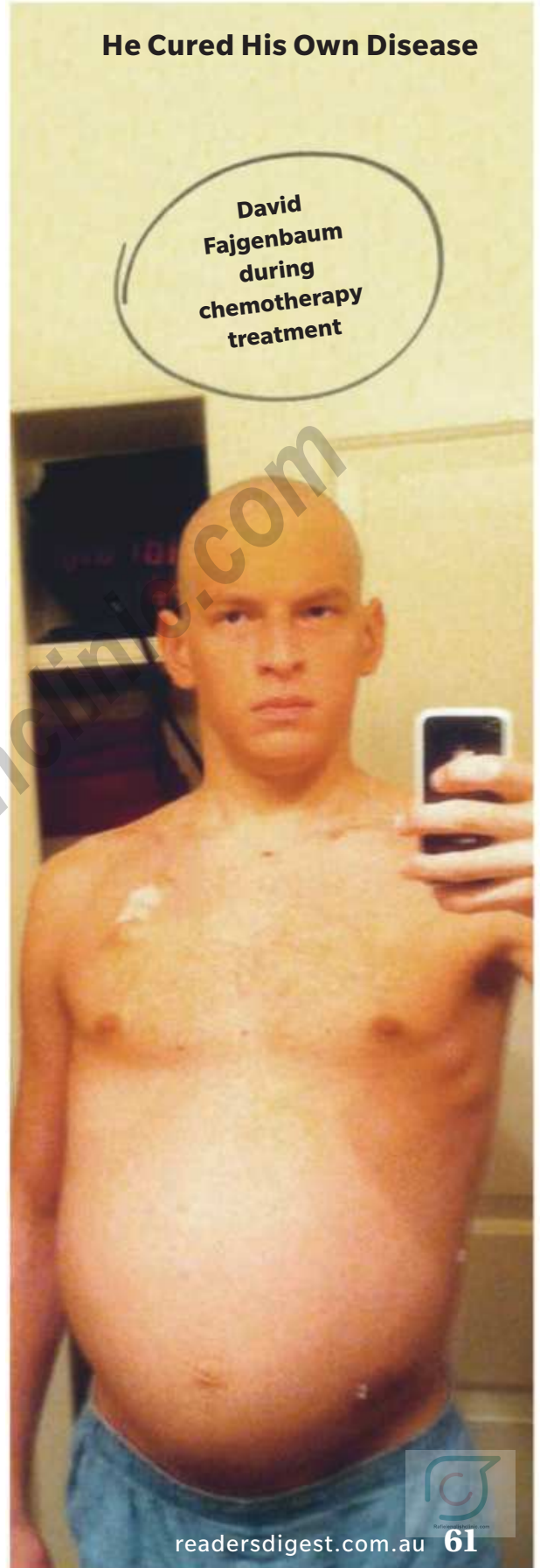
At age seven, he was obsessed with becoming a Division I athlete. In high school, he would wake up at 5am to go running. The walls of his bedroom were covered with football play charts.

He achieved his dream, making the Georgetown University football team as a quarterback. But in 2004, during his second year, his mother died of a brain tumour.

His obsessive focus deepened, helping him learn to appreciate life’s precious moments and understand that bad things happen to good people. “I know people far more worthy of miracles than I am who haven’t received them,” he says. David founded a support group for grieving university students at Georgetown called Students of AMF – an acronym for Ailing Mothers and Fathers, as well as his mother’s initials.

David went on to earn a master’s degree at the University of Oxford,

David  
Fajgenbaum  
during  
chemotherapy  
treatment



where he received extensive training in complex scientific research – that he hoped would help him fight the disease that took his mother. That relentless focus and scientific rigour would one day save his life.

David entered medical school at the University of Pennsylvania to become a doctor like his father –

*“I don't think I would have felt comfortable trying the treatment on another patient; there were too many unknowns. Who knew what problems could arise when you shut down a volatile immune system like mine”*

DAVID FAJGENBAUM, IN HIS BOOK CHASING MY CURE

specifically, an oncologist, in tribute to his late mother.

In 2010, during his third year, he got very sick and was hospitalised for five months. Something was attacking his liver, kidneys and other organs and shutting them down.

The diagnosis was idiopathic multicentric Castleman disease. First described in 1954, Castleman presents

partly like an autoimmune condition and partly like cancer. It's about as rare as amyotrophic lateral sclerosis (ALS); there are around 7000 new cases each year in the US.

The disease causes certain immune-signalling molecules, called cytokines, to go into overdrive. It's as if they're calling in fighter jets for all-out attacks on home territory.

In his hospital bed, David felt nauseated and weak. His organs were failing, and he noticed curious red spots on his skin. He asked each new doctor who came in his room what the 'blood moles' meant. But his doctors, focused on saving his life, weren't interested in them.

“They went out of their way to say they didn't matter,” David says. But the medical student turned patient would prove he was on to something.

“Patients pick up on things no one else sees,” he says.

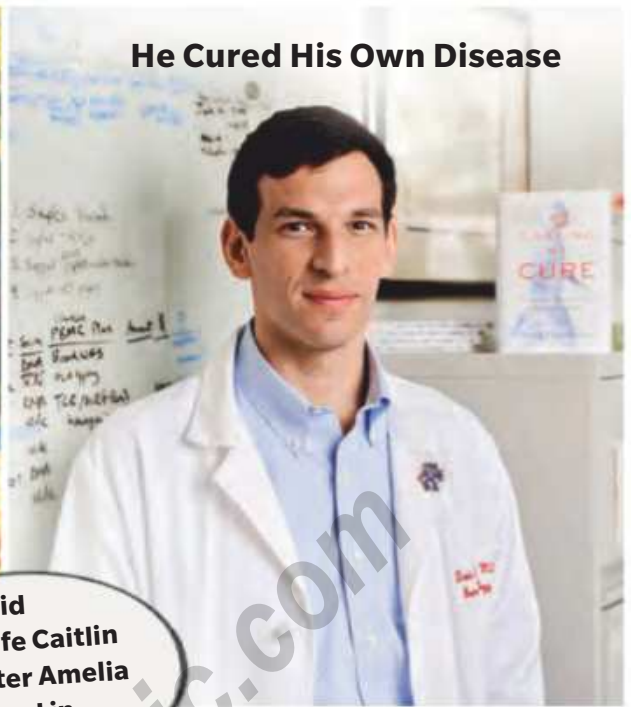
Castleman disease struck David four more times over the next three years, with stays in hospitals that ranged from weeks to months. He lived through the intense chemotherapy 'carpet bombing' campaigns, but only just. During one relapse, his family called in a priest to give him his last rites.

After all the setbacks, all the organ failure, all the chemo, David worried that his body would simply break. Yet despite it all, he managed to graduate from medical school. He also founded the Castleman Disease





**David with his wife Caitlin and daughter Amelia (left), and in his office**



## He Cured His Own Disease

Collaborative Network (CDCN), a global initiative devoted to fighting Castleman disease.

Through the CDCN, he began bringing the world's top Castleman disease researchers together for meetings in the same room. His group worked with doctors and researchers as well as patients to prioritise the studies that needed to be done soonest.

Rather than hoping for the right researchers to apply for grants, they recruited the best researchers to investigate Castleman.

David also prioritised clinical trials that repurposed drugs the US Food and Drug Administration (FDA) had already approved as safe rather than starting from scratch with new compounds. Meanwhile, he never knew whether the next

recurrence would finally kill him. Staving off relapses meant flying to North Carolina every three weeks to receive chemotherapy treatments.

Even so, he proposed to his university sweetheart, handing her a letter written by his niece that said, in part, "I'm a really good flower girl".

"The disease wasn't a hindrance to me," says his now-wife, Caitlin Fajgenbaum. "I just wanted to be together."

But in late 2013, Castleman struck again, landing David back in hospital. It marked his closest brush with death yet.

Before he and Caitlin could send out their save-the-date postcards, David set out to try to save his own life.

After examining his medical charts, he zeroed in on an idea that

## READER'S DIGEST

– more than 60 years after Castleman disease was discovered – researchers hadn't yet explored.

A protein called vascular endothelial growth factor, or VEGF, was spiking at ten times its normal level. David had learned in medical school that VEGF controls blood vessel

*“I was marrying the girl of my dreams ... Here she was saying ‘In sickness and in health, until death do us part,’ and I didn’t have to guess that she really meant it”*

— — — — —  
**DAVID FAJGENBAUM, IN HIS BOOK CHASING MY CURE**

growth, and he hypothesised that the blood moles that had shown up with every Castleman relapse were a direct result of that protein spike, which signals the immune system to take action.

He also knew that there was an immunosuppressant called sirolimus that was approved by the FDA to help fight the immune system when it activated against kidney transplants.

After consulting with a National Institutes of Health expert, David


asked his doctor to prescribe the drug. He picked it up in February 2014 at a pharmacy less than two kilometres from his home.

“A drug that could potentially save my life was hiding in plain sight,” he says.

So far, it's working. David has been in remission from Castleman for more than six years. He's not the muscular football player he once was, but he's close to full strength. He is now an assistant medical professor at the University of Pennsylvania, running a research lab and enrolling patients in a clinical trial for the drug that has given him his life back.

In 2018, he and Caitlin became parents when their daughter, Amelia, was born. “She's such a little miracle,” Caitlin says. “We're so lucky to have her.”

David hopes his story offers lessons far beyond medicine about what people can do when they're backed against a wall. And he feels his suffering means something when he looks in the eyes of his patients with Castleman disease.

One girl, named Katie, was diagnosed at age two and endured 14 hospitalisations. Then her doctor prescribed David's drug after the family reached out to the CDCN. Katie hasn't been hospitalised since and just finished kindergarten. She has even learned how to ride a bike. 

CNN.COM (SEPTEMBER 16, 2019), © 2019 BY TURNER BROADCASTING SYSTEMS, INC., CNN.COM.



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**SEE THE WORLD...**

Turn the page »

## ...DIFFERENTLY

**By looking up, visitors to Rotterdam's Market Hall can marvel at an 11,000-square-metre image projected onto its ceiling. Artists Arno Coenen and Iris Roskam employed a computer program used for making animation films in Hollywood to create giant fruit and ears of wheat as big as cranes. If you can tear your gaze from the spectacular ceiling, you won't be disappointed as the food market has dozens of stalls, offering traditionally made cheeses, exotic fruit, spices from all over the world and just about everything else in between.**

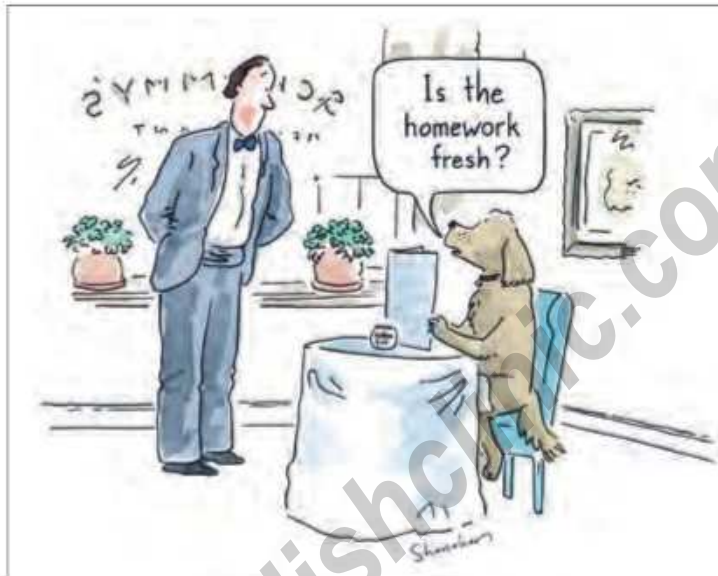
PHOTOS: ALAMY STOCK PHOTO





# LAUGHTER

## *The Best Medicine*



### **Read the Signs**

A police officer stops a car going 75 km/h when the speed limit is 60. The officer asks the man driving if he realises he was speeding.

The man replies, "Look right there - that sign says the speed limit is 75."

The officer explains that that's the highway number, not the speed limit.

As he says this, he looks in the back of the car and sees an elderly woman looking pale.

The officer asks her if she's OK, and she says, "Yes, we just got off Highway 155."

Upjoke.com

### **How to Climb a Ladder**

Step 1:

Step 2:

Step 3:

Via Reddit

### **An Affair to Forget**

A weeping woman bursts into her hypnotist's office. "I have been faithful to my husband for 15 years, but yesterday I had an affair!" she sobbed. "The guilt is killing me. I just want to forget that it ever happened!"

The hypnotist shakes his head and sighs. "Not again ..."

AS TOLD BY ALEX CHAMP,  
HYPNOTIST, ON FACEBOOK



## Office Joker

My boss just texted me: "Send me one of your funny jokes!"

I texted him back: "I'm busy working. I'll send one later."

"That's hilarious," my boss replied. "Send another one!"

Fatherly.com

## SONNY DAYS

**SON:** There's a man at the door collecting for the community swimming pool.

**DAD:** OK. Give him a glass of water.

A man is washing his car with his son.

The son asks, "Dad, can't you just use a sponge?"



**TEACHER:** If you had \$1 and you asked your father for another, how many dollars would you have?

**BOY:** One.

**TEACHER:** You don't know your arithmetic.

**BOY:** You don't know my father.

jokes.boyslife.org



## DEAD LINES

An obituary for someone you don't know can seem bland, but these lines from real ones might make you miss a person you never met:

"His regrets were few but include eating a hot dog from a convenience shop in the summer of 2002."

"His wife refuses to honour his request to have him standing in the corner of the room with a glass of Jack Daniel's in his hand so that he would appear more natural to visitors."

"When the doctors confronted his daughters with the news that 'Your father is a very sick man,' in unison they replied, 'You have no idea.'"

"He despised canned cranberry sauce, wearing shorts, cigarette butts in his driveway, porridge, loud-mouth know-it-alls, Tabasco sauce, reality TV shows and anything to do with the Kardashians."

Loveliveson.com and The New York Times



# Weird and Wonderful

*From self-lacing trainers to a pillow that stops you from*



# Inventions

BY *Andy Simmons*

ILLUSTRATIONS BY *Louise Pomeroy*

*snoring, these innovations will blow your mind – and budget*

# For years,

Donna had been desperate to get a good night's sleep. The problem: her husband. He snored. Like a train. Donna tried the standard fixes: ear-plugs for her (uncomfortable and ineffective), mouth guards and nose gizmos for him (ditto) and shoving him (again, ditto). Then she heard about a really out-there solution called the **Motion Pillow**.

Made by Korean company Ten-Minds, the pillow has four pressure-sensing airbags that connect to an outside microphone on a bedside table. Once the mic detects her hubby shaking the walls, it automatically inflates the airbags, which gently reposition his head until he stops snoring. Donna doesn't always go for the expensive gadgets – but when she heard that the Motion Pillow won an Innovations Award 2020 from the Consumer Technology Association, she decided to take the US\$378\* plunge. And it works! In fact, when she's cross with her husband, she makes snoring sounds just so the pillow will take his head on a roller-coaster ride.

These days, her husband's snoring no longer wakes Donna up – some strange woman does: "Morning, Champ! Remember, all our dreams can come true if we have the courage to pursue them!" Who is this

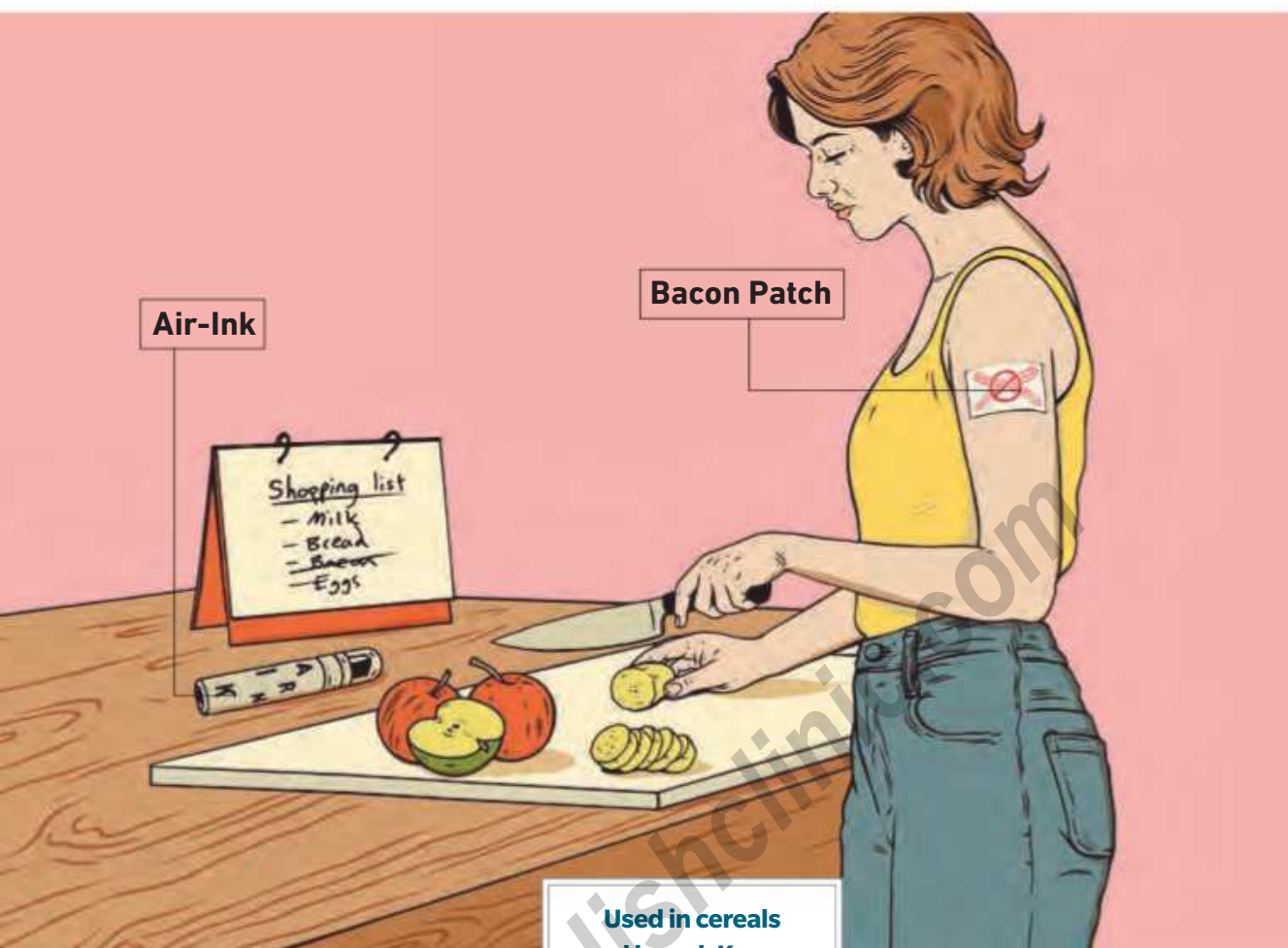


ridiculously chirpy morning person? It's Donna's new alarm clock. Bitten by the gadget bug, Donna bought the **Ruggie** for \$69. It's the only clock that gets her out of bed – quite literally.

First, it rouses her using music, those chirpy words of affirmation, or an alarm that can hit 120 decibels – a din akin to a pneumatic drill. When Donna reaches for the snooze button, she is confronted by the fact that the Ruggie doesn't have one. To make it stop, she has to haul herself out of bed and stand on a foam mat – the 'rug' in Ruggie – for up to 30 seconds. At that point, she is soundly awake.

