

AUSTRALIA

Reader's Digest

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OUR STORIES
AS PODCASTS

Fast Tracking
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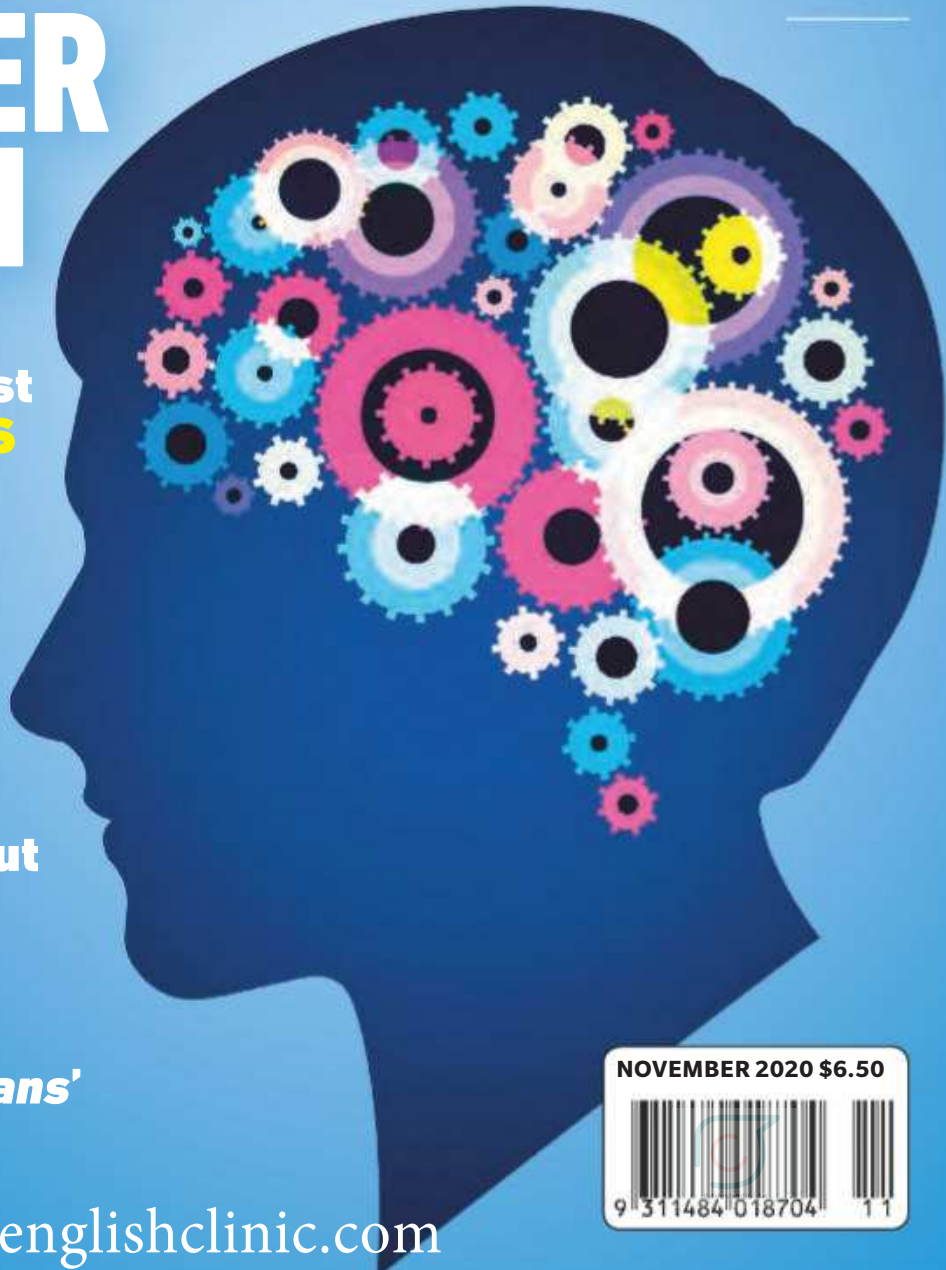
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EXCLUSIVE
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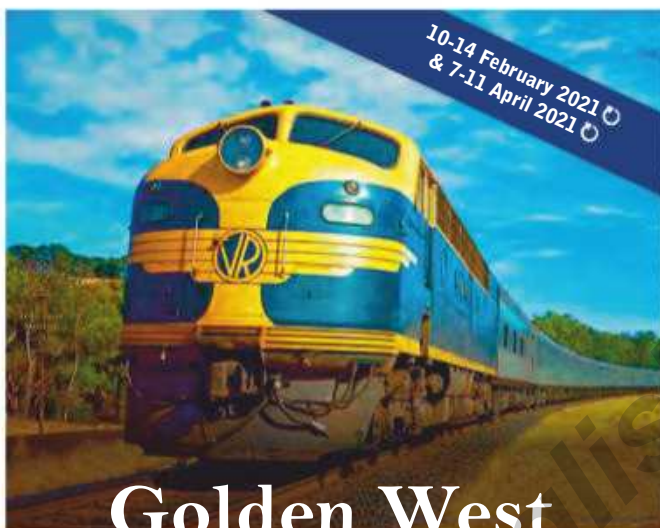