Now that you know all about





Air-Ink

Bacon Patch

Used in cereals and bread, Kernza (above left) is a perennial grain that preserves soil health

Donna's sleeping habits, here's something else you should know about her:

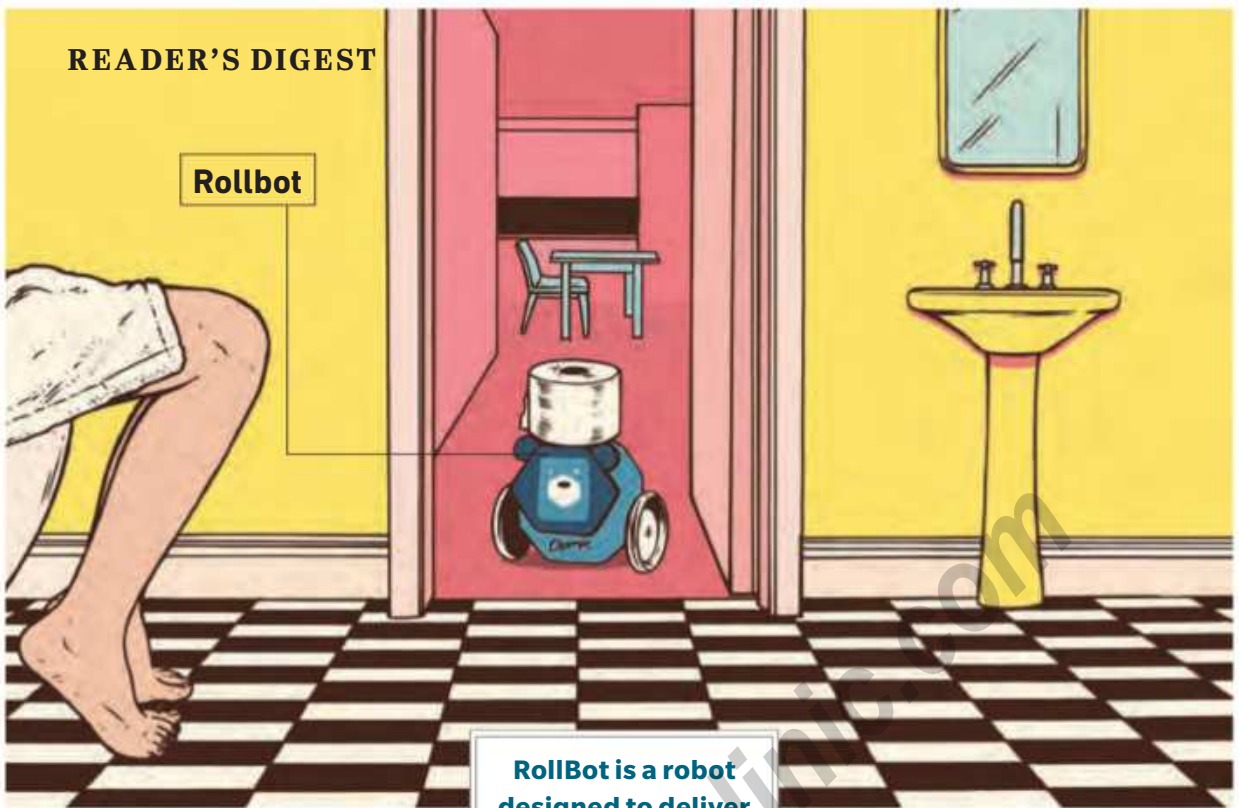
she's not real. But all the devices she encounters in this story are. A few are still in the development stage, but most are available right now. They might not change the world, but they are delightful in their own quirky ways. Even if you wouldn't benefit from owning any, it's fun to read about the weird things that marketers and inventors are coming up with.

**WHICH BRINGS US** back to Donna. As it happens, she has high cholesterol, and her weakness for bacon

doesn't help. Fortunately, a professor at England's hallowed University

of Oxford is developing the **Bacon Patch**. It's a nicotine-style patch you wear on your arm; scratch it and it releases an aroma redolent of fatty bacon. "Studies have shown that scent can reduce food cravings," insists its creator, Charles Spence. Really? That smells fishy to some sceptics. "If I can smell bacon," one bacon eater told the *Telegraph* when it reported on the faux-porcine product, "I'll want it."

Donna's actual healthy breakfast is a non-earth-shattering bowl of Honey Toasted Kernza Cereal from



**RollBot is a robot designed to deliver a fresh roll of toilet paper**

Cascadian Farm. **Kernza** is a new grain that has been touted as a possible saviour for our warming planet. Because it's a perennial – unlike wheat, oats and barley – it sucks greenhouse gases from the air and traps them in its roots, much like a tree. It also soaks up nitrogen, a fertiliser ingredient that has been blamed for polluting streams and rivers.

Alas, Kernza is high in fibre, so off to the bathroom Donna goes. “Poop anxiety is real,” a spokesperson for Charmin, a toilet paper brand, told CNN. And Donna agrees, especially when she realises she's out of toilet paper. She calls to her husband, but of course he's still asleep. So she fires up the Charmin app on her phone, and the **Rollbot** comes to the rescue.

Using infrared sensors, the self-balancing robot emblazoned with a teddy bear face arrives bearing a precious roll of preloaded toilet paper.

Saved by the robot, Donna continues to get ready for her day. She opens her dresser drawer and pulls out a pair of **Sensoria Smart Socks**. The socks (\$199) have a dock for a microelectronic chip that wirelessly relays data about cadence, pace, heart rate and more to an app on Donna's phone. You can't wear low-tech shoes with high-tech socks, so Donna also bought a \$400 pair of self-lacing trainers, the **Adapt BB 2.0**, which were created by Nike for athletes. All Donna need do is insert her foot into the trainer, and digital sensors inside the sole do the rest by



deducing her foot size and automatically closing around it.

**DONNA MAY BE** in good shape, but her pudgy pets could use some help. For her dog, she bought the **iFetch** (\$115), a small blue-and-white machine that sits on the floor and automatically launches a tennis ball up to ten metres. The dog retrieves the ball and drops it into the hole at the top, and the iFetch launches it again.

When cats dream, they envision themselves prowling the Serengeti stalking wildebeests. So Donna bought Kitty the **ProFlight Panthera Cat Toy Drone**. As its name implies, it's a drone, but this \$100 novelty flies around the room dangling a small toy for the cat to chase. It even has a built-in camera so Donna can watch Kitty from her phone. Donna's not concerned about the damage it might cause indoors because the drone is fitted with anti-collision technology that monitors its surroundings to avoid crashing into obstacles, while the auto-altitude function lets you maintain a steady height.

Before leaving the house, Donna

stops to write a note for her hubby. She reaches for a pad and her favourite pen ever, the **Air-Ink** from Graviky. The pen (available only as a prototype) literally writes with polluted air from captured carbon emissions. A cylindrical device called KAAL-INK fits around a car's tailpipe and captures up to 99 per cent of its black particulate matter, which in turn is converted into inks and paints.

Donna opens the door to a beautiful day. If she were wearing the **Mojo Lens**, a smart augmented reality (AR) contact lens from Mojo Vision, she'd know it was 22°C outside because the lens would tell her. Donna has been coveting one for a while, though it's not for sale yet. The lens is activated by eye movement and powered by a minuscule battery that lives on the lens itself. Microelectronics are used to project images on the tiniest of built-in displays. Users can call up information, scroll through text and even watch videos.

Because the technology fades away when you want to focus on the world around you, says Mojo Vision CEO Drew Perkins (the lens hides whatever was being displayed), it makes walking busy streets safe, unlike when you're looking at your smartphone. Which, luckily, Donna doesn't happen to be doing at the moment – or else she would have been clipped by a speeding suitcase gunning for her at ten kilometres per hour.

The **Ovis Suitcase** (\$640) is a

**Adapt BB 2.0**

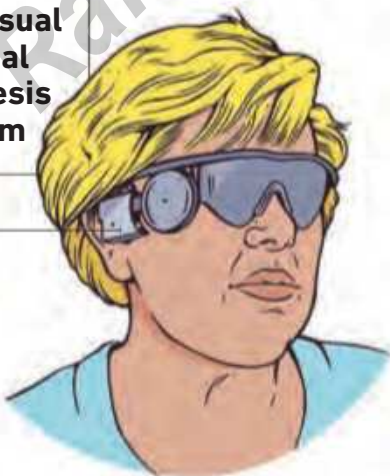


self-propelled carry-on that uses cameras, facial-recognition technology and a tracking algorithm to travel hands-free with its owner, avoiding collisions as it wends its way through crowds. “Essentially,” says Nicolas Chee, founder and CEO of ForwardX, “we’ve given the Ovis Suitcase a pair of eyes and a brain.”

It’s like luggage and a pet all in one, but you don’t have to pick up after the suitcase.

**THE OVIS DOES** a U-turn and returns to Donna, this time accompanied by its owner, a German tourist. He holds two **Ambassador** earpieces, audio devices with built-in microphones that translate on the spot. He puts one earpiece over his ear, and Donna does the same with the other. He asks in German how to get to the train station, but Donna hears the question in English. She responds in English, and he nods, understanding everything since her words are

**Orion Visual  
Cortical  
Prosthesis  
System**



relayed in German. The Ambassador translates 20 languages and 42 dialects. Donna bids the tourist and his Ovis *auf Wiedersehen*, then walks to her favourite restaurant.

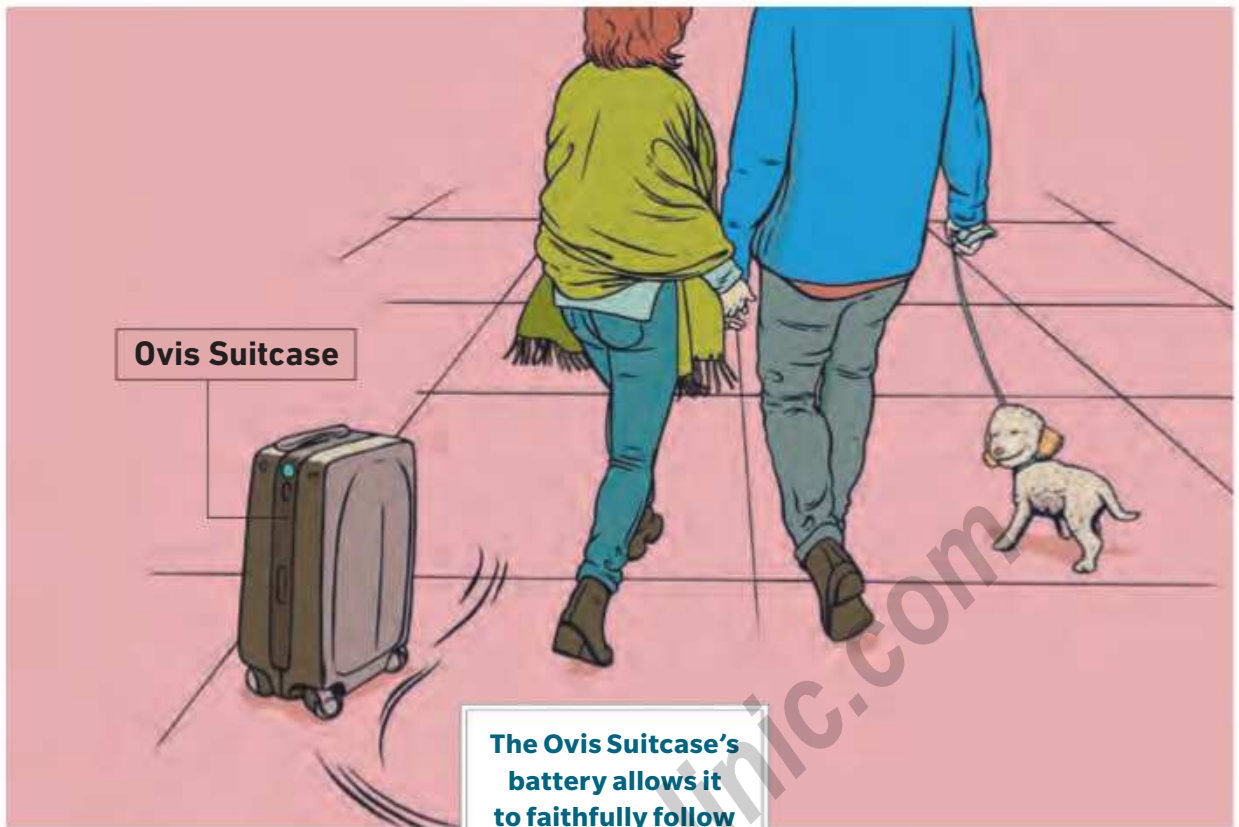
Minutes later, her friend enters wearing stylish sunglasses. “Elaine!” Donna calls out. Elaine slowly walks over and takes a seat without assistance, remarkable because she is blind. Since she was fitted with the **Orion Visual Cortical Prosthesis System** from California-based firm Second Sight, she has led a more active life.

Those stylish sunglasses carry a camera and video-processing unit (VPU). Implanted in the visual cortex of Elaine’s brain is a tiny chip containing 60 electrodes. The wireless VPU converts images from the camera into electrical pulses, which are transmitted to the electrodes on Elaine’s brain, which then figures out what she is looking at. People and objects appear as dots of light. “You don’t even need to have eyes for the device to work,” says neurosurgeon Dr Nader Pouratian, who has implanted the device in patients.

The waitress comes by, and Elaine orders a burger. Tempted by a bacon cheeseburger at the next table, Donna wishes again that she had that Bacon Patch. Instead, she orders a salad, and the two chat away. Elaine brags about the holiday her son took: he rode a bicycle across a lake.

Well, not exactly a bicycle. He rode a





Ovis Suitcase

The Ovis Suitcase's battery allows it to faithfully follow its owner for up to 20 kilometres

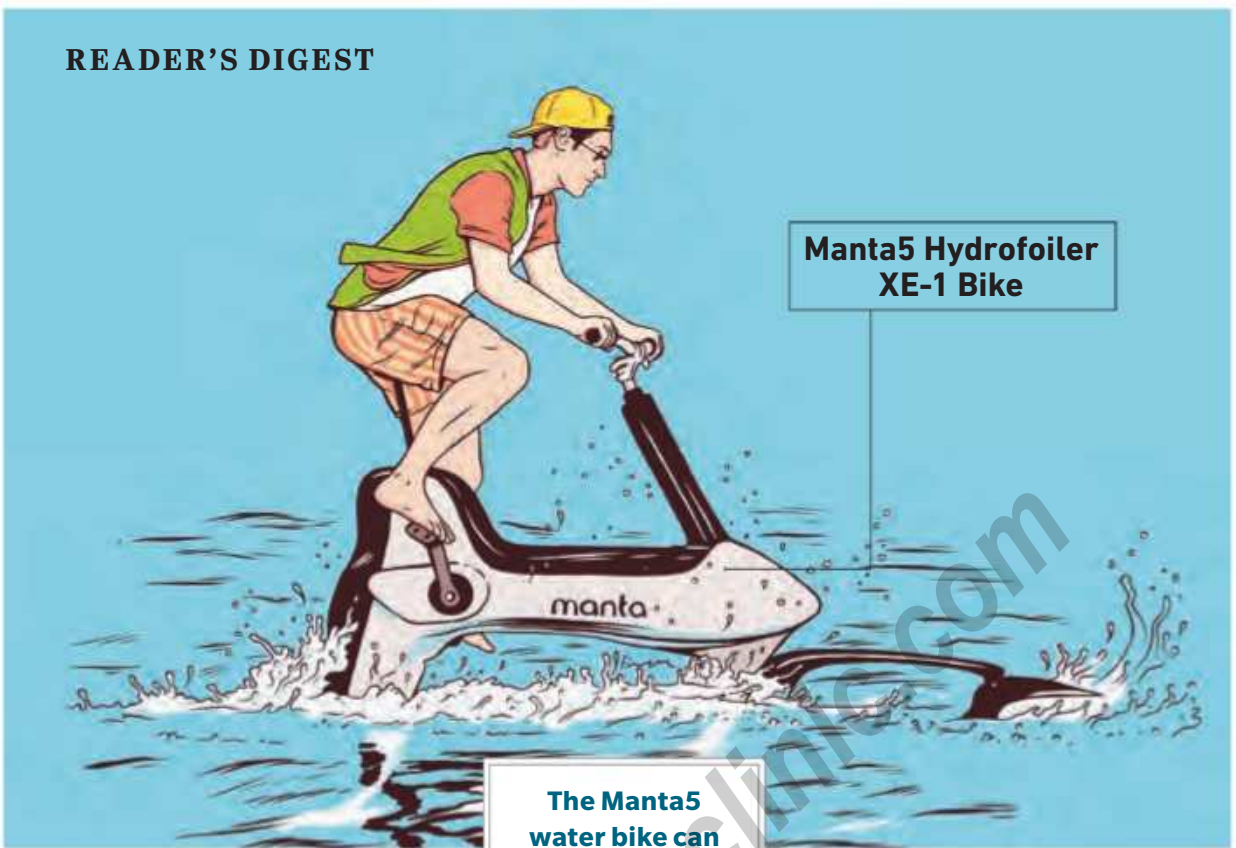
**Manta5 Hydrofoiler XE-1 Bike**, which website [digitaltrends.com](http://digitaltrends.com) calls “the unholy offspring of a boat, a plane and an e-bike.” (It also has an unholy price tag: \$8990.) Instead of wheels, the Manta5 is “equipped with a set of hydrofoils, which essentially function like wings in the water. As you pedal and propel the bike forwards, water passes over these wings and creates lift, much like plane wings create lift.”

**AS DONNA IS CROSSING** the street after lunch, she gets a text from her husband: “How do I turn off the @\$%^ iFetch?!” With her head buried in her mobile phone, she texts back, “I’m coming home!” Donna is a ‘twalker’, someone who texts while walking, and this time it’s not

a suitcase but a car that almost gets her.

She knows she has a dangerous habit – pedestrian deaths are climbing – but is happy about the protection on the way. Fred Jiang, assistant professor of electrical engineering at Columbia University, is working out the kinks on his **Smart Headphones**. When they’re perfected, four miniature microphones will “differentiate car sounds from background noise,” says [mashable.com](http://mashable.com), and work with an app to calculate the distance and position of cars in order to alert wearers when they are in danger of being run over. That sounds wonderful to Donna.

Back home, she switches off the iFetch and joins her husband on the couch to watch TV. But the screen is nowhere in sight. Donna taps a



Manta5 Hydrofoiler XE-1 Bike

The Manta5 water bike can slice through water at 20 km/h

button on a remote, and a 65-inch screen unfurls from a rectangular box sitting on a stand. It's a prototype of the not-yet-available **LG Signature OLED TV R9**. Kept erect by numerous thin horizontal bars and a pair of riser arms on its back, the screen can be raised some 50,000 times before potentially breaking down from wear, according to LG.

Donna's husband puts an arm around her. Overcome with love for him, snoring and all, she wants to tell him how she feels. But their virtual assistants, such as Amazon Echo and Google Home, may be listening to them, so she pulls out the **Bracelet of Silence**, and slips it on her wrist.

The brainchild of Ben Zhao and Heather Zheng, married computer science professors, this piece of "digital armour", as the *New York Times* calls it, "will jam the Echo or any other microphones in the vicinity from listening in on the wearer's conversations." Not yet on sale, the large, clunky plastic cuff is dotted with 24 small speakers that emit imperceptible ultrasonic signals to jam prying microphones.

After whispering sweet nothings into her husband's ear, Donna calls up Amazon Prime Video and orders a classic film, *Casablanca*. Sometimes the old stuff is still the good stuff. **R**

\* All prices cited in this article are in US dollars.



ADVENTURE

# *A Message in a Bottle*

*When a family becomes trapped at the top of a raging waterfall, they pin their hopes of rescue on a plan with little chance of succeeding*

BY *Jen McCaffery*



ILLUSTRATION: GEL JAMLANG

Curtis Whitson knew the waterfall was coming. He'd rafted down the Arroyo Seco, a river in central California, before. He figured he would hop out of his raft into the shallow water, abseil down the rocks on either side of the falls, and continue on his way, as he had on a previous trip.

But this year was different. Heavy snow and spring rains had turned the usually manageable falls into something fierce. And instead of his usual companion, he had his girlfriend, Krystal Ramirez, and 13-year-old son, Hunter with him. As the trio approached the falls in the late afternoon of the third day of their camping trip, Whitson could tell from the increasing roar of water in the narrowing canyon that they were in serious trouble. There was no way they'd be able to abseil down the rocks as planned.

"The water was just gushing through there with tremendous force," recalls Whitson, 45.

They could wade to the shore, but would anyone find them there? They had no mobile phone service, and they hadn't seen a single person in the past three days. And Whitson knew that they'd be sharing the ground with snakes and mountain lions.

As he pondered what to do, Whitson hit on a bit of luck - he heard voices coming from the other side of the falls. He yelled, but the sound of the rushing water drowned him out.

*We have to get these people a message,* Whitson thought.

He grabbed a stick and pulled out his pocketknife to carve 'Help' in it. Then he tied a rope to it so the people would know it wasn't just any stick. He tried tossing it over the falls, but it floated away in the wrong direction.

"We've got to do something!" Whitson yelled to his son. "Have we got anything else?"

## THERE WAS NO WAY THEY'D BE ABLE TO ABSEIL DOWN THE ROCKS AS PLANNED

Then he spotted his green plastic water bottle. Whitson grabbed it and carved 'Help!' on it. Krystal also reminded him that he had a pen and paper, which she'd

brought to play games with, in his backpack.

Whitson knew it was a long shot. But he scrawled '6-15-19 We are stuck here @ the waterfall. Get help

please' and shoved the note into the bottle.

This time, his throw over the waterfall was perfect.

"All right, that's all we can do," Whitson told Hunter.

It took 30 minutes to navigate back upstream to the beach where they'd had lunch. They made a fire and laid out a tarp. With no reasonable expectation that

their message in a bottle would find its way to anyone, they spelled out SOS in white rocks, which they set on the blue tarp. As the evening wore on, they placed a headlamp with a flashing light on a ledge so that the SOS could be seen from overhead.

By about 10.30pm, they decided they probably weren't going to get rescued that night, so they pulled out their sleeping bags. Before turning in, Krystal stoked the fire to keep the mountain lions away.

Then, just after midnight, they heard a helicopter hovering above them. Whitson turned to his son and started shaking him.

"They're here!" he said.

Whitson ran over to the headlamp and started flashing it at the helicopter. The three of them were waving and shouting when they heard the magic words: "This is Search and Rescue. You have been found."

The helicopter circled as the pilot looked for a good place to land. Finding none, the crew announced to the campers over the PA system that they would not be rescued until morning and told them to conserve their firewood.

The next morning, the helicopter returned and lowered a crew member down on a cable. Then rescuers slowly lifted Hunter, Krystal

and Whitson out of the gorge one by one and deposited them and their gear on the closest bluff where the helicopter could safely land.

It was a moment of pure happiness as the three chatted with the officers who had rescued them. Together, they marvelled at the unlikelihood of it all.

"They said that in the 25 years that they've been performing these kinds of rescues, no one's ever been rescued by a message in a bottle," Whitson says.

When the officers dropped them back at the Arroyo Seco Campground, the trio learned more about the long-shot events that had saved them. Two men had seen the water bottle bobbing in the water. When they picked it up, they noticed the writing on it - 'Help!' - which piqued their curiosity. Then they realised there was a note inside. After they

### BEFORE TURNING IN, THEY STOKED THE FIRE TO KEEP THE MOUNTAIN LIONS AWAY

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read it, they quickly went to the campground, turned the bottle in, and took off without leaving their names.

"It wasn't about notoriety; it wasn't about leaving their names," Whitson says. "It was just a matter of: here's the water bottle, here's the note, here's the information we know."

A few days after news of the rescue broke, one of the hikers contacted

## "IT WASN'T ABOUT NOTORIETY; IT WASN'T ABOUT LEAVING THEIR NAMES"

swam to get it. Whitson is planning on having a big barbecue to meet the hikers – and thank them.

"I imagine it's going to be one of the greatest moments of my life," Whitson says. **R**

Whitson. That's when he learned the rest of the story. There were actually two little girls hiking with the men that day. It was the girls who first spotted the bottle and

---

◆ ◆ ◆

### Artificial or Real? That Is the Question

Researchers at IBM Research Australia, the University of Toronto and the University of Melbourne used an artificial intelligence (AI) bot to analyse more than 2600 sonnets by William Shakespeare. They then asked the AI to use what it had 'learnt' to create its own poem. Can you tell which of the two stanzas below was penned by the Bard and which one was written by a machine?

**A:** *With joyous gambols gay and still array*

*No longer when he twas, while in his day*

*At first to pass in all delightful ways*

*Around him, charming and of all his days*

**B:** *Thy glass will show thee how thy beauties wear*

*Thy dial how thy precious minutes waste*

*The vacant leaves thy mind's imprint will bear*

*And of this book this learning mayst thou taste*

ANSWER: THE MACHINE WROTE A; SHAKESPEARE WROTE B.



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# PLANTING SEEDS OF Hope

*In my darkest days, gardens have offered the promise of new life*

BY Sara B. Franklin

FROM **LONGREADS.COM**

**T**he day after schools and our three-year-old twins' daycare centre closed, due to the Covid-19 outbreak, I sent the kids to their babysitter one final time - frantic for a couple hours to get a few things done before I turned myself over to motherhood, all day, every day, for the foreseeable future.

There were piles of laundry to do and a shopping list that needed tending, urgently. But I found myself

drawn out into the garden, still covered with mulch for its wintry slumber. Poking around, I saw early signs of life; the rhubarb had poked its rippling, fuchsia crowns out of the earth, and the tiny frills of wild nettles were several centimetres high in the untended back corner. The chives, too, had suddenly shot up in the preceding days' warmth. *It seemed too early*, I thought, running back in my mind over all my years of planting. But then, this was the winter that never was, the deep

freeze that never came. The unease has been around us for months now. The geese came home early, turtles are resting on logs already, the frogs out in the pond a full month ahead.

I wasn't ready, but the earth was ready; the plants were telling me so. So I pulled my box of seeds from the kitchen shelf. In the shed out the back, I wrangled a sharply-tipped hoe from behind a mess of bikes and lawn chairs. In the garden, I knelt over a bed, pulled aside the browned grass clippings from the last mowing of autumn, made two shallow rows, and dropped seeds into the ground - tiny, almond-shaped lettuce seeds and those of kale and mustard greens, like burgundy poppy seeds.

*It might be too early*, I thought as I sprinkled the harbingers of life into place, *but it's worth a shot*. Anything hopeful, right now, is worth a shot.

I should know. I've been here before, in another time, another life, it seems.

**I WOKE THE MORNING** after my mother took her last breath, on March 8, 2008, and I padded down the stairs of my childhood home in the weak late winter light. I was emptied out, exhausted, bewildered and totally unmoored. I was 21 years old. Before coffee, and without thinking, I reached for a packet of seeds; I'd ordered a whole season's worth when I moved home to help my mother - who had pancreatic cancer - die, planning to revive the vegetable

garden she'd tended when I was a kid.

The garden had sat, abandoned, in recent years, and had become overrun with weeds. I envisioned the cathartic pleasure of ripping all those invasive weeds out, turning old manure into the dirt, pushing all my fury and confusion back into the earth as if to purge myself of it.

That morning after her death, so many months sooner than we'd anticipated, I went through the broken screen door and onto the back steps where I'd stowed the gardening supplies. I emptied a few handfuls of cool, loamy potting soil into a plastic seed tray, and carried it back indoors. Gently, I pushed a pea seed, wrinkled and grey-green, into each compartment, then nudged a bit of soil over their tops. I took the tray to the kitchen, sprinkled the whole thing with water, and set it on a sunny windowsill.

The impulse had come from somewhere beneath consciousness, a desperate bid to catalyse new life in the immediate wake of death. Time had been frozen those past few weeks, as we spent idle, torturous days by my mum's bedside, waiting for death to come for her and also desperate to keep it at bay.

Pushing seeds into soil, I felt myself calling down the spirits of time, begging them to bring me back into their folds: please, let me rejoin this life. I'm emptied out, but I'm not done.

Now, 12 years later, I can't seem to

leave my garden. Something about the scene is so reminiscent of those days when we were awaiting my mother's death – immediate family only, no one coming in, no one going out. Time was leaden, then, swimming as if through oil, distorted and heavy. Now, too, all of us, hold our breaths for the next death toll, the latest confirmation of encroaching shutdown and pending isolation.

I SCROLL AIMLESSLY and endlessly on my phone as the kids stack broken bricks in the yard, or watch too much TV, or whine for my attention. I hardly hear them. I should be present to my children, I want to be, I admonish myself. But I'm hanging on the edge of time, waiting for something definitive to happen. Nothing comes, of course. Only the expansion of fear and regulation, a looming mass of edgy uncertainty that's taken all of us into its hungry maw.

In the garden, on another warm day, I straighten my body momentarily to ease the ache in my back. I've been shoving the garden fork into the cool soil to turn it up over

itself for nearly an hour now. My fingers are caked in dirt, two knuckles broken open and bleeding. I relish the tiny hurt. The garden, now, is the only place I can find a pool of stillness, can channel something of reality.

My children run about the yard wielding sticks, suddenly feral with the dissolution of routine and socialisation. The dogs are delighted and surprised to have us home all day, and they leap about, pulling a toy back and forth between themselves and growling gustily.

I crouch again, pull at weeds, stomp a shovel into mulch, and turn earthworms into the compost pile. I need things here, in this garden, to hurry up and show themselves, to tell me we're still moving forwards, somehow, in this sudden suspension of time. I need to believe it's a pause, not a cessation. Come on, I seem to be saying to it all, come on. We've got mettle to prove. We're not ready to go yet. **R**

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**THE GARDEN,  
NOW, IS THE  
ONLY PLACE  
I CAN FIND  
A POOL OF  
STILLNESS**



**Running on Coffee**

**I believe humans get a lot done, not because we're smart,  
but because we have thumbs so we can make coffee.** FLASH ROSENBERG



## FINISH THIS SENTENCE

# The First Thing I Learned in Isolation Was...

*... to make my own mayonnaise.*

VINCENT DEBERQUE,  
FRANCE

*... that what seemed the most important (work) can actually wait.*

ELENA LOPEZ,  
MEXICO

*... that during lockdown the planet is recovering from us.*

SONIA MARÍA,  
COSTA RICA

*... fear*

MARTHA LAMOTA,  
ECUADOR

*... that there is no enemy too small.*

JORGE ALBERTO GARZON NARVAEZ,  
COLOMBIA

*... that who we are depends on others.*

FÁTIMA CORDEIRO,  
PORTUGAL

*... that I should have bought that exercise machine when I had the chance.*

ED BAUTISTA,  
PERU

*... that Paraguayans, despite our love of drama, can keep our sense of humour.*

MARIELA PANIAGUA,  
PARAGUAY

*... how pleasant an old-fashioned game of cards can be.*

**GERT VAN WESEMAEL,**  
BELGIUM

*... that it's silly to hoard toilet paper.*

**RITVA LÖNNQVIST,**  
FINLAND

*... that there are many people willing to help me.*

**JANS WESTLAND,**  
THE NETHERLANDS

*... that you can eat garlic with a much clearer conscience.*

**MICHAEL,**  
GERMANY

*... that no one can serve you better than yourself.*

**DEEPA SEHGAI,**  
INDIA

*... that my hair grows faster than I thought.*

**MAKS,**  
SLOVENIA

*... I shouldn't have worked that hard all my life.*

**AH MAR,**  
MYANMAR

*... that the cat thinks I'm a chair.*

**JANE TOBIN,**  
NEW ZEALAND

*... to train my positive thoughts and to get them to gain muscle.*

**PAOLA DI MARCO,**  
SPAIN

*... that the neighbours are noisy!*

**DENISE MEURANT,**  
AUSTRALIA



## DIET

# Food for Fitness

*What, if anything, should you eat before a workout?*

BY *Alexa Erickson*

**D**o you like working out on an empty stomach, or need the benefit of having some fuel in the tank to help power you through a morning of exercise? Whether your goal is to burn fat or build muscle mass, here's what scientists discovered when they investigated the impact the timing of our food choices have on our exercise habits.

While more studies are needed, scientists recently came to some conclusions about one important



question: whether it makes more sense to eat before or after your sweat session.

### **TIMING MATTERS**

In a 2017 study published in the *American Journal of Physiology: Endocrinology and Metabolism*, UK researchers had a group of overweight males walk for one hour at 60 per cent maximum oxygen consumption on an empty stomach; then, on another day, they had them walk again for two





FROM RD.COM; PHOTO: SHUTTERSTOCK

hours after eating a high-kilojoule, high-carbohydrate breakfast. The researchers collected multiple blood samples after eating and while fasting, as well as after exercising. They also took adipose tissue (fat) samples directly before and after an hour of walking.

### **BURNING BODY FAT**

The results showed differences in gene expression of the fat tissue in the two trials. The two genes they looked at, PDK4 and HSL, increased

as a result of the volunteers fasting and exercising and decreased when they ate before exercising.

The researchers believe that the rise in PDK4 likely shows that stored fat was used to fuel metabolism during exercise as opposed to carbohydrates from food and that HSL increased when the fat tissue used stored energy to

## **“IT TAKES SEVERAL HOURS TO FULLY FINISH THE RESPONSE TO DIGESTING A MEAL”**

---

benefit a boost in exercise. In short: when the volunteers exercised without a pre-workout snack, they burned off body fat instead of fuel from food.

According to Dylan Thompson, one of the study authors, the results support the view that fat tissue often faces competing challenges. “For instance, after eating it is busy responding to the meal, and a bout of exercise at this time will not stimulate the same beneficial changes in adipose or fat tissue,” he says.

“This means exercise in a fasted state might provoke more favourable changes in adipose tissue,” he says, “and could be beneficial for health in the long term.”



## WHAT EXACTLY IS FASTING?

How long do you have to forego food to meet their definition of fasting? "It can take several hours to fully finish the response to digesting a meal," says Thompson. "The best advice would be to ensure that your last meal was four hours before exercise to get the effect that we reported. Or exercise before breakfast – this is exactly what we did."

It's actually less important how you refuel post-exercise, especially if you're active generally. "This is only really an issue for people who are looking to train more than one time on one day," Thompson says. "This is therefore important for more serious athletes, but for everyone else, it is probably fine to follow a normal meal pattern without worrying too much about refuelling."



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◆ ◆ ◆

### What's in a Name?

A Swedish mother wanted to have the name of her two year old tattooed on her arm. Although Kevin is not a complicated name, the tattoo artist managed to misspell it by adding an l, turning it into Kelvin. The mother was horrified. But after learning it would take multiple treatments to remove the tattoo, she and her husband came up with a far simpler and less painful fix:

They changed their son's name to Kelvin. CTV NEWS

A New Zealand post office had the task of delivering a parcel '2 Kay + Philip', with no surname or proper street address and one mangled clue: "On a farm, situated up a long drive with cows, opposite Cust pub or thereabouts." Amazingly, they found the rightful recipients after the postal worker left the parcel with the owner of a service station in the village of Cust in North Canterbury, which has a population of 450. The service station put the 'address' on Facebook. More than 2300 people shared it, and soon a man named Philip walked into the post office and said, "I think we own this parcel." THE GUARDIAN

For new parents looking for unusual baby names, a baby website has recently revealed its top picks. For girls: Breeze, Fable, Gypsy, Spring and Sugar. For boys: Cub, Fender, Rhaegar (from *Game of Thrones*) and Marlin (from *Finding Nemo*). BOUNTYPARENTS.COM.AU







# Access help at home

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## ALL IN A DAY'S WORK

### *Humour on the Job*

#### **Under Groomed**

A colleague once showed up to the office in a white wedding dress with a crinoline, beading – the works. When our manager asked why she'd worn her wedding dress to the office, my colleague replied, "I was out of clean clothes and didn't feel like doing the laundry."

LAUREN EMILY ON FACEBOOK

#### **No Cure Available**

The medical school at the university where I work was once celebrating an event and decided to hand out gift pens with the inscription 'Faculty of Medicine'. The more you bought from the supplier, the lower the cost, so the university bought 2000 pens. When the pens arrived, all 2000 of them read: 'Faulty of Medicine'.

SUBMITTED BY ROBERT HALSTEAD

#### **Friendly Service**

Our booking office had three phones. One day during lunch,



I was responsible for answering all of them. It was a constant repeat of "May I help you?" or "Will you hold?" I think I got confused because I surprised one man on the other end of the line when I answered his call with, "May I hold you?"

SUBMITTED BY VERA GRANGER

## Potty Humour

I was working from home, interviewing a famous neurologist for an article, when my three year old announced she had to go potty and waddled into the bathroom.

After some loud moans, she yelled, "I did it, Mum! I pooped in the toilet! I pooped on the floor too! But I'll clean it! Oh, I stepped in it!"

There was an uncomfortable silence as I realised the doctor had heard every word.

"Ha ha," I laughed nervously. "Do you have kids?"

"No," he said, "and I never will."

SUBMITTED BY CHARLOTTE ANDERSEN

## Customer Knows Best

I said "Sorry for the wait" to a customer and she said, "No, you're not." And you know what? She was right. @STEPHFRANCEX

## Wicked Wife

My husband is in a work Zoom meeting, so every few minutes I silently walk behind him dressed as a new character from the musical *Wicked*. @LIZ\_HACKETT

## Hard Worker

**ME:** I'm overwhelmed, exhausted, too many tasks. Help! What can be done? Will I live this way forever?

**ME, AFTER REPLYING TO ONE EMAIL:**

I'm magnificent; what a powerful workhorse. Time to celebrate with a beer - reward this titan of industry!

@KRISTEN\_ARNETT

## Rule of Law

**ME:** I'm not saying a word without my lawyer present.

**COP:** You are the lawyer.

**ME:** Exactly, so where's my present?

@MARFSALVADOR

## SOLDIERING ON

We can thank soldiers and sailors for the words 'umpteenth' and 'skedaddle'. Here's more military slang that deserves use.

• **Crumb catcher:** mouth.

• **Flight suit insert:** pilot.

• **Fruit salad:** ribbons and medals worn on a uniform.

• **Galloping dandruff:** lice.

• **Fang farrier:** army dentist.

• **Ink stick:** pen.

• **Left-handed monkey wrench:** a nonexistent item recruits are tricked into looking for.

• **Soup sandwich:** a situation

that has gone horribly wrong.

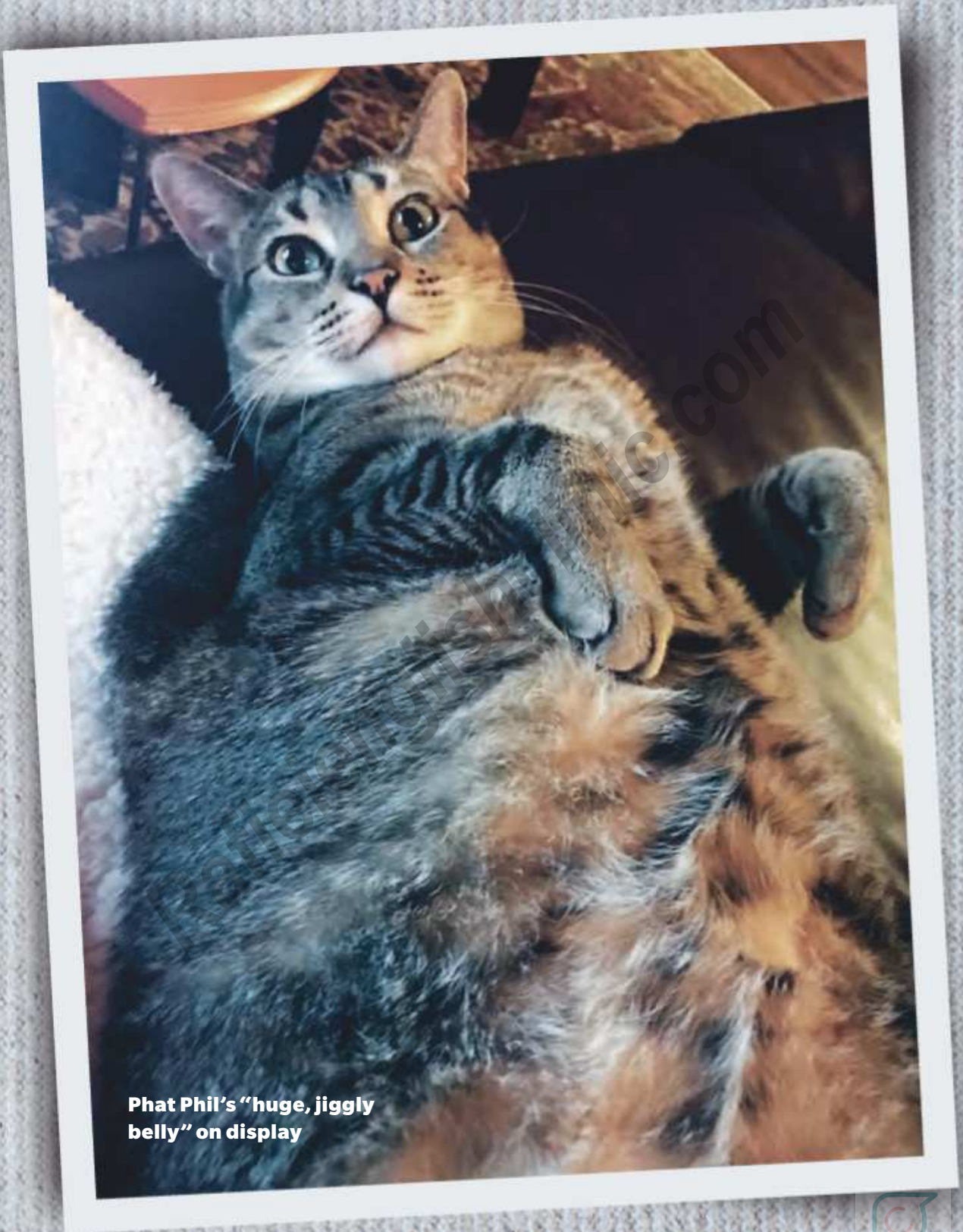
• **Oxygen thief:** someone who talks too much.