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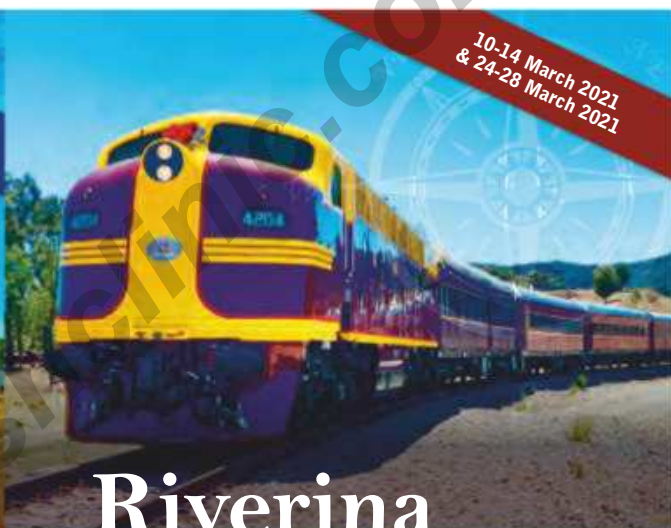


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EDITOR'S NOTE

Challenges That Lie Ahead

HAVE YOU HEARD ABOUT VAPING? Our article on e-cigarettes explores the world of vaping, and how kids who have been raised on the risks of smoking tobacco are taking up vaping because they think it's safer and not addictive (page 96). We set out to find the facts, explain the trend and highlight valid concerns and, in doing so, hopefully raise awareness about e-cigarettes that contain nicotine. We all shared a sense of baffled confusion – why, after decades of public health efforts to reduce the war on tobacco, do we now need to question the risks of vaping?

Without overlooking the seriousness of the COVID-19 pandemic, it's clear that our race to curb one crisis unwittingly fed into another. In 'Loneliness: 2020's Other Health Crisis' (page 58), health writer Helen Signy explores the risks associated with loneliness, a condition that has surged among groups in the community because of social distancing, and the sudden isolation created by business and social shutdowns. How we work together as a community to reduce this isolation, and strengthen local ties, is part of the broader health challenge ahead.

There's also some surprises: we meet Kevin Kwan, one of the literary world's most likeable authors (page 26), step inside the world of superhumans – where extreme talents rule (page 32), and journey to Kangaroo Island and meet the people who helped seriously injured animals following the catastrophic fires (page 128).

Something for every interest and family member. Enjoy!

Louise

LOUISE WATERSON
Editor-in-Chief



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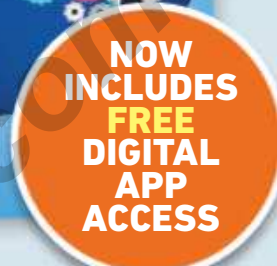
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LETTERS

Reader's Comments And Opinions

Conquering Antarctica

Dr Geoff Wilson's solo expedition to Antarctica, 'The Man Who Conquered Antarctica With a Tent and a Kite' (September), was nothing short of a breathtaking and highly dangerous adventure. It's impossible to imagine the courage and mental stamina that would see this man complete what would become a solo, world-record-breaking adventure. There's no doubt that Geoff's hunger for adventure and discovery already has him dreaming of new places to conquer, far beyond the walls of his veterinary practice.