• **Voluntold:** forcibly volunteered for an assignment.

MILITARY.COM

"What a Soup Sandwich!"





**Phat Phil's "huge, jiggly belly" on display**



# *Phat Phil's* ROAD TO SLIM

*At 11 kilograms of feline flabulosity, Phat Phil needed to lose weight – but try telling him that*

---

BY *Lindsay Van Gelder*

**M**y cat Jean-Philippe is not what you might charitably describe as “big-boned”. In fact, his head and his tail are on the petite side. But then there’s his giant, jiggly belly. A year ago, he weighed in at just under 11 kilograms. Now he’s a svelte 9.5 kilos, although our journey is far from over.

Depending on your age and cultural tastes, you might describe him as the feline Orson Welles, or maybe the kitty John Belushi, or perhaps the tabby Notorious B.I.G. I usually call him Phat Phil. I love him, but he is basically a meat loaf with fur. That makes him adorable and lovable, but not all that healthy. To make sure that Phil sticks around for as long as possible,



I knew I needed to make some changes to his diet – whether or not he was fully on board with them.

### Phil's feral past

Not to make excuses for him, but let me tell you a little about his back story. I adopted him when he was about six months old. Before he came to my house, he had been feral, found with a couple of other kittens hiding in a sewer grate. The rescue group that captured him told me he had been kept alive by hunting lizards and from the generosity of a man who worked in a local bakery who gave him handouts. From reptile burgers and bread carbs, there was nowhere to go but up.

Like many former feral animals, Phil always tended to act as if he were starving to death. He wolfed down his

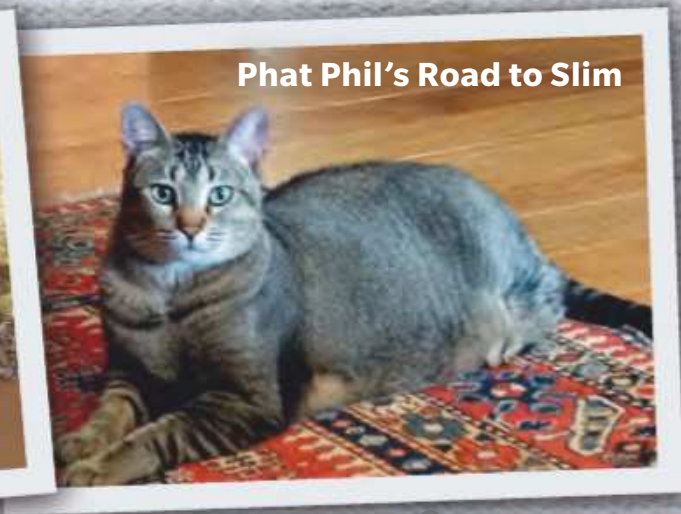
cat food and whined for more. But as an indoor-outdoor cat, he was at least getting plenty of exercise. Outdoor life is hazardous for cats – they can be hit by cars, felled by diseases, and set upon by predators – but waistline expansion is not a major risk. All of that changed when I moved Phil and his (non-feral, non-fat) adopted

sister, Tufa, across the country to a fourth-floor apartment. He became a full-time foodie. Eleven porkishly plump kilograms of feline flabulosity.

In hindsight, maybe creating a pet paradise in my backyard would have been a good idea to ensure he got a little more exercise.

Since I am the Opener of the Cans, I can only blame myself. I'm admittedly a pushover. I felt sorry for him, deprived of his lizard kingdom. I also made the same mistake I've made

**SINCE I AM  
THE OPENER  
OF THE CANS,  
I CAN ONLY  
BLAME MYSELF**



when I've tried to shed a few human kilos. Oh, how much could it hurt? I was clearly in denial. I finally realised things were getting out of hand – OK, out of paw – when he outgrew his cat carrier and the new one that was the right size for him was marketed to medium-sized dogs.

### **A dawning of a diet**

His vet emphatically suggested a diet. Cats are vulnerable to many of the same health problems that obese humans are – and in fact, X-rays show that Phil already has some arthritis in his front paws. In his case, the stakes are even higher; he had a tumour removed from one of his back legs, and if it ever comes back, the veterinary recommendation is amputation. The vets say that tripod cats usually do quite well under those circumstances, but not if they're dragging around the equivalent of a whole other cat.

Although Phat Phil needed to become Sylph-Like Phil, or at least

Somewhat-Less-of-a-Chunky Phil, it's dangerous for cats to lose weight too quickly. Crash diets can cause a potentially fatal condition called hepatic lipidosis. Rather than slash Phil's weight by half or more, the vet decided to aim for a more modest goal of eight kilograms – still 25 per cent of his body weight, or the equivalent of a 91-kilogram human whittling down to 68 kilos. She sent me to a website that calculates how many kilojoules a day a cat needs in order to slim at a healthy pace. We were on our way.

You apparently need advanced algebra to count cat-food kilojoules.

Phil eats a combination of raw, freeze-dried, and canned food, and he began his diet at 1133 kilojoules a day. Have you ever tried to figure out the kilojoules in your cat's favourite brands? Some don't say at all. Others tell you in teeny-tiny print. Or they publish it in terms that require you to revise on high school algebra and

figure out, say, that if 450 grams of freeze-dried chicken nuggets contain 523 kilojoules, with a kitchen cup weighing about 700 grams, and 50 nuggets fit in a cup, each nugget has... wait, carry the 3.... In general, this is the very best diet for cats, according to vets.

Not surprisingly, a small food scale and a calculator are now fixtures in my cat-food cupboard. I also realised that there's a huge disparity in how fattening different foods are. A small pouch of one of Phil's favourite brands can range from under 200 kilojoules to more than 400. So, one of the first things I had to do was to find a happy medium of flavours that he liked, that would satisfactorily fill him up, and that would stay within his kilojoule count.

And hooray! After more than a year, he's down to nine kilos and change - on a good day - and his daily kilojoule count has been

reduced to 1050. But it's an ongoing struggle. He's a hardened, cagey, sneaky food thief. I feed his sister on a high benchtop that he can't reach, but he regards the dining-room table as fair game. Just this morning,

I got distracted for a moment and realised he (who had already chowed down breakfast) had sprinted off with a piece of my smoked salmon.

**IT'S AN  
ONGOING  
STRUGGLE.  
HE'S A  
HARDENED,  
SNEAKY  
FOOD THIEF**

**And the battle  
continues**

He wheedles. And nags. He starts lobbying for dinner at about 1pm, sometimes rising up on his hind legs and tapping me on the shoulder with his front paw as I sit at my computer. If he had a watch, he'd be pointing at it. Resisting his pleas takes as much self-control on my part that I can muster. But I persevere.

And any month now, my boy is going to slim down that dog-sized body and become the size of a very large cat. **R**

---

**Cash Stash Turns to Trash**

**A man in Taiwan who buried about \$280,000 in cash five years ago is learning the hard way there may be better ways to store his life savings. On digging it up, the man, a farmer known only as Wang, discovered the bank notes were rotten and mouldy and broke apart on contact, according to news reports. About \$70,000 of the notes were unable to be restored. UPI.COM**





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# WATCH WHAT YOU'RE EATING

*Many of our everyday foods — processed and convenient — are dangerous to our health*

---

BY *Susannah Hickling*



“**A**

re you happy to heat up a frozen pizza again,” I asked my son as I got ready to go out. What 16 year old doesn’t love pizza? “Make sure you have a salad with it,” I instructed, keen to ensure he’d

be eating a healthy meal. But glancing at the ingredients on the pizza box, I began to have my doubts.

Not only were there high amounts of salt, saturated fat and sugar in that innocent-looking pepperoni pizza, there were also mysterious ingredients such as glucose syrup, dextrose, yeast extract and sodium nitrite. What on earth was I feeding my son on nights when I was out with my friends? I vowed to find out more.

Today, 39% of adults in the world aged 18 or over are overweight, with 13% obese. Carrying excess kilos can cause a host of life-threatening health problems from diabetes to heart disease to cancer. One of the reasons why people are overweight is that they are eating ever more ultra-processed or convenience foods – foods that contain additives and other unlikely ingredients.

Despite most countries requiring food manufacturers to list all ingredients contained in packaged food to help consumers make healthy food choices, studies show that consumers are increasingly choosing manufactured foods with unhealthy ingredients.

In Australia, 42 per cent of people’s diets consist of ultra-processed

foods such as ready meals, industrially made bread, desserts, sugary cereals and sweetened drinks. A 2019 New Zealand study of packaged food on supermarket shelves found that more than two-thirds was classified as ultra-processed.

A fast-paced lifestyle and the accessibility of processed food and drinks is contributing to the rising global incidence of diabetes and obesity. A 2016 Global Panel on Agriculture and Food Systems for Nutrition report found that people living in Southeast Asia are shifting away from traditional starch-based diets and towards food rich in fat, protein, dairy and sugar, much of it packaged and processed.

The report blames these trends on changing food environments.

Healthy foods such as fruit and vegetables are becoming increasingly expensive in most countries, while unhealthy and fast food is becoming cheaper and easier to buy.

Start eating unhealthy food young and you could die young. In a 2019 Spanish study of nearly 20,000 university graduates who were followed up over 14 years, with an average age of 37.6 years at the outset, 335 people died. The main cause was cancer. Researchers found that the participants who ate the most ultra-processed food – more than four servings a day – were 62 per cent more likely to have died during the study. They were also more likely to have a higher BMI – more weight in relation to height – than those who ate the least.

As I dug deeper, I was surprised at some of the additions in our everyday, highly refined diet and the effect they have on our health. Here are some of the commonly consumed processed foods – and their ingredients – we'd all do well to limit.

### Added Sugar

Adding sugar of any kind, whether brown or white, honey, corn syrup, sucrose or even fruit juice concentrate, to food means we're tempted to eat more of it. This can cause us to pile on the weight. There's actually no such thing as a healthy added sugar.

Added sugars are everywhere. They're in baby food, tomato sauce,



pasta sauces, ready-made meals and potato crisps, to name just a few.

They're even in some granolas, which are touted as a healthy breakfast cereal. "Try switching to bran flakes, which are high in fibre, or porridge made with semi-skimmed or skimmed milk," recommends nutrition scientist Simon Steenson. "Top this off with a sliced banana or a handful of berries and you're on your way to one of your recommended five-a-day servings of fruit and veg."

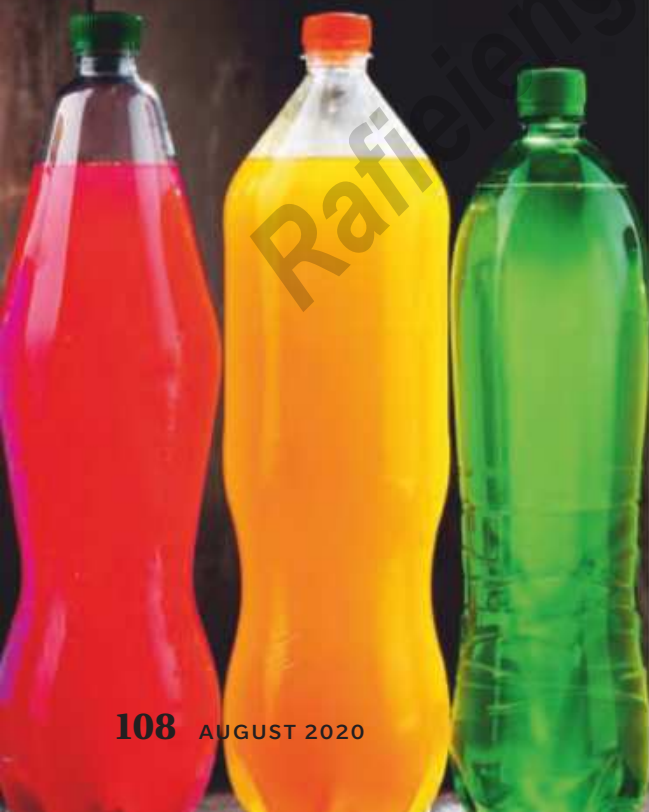
According to a major 2014 US study, you could be nearly three times as likely to die from heart disease if added sugar makes up 25 per cent or more of your diet, compared to keeping sugar intake to less than ten per cent.

## READER'S DIGEST

A 2019 study of more than 450,000 people from ten European countries found that people who drank more than one sugar-sweetened soft drink a day – soft drinks are one of the main sources of sugar in our diet – had a 59 per cent higher chance of dying from digestive diseases, such as liver disease and pancreatic and intestinal problems, compared to consumers who drank less than one a month.

A food label might simply say 'sugar' but the higher up it appears in the list of ingredients, the more sugar your product contains. If the added item ends in 'ose' – like sucrose, glucose, maltose, fructose – it's a sugar. Molasses, agave syrup and hydrolysed starch are added sugars, too.

### ARTIFICIAL SWEETENERS



## Artificially Sweetened Soft Drinks

It's pretty easy to spot soft drinks containing synthetic sweeteners. You might see 'diet', 'sugar free', 'zero sugar' or 'low calorie'. Look on the list of ingredients for aspartame (E951), acesulfame K (E950), saccharin (E954) or sucralose (E955), or a combination of these.

Don't go thinking that just because something is free of added natural sugars, it's good for you. Three studies last year found a link between gulping too many artificially sweetened drinks and premature death from all causes.

"Compared with low consumers of these drinks (less than one glass per month), those drinking two or more glasses per day had a 52 per cent higher risk of dying from strokes, heart attacks and other cardiovascular conditions," explains nutrition researcher Amy Mullee, co-author of the 2019 large soft drinks study.

Diet colas, lemonade, tonic water, sports drinks, diluted syrups and squashes, sweetened fruit juices – any drink containing an artificial sweetener, whether fizzy or flat, is in the frame.

All the experts say the same thing: drink water. Sounds boring? Add a slice of lemon, mint or cucumber to sparkling or still water.

## Nitrates and Nitrites

When you're frying up bacon for breakfast, the smell is to die for, but

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## NITRATES & NITRITES

you could be preparing a distinctly unhealthy meal.

Salts of nitrates and nitrites are used legally to preserve processed meats like bacon, pancetta, ham, sausages, salami – and yes, even the pepperoni on my son’s pizza. They’re also used in some cheeses. But nitrates and nitrites form cancer-causing compounds, known as nitrosamines. Eating them puts you at risk of bowel and breast cancer.

The World Health Organization has classified processed meats as carcinogenic, right alongside tobacco. A recent UK study found the risk of bowel cancer grew by 20 per cent if you ate the equivalent to three slices of ham or rashers of bacon per day.

## Watch What You’re Eating

And, a 2018 Scottish study of more than 262,000 women revealed that the more processed meat post-menopausal women consumed, the more likely they were to develop breast cancer. For those who ate over nine grams – approximately half a slice of ham – a day, the increased likelihood was 21 per cent.

“Processed meats are often also really high in salt and saturated fat,” says food safety expert Nina McGrath.

“Think about making your bacon sandwich an occasional treat,” says Simon Steenson. He also recommends trimming excess fat or buying leaner cuts.

## Added Phosphate

Processed cheese slices, some creamy cheese spreads and many other manufactured foods contain phosphate, an additive which in large quantities can be bad for your kidneys and heart, and weaken bones.

We all need phosphorus for healthy teeth and bones and to keep our bodies functioning well. It occurs naturally in protein-rich foods such as meat, poultry, nuts and beans. But up to 30 per cent of the phosphorus we consume comes from food with added phosphate, including baked goods, processed meats, canned fish, fish fingers, instant mashed potato, soft drinks, baby food – the list goes on.

## READER'S DIGEST

The danger is you could end up eating too much without realising it.

What's more, added phosphates are more harmful than those present naturally in foods, according to a 2015 US study. It showed that dairy foods and cereals with added phosphates caused bigger spikes in blood phosphate levels. High amounts of phosphates are known to stiffen blood vessels, increasing blood pressure and potentially causing kidney failure.

Food safety authorities recommend a daily intake of phosphorus for adults in the region of 1000mg a day. Two slices of processed cheese contain 385mg of phosphate, compared to the 85mg in 50g of cottage cheese.

### ADDED PHOSPHATES

Look out for phosphoric acid or di-, tri- and polyphosphates on food labels - or E numbers E338 to 341, E343, E450 to 452.

### Glutamic Acid and Glutamates

Your steaming bowl of canned soup may contain an ingredient that causes headaches and, more seriously, raises blood pressure and insulin levels - a risk factor for type 2 diabetes - if you have too much.

The amino acid known as glutamic acid or one of its salts, including monosodium glutamate (MSG), is often added to ultra-processed foods to give a savoury or meaty taste. MSG is a man-made additive, but manufacturers may also add yeast extract or soy instead, to give the same result. You'll find these added ingredients in packaged bread, some sauces, processed meat products, instant noodles, seasonings and condiments like soy sauce and stock cubes - and even cakes.

A 2018 study by Italian and Dutch researchers pointed the finger at monosodium glutamate as responsible for a variety of other health issues, including changes in the brain that affect behaviour, promoting obesity, liver damage and reproductive problems. The study went as far as to say that a total ban on MSG as a flavour enhancer should be considered.

Look on the label for glutamic



## GLUTAMIC ACID & GLUTAMATES

acid, monosodium glutamate, disodium or other glutamates, or E numbers 620 to 625. “It’s a matter of avoiding products with that on the label,” says Nina McGrath.

Hydrolised protein, autolysed

## Watch What You’re Eating

yeast and sodium caseinate are names of other ingredients that can contain glutamic acid you should watch for. Look also for yeast extract or soya.

So, you might want to think again if you eat a lot of those tasty shop-bought soups. Simon Steenson suggests making your own soup instead. “Try to pack in as many vegetables as possible and add a can of kidney or butter beans to boost the fibre content and make it more filling.”

**THE TAKEAWAY FROM ALL THIS** is that eating too many highly processed foods is bad for you. I now read labels carefully and am becoming adept at spotting the nasties hidden in them.

As the experts say, it’s not hard to eat a healthy diet and keep unhealthy foods and additives to a minimum; you just need to give it a bit of thought. **R**

---

### Simpler Times

**My ten-year-old daughter:** Can I go to my friend’s house?

**Me:** Take your phone and text me every 20 minutes to tell me you’re OK.

**Me, when I was ten:** I’m off to the abandoned quarry with my pals.

**Mum:** Dinner’s at five.

@JOEHEENAN

**Me:** You can make a wish on any star you like.

**Five year old:** Which one is the Death Star?

@XPLODINGUNICORN

## QUOTABLE QUOTES

You cannot control what happens to you, but you can control your attitude towards what happens to you, and in that, you will be mastering change rather than allowing it to master you.

**BRIAN TRACY,**  
MOTIVATIONAL SPEAKER



**MY WEAKNESSES  
HAVE ALWAYS  
BEEN FOOD  
AND MEN – IN  
THAT ORDER.**

**DOLLY PARTON,** MUSICIAN

*You don't have to burn books  
to destroy a culture. Just get people  
to stop reading them.*

**RAY BRADBURY,** SCIENCE FICTION WRITER

**DON'T JUDGE EACH DAY BY  
THE HARVEST YOU REAP BUT  
BY THE SEEDS THAT YOU PLANT.**

**ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON,** WRITER



**Let's not be  
narrow, nasty  
and negative.**

**T. S. ELIOT,** POET



**AGE IS NOT  
THE ENEMY.  
STAGNATION  
IS THE ENEMY.  
COMPLACENCY  
IS THE ENEMY.  
STASIS IS  
THE ENEMY.**

**TWYLA THARP,** DANCER  
AND CHOREOGRAPHER



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TRAVEL

*An end-to-end road trip reveals  
the natural wonders of New Zealand  
and the generosity of its people*

BY *Carrie Miller*

FROM **NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC TRAVELER**

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PHOTO: © NUR ISMAIL / ROOM RF / GETTY IMAGES

**Mount Cook on the South  
Island is New Zealand's  
highest mountain**

was expecting to cross paths with a T. rex at any moment.