JUDITH CAINE



Wacky Inventions

'Weird and Wonderful Inventions' (August) showed me how creative people solve problems, no matter how big or small. With this, I feel motivated to pursue an invention of my own that could help the world environmentally or socially, even if it is a little bit wacky.

AUSTIN LOO

Driving the Civil Rights Trail

This is a road like no other which was paved with the tears and suffering of a people longing to be free ('The Long Road to Freedom', September).

The signposts along its way may bear mute testimony to the heroism and cruelty of both the oppressed

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.

and oppressor. Most important of all, this road is a lasting reminder to anyone who sees it that people will always reach their destination whatever the cost. **MICHAEL WOUTERS**

Sound Check

The article ‘Say What? Minimising hearing loss’ (Health, September) reminded me of the time I went to a concert in Adelaide to see the great jazz trumpeter Miles Davis – what an opportunity!

But the sound was far too loud – so loud that it hurt my eardrums. I was seated behind the sound system no doubt used for pop concerts. I left immediately as I was not about to damage my eardrums for anything. I was so disappointed but, at 79, my hearing is still excellent.

LORNE HENRY

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The best letter each month will win a Pilot Capless Fountain Pen, valued at over \$200. The Capless is the perfect combination of luxury and ingenious technology, featuring a one-of-a-kind retractable fountain pen nib, durable metal body, beautiful rhodium accents and a 14K gold nib. Congratulations to this month’s winner, Lorne Henry.



TAKING OFF

We asked you to think up a clever caption for this photo.

If you need a wingman, I’m here for you, buddy. **JANA SIVARAJAH**

Flights in lockdown. **RUTH CHIPMAN**

No carbon emissions from my plane. **WENDY BROADBENT**

I know they’re cutting back on Fly Buys rewards but this is ridiculous!

JULIAN GRINTER

Congratulations to this month’s winner, Ruth Chipman.



WIN!

CAPTION CONTEST

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

\$100. To enter, email

editor@readersdigest.com.au

or see details on page 8.

Story Time Is for Everyone

Your article, 'Story Time is for Everyone' (Genius Section, August) on reading aloud and its positive effects on people with dementia has given a new light. Being a doctor, I realise that it won't bring back the Mum I knew but at least it will rekindle the ember in her heart.

DR MUHAMMAD RIDHA BIN ABDULLAH

From a Creative Mother...

The last edition of Reader's Digest (September) caused a stir in our household. I have been entering the Caption Contest for ages and my son, Jeffery, decided to enter. The one and only time he does, he wins! The banter that has gone on between us has been worth more than winning \$100. It's been priceless and will cause a stir when we tell the rest of our family and friends. MERRAN TOONE

... And Her Creative Son

I just wanted to thank you for including my caption in the contest, it has brought a lot of joy and laughter to my whole family.

My mother religiously enters the Caption Contest. At a family dinner, I jokingly suggested I'd enter to see if I was clever enough to have an entry printed. When I told Mum I had entered with 'The great emperor penguin, Julius Skisar' she told me it would win. But I was still in trouble when she opened the September issue to see who had won! JEFF TOONE



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Affordable 'Back-Up' Digital Hearing Aids Take-Off During COVID-19

Australian company *Found Hearing* have released one of Australia's first low-cost digital hearing aids, which is now available and delivered directly to your front door. The *Jaspa 3* hearing aid was originally developed as a 'back-up' digital hearing aid, or loan device for audiology clientele, whose current pair of hearing aids were either in for repair or servicing, or had been lost. Audiology clientele could simply pick up the *Jaspa 3* hearing aid without the need for an appointment or hearing test.

The surprise came when the majority of customers who used the *Jaspa 3* 'fill-in' hearing aid during the interim period, were extremely reluctant to return the hearing aid to their audiology clinic, even after their more expensive hearing aids had been repaired and were ready to be collected.

Once COVID-19 restrictions set in, demands for a non-contact 'back-up' digital hearing aid were in full flight, with most audiology clientele putting off hearing appointments altogether.