The rugged west coast of New Zealand's South Island can seem prehistoric like that. Half-walking, half-sliding down a narrow trail overhung with trees dripping tangled moss, I was looking for a man named Merv.

I had started my search in Jackson Bay, Southland, a quiet fishing village with a handful of year-round residents. As I got out of my car, a slender, blonde woman on a sunny verandah asked if I was lost.

"I'm looking for Merv?" I said. It was actually a question.

"He's up the river whitebaiting," she replied. "I'm his wife. I'll tell you how to find him."

This was how I ended up on a muddy trail, looking for Merv's whitebaiting stand. Whitebaiting stands are cobbled-together docks reaching out over rivers feeding into the ocean, the perfect spots from which to net juvenile *Galaxiidae*, a prized fish delicacy.

I was on a road trip from the Lands End hotel, in Bluff, the southern tip of the South Island, to Cape Reinga, at the top of the North Island. Even after 15 years of living here, a New Zealand road trip is my favourite travel experience. Throughout this land there is a feeling – a warmth, a welcoming, a sense of being looked after. The Māori word for it is *manaakitanga*. Loosely translated, it means hospitality.

This culture of looking after one another came to worldwide attention in the aftermath of the March 2019 terrorist attack on two mosques in Christchurch on the South Island. The way New Zealanders responded with a national call of "this isn't us" and an outpouring of messages of inclusion was an example of *manaakitanga* in action.

My road trip was inspired by *manaakitanga*, its itinerary decided by people I met along the way – their recommendations, their generosity, their good graces – as I travelled on a daisy-chain of friendly gestures.

My search for Merv had begun exactly three days and 450 kilometres earlier in the lounge of Lands End. I was drinking a beer with the owner, Lynda Jackson, her husband, Ross, and another guest, Gaye Bertacco from Christchurch. The mood in the tavern felt both lovely and lonely – fitting for a bar at the end of the world.

"I'm here to pick up my partner, Mark," Gaye said. "He's a fisherman, and he's been out at sea for a week."

As if on cue, Mark Muir walked in the door.

A few beers later, Gaye and Mark invited me to join them for dinner at Oyster Cove, the restaurant next door. Over locally sourced spiny rock lobster and muttonbird (a large seabird that is a traditional Māori food), we watched the fishing boats returning, their red and green lights winking in the dark.



## Land of Beauty and Spirit

**Clockwise from top: The Land's End hotel sits at New Zealand's southern tip; performing the Haka Pohiri, a Māori welcome dance, on Muriwai Beach on the North Island; Mount Taranaki, an active volcano, can be found 80 kilometres west of Whangamomona; Vicki and Richard Pratt welcome visitors to the 'republic' of Whangamomona**



## READER'S DIGEST

"There are some real characters on the west coast," Mark said. "You should look up Merv Velenski in Jackson Bay if you go that way. Merv's the biggest character of them all. He's been fishing as long as I've been alive. He'd give the shirt off his back to anyone, and they want to give their shirts to him."

**MUDDY AND MERV-LESS**, I returned to Jackson Bay. There wasn't much to this place but beauty. The beech- and rimu-shaded road dead-ended in a settlement with a few houses, an orange café with a blue roof called the Cray Pot, and a weathered wharf extending into the turquoise sea. It was a slice of unspoiled paradise.

Back on the sun-soaked verandah, as I was telling Liz Velenski about my lack of success tracking him down, Merv pulled up in his vehicle. "I'll get some tea," Liz said.

Merv greeted me with a polite reserve. I told him Mark Muir sent me.

"My brother worked for Mark for a long time," Merv said. "Mark's got a well-built boat."

We talked for an hour. Merv has done a little bit of everything: an army stint in Malaysia, Borneo and Thailand; deer antler velvet harvesting; sawmill work; a lifetime of fishing; and now stone carving.

"We've been in Jackson Bay for more than 40 years," Merv told me. "There's no place I'd rather be. But people miss it. You gotta get down

the side roads and have a look. That's where you meet the workers. Go and talk to them and you'll learn ten times more than you would in any tourist town. That's where you see New Zealand."

Merv and Liz sent me away with a friendly wave and two parting gifts: the phone number of an old army buddy of Merv's living in Hokitika, and a cooked crayfish wrapped in a page of the *Otago Daily Times* for my lunch.

I was 1200 kilometres north of Jackson Bay, just inland from the west coast of the North Island, at the Whangamomona Hotel. It's perhaps the most remote country hotel in New Zealand, located on the Forgotten World Highway that runs between Stratford and Taumarunui. Whangamomona is New Zealand's only republic, having declared its independence in 1989.

A Wellington-based friend reminded me about the Forgotten World Highway on my way north, and I found myself at the Whangamomona Hotel drinking beer from a borrowed glass.

"This is the only watering hole within an hour's drive, so the locals gather here," said Vicki Pratt. She and her husband, Richard, own the Whangamomona Hotel. Pint glasses hung on the wall, each bearing a yellow cattle ear tag with an identifying number. I was drinking from number 13.





Visitors enjoy Cathedral Cove during the summer holidays

“That’s Pete’s glass. He lives in the woolshed down the road,” Vicki said. “I don’t think he’ll mind.”

If someone is trying to reach a local who doesn’t have a phone, they call the hotel and leave a message with Vicki or Richard. They, in turn, leave a note in the person’s beer glass.

As we were chatting, a baby pig streaked into the bar, racing around the large barrels that double as tables. It was followed by a more hesitant lamb named Roast, and two tired-looking cyclists seeking a hot meal and a place to pitch a tent.

The pig and Roast were ushered back outside while I spoke to Jamie Lessard and Alanah Correia – 20-something Canadians who were ten months into a planned 15-month trip.

They had spent the winter in the Coromandel Peninsula further north on the North Island and were now cycling south. “We never would have biked here if someone we met hadn’t told us about it. It’s totally rerouted us,” Alanah said.

Visitors to Whangamomona have traditionally been New Zealanders, but in recent years the area has been attracting more overseas travellers, most of them on day trips to collect novelty republic stamps in their passports.

“It would be nice if some of these international visitors would stay longer,” Vicki said. “The ones that do stay have a really good time. We look after them. This is a great place to meet locals.”



**The Pacific Ocean and the Tasman Sea meet at Cape Reinga in New Zealand's far north**

Once a bustling frontier outpost of 300 residents, Whangamomona now has “ten or 11 town residents, with maybe 120 in the wider area,” Richard told me.

A government decision to redraw the local council boundary, which split the region in half, led to locals declaring themselves a republic. “You can’t just change the boundary and change where people are from,” Richard said. “And they didn’t consult us. Initially it was a gesture, but we’ve always taken a little pleasure in the rebellion. We’re a stubborn, amiable people.”

“I think that applies to all New Zealanders,” Vicki added. “We look after each other, especially in rural communities. Manaakitanga is what I grew up with, even if I didn’t know the name for it. I think it has to do with the fact that everyone knows each other in New Zealand. Guests come in, and

within three sentences I’ll know someone they know. And I like that.”

**MY KAYAKING GUIDE**, Cait Disberry, and I realised we had both lived in Raumati Beach, a tiny beach town 50 kilometres northwest of Wellington, New Zealand’s capital. It’s that ‘three sentences’ connection Vicki talked about.

I was on a kayaking tour in Hahei, on the Coroman-

del Peninsula. The cycling Canadians had told me Cathedral Cove was a must-visit destination. With its lush landscape, secret coves, and hot-water beaches, only two and a half hours’ drive from Auckland, the country’s largest city, it is a place that makes visitors seriously study property listings. It has about 400 permanent residents, but that number explodes during the summer.

Our three-hour kayak tour led us across the clear, green waters of the Whanganui-A-Hei Marine Reserve, which has seen a huge increase in marine life since its establishment 28 years ago. Signs were evident everywhere I looked, from the multitude of ocean birds on their rock perches to the dozen small stingrays that zoomed around in the aptly named Stingray Bay.


Andy Mora, our lead kayak guide, pointed to the Mercury Islands in the

distance. “This area is where Captain Cook pinpointed the transit of [the planet] Mercury in New Zealand,” he said.

**I TRAVELLED 600 KILOMETRES** north of the Coromandel Peninsula to Cape Reinga, the northernmost point of New Zealand that’s accessible to visitors, and the end point of my voyage. A short white lighthouse crowned a dragon’s-snout stretch of land marked only by an ancient pohutukawa tree, as two bodies of water – the Tasman Sea and Pacific Ocean – surged together, creating a white line in the waves.

This place is the landing spot of Kupe, the extraordinary navigator of Māori legend, who found his way here a thousand years ago from the eastern Pacific. Cape Reinga is also the place from which a Māori person’s spirit departs on its way to the next world.

When I look back on this road trip from one end of New Zealand to the other, I remember how the ocean beyond Cape Reinga whispered to me of the world beyond these islands, and how that gnarled pohutukawa tree spoke even more loudly of all the reasons I’d made this land my home.

Recently I heard that Merv had passed away. He was larger than life, a person I won’t forget, and the embodiment of manaakitanga. 

FROM NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC TRAVELER (JUNE/JULY 2019), © 2019 BY NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC

### TRAVEL TIPS

**GETTING AROUND** The majority of New Zealand’s roads are two lanes and winding. Pulling over to let faster drivers pass will endear you to locals. **Transfercar** (transfercar.co.nz) offers great deals for returning rental cars to their point of origin.

**LODGING** Ocean views fill guestroom windows at **Lands End Boutique Hotel** in Bluff, landsendhotel.co.nz;

**Whangamomona Hotel** is a boarding house-style hotel that serves as the community hub of the Republic of Whangamomona, whangamomonahotel.co.nz;

**Tatahi Lodge Beach Resort** is a five-minute walk to the white sandy beaches for which the Coromandel Peninsula is famous, tatahilodge.co.nz.

**DINING** Diners at the **Oyster Cove Restaurant** in Bluff enjoy bay vistas while feasting on oysters on the half shell, Cloudy Bay clams, and dishes such as lamb salad, entrees from NZ\$22.50; **The Cray Pot**, the waterside food shack in tiny Jackson Bay, offers crayfish, other seafood and burgers.

**INFORMATION** Check opening times of restaurants, and pricing and availability of hotels on their websites, or by contacting **Tourism New Zealand** (newzealand.com)

# THAT'S OUTRAGEOUS!

BY *Rosie Long Decter*

**GOING NUTS** It seemed like the animal kingdom had it in for Pittsburgh's Chris and Holly Persic. An hour after Chris's vehicle broke down last year, his wife called to report a burning smell coming from her own car's engine. When she popped the hood, she found it filled with about 200 walnuts. An enterprising neighbourhood squirrel squad had been storing nuts for the winter. They had chewed through a wire in Chris's 4WD for good measure. While Chris repaired his wire, Holly got to temporarily enjoy the scent of roasting nuts.

**IN DEEP WATER** When police posted a photo of 26-year-old Brandon Conti - wanted for drink driving - on their Facebook page the day before Halloween, they were hoping for tips on his whereabouts. Instead, the sheriff's office in Kankakee, Illinois, got a comment from Conti himself: "Appalled!" he wrote. "Where's my costume?"

Police responded by editing a sailor suit onto Conti's mugshot, complete with a cap that read AHOY. "That's awesome," Conti commented the next day. "I'll be there before

noon." Conti turned himself in and was released on bail later the same day - with enough time left to go trick-or-treating.

**ASLEEP AT THE WHEEL** They say you need to make a strong first impression during a job interview. A teenager applying at a Subway restaurant in Oregon did just that when his mother literally crashed his interview. While her son was inside talking to the manager, the mother dozed off in her car - and accidentally hit the accelerator, sending the car through the establishment's window.

The crash happened just metres from where the interview was taking place. Thankfully there were no injuries - except maybe to the poor kid's job prospects.





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BONUS READ



MY

*Mysteries swirled about my grandfather,*

FAMILY'S

*but no one would talk to me about him honestly.*

SECRET

*Finally, I decided to find the answers on my own*

PAST

BY *Julie Lindahl*

FROM THE BOOK **THE PENDULUM**

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**B**erlin, 2010. The cold rain hung heavy in the air as I made my way down a wide empty street on the southern outskirts of Berlin. I had just one day to spend at the German Federal Archives. As I stopped to read the street sign, my troubled heart battled with my will. Wasn't this a betrayal of the family? After months of struggling with the idea, I had decided that I must learn about Opa, my mother's father. As none of my family would ever be willing or able to tell me the whole truth, I had to find it myself.

I approached the front desk. "I am looking for information about a particular person," I said.

A fresh-faced young man asked, "You want to know about a family member?"

"Yes, my German grandfather," I said. "I was born in Brazil, and I believe I was never told the real reasons for my mother's family's presence there," I added.

"I understand," he said, the sharp blue outlines of his irises softening.

He took the slip I had scribbled on, stood up energetically, and typed my grandfather's name into the search engine of the workstation behind him. "There is only one record in our archives under that name," he said. "They are *Ahnenerbe* and other papers. Most likely they contain information about your grandmother, too.

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The author has omitted surnames and other identifying details to respect the privacy of family members and survivors.

I'll have them copied and sent to you. There are about 100 pages."

Oma? Why would my grandmother be in these papers?

I folded my hands to stop them from shaking. "What does this say about my grandfather? Was he in the SS?" The archivist suddenly realised I didn't understand the meaning of *Ahnenerbe*.

"Yes," he said. "*Ahnenerbe* was an organisational part of the SS."

As I walked out, I imagined opening the documents and finding they were not about my grandparents. But in my heart I knew it was true. These people were my very own.

### == A TROUBLING SILENCE ==

I knew Opa only through a few photographs. He remained in Brazil, a world we left behind when I was three years old. He passed away when I was nine. I was as unaware of his death as of his life. It wasn't uncommon that relatives faded in families. The

## My Family's Secret Past

difference with Opa was that his fading was not only total, it was mandatory.

Father and Mother transplanted the family from one country to the next. We sailed through them all on an island of German tradition, even though Father was American. Many times as a young child I had visited my grandmother, Oma, in her apartment in Baden-Württemberg in southwestern Germany. The table was always elegantly set, with a smaller tablecloth overlaid like a diamond on a larger one, and the gold-rimmed plates framed by sterling silver cutlery with a stag engraved into the grip.

These items were what remained of a turbulent family history that no one wished to discuss. Raising it elicited an angry exchange of words between Oma and her daughters. Mother's words were always the sharpest, and when she wielded them, everyone fell silent. My American father would intervene by suggesting a stroll in the park. All my sister and I wished to do was to escape the room.

I commenced my master's degree in international affairs at Oxford in 1990. During my scholarship year in Germany the previous year, the Wall had defined my studies. Now it was gone. Suddenly, the dormant history behind the Iron Curtain had begun



**Julie Lindahl's grandfather is seen in the dark coat in the foreground. He joined the SS in 1934**

to mill with life. I could feel there was something very personal about this event. Opa had been a farmer in occupied Poland during World War II. Mother was born there. What were my grandparents doing there? This wasn't their original home.

As my studies progressed, a picture I preferred to deny began to form. Germany invaded Poland in September 1939, an early phase of the war. What if Opa had been one of the invaders?

During a visit from Father at Oxford that year, I asked him, "What did Opa do during the war?" Father responded abruptly. "You must never raise that subject again," he said. He cast a look of disappointment at me I had never experienced from him before. My heart plummeted.

The last time Father and I saw one another, years later, he had waved goodbye and shouted, "Take care of

my grandchildren." After his passing, I fell into depression. Shame wound its tendrils around me and my family. But to take care of my children, I had to take care of myself, and the only way to do that was to cut away the tendrils and go to their roots.

"Take time to attend to this," my husband said. In order to fulfil my last promise to Father, I would have to break the one I had made to myself and to him years ago: never to look into the past.

The documents the archivist sent me qualified my grandparents for membership in Hitler's elite. There

followed three years later. Throughout the war, Opa and Oma had resided with their family in western Poland where they, as members of a new elite, spearheaded the creation of the Reich's model blond province, the Warthegau.

## GRIM HISTORY

On a cold, wet evening in December 2012, I made my way down the two-lane road that once had been the main route north out of Hamburg. I was headed to the inn that Opa and Oma had settled in with their children some years after the war.

# I READ TESTIMONIES OF VILLAGERS WHO REMEMBERED OPA AS A PARANOID TYRANT WHO KEPT HIS REVOLVER BY HIS SIDE

were birth dates, places of residence, and a family tree going back to 1800 intended to uphold the illusion of racial purity.

In the photographs, Oma smiled at the camera. The earlier photographs of Opa revealed a defiant young rebel, in the tailored tweed jacket, jodhpurs and polished high-cut leather boots typical of his Hamburg middle-class origins. In later photographs, the lapels of Opa's jacket were wide and proud, with ample room for the insignia of the party and the SS.

He had joined the party in 1931; membership in the mounted SS

At the reception in the illuminated castle-like house, I met the mayor, whom I had notified, and Herr Schuhmeister, someone who knew the family. I recognised the dark beams of the restaurant from family photographs. At the table, the engraved stag on the silver cutlery gleamed in the candlelight. I lifted the dessert spoon and examined the engraving. It was the same cutlery as Oma's.

"Is something the matter?" asked the mayor.

"No," I said. "I recognise this symbol." This triggered a flood of storytelling by the mayor and

Schuhmeister, who revealed that he had once fallen in love with one of Opa's four daughters.

"The lady of the house dared not raise her head and was very quiet," he said. "One day the girls told me they would have to leave."

The mayor reached for his portfolio. "I have some documents that may be of interest to you," he said. He placed the papers on the table.

Back in my hotel room, I opened the folder and read the testimonies of villagers who remembered Opa as a paranoid tyrant who kept his revolver by his side. Opa maintained strong connections to his former SS network. On days when the parking lot was filled with Mercedes-Benzes and the inn was closed to the public for exclusive hunting weekends, the locals knew.

The townspeople were without doubt about Opa's motives for suddenly departing for Brazil in 1960. By the time Adolf Eichmann was captured in May of that year, the unofficial amnesty of the 1950s made possible by the exigencies of the Cold War was over. While Chancellor Konrad Adenauer's Christian Democratic Union had campaigned on "a quick and just denazification" (the process of removing Nazi ideology and influence from public life), a decade later the government could no longer resist



**Julie Lindahl, aged two, pictured with her Opa (grandfather) in Brazil**

the pressure from outside the Federal Republic to bring at least some perpetrators to trial. Eichmann's argument about following orders fell on deaf ears. Opa must have felt the figurative noose tightening.

The next morning, I drove to the tiny town that was the site of an estate Opa had acquired in 1937. Long orderly horse barns flanked a brick mansion covered in red creeping vines. Even in the rain, I could appreciate the grand vision.

"At the turn of the century the Kaiser established a horse-training station for the imperial cavalry across the whole area, and this was its centre," the widow who lived there told us.

"Do you know anything about the pre-war or wartime occupants of this house?" I asked.

"I don't know anything about that," she said.

**DENIAL**

“So, tell us more,” said Oma, her ancient eyes still sparkling with the curiosity of youth. “What adventures did you get up to in Hamburg?”

Oma was two years shy of a century, but her mind retained its sharpness. She had endured depression for many years and continued to suffer from nightmares and an uncontrollable blinking condition. My mother’s sister, Auntie Best, had taken over as her caregiver.

I presented Oma with a Christmas arrangement I had purchased at a handicraft boutique near the brick mansion. She read the label out loud. “Why, your aunt was born there before the war!” she exclaimed.

“Yes, I know,” I said, uncertain as to how I was going to handle this conversation. “I can see why Opa went for that place, with all its past connections to the Kaiser and his horses. Opa liked horses, didn’t he?”

“Horses?” she ridiculed. “We never had anything to do with horses.”

“But Opa liked riding. You said so yourself.”

“You’ve got things very mixed up, child,” said Oma, who seemed a long way away from me.

I rose to make myself useful in the kitchen. When Oma called for me to come back, I decided to face her with



**A document reflecting the ‘Blood and Land’ ideology from the Farmers Association of Pinneberg, where Julie's grandfather joined the Nazi Party in December 1931**

the question that the documents had already answered. Acknowledging facts must surely be better for all of us.

As I sat down across from Oma’s armchair, she had already launched into memories of Poland. “We lived a beautiful life there,” she said. “But we had to work to make it so.” Her tone changed abruptly, and she looked sternly at me. “Those lazy Poles had no idea what an honest day’s work was until we arrived and organised things.”

I found it impossible to simply listen and interrupted her monologue. “Oma, Opa was in the SS, wasn’t he?”