Found Hearing spokesperson Lyndon Hudson said;

"Understandably many hearing aid wearers have not wanted to put themselves at additional risk by having to attend hearing appointments. Consequently, we realised that access to a high-quality 'back-up' digital hearing aid is essential for most hearing aid wearers, and not just during a pandemic. Even the most expensive hearing aids regularly require repairs, servicing, adjustments and are commonly lost or misplaced. When this occurs many hearing aid wearers have to suffer with poor hearing until the problem is resolved. Often this can be days or even weeks that someone has to be without their hearing aids. It is extremely frustrating not just for the hearing aid wearer, but also for friends and family

who are struggling to communicate with them. With the quality and affordability of the *Jaspa 3* hearing aid, we can now solve these problems."

The *Jaspa 3* digital hearing aid has been advanced even further since the pandemic began, and now operates on one of the world's leading hearing aid microchips. It holds much of the same technology as found in expensive hearing aids, including fully digital sound processing, wide dynamic range compression, feedback cancellation, noise reduction, and digital operation across 12 bands. All these features operate automatically for the wearer. It is suitable for mild to severe hearing loss, and is equipped with a simple to use volume and program control.

The *Jaspa 3* hearing aid is a broad-prescription device, meaning it will work for various types of hearing loss without the requirement for a hearing assessment. The style is a discreet 'behind-the-ear' open-fit design, that the majority of hearing aid wearers are already accustomed to inserting and managing. It takes a standard 312 hearing aid battery.

The *Jaspa 3* hearing aid is \$429 per device and includes a 30-day money back guarantee and free delivery anywhere in Australia. No hearing test or appointments are required. To order call 1300 240 114 or order online at

www.foundhearing.com.au



NEWS WORTH SHARING

The Power of Co-operation

It seems that nice guys don't necessarily finish last. A recent study from the US tracked 671 people over 14 years, from university and during their career. It found that 'deceitful and aggressive' people are no more likely to be successful than those who are 'generous, trustworthy and nice'. Furthermore, being

nice to each other is how we have evolved as a species. Evolutionary anthropologist Dr Oliver Scott Curry says that for millions

of years humans have relied on each other to survive and thrive. "It's a very deep-seated, ancient impulse to work together," he says.

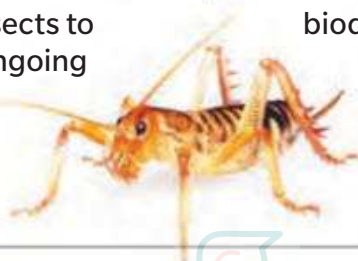


Schoolchildren Build Mini-Hotels for Insects

Thanks to the children of Te Pahu School, the tree wētā of Waikato's Mt Pirongia on New Zealand's North Island should always find a home. The students from the small rural school have made 'wētā hotels' for the ancient insects to continue the students' ongoing conservation learning. Spokesperson for Te Pahu landcare group, Nardene Berry, says that

just before the COVID-19 lockdown 100 wētā hotels were made. The initial placement of wētā hotels will provide baseline data to determine interest from the flightless insects for the hotels, which are an important biodiversity indicator.

And although wētā don't have quite the cute factor of birds, lizards or frogs, that hasn't deterred the children, Berry says.



COMPILED BY VICTORIA POLZOT

PHOTOS: GETTY IMAGES

Lego Ramps Make Shopping Easier for Wheelchair Users

Disabled by a car accident 25 years ago, Rita Ebel had long been frustrated by the number of shops and cafés inaccessible to wheelchair users. A year ago, the 62-year-old grandmother from Hanau in Germany came up with a simple solution: building ramps made of Lego.

Helped by her husband, Ebel has constructed dozens of made-to-order Lego ramps for shop entrances by sticking together hundreds of the brightly coloured, interlocking plastic bricks. “I’m trying to sensitise the world a bit to barrier-free travel,” says Ebel. “Anyone could suddenly end up in a situation that puts them in a wheelchair, like it did me.”

Hairdresser Malika El Harti has one of Rita’s ramps installed at the entrance to her hair salon. “You can see from afar that you can get in here without any problems,” she says.



Face Masks with a Difference

With recommendations that face masks be worn to help manage the spread of the COVID-19 pandemic, stylish designs have become a sought-after fashion accessory.

Australian indigenous artwork is being showcased on fashion label Bundarra Brand’s face masks.

Born in 2011, the online sportswear and fashion collection features authentic indigenous artwork and designs with profits directed to supporting community development.

Earlier this year, Bundarra added face masks and coverings to its collection. Each is 100 per cent indigenous art and, like all their products, is ethically and sustainably sourced.

As testament to its cause, Bundarra, with its partners, has contributed over \$1.5 million to indigenous employment development, artist sponsorship and donations for community development.

MY STORY

My Sister's Laugh

I was crossing a busy street in a strange city when I heard something familiar

BY Cheryl Charles

I come from a broken family that many would consider dysfunctional, at the least. After we grew up, my three siblings and I could go years without speaking. And that is where this story begins.

My sister Jeanne and I were born only 14 months apart, but by the time we were teenagers we had lost touch. At age 19, I had moved away from the home we shared with our mother to live on my father's horse farm in another state, where I worked ultimately as a veterinary assistant and a bartender. Jeanne got married at

18, moved away, and became – well, I didn't know what. We lived separate lives in separate states, and our connection somehow ended.

Fast-forward about five years. I was 24 and on a trip with my fiancé to New York, a place I had

never been. It was overwhelming. I was used to riding my horse into the small town where everyone knew everyone and everything going on in the quiet little

WE LIVED SEPARATE LIVES, AND OUR CONNECTION SOMEHOW ENDED

cowpoke hamlet. We had gone to New York to visit my fiancé's cousin and see the sights. We went to Little Italy, the Statue of Liberty, China-



town, and several Manhattan clubs. I had never seen so many taxis in one spot in all my life.

During a day of sightseeing, we were crossing a very busy street loaded with people. Everyone was in a hurry, hustling and bustling. I had laughed at something my fiancé said, and I suddenly heard my name yelled from somewhere behind me: “Cheryl!” I froze mid-stride in the middle of the road. Tears welled up spontaneously in my eyes. I knew without a doubt that it was my sister, Jeanne.

I yelled back before even turning to look. “Jeanne?”

It was her.

“Oh my God!” I screamed, and I began pushing people out of my way to get to her. The crowd started to part – even by New York standards, we must have seemed crazy. And there we were, standing in the middle of a Manhattan street, facing each other and smiling. I couldn’t believe it.

I later asked how she’d known it was me – *she never saw me!* She said it was my laugh. I wouldn’t say my

laugh is all that unusual, but I guess to a family member it's infectious. It hits your heart and resonates in your mind.

I asked her what she was doing in New York, and she said she had come for an opera showing and was there for only a week. Neither of us has ever returned to New York, and both our visits were spontaneous trips planned just a week earlier.

Since that time, Jeanne and I have never been separated. We both moved back to our home state. We talk daily. Many years have

passed, and we are now in our 50s. I truly believe serendipity played a huge part in bringing us together.

But our meeting by chance wasn't just a sign. I see it as more of a lesson, a reminder not to lose touch with loved ones.

It is too easy to remain lost.

After our sister-to-sister miracle, I don't plan to let that happen again.

I TRULY BELIEVE SERENDIPITY PLAYED A HUGE PART IN BRINGING US TOGETHER

Do you have a tale to tell? We'll pay cash for any original and unpublished story we print. See page 8 for details on how to contribute.

Walkies Law Raises Hackles

A proposed bill that will force people living in Germany to take their dog for a walk twice a day has left some dog owners barking mad about whether the state can decide what is best for the country's 9.4 million pet canines. Agriculture Minister Julia Kloeckner is introducing a law to ensure dogs go for a walk or run in the garden at least twice a day for a total of an hour. But some dog owners argue it's wrong-headed to think that all canines have the same exercise needs – and demanded that the government keep its paws out of their business. They point out that the physical needs of a pooch depend on its health, age and breed. It is not clear how the rule will be enforced. The most popular breeds in the country are the German Shepherd and short-legged, long-bodied Dachshund, known as 'sausage dogs', followed by Labradors, retrievers, Jack Russell terriers and pugs.