“No, no,” she continued, dismissing my suggestion as outlandish.

I slumped in my chair. The blow of being lied to was nauseating, and my head was immediately gripped by the most painful headache. “Had he not done as they told him, they would

have strung him up, you know!" My head nodded unthinkingly. These were not the insane mutterings of an old lady. Oma had made a desperate effort to justify a lie.

That evening at a local café with my beloved Auntie Best, I asked her, "Who was Opa?"

My aunt continued to stare downwards, circling her finger around the base of her wineglass. "I never had any problems with him," she said. "Although we had to work hard at the inn, we got most things we wanted."

She heaved a sigh, wishing that the mild prelude of what she had to say didn't have to be over. Aunt Gise, her older sister, had always been the last to finish up work in the inn at night. She was pretty - blonde and blue-eyed - and so Opa had touched her. Besides this, Oma's life with him had been terrible. He drank and couldn't keep his hands off other women.

Auntie Best stopped speaking. It was time to retreat back into the confines of the family's pact. "Now we shouldn't stir all this up any more," she said.

That night, as I lay sleepless, many things became clear to me. Opa had taken the violence of war home with him and unleashed it on his own family. How could Oma continue to live with such a man?

### **POLAND, 2012**

Two years later, the Institute of National Remembrance in Pozna,

Poland, provided me with accounts about my grandfather from the people to the local courts in 1946.

In the reading room, I shook archivist Robert Nowicki's hand. He ushered me to a table and placed three sets of bound photocopied documents on the table.

"What do these documents say he did?" I asked.

Flipping through the pages, Robert replied, "It says he beat people very badly, was a terror to the people, called them pigs and dogs." He closed the door, leaving me alone with the pages of testimonials in Polish.

But soon Robert was next to me again. He patted me on the shoulder and led me out of the reading room. For the next half hour in the staff kitchen, Robert listened patiently as the unplanned monologue of why I was here poured forth.

"Families where there is silence and lying are not happy - it was the same thing in the Communist time," he said. Robert had a way of putting things that was refreshingly straightforward. "What will you do now?" he asked.

"Drive into the countryside tomorrow and see whether I can find these places," I said.

"I could go with you," Robert offered eagerly.

The following morning, Robert forced his tall frame into the passenger seat of the compact rental car and unfolded a map of west-central

Poland. He pointed to a location about an hour east of Pozna, to a place now called Wilczyn, which the Nazis had renamed Wolfsbergen. "We will try to find estates of your grandparents – documents say there were three in this area – and maybe some eyewitnesses." A stone dropped in my stomach. Would any of them still be alive?

A few farmhouses, some of them derelict, dotted the flat countryside. Opa and Oma must have felt at home here, the landscape similar to their home in Schleswig-Holstein, in northern Germany. Robert stopped

pleaded with Robert as Kisnewski's great-granddaughter took hold of the old man's arms and calmed him.

I had decided that we should not continue, but Robert was resolved to keep on. "There is at least one more, a Mr Januszewski." His parents had worked on one of my grandfather's estates, he said.

Januszewski, a stocky man in his 80s, welcomed us into his home, where we sat at a dining table overlooking a garden. Robert translated. "Your grandfather beat him when he did not take off his hat, but only with the hands." Januszewski

### I PHONED OMA TO ASK HOW OPA HAD GOT HOLD OF THE MANSION AND THE HORSE-TRAINING CENTRE THEY ACQUIRED IN 1937

some of the villagers passing by and returned with new information about people we could meet.

We drove to the home of Kisnewski, a 90-year-old man with thick, arthritic hands. His great-granddaughter repeated Robert's words in Kisnewski's good ear. Kisnewski's eyes lit up with fear and he shouted Opa's name, covering his head with his arms to protect himself from imaginary blows. Robert translated. "Some people are lined up against a wall to be shot... they try to escape... he is hiding in a barn watching... he is afraid."

"We must stop! Stop this!" I

pointed above his eye. I looked at the scar. What hand could deliver such a blow?

"Your grandmother liked her garden. Many flowers," Robert continued. Opa had beaten the gardener many times. "Blood everywhere. He almost died. Farm manager, too, when he tried to protect other workers. Always on white horse watching and making terror."

"Not happy man." Januszewski shook his head.

"He says if you are like your grandmother, you are an angel," Robert said. I looked at Januszewski in



disbelief. "She made sure they got medicine, treatment after beatings. Your grandfather didn't know."

As we said our farewells, Januszewski clasped my forearms tightly in his hands. "Be happy," he said. "It wasn't your fault."

So many things suggested that Januszewski was the son of the gardener. This man who as a child had watched his nearest having the life beaten out of them with regularity had seen to it that the descendant of his family's oppressor could walk free. It was the most selfless act I had ever witnessed.

**UPON MY RETURN HOME** from Poland, Opa's birth certificate waited in the mailbox. In the margin of the first page was a long paragraph of swirling script that had been signed off by a Helené Schachne, a midwife who had been present at Opa's birth. The infant had been left with her until he was three years old, when his father claimed him.

Opa's parents came from different social classes. Their marriage, let alone parenthood together, was a violation of social norms. I opened my albums to a picture of Opa's mother. Her pleasant face was framed by a dark bob. Leaning towards his mother to satisfy the photographer, was Opa. "He couldn't tolerate his mother," Oma had once said.

Suddenly, I thought I understood the unhappiness that Januszewski

had noticed. I rested momentarily in the image of the deserted child, until the brutal perpetrator overtook him and defied all comprehension.

### == GRAND AMBITIONS ==

With each day that passed, the bronze horse on the mantelpiece at home haunted me more. Mother had given the statue to me years ago and said that she had never liked it. Today as I observed the horse, I asked myself why Opa had joined the mounted SS.

I arranged to meet Nele Fahrenbrück, an expert on the mounted SS, in Hamburg. We planned to visit the villages where Opa had lived before the war and to trace the impact of joining the SS on his life and family.

As we drove to the first estate Opa had taken over at the same time as he joined the SS in 1934, Nele commented, "Looks like he didn't lose time cashing in on his privileges," she said, with eyebrows raised. Affiliation with the mounted SS had accelerated Opa's class journey from humble city merchant with a cabbage patch in the countryside to grand estate owner.

"After this he purchased the imperial horse training station you haven't seen yet," I explained.

The property teemed with equestrians, some of them on horseback in the riding arenas and others tending to their horses in the stalls. The place smacked of order, discipline and quality.

"My grandmother said he had nothing to do with horses."

"Your grandmother didn't tell you the truth," Nele said. "This has always been horse country. It's obvious that your grandfather's career was given a nice lift by the mounted SS."

"Look," she said, turning to me, impatient with my tiptoeing. "The mounted SS were Himmler's chosen knights who would restore Germany's honour and demonstrate its Aryan supremacy in the riding competitions of Europe, and eventually in war. Power and influence came with the job."

After I got home, I phoned Oma to ask how Opa had got hold of the mansion and the horse-training centre they acquired in 1937.

"Ach!" she replied dismissively. "They were just a bunch of old heath farmers squatting there."

After putting down the receiver, I looked up the heath farmers and learned that they were persecuted as socialists by the regime. Did Oma know?

I wandered through the house and stopped before the horse on the mantelpiece. I longed for it to step out of its stiff, bronze shell, graze free on the grass, and shoo the flies away with a gentle swish of its tail.

**IN 1947, OPA MADE A DECLARATION** to the Allied military administration of his record in relation to Nazism. It was full of testimonies to his decent character and intentions, a so-called

*Persilscheine* – a cynical term for 'clean' character endorsements that referred to the washing detergent Persil.

The Allies regarded Opa as an extremist who had joined the party before the takeover of power and the SS in its early days. A lawyer argued he had only been interested in the sport; membership in the SS was a coincidence. The eventual classification, as a Lesser Offender, focused on ideological commitment before the war rather than what transpired in the occupied territories. In December 1948, Opa was dismissed with: "exonerated, no sanctions".

### DIRTY WAR

Flustered by these documents, I picked up a photograph of Opa as a perky young man next to a wobbly legged foal. "What happened to you?" I asked in a shaky whisper. While I had heard the confessions of eyewitnesses, I still didn't have a clear picture of the consequences of Opa's engagement in the mounted SS.

In the denazification documents, Opa claimed that he had taken up his assignment in occupied Poland in November 1939, two months after the invasion. This clashed with Oma's insistence that he had left in September.

I phoned historian Jochen Boehler, my expert on the invasion of Poland. "Some of Hamburg's best SS riders had been incorporated into policing

## My Family's Secret Past

squadrons, which followed on the heels of the Wehrmacht to establish so-called law and order in occupied Poland," he said. They were given instructions by Hitler to "close hearts to empathy" and "proceed brutally".

His voice halted. "The consequence was that these men unleashed a war so dirty that later analysis of what happened could only describe it as the decay of man. These squadrons set the tone of life in occupied Poland, and, according to those who knew them, were themselves never the same again."

There are records of these men who were reassigned to agriculture directly after the invasion, he said. "You say that he was eager for land. Well, this was the fastest way to get hold of it."

"And what if he really did leave in November?" I asked.

"That's not a pretty story either," said Jochen. Estates and farms were raided in the early hours. The inhabitants had minutes to pack up, if they had not already fled into the freezing forests. If they attempted to return, they were usually shot. Homes were stolen, people hounded and chased, and the remaining labourers beaten into submission, all from the back of a horse.

I went to bed but found no peace in



One of the grand estates that Julie's Opa presided over during the war

sleep. Instead, I heard the agonising sound of the unmilked cows across the countryside, their owners either driven away or shot.

### GERMANY, 2013

I visited Oma again. She had looked the same for a very long time, the snowy white waves of hair still framing a peach-skinned face. Yet she was over 100 years old, and each time I visited her I assumed would be the last.

Over the past two days, we had continued to find other subjects of discussion over Auntie Best's meals. In the middle of the table was a black hole of suspicion that none of us was prepared to name. I realised the time for charmed conversation with Oma was running out.

If I told Oma what I knew would it bring her more or fewer nightmares?

The last thing I wanted was for her to return to the depression, and to ruin Auntie Best's good work. As I lay in bed in my hotel room that night, I determined that I would leave an old woman in peace. Yet with her nightmares, blinking and depression, Oma appeared never to have found any peace.

My husband called. "I can't sleep," he said.

"I can't, either," I admitted.

"You must tell her," he said, sounding quite certain. "If you don't, you will never forgive yourself. You cannot play the same game of lying if you are to have any self-respect."

"It is time for us to acknowledge the truth between us without blaming anyone, which is that Opa was an avid National Socialist and a fanatical SS man."

Not a window had been opened, but the air in the room was suddenly cooler. Oma's hands retreated to her lap, and she straightened her posture. "That is correct," she said. "He looked very smart in his uniform, too. They were beautiful men. What people said about them is quite wrong. They were the best sort. People didn't have as bad a time in the labour camps as was said. That was just Jewish propaganda!"

**"WE JUST DID THE SAME AS EVERYONE ELSE,"  
OMA SAID. I NEVER FELT AS DISTANT FROM  
HER AS WHEN SHE UTTERED THAT "WE"**

I knew exactly what he meant. All along I had pursued a story that I didn't feel I had the right to. Fear of facing the family and of breaking their taboo would continue unless I told them the truth.

After another lunch prepared by Auntie Best, I moved to sit on the footstool in front of Oma. I took her hand into mine and said a little prayer to myself. "Blame must not enter this space." I repeated in my heart. Sensing that something important was about to happen, Auntie Best sat down in one of the armchairs.

I envisioned myself scratching at a thin layer of dust on impenetrable ground. There had to be more. The remorse would surely come.

Auntie Best was speechless, but what could she say? She had been a small child during the war, after which a blanket of silence had been cast over the crimes of her parents. In that moment I saw what had happened in our family: shame had been left to the next generations. Those responsible had shunned responsibility, and the unrecognised victims were their children.

"So, are they coming to get me?" said Oma, looking defiant and terrified all at the same time. The pathos in these words moved me to calm her and I shook my head. "No," I reassured her. "In fact, a young boy whom Opa hurt remembered you as an angel because you called the doctor."

She cut me off. "That is ridiculous!" Although her husband was long dead, the instinct to defend him was very much alive. I suspected she was still afraid of him, like a ghost that would never leave her.

"He didn't kill anyone!" she insisted. "I was with him all the time. He only beat them," she said, regaining her composure. "We just did the same as everyone else." My head drooped. I had never felt as distant from her as when she uttered that "we".

Oma spoke incessantly for two hours. Many stories were recycled. The flight to Brazil still had nothing to do with the war. Scraps of information were tossed out that contradicted other scraps. "I was in the NSV," she said proudly of her affiliation with the National Socialist welfare agency. This organisation had busied itself with spreading the corrupt idea of Aryan superiority and redistributing the belongings of people who had been sent to the ghettos and the gas chambers "to support the war effort".

It was time to go. Realising that we would never reach that common recognition and feeling of responsibility I had hoped for, I took her hands back

into mine and stroked them with the deep pity I felt for this woman who could not be honest with herself.

"Goodbye, Oma," I said, kissing her forehead.

### == RETURN TO POLAND ==

By now, I had visited every estate but one that Opa had taken over since 1934. The last place my grandfather and his family had lived in during the war was a baroque-style palace in Siemianice, or Schemmingen in Opa's day, in southwestern Poland. Each had been grand, but this one was beyond my wildest imagination. It was as though he had aspired to become the Kaiser himself. Today the building is a forestry institute.

A man in his early 30s called Tomek, accompanied by his father, shook my hand heartily. "My grandfather was deported by the SS from here to a labour camp," he said. "We had to work hard to get this land back, but it is ours now."

Tomek and his father drove Robert and me around the estate. In a vast stretch of farmland a statue of the Madonna stood, a replica; Tomek said my grandfather struck down the original. I was ashamed to be so closely related to a person who would do such a thing.

He also told us that nearby was an unwed mothers' home, supported by the local NSV, women like Oma. It was believed there were Jewish girls held there, and the children

born to them were struck from the birth register. The rape of Jewish girls had become a standard weapon of the SS's dirty war in the East. But fraternising with Jewish women was illegal. Had the mothers' home been used to cover up a problem or to run racial experiments? It was impossible to digest the monstrosity of it.

Back in the driveway, the director of the forestry institute handed us a slip, "You must visit this man. He has written about your grandfather."

**AS WE ENTERED** the apartment, Matysiak and his wife stared at me in wonderment. Matysiak had survived Opa's fiefdom as a boy. We sat down at a table laden with fine porcelain, tea and biscuits.

"He was an unhappy man," Matysiak said. This is what so many remembered about Opa.

"He had a temper like spitfire," he explained. "His wife and children just cowered around him."

According to Matysiak, towards the end, Opa turned his attention to escaping the enemy from the East. "It was the 18th of January, 1945. There were many convoys passing through our town on the same route back into the Old Reich. I will never forget the mothers holding their infants, who had frozen to death.

"Your grandfather led his hay-laden carriages out a different route to avoid the partisans. They were after

his head," said Matysiak. I pictured my mother's frightened eyes peeping out of the hay next to her older siblings. What had this three year old been told by her mother, now pregnant with a brother or sister?

"We remember his wife well," he had said, referring to Oma. "She wore the NSV pin daily and was proud of it."

Images of Oma passed before me like pieces of a torn canvas. To the young Januszewski she had been the angel who had called for medical help. There was the image of the stalwart NSV leader, working for 'maternal health' in her area. There was the pregnant woman surrounded by her four children on a freezing night in a hay-laden carriage. And there were the delicate hands that stroked mine with gentleness.

### == "QUIET IS THE BEST" ==

Back home, photocopied documents had arrived in the mail from an archive in Ludwigsburg. According to an interpreter for the Gestapo, Opa had collaborated in "eradication" of unarmed locals in a forested area near Wilczyn known as the site of night-time executions by the SS and local Gestapo.

With a heavy heart, I called Oma. "I must say, you went very hard at me," she said angrily, leaving no time for offloading sadness. "I haven't been able to sleep." Her complaint was like sandpaper that

scratched open my guilt wound, so I listened.

"You should let him and this history rest in peace. You know nothing about that time. It doesn't belong to you!"

The ensuing conversation turned ugly as fragments of the old NSV volunteer's memory were tossed out into open view. "Your marriage has brought genetic uncertainties into our family. I am sure your daughter is already ripe for marriage." My husband had three disabled siblings who had died young. My daughter was only 14. Whatever did she mean?

"All it takes is one kiss and there will be children," Oma said.

In that moment it seemed to me that the vulgarity at the core of history's unprecedented racial experiment was laid bare. Oma had gone to a wilderness with a man she feared because she too had participated in that experiment and felt the need to hide.

"I have to go now, Oma," I said, trying not to fall apart.

She made sure she had the last word. "Remember that quiet is the best."

**IN 2014**, the news came that Oma was dying. She was two months shy of 103. During the year since we had last spoken something had shifted inside me.

I had talked publicly of my

discoveries. By breaking an old family taboo, healing had begun.

My ears had ceased to hear the echo of Oma's hard words. Now all I knew was that a life that had survived a terrible century and was closely tied to mine would soon end. The prospect of her loss and the knowledge of her tragedy left a gaping hole in my heart.

At Oma's grave, I felt an odd sense of neutrality about the way my relationship with her had ended. My husband had been right to advise me to face her with what I knew.

**THE SPRING RAIN** had begun to fall outside the window to my study. I found solace in observing the wooden statue of an angel I had placed on a pedestal in our backyard after I had learned of the Madonna in the field that Opa had struck down.

As the water gathered in her cupped hands, I imagined that she had the choice of how to hold it: with awareness and reverence, or with fear and indignation. The former was much more difficult, because it demanded self-respect to acknowledge kindnesses and admit one's own injustices, and the inclusion of all life. The rain intensified, insisting that we must never stop trying. **R**

*THE PENDULUM: A GRANDDAUGHTER'S SEARCH FOR HER FAMILY'S FORBIDDEN NAZI PAST* BY JULIE LINDAHL, © 2019 BY THE ROWMAN & LITTLEFIELD PUBLISHING COMPANY, INC.

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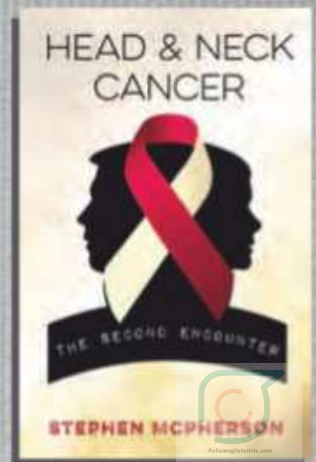
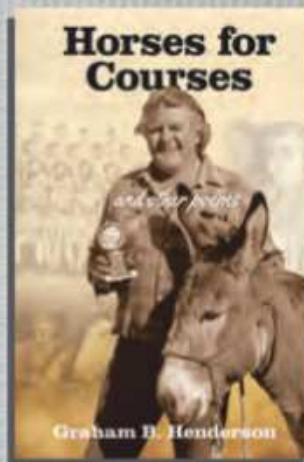
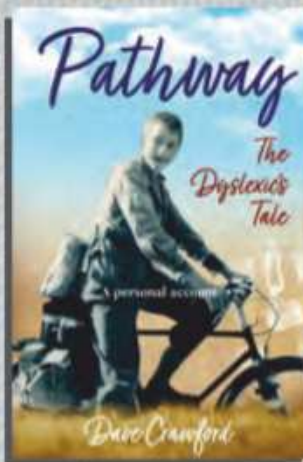
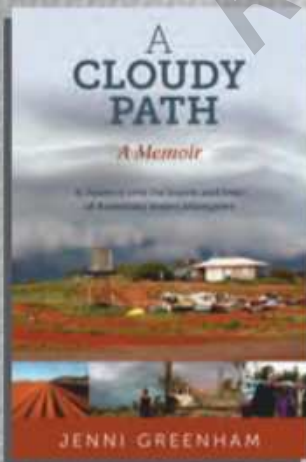
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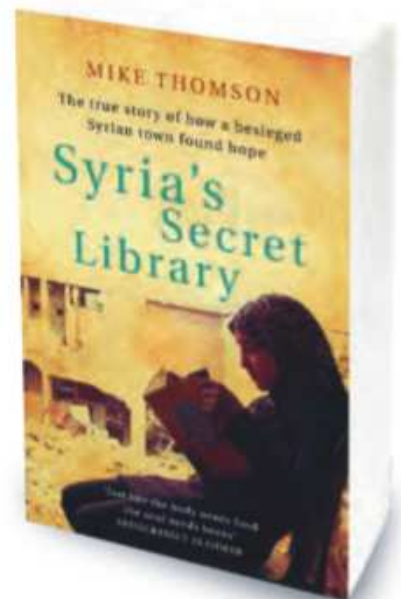
### Syria's Secret Library

The true story of how a besieged Syrian town found hope

**Mike Thomson** HACHETTE

What does it take to protect a culture's library treasures from the destruction of war? Over the centuries, heroes have stepped up and quietly protected and saved valuable records of the past for future generations. In 2011, a team of extraordinary people did just this when the city of Daraya, on the fringe of the Syrian capital Damascus, was besieged by warring government forces. Its streets were filled with ruined homes, office buildings and shops, but beneath was a secret library of works of poetry, history, fiction and religion. Each one was gathered and stored by people willing to risk their lives to save the city's books. This library became a symbol of hope that one day their society would be rebuilt.

*L.Watson*



PHOTOS: GETTY IMAGES

COMPILED BY DIANE GODLEY



## Period Queen

Lucy Peach

MURDOCH BOOKS

OK, we know this book isn't for the majority of our readers. But grandmothers, aunts, mothers and role models with granddaughters, nieces, daughters and young girls who confide in and look up to them, will find this book a little gem of knowledge in self awareness. Author Lucy Peach wants to help young women to become an expert in understanding their own bodies and learn the greatest life hack of them all: recognising what they need at different times of the month (both physical and emotional) and cultivating a relationship with oneself.

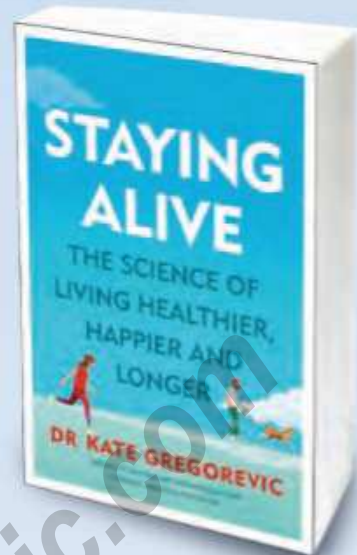


## Staying Alive: The Science of Living Healthier, Happier and Longer

Dr Kate Gregorevic

MACMILLAN

The way we live out the latter years of our life depends on our health: how agile we are and whether we are disease-free or rely on medication or medical assistance. Specialist geriatrician Dr Kate Gregorevic is deeply interested in understanding how to achieve optimum health in old age. In *Staying Alive*, she aims to educate us to increase our own capacity in creating health. Divided into three parts: Understanding Ageing; Creating Health; and the Health Conditions of Ageing, the book explains what happens to our bodies as we grow older and provides easy-to-understand advice on everyday lifestyle choices.



## The Ratline: Love, Lies and Justice on the Trail of a Nazi Fugitive

**Philippe Sands**

WEIDENFELD & NICOLSON

Are evil acts perpetuated by evil people, or simply by bureaucrats following orders? The 'banality of evil' is explored by barrister Philippe Sands, who lost 80 relations in ghettos and Nazi concentration camps during World War II. One of those responsible was SS Brigadeführer Otto von Wächter, a devoted husband and father, but also a war criminal who went on the run in 1945. The complex twists of Otto's efforts to flee Europe via the 'Ratline', an escape route to Latin America, is at the heart of this fascinating and well-researched story. *M.Egan*

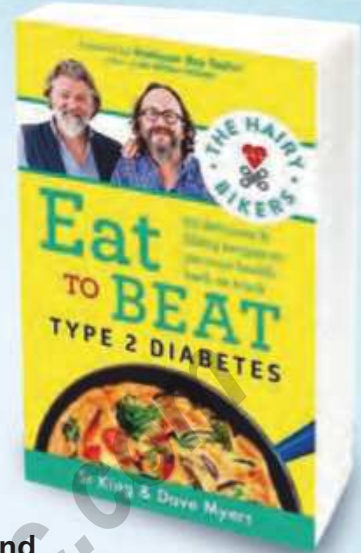


## Eat to Beat Type 2 Diabetes

**The Hairy  
Bikers: Si King  
& Dave Myers**

HACHETTE

Ten years ago, the Hairy Bikers had health problems – suffering from high blood pressure and cholesterol, they were both overweight and Dave was borderline type 2 diabetes. So, they spoke to healthy eating experts and, by following their advice shed nearly 40 kilograms between them. Their bodies responded positively, and the hairy pair decided to recreate some of their favourite recipes by writing diet cookbooks. Their latest book deals with type 2 diabetes and provides 80 easy-to-make and tasty recipes that take deprivation out of restrictive diets.

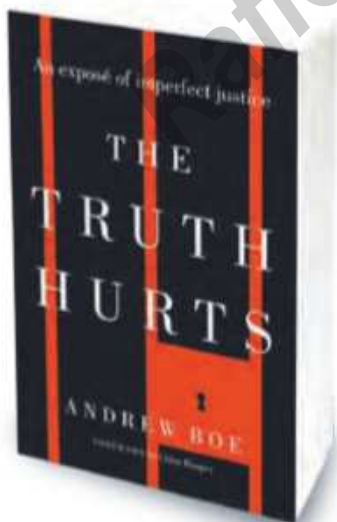


## The Truth Hurts

**Andrew Boe**

HACHETTE

According to barrister Andrew Boe, everyone is entitled to the presumption of innocence – or none of us are. Defender of the innocent as well as the notorious, Boe says that navigating the criminal justice system is more difficult for those in a minority group. Drawing on his experiences as a child of migrants fleeing the Burmese military junta, Boe has an unbridled willingness to speak the truth. In *The Truth Hurts*, he explores fault lines in the justice system and delves into cases he can't leave behind, such as a suicide in the Gibson Desert, a death on Palm Island, and abandoned children.



## One Bright Moon

**Andrew Kwong**

HARPERCOLLINS

**I'm not normally a fan of biographies, but I couldn't put this book down. *One Bright Moon* is author Andrew Kwong's moving memoir about resilience and courage while growing up in China during Mao Zedong's Great Leap Forward – an era of persecution and famine. At a young age, Kwong witnessed terrible acts of brutality, and although anxious and suffering from constant hunger pains, he and his eight-year-old school friends were devoted to the Party, shouting the latest slogans against the country's 'enemies' with fervour until their throats were hoarse, and breaking rocks and collecting metal to help the country move forward. Kwong's journey is distressing yet delightful, powerful and profound. An insightful look at life in communist China during the 1960s and 70s.**





## Fiction

## The End of October

**Lawrence Wright**

BANTAM PRESS

A pandemic ravages the world, bringing death, quarantines, unemployment and social unrest in its wake. Sound familiar? Marketed as ‘eerily prescient’, and written months ago by Pulitzer Prize-winning journalist Lawrence Wright, *The End of October* is a cut above the usual sort of doomsday thriller. The hero is an epidemiologist racing to find a cure. The villain is the virus itself – stealthy and totally without mercy. While timely, it’s not for the faint-hearted. *M.Egan*



## Keeper

**Jessica Moor**

PENGUIN RANDOMHOUSE

When the body of Katie Straw is found downstream of a bridge popular for suicides, it seems like a clear-cut case for Detective Sergeant Whitworth and Detective Constable Brookes – but the women in the refuge where Katie worked have a different story to tell. Through their accounts – and flashbacks into Katie’s life – we are given a harrowing insight into the many insidious forms domestic violence takes. Moor offers readers a raw portrayal of this troubling social problem. *Z.Meunier*

## Sex and Vanity

**Kevin Kwan**

PENGUIN

RANDOM HOUSE

Singaporean-born Kevin Kwan, author of the phenomenally successful *Crazy Rich Asians*, once again hilariously tackles the nuances of Asian identity, wealth, love and class. This frothy modern comedy of manners moves between the decadent worlds of the island of Capri and uptown New York. Demure Lucie tries to deny her attraction to the gallant but geekish George, amidst lavish parties attended by proud, pretentious and pseudo characters.

*M.Egan*





Podcasts



**Chasing Charlie**

Approached with the case of a jilted lover, Melbourne private investigator Julia Robson uncovers the trail of con artist Charlie. The New Zealander has spun a web of deceit around the world, ensnaring and defrauding dozens of victims.



**Wind of Change**

It's 1990. The Soviet Union is on the verge of collapse. The song of the times is 'Wind of Change' by German band the Scorpions. Decades later, journalist Patrick Radden Keefe hears a rumour: the song was actually written by the CIA. This is his quest for the truth.



**Seconds to Save Emily**

With no time to brake, the driver and conductor of a heavily laden freight train discover it is bearing down on a little girl who has wandered onto the tracks. A Reader's Digest classic that will make your heart race.

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**Puzzle Answers**

See page 152

**TO 'TELL' THE TRUTH**

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# THE GENIUS SECTION

*Sharpen Your  
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# STORY TIME IS FOR EVERYONE

*Reading aloud, even to other adults,  
yields surprising rewards*

BY *Meghan Cox Gurdon* FROM THE BOOK **THE ENCHANTED HOUR**





**N**ot long ago, Linda Khan was sitting by a hospital bed, feeling ill at ease. Beside her lay her 88-year-old father. His heart was faltering. He needed surgery.

What troubled her almost as much as his health was the fact that all day the two of them had engaged in nothing but depressing small talk. She and her father had always had good conversations, but now he seemed to be sunk in querulous contemplation of his predicament. He talked about the lousy hospital food, the tests, the doctors, the diagnosis. The scope of his once wide-ranging interests seemed to have shrunk to the size of the room.

That day in the hospital, her eyes fell on a stack of books that people had brought as gifts. Her father had always been a reader, but lately he didn't have the energy or focus. She picked up *Young Titan*, Michael Shelden's biography of Winston Churchill, and started to read it out loud.

That afternoon, Khan read to her father for an hour. It was a relief and a pleasure for both of them. Reading gave the daughter a way to connect with her father and help him in a situation that was otherwise out of her hands. Listening allowed the father to travel on the sound of his daughter's voice, up and out of the depth of illness and back into the realm of mature, intellectual engagement, where he felt himself again.

Reading may be just what the

doctor ordered. In a 2010 survey in the UK, elderly adults who joined weekly read-aloud groups reported better concentration, less agitation, and an improved ability to socialise. The survey authors attributed these improvements in large part to the "rich, varied, nonprescriptive diet of serious literature" that group members consumed, with fiction encouraging feelings of relaxation and calm, poetry fostering focused concentration, and narratives of all sorts giving rise to feelings and memories.

Almost any kind of reading to another person can be beneficial. That seems to be especially true for Alzheimer's patients, according to a 2017 study of 800,000 men and women with dementia. "Reading a literary text together not only harnesses the power of reading as a cognitive process, it acts as a powerful socially coalescing presence," the study's authors wrote.

**WE ARE NOT THE ONLY SPECIES** to benefit from this kind of oral medicine. Dogs do, too, which is why volunteers at the American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals read to the animals under their care.

"Ten or 15 years ago, I was essentially the only person who worked with the neglect and abuse cases," says Victoria Wells, the organisation's senior manager for behaviour and training. "I used to sit with them, in front of their kennels, and play guitar

and sing. I used to play the Beatles. I noticed that the dogs who were very fearful, in the back of their kennels shivering and cowering, would slowly creep forwards to the front. They would appear to be listening, and they would become very relaxed."

The dogs' response to music led in a natural way to the idea of reading aloud. Some volunteers keep the animals apprised of current events by reading the newspaper, some choose children's books, and others prefer adult fiction. "The dogs really enjoy the reading," Wells says. "The fact that it's not threatening but it's attention all the same is what's most beneficial."

**READERS GET REWARDS, TOO.** For Neil Bush, the late-life hospitalisations of his famous parents, former US President George H. W. and Barbara Bush, became opportunities to repay a debt of gratitude.

"When I was a kid, [my mother] would read to me and my siblings," he told a reporter in 2018. With his parents in and out of care, he said, "we've been reading books about Dad's foreign policy and, more recently, Mom's memoir."

Bush went on, his voice thick with emotion: "And to read the story of their amazing life together has been a remarkable blessing to me, personally, as their son."

Reading to a spouse, sibling or parent might feel a little peculiar at first.

Initially, it felt odd and even improper to presume to read to a man who, for her entire life, had always been strong and independent, Linda Kahn told me. Her fear was misplaced; they both ended up loving the experience. Like so many others who brave the momentary weirdness of reading to another adult, they were, to borrow a phrase from Wordsworth, surprised by the joy of it.

Who wouldn't want that? One night, years ago, a friend of mine picked up a copy of Michael Shaara's novel *The Killer Angels* about the American Civil War.

Without thinking much about it, he started to read the preface out loud. Immediately, he was joined by his eldest son, who was about 12. A moment later, his wife came in, followed by the couple's two daughters, who at six and eight were not perhaps the target audience but wanted to be part of a family moment.

Within a few minutes, everyone seemed so comfy and engaged that my friend kept reading. He picked the book up again after dinner the next night, and the next, until he had finished it. **R**

EXCERPTED FROM THE BOOK  
*THE ENCHANTED HOUR* BY MEGHAN  
COX GURDON, © 2019 BY MEGHAN  
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PERMISSION OF HARPERCOLLINS



# WIN

## 5 CHANCES TO WIN A VICKS WARM STEAM VAPORIZER AND TWO VAPOSTEAM INHALANTS

BE PREPARED FOR COLD & FLU SEASON WITH  
THIS PRIZE FROM VICKS!

The Vicks Warm Steam Vaporizer & Inhalant creates a soothing flow of warm steam to humidify the air and help ease congestion naturally.



For your chance to win one of five Vicks Warm Steam Vaporizers and two VapoSteam Inhalants valued at \$100.00, simply tell us why you trust Vicks in 25 words or less. To enter, visit the giveaway page on

[www.trustedbrands.com.au](http://www.trustedbrands.com.au)

Full terms and conditions can be found online. Entries close August 31, 2020. Always read the label. Follow the directions for use. If symptoms persist, talk to your healthcare professional



# PUZZLES

*Challenge yourself by solving these puzzles and mind stretchers, then check your answers on page 146.*

### Sum-Thing Special Moderately Difficult

Each letter from A through H has one of the eight values listed below, and no two letters have the same value. Which number corresponds with each letter to make all of the equations true?

$D + G = A$	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>24</b>
$F + A = E$								
$H + C = F$								
$D + B = E$								
$C + F = G$								

A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H

### 1 to 25 Moderately Difficult

Move the numbers from the outer ring onto the board. Each number must be placed in one of the five cells that lie in the direction indicated by its chevron. The numbers must snake together vertically, horizontally or diagonally so that they link in sequence from 1 to 25. (For example, 2 must be adjacent to both 1 and 3.) There's only one solution. Can you find it?

<b>17</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>25</b>
<b>16</b>						<b>15</b>
<b>5</b>						<b>20</b>
<b>12</b>						<b>23</b>
<b>24</b>						<b>3</b>
<b>9</b>			<b>1</b>			<b>2</b>
<b>14</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>11</b>

(SUM-THING SPECIAL) FRASER SIMPSON; (1 TO 25) JEFF WIDDERICH



		5	8	9		1	
	9			4			8
8							6
		3				5	
	5	6	4	8	7	3	2
		9				4	
	7						4
	6			5			9
		1		6	9	8	

### Sudoku To Solve This Puzzle

Put a number from 1 to 9 in each empty square so that: every horizontal row and vertical column contains all nine numbers (1-9) without repeating any of them; each of the outlined 3 x 3 boxes has all nine numbers, none repeated.

### To 'Tell' the Truth Moderately Difficult

You're playing poker against Tex. He has a 'tell': his eye twitches 90 per cent of the time when he thinks he has a good hand. The trouble is that he has a twitchy eye anyway, and there's a 10 per cent chance it's twitching even when he thinks his hand isn't strong. If Tex considers 30 per cent of all the hands he gets to be good, and if his eye is twitching right now, what's the probability that he thinks he has a good hand?



(TO 'TELL' THE TRUTH) DARREN RIGBY

BRAIN POWER  
brought to you by



ジュースアップ  
Juice up



# TRIVIA

## Test Your General Knowledge

BY Paul Paquet

- 1.** In 2012, what became the first movie to win both the Oscar for Best Picture and France's César Award for Best Film? **2 points**
- 2.** HD 140283 is one of the most ancient known stars, at over 13.5 billion years old. It also has what biblical name? **2 points**
- 3.** New Zealand's largest city is known as Tāmaki Makaurau in Māori and what in English? **1 point**
- 4.** Who built a private apartment near the top of the iron tower named for him and entertained Thomas Edison in it? **1 point**
- 5.** In the popular video game series, what type of animal is Sonic? **1 point**
- 6.** In 2007, purported remains of what saint were found to be from an Egyptian mummy instead? **2 points**
- 7.** What app, a monster hit in 2016, has been credited with teaching Americans the metric system? **1 point**



- 15.** In which national capital can you find around 200,000 gers (traditional round tents) alongside other kinds of housing? **2 points**

- 8.** Complete the title of the play by Shakespeare – *The Merchant of \_\_\_\_\_*? **1 point**
- 9.** Which pop superstar topped the list of the world's best-selling music artists last year, beating South Korean group BTS who placed second? **1 point**
- 10.** Colombo is the largest city of which Asian country? **1 point**
- 11.** Sahti is a type of beer that's traditionally flavoured with juniper. You're most likely to find it in which northern hemisphere country? **2 points**
- 12.** What actor won the inaugural Razzie Redeemer Award by going from a flop (*Gigli*) to hits (*Argo* and *Gone Girl*)? **1 point**
- 13.** Complete the well-known phrase: 'A leopard never changes its \_\_\_\_\_' **1 point**
- 14.** Brie, Camembert and Bleu d'Auvergne are types of which food? **1 point**

**16-20** Gold medal    **11-15** Silver medal    **6-10** Bronze medal    **0-5** Wooden spoon

**ANSWERS:** 1. *The Artist*. 2. Methuselah. 3. Auckland. 4. Gustave Eiffel. 5. Heddehog. 6. Joan of Arc. 7. Pokémon GO. 8. Venice. 9. Taylor Swift. 10. Sri Lanka. 11. Finland. 12. Ben Affleck. 13. Spots. 14. Cheese. 15. Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia.

# WORD POWER

## *Take to the Skies*

### *Explore these terms from the world of aviation*

BY Louise Nadeau AND Samantha Rideout

- 1. combi** – A: able to carry both passengers and cargo. B: series of connecting flights. C: cleaning crew.
- 2. Hobbs meter** – A: device that can measure how long an aircraft is in use. B: distance to the ground. C: sideways drift.
- 3. biplane** – A: aircraft with jet engine. B: two sets of wings. C: no first-class seating.
- 4. taxi** – A: get a last-minute seat. B: tax imposed on goods crossing borders. C: move along the ground.
- 5. avionics** – A: electronic equipment fitted in an aircraft. B: air ambulances. C: plane stunts done for sport or entertainment.
- 6. bird control** – A: steering a light aircraft. B: keeping birds away from the airport. C: checking passports.
- 7. instrument flight rules** – A: regulations for maintaining cockpit instruments. B: relying on instruments instead of visual references. C: crossing an ocean.
- 8. ditch** – A: accidentally leak sewage. B: make a forced landing on water. C: misplace luggage.
- 9. overbook** – A: accept too many reservations. B: fly too fast. C: review a pilot logbook.
- 10. ceiling** – A: overhead controls for air vents and lighting. B: business-class area. C: maximum altitude of an aircraft.
- 11. buzz-saw noise** – A: sound of a helicopter rotor. B: radio static. C: a supersonic fan.
- 12. wind shear** – A: wind pressure on the tail. B: wind-related wear and tear. C: sudden change in wind speed and direction.
- 13. aeromodelling** – A: designing flight-attendant uniforms. B: building and flying model aircraft. C: using a flight simulator.
- 14. stall** – A: airline employee's locker. B: loss of lift and consequent fall. C: interrupted take-off.
- 15. deplane** – A: travel by car instead. B: face a fear of flying. C: leave an aircraft.

## Answers

**1. combi** – A: able to carry both passengers and cargo. A combi plane dropped off mail, two tourists and supplies for the village store.

**2. Hobbs meter** – A: device that can measure how long an aircraft is in use. Uri watched the Hobbs meter, not wanting to pay for more than two hours of plane rental.

**3. biplane** – B: aircraft with two sets of wings. The historic 1930s biplane took off with no problem.

**4. taxi** – C: move along the ground. At last, the delayed plane taxied away from the terminal.

**5. avionics** – A: electronic equipment fitted in an aircraft. Ahmad was an avionics engineer interested in improving autopilot technology.

**6. bird control** – B: keeping birds away from the airport. Playing recordings of avian distress calls is a proven bird-control strategy.

**7. instrument flight rules** – B: regulations for relying on instruments instead of visual references. Pilots must fly under instrument flight rules when the weather makes it hard to see.

**8. ditch** – B: make a forced landing on water. Arthur, a military flying ace, had once survived ditching in the Pacific.

**9. overbook** – A: accept too many reservations. Airlines deliberately overbook flights because typically, some passengers don't show up.

**10. ceiling** – C: maximum altitude of an aircraft. U-2 spy planes have such a high ceiling that their pilots wear pressure suits.

**11. buzz-saw noise** – C: sound of a supersonic fan. Amy's baby, asleep when he boarded the jet, was soon awakened by buzz-saw noise.

**12. wind shear** – C: sudden change in wind speed and direction. Wind shear is dangerous for planes.

**13. aeromodelling** – B: building and flying model aircraft. Aeromodelling clubs have fields where enthusiasts can try out their creations.

**14. stall** – B: loss of lift and consequent fall. Nabila paid close attention when her flight instructor explained how to recover from a stall.

**15. deplane** – C: leave an aircraft. After deplaning, Hayley realised she'd left her phone behind.

---

### VOCABULARY RATINGS

**5-8:** Fair

**9-11:** Good

**12-15:** Word Power Wizard





**Only \$2 Postage!** - Quote code RM08S when ordering

**Only \$2 Postage**  
on your entire order!



*Front zip for an easy and secure fit*

### Good-Looking Active Footwear - suede trim and easy zip!

More stylish than a regular trainer but just as comfortable, these shoes are also very easy to slip on and off thanks to the practical zipped design. The high-quality suede and fabric uppers allow your feet to breathe, as do the cushioned insoles, so they're perfect for warm weather. They're finished with hard-wearing, flexible and slip-resistant soles and the smart black colour is sure to complement your clothes.

**Zippered Ladies Trainers • SLPNA**  
**\$59 or \$29.50 x 2 mths**



Euro Sizes	36	37	38	39	40	41
Australian Fractional Sizes	5	6	7	8	9	10

### Set of 2 Butterfly Cushions - a pretty way to welcome winter

Here's a gorgeous – and very affordable – way to brighten up your sitting room. These cushions feature richly-coloured butterflies fluttering among pretty green ferns, all shown off to perfection by the pale grey background. The hardwearing polyester covers zip off for washing and the springy polyester filling means they're very comfortable behind your head or in the small of your back. Supplied in a set of two measuring 45 x 45 cm, they're like a breath of fresh air!

**Butterfly Cushions**  
• BTCSH  
**\$29.95 Set of 2**

Set of 2



*An instant update for any room!*

**SAVE \$10**  
Buy two for **\$49.90**  
or \$24.95 x 2 mths





## All-Over-Support Pillow

- just shape it to fit

You can bend, twist or fold this amazing pillow for tailored cushioning and support. Neck, shoulders, back, knees, ankles – simply shape it to fit and you can relax in greater comfort. The soft yet resilient memory foam has a flexible aluminium filament at its heart to hold the pillow in your chosen position. Easy to carry and great for travelling, it measures 10 cm in diameter and 61 cm long and has a washable cotton cover.

*Bend or twist to any shape to provide comfort*

Washable cover

**Twist Pillow**  
• TWIP \$19.95

Perfect for home or travel

**SAVE \$10**  
Buy two for \$29.90

**PERFECT FOR:**

- Neck
- Shoulders
- Back
- Knees
- Legs



Easy to shape

Snap closures to fit snugly around your neck

## Clever Backpack with USB port - charge your mobile, laptop or tablet on the go!

This quality backpack has generous padding to protect your back and shoulders as well as your laptop or tablet. It also has a connection for your own power pack and USB outlet, so you can charge your devices even when you're nowhere near a mains connection. A roomy 40H x 35W x 13D cm and made from tough polyester, it has plenty of pockets and compartments to help you stay organised. Power Bank, Smartphone, Tablet & USB Cord not included.

Perfect for work, travel or day trips

Carry and charge your devices more comfortably

Quality backpack with lots of compartments to fit all your essentials



**Charging Backpack • BPACK**  
\$79 or \$19.75 x 4 mths

*Padded interior for your tablet or laptop!*

## Sewing Machine Carry Bag

Fashionable carry bag to store and transport your sewing machine. This black canvas bag with purple colour trim and lining measures 48D x 32H x 21D cm, and features a zippered outside pocket 37 cm wide.

63578

• \$39.95



**Only \$2 Postage!** - Quote code RM08S when ordering

**Only \$2  
Postage**  
on your entire  
order!

## ▼ Baby Tiger Latch Hook

This cute baby tiger latch hook project is ideal for the floor or wall of a child's room.

Your latch hook rug kit includes design printed in colour on 4.5-mesh canvas, pre-cut acrylic yarn, latch hook tool and instructions. 50 x 75 cm.

63341 • \$129.00 or  
\$32.25 x 4 months



## Wonderful Rose ▶

Discover the amazing craft of diamond mosaic.

Your diamond mosaic kit includes colour printed fabric with adhesive finish, pre-sorted acrylic facets, tool, wax and tray.

20 x 38 cm. 63599 • \$36.95



## Over-Door Shoe Storage

- room for up to 36 pairs!

Holds  
up to  
36 pairs!

Here's an easy way to turn wasted space into roomy storage for your shoes. This strong yet lightweight plastic rack adjusts to fit over most doors and you can also adjust the length. It's easy to assemble and, at 183H x 52W x 20D cm, it can hold up to 36 pairs. Perfect for the bedroom, it's an easy and affordable way to keep your footwear organised and free from scuffs.

Over-Door Shoe Rack • OVSR • \$24.95



Fits neatly  
over a  
door

Lightweight  
adjustable  
rack



Keep  
cleaning  
supplies  
and toilet  
rolls out  
of sight!

Stylish  
storage  
for your  
home

## Attractive Bathroom Cabinet - adjustable shelf for flexible storage

Openwork side panels give this cabinet a feeling of light and space. The door, which has a stylish panelled effect, opens on to a three-position adjustable shelf and closes with a magnetic latch. Easy to assemble, the cabinet is made from MDF with a fresh, white finish. A roomy 92H x 40.5W x 30D cm, it will store or display your towels and toiletries as it keeps toilet rolls and cleaning products out of sight.

Bathroom Cabinet • BATHC  
\$99 or \$24.75 x 4 mths



Features  
light and airy  
openwork  
side panels

## Super-Soft Floor Rug - with deep pile for extra comfort. Only \$99!

Step out of bed on to this amazingly soft rug and you'll want to stay there, wriggling your toes into its warmth. A generous 180 x 120 cm, it will look lovely in front of the sofa, too. The deep, furry pile is made from polyester with a tough cotton backing so you can simply rinse it with a hose and let it dry on the line. It's so easy to keep it looking its best and the perfect way to bring warmth to a cold room or add that



*Beautiful protection for your floors*

*Deep pile with a soft underfoot feel*

*A generous 180 x 120 cm!*

*Looks good anywhere in the home*

decorative touch!

**Super-Soft Floor Rug**

• SSRUG \$99 or \$24.75 x 4 mths

*Soft deep pile*



**Only \$2 Postage!** - Quote code RM08S when ordering

**Only \$2 Postage** on your entire order!

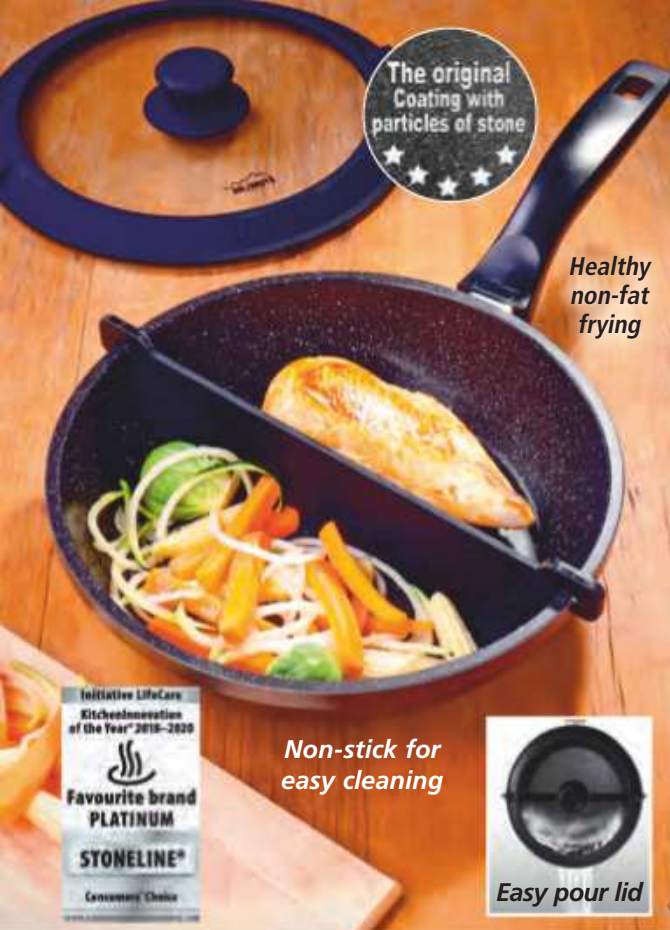
# CADFAEL

## Cadfael (1994) - Complete DVD Collection

Based on the best-selling novels by Ellis Peters, this award-winning series stunningly recreates life in 12th Century England. Once a crusader, now a monk at the grand Shrewsbury Abbey, the worldly but humble Brother Cadfael (Sir Derek Jacobi) uses his keen intuition to protect the innocent and bring the guilty to account. Includes Series 1-4. 5 DVDs, 16 hrs. **SUBTITLES**

**MCAGA • \$69.95 or \$23.32 x 3 mths**





The original Coating with particles of stone

Healthy non-fat frying

Non-stick for easy cleaning



Easy pour lid

## Ingenious Two-in-One Pan - easy to cook two dishes in one pan!

Save on space, time and washing up with this high-quality pan. 24 cm in diameter and 6 cm deep and, when you click the central divider in place, a silicone seal creates two completely separate zones. You can even heat liquids side by side! It also lets you strain safely. Plus, as the tough, non-stick coating incorporates particles of stone, clean-up is easy as foods won't stick or burn.

**Half and Half Pan**  
• STLHP \$79 or \$19.75 x 4 mths

SIMPLE TO CONVERT 1 PAN INTO 2!

Prepare two different sauces with the removable divider!



## Easy-to-use potato masher - effortless silky-smooth mash

Now you can make deliciously-smooth mashed potato in just 20 seconds. This brilliant masher's rotating blades lift the potato and push it through the perforated sides so there's none of the glutinous 'glug' you get with a blender. The non-slip handle is easy to hold even if you have arthritis or weak hands and the base is dishwasher safe.

Mains powered, you can also use it to make tasty homemade soups, purees, sauces and dips.

Non-slip handle

**Potato Masher • MASHR**  
\$79 or \$19.75 x 4 mths



Rotor pushes ingredients through outer mesh for lump-free mash!



**GREAT FOR:** • Dips • Baby food • Gravy  
• Butter + Flour • Pasta Sauce



Perfect, delicious creamy mash in seconds!

Easy to clean and dishwasher safe



*Smart  
lightweight  
design  
perfect for  
the entry  
way or hall*

*Easy to  
assemble,  
no tools  
required!*

## Handy Hat And Coat Stand

**- lightweight, strong and stable**

For years, traditional hat stands have been an attractive feature in hallways and offices, providing a space-saving place for hats, coats, umbrellas, scarves and more. This one has cleverly updated the classic design. Smart and sleek in black plastic, it provides maximum hanging space with four double hooks at the top and three single hooks lower down. Very stable and easy to assemble without any tools, it stands 175 cm tall. Accessories not included.

**Lightweight Coat Rack**

• LWCR \$29.95



**Only \$2  
Postage**  
on your entire  
order!

**Only \$2 Postage!** - Quote code RM08S when ordering

## ▼ Little Knits For Little Feet

Fun, whimsical designs to knit for baby. Beginner and advanced knitters can create boots, shoes and socks. 128 pages.

63551 • \$32.95



## ▲ Feeding The Chickens

A picturesque country scene for puzzle enthusiasts. The finished size of this 1000-piece jigsaw is 68 x 48 cm.

64093 • \$34.95



## Miracle Gel Cushion - sit in comfort always!

If you spend a lot of time driving, sitting at a desk or in a wheelchair, this cushion could be a life-changer! As the pockets of cooling gel respond individually to pressure you could feel relief for any pressure spots as you enjoy personalised support. It's easy to



carry and, at 40 x 38 cm and a generous 3 cm deep, it fits most seats. The washable cover has a slip-resistant base to keep it securely in place.

**Blissful Gel Cushion**  
• MGCOL \$39.95



*Perfect for sitting at home or while travelling*

## Three-Strap Sandals - triple the comfort!

You can shape these sandals to the contours of your feet for all-day blissful comfort. The three straps have touch fasteners you can position to ease pressure on any sore spots, then you can readjust them later on if you need to accommodate any swelling. The attractive tan colour and suede-look finish will complement most outfits and the hard-wearing sole is slip resistant for security.

**Triple Touch Sandals • TRISS**  
\$49 or \$24.50 x 2 mths

*Easy walking with hard wearing, slip resistant soles*



*Three easily adjustable straps*

*All-day blissful comfort*



*Gabbeni*

Euro Sizes	36	37	38	39	40	41
Australian Fractional Sizes	5	6	7	8	9	10



Sits securely  
in place after  
your shower

Super  
absorbent  
100%  
cotton  
towelling



Ladies

**MEASUREMENTS:**

- Ladies S-M  
80L x 130W cm
- Ladies L-XL  
80L x 150W cm
- Mens  
70H x 140L cm



Mens

Choose a  
Ladies or  
Mens Wrap

## Secure Bath Wrap

- two styles for women and men!

This wrap is held snugly by an elasticated top with the added safety of 3 selectable buttons to keep it comfortably in place. The 100% cotton towelling is soft and super absorbent to ensure fast and easy drying. Available in Ladies S-M and L-XL. Mens one size fits all.

### Secure Bath Wrap

- SWRPM Mens • SWRPW Ladies
- \$39.95 each**



Adjustable fit  
with secure  
button up front

**Only \$2  
Postage**  
on your entire  
order!

**Only \$2 Postage!** - Quote code RM08S when ordering



**NEW  
RELEASE  
Series 9**



## Death in Paradise - Series 1-9 DVDs

DI Richard Poole is sent to the paradise island of Saint-Marie in the Caribbean to solve an impossible murder. He hates sun, sea and sand, but plans to head back to cold, drizzly London once he's solved the murder. Poole's boss conspires to keep him in the Caribbean which he hates, and people just keep getting murdered. 2-3 DVDs, 440-488 mins.

**SUBTITLES**

- MDEBK Series 1 (2011)
  - MDEBL Series 2 (2013)
  - MDEBM Series 3 (2014)
  - MDEBO Series 4 (2015)
  - MDEBP Series 5 (2016)
- \$29.95 each**

- MDEBR Series 6 (2017)
  - MDEBS Series 7 (2018)
  - MDEBT Series 8 (2019)
- \$34.95 each**

- MDEBU Series 9 (2020)
- \$39.95 or \$19.98 x 2 mths**



Stretches easily over the arms of most chairs and sofas

## Stretch Armrest Covers - rejuvenate or protect your chairs

The arms of your chairs and sofas are often the first areas to show signs of wear. These covers can extend their life in two ways – by protecting new pieces from damage and giving older, worn furniture a fresh new look. Available in grey or brown to complement most upholstery, they measure 56L x 18W x 24D cm. As they're made from a very elastic mix of polyester and cotton they stretch to fit most armrests. Available in grey or brown.

**Stretch Furniture Arm Protectors**  
 • FARMP  
 \$19.95 each set



## Leather Organiser Bag

You'll be amazed how much this sleek 25.5W x 26H x 7D cm leather bag can hold and organise – there are two internal compartments as well as a zipped purse section and places for your phone, cash, cards and pens. Adjustable strap. Black or red.

**Leather Organiser Bag • ORBGA**  
 \$49ea or \$24.50 x 2 mths





*Sit comfortably while the pedals rotate to provide gentle exercise*

*Remote control included*

## Low-Impact Elliptical Trainer - great for all fitness levels

This mains-powered elliptical trainer can help tone your lower body and improve flexibility with minimal pressure on your joints. Simply sit comfortably and enjoy up to 30 minutes of effortless movement. Choose between the three pre-set programs or select from five different speeds in manual mode. The remote control requires 2 x AAA batteries (not supplied). Easy to store at just 38L x 34W x 25H cm, it keeps track of time, distance, speed, pedal count and calories burned.

### Elliptical Trainer

**ELPCA**  
 • \$249 or  
 \$49.80 x  
 5 mths



*Multi-directional pedals*

**Only \$2 Postage!** - Quote code **RM08S** when ordering

**Only \$2 Postage**  
 on your entire order!

## Wheel Cards Flowers

Create these clever cards with a moving wheel to display messages and greetings. The set includes nine pre-scored 10.5 x 15 cm cards and pre-printed cut-out front cards with window, envelopes, nine turning wheels, sheets with sentiments and best wishes, clips, foam pads and instructions.

Makes 9 cards.

**64165 • \$29.95**



## Captivating Miniature Miller's Garden - an absorbing DIY craft project

If you enjoy craft, you'll love putting this exquisite miniature sunroom together and watching it take shape. Each tiny piece is perfect in every detail and, once the model is complete, it makes a stunning 19.5H x 21W x 18.5D cm ornament. The materials include wood, fabric, thread and wire – all provided, along with the accessories you need to do a perfect job. There's even a USB cable to light up the overhead lamp!

**Miller's Garden • MILLG \$49 or \$24.50 x 2 mths**



*Includes all you need!*

*Captured in perfect miniature detail*

## Adorable First Kiss Statue - young love, too cute for words!

Two sweet little children are about to share their first kiss – what could be more adorable? This delightful ornament captures them both in remarkable detail, from the flowers in her hair to his boot laces. It's cast from weather-resistant polyresin with a hand-painted antique finish and, at 24H x 21W x 11D cm, it will make a delightful feature in your garden or courtyard, or on the patio.

**First Kiss Statue • FKSST \$39.95**

*Sweet decoration for your garden*

*Beautiful detail, easy to move*





**Robert**  
Founder of Stay Loyal

**David**  
Founder of Stay Loyal



## “Stay Loyal is the best decision I’ve made for my dog!

I didn't know what my 3 year old boxer was missing until my friend recommended Stay Loyal. It is seriously the best Premium product at an affordable price and delivered to your door.

My boxer has been a Stay Loyal fan for over two years and still goes nuts for it.

The owners always respond to any queries and are genuinely without question seriously focussed on offering a holistic approach to helping you look after your precious canine mate. They are Australian locals and not some huge company looking for short cuts.

I love that my boy is so happy and healthy and #1 Stay Loyal fan.

- Nerrida Hall, Greenway, ACT

## The Story of Stay Loyal

Stay Loyal was founded in 2012 by Robert Belobrajdic and David Korac, two cousins from Western Sydney. When their dogs started suffering from nutrition-related health problems, they searched for a food to help. But they never found it. So, they created their own healthy, all-natural food.

In the process, Robert wrote the book on natural healing for dog skin allergies: *How To Stop Your Dog Itching Without Repeated Vet Visits and Serious Prescription Side Effects*.

**Today, dog owners across Australia are discovering the difference in Stay Loyal – the only food your dog is guaranteed to love, or your money back.**

## MONEY-SAVING SPECIAL OFFER:

## 50% Off Savings For Dog Parents



We believe so strongly that your dog will thrive and live better on Stay Loyal, that we'd like to give you an **Instant 50% Off Savings** on your first Trial Bag of our food!

Just visit the special Web page below, and request your first 3kg bag of our All-Natural, Grain-Free formula. You get all this ...

1. **50% Off Instant Savings on Trial Bag.**
2. **FREE Delivery Australia Wide**
3. **FREE Gift: Membership in The Stay Loyal Dog Lover's Club.**

[www.StayLoyal.com.au/doglover](http://www.StayLoyal.com.au/doglover)

Phone: 1300 30 70 57