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SMART ANIMALS

These happy creatures are on a mission to rescue – or be rescued



Good Samaritan

STEPHEN KAY

This happened back in 1972, before the days when pool fences were compulsory. I was digging a vegetable garden in my backyard when a large German Shepherd that I will call Sam (being short for Good Samaritan) ran towards me, barking. He came through the bush in the direction of a new house that was being built, some 200 metres away. For a while I ignored him, and then realised that he wanted me to follow him.

All the workers had left for the day and I saw that the swimming pool

had been built and was full of water. A white toy poodle was swimming around the pool. The water level was too far below the edge of the pool for the dog to climb out. It had no alternative but to keep swimming until eventually, through sheer exhaustion, it would sink to the bottom and drown.

When it saw me, and after a few more barks from Sam, it swam towards me and I was able to lift it

You could earn cash by telling us about the antics of unique pets or wildlife. Turn to page 8 for details on how to contribute.

out of the water. I took the toy poodle home, dried it off and noticed a collar bearing a name, Midge, and an address, which was a five-minute walk from my home. So I took Midge home to his very grateful owners. But that was not the end of the story.

Some three weeks later, I was walking down the road when I was stopped by two vicious, snarling Dobermanns. They obviously had no intention of letting me pass. Suddenly, Sam ran from a house behind me. Barking and snarling, he stood between the Dobermanns and me. There he remained until my four-legged assailants retreated to their home.

After one final friendly ‘woof,’ Sam went back to his home, obviously believing that one good turn deserved another.

Saving a Spider

JI SHUMAN

In early July I noticed a cellar spider [daddy longlegs] in my bathtub. I didn’t think too much of it and assumed it would soon move on, although I must admit its long legs were a little bit scary. For the next few days, each time I’d go into the bathroom, I would find it still in the tub.

After almost a week in the bathtub, the spider turned to me. It appeared to fix its gaze directly into my eyes as though asking for help. It suddenly occurred to me that the



spider may be trapped and unable to make its way out of the tub.

I did a quick Google search and learned that spiders cannot crawl out of bathtubs as the enamel surface is too slippery for them to grip. So, I gathered my courage and was able to manoeuvre the spider onto the small piece of rope attached to my hairbrush, and carry it safely to the window where it made its way outside.

I felt an immense sense of joy in rescuing the poor little fellow. I like to think it realised that I was not going to harm it and so asked me for help.

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PETS

Why Cats Make Great Pets

Good companions and easy to look after

BY *Dr Katrina Warren*



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

WHILE DOGS ARE THE MOST POPULAR household pet, cats run a close second. Cats are often overlooked by people choosing a new four-legged friend. Veterinarian Dr Katrina Warren explains why they make fantastic pets.

CATS VERSUS DOGS It seems that many people have a definite tendency to be either 'cat people' or 'dog people'. Often people who grew up with one species find it difficult to imagine owning and loving the other. People are frequently surprised to learn how friendly and responsive cats can be.

BENEFITS OF FELINE FRIENDS Cats can be a great pet choice for people with limited space and busy lifestyles, or who live in an apartment. They don't have the exercise requirements of a dog, plus they are quiet and clean. In general, cats are low maintenance and happy to be left alone and indoors.

BREEDS APART Different breeds have individual character traits and care requirements. Some breeds such as Burmese are friendly and almost dog-like, while Siamese are known for being quite vocal. Abyssinians can be active, and Persians are real couch potatoes but require lots of grooming for their long coats. Rex cats don't shed hair, so are sometimes preferred by owners

PHOTO: GETTY IMAGES

with allergies. It's a good idea to research the type of cat best suited to your lifestyle. Whether you decide on a purebred or a 'moggie', it's important that you find a well-socialised cat. A stray kitten may need a lot of care if it is timid or not well socialised.



KEEPING DOGS AND CATS TOGETHER

Dogs and cats can become great companions, especially if they are acquired at the same time. The younger dogs and cats are when they are first introduced the better, as they can become familiar with each other from the outset.

GREAT FOR KIDS As well as offering the opportunity to learn to care for another living being, cats can be very playful and interactive with children.

Cats are relatively low maintenance compared to dogs

HELP TO DECIDE If you've never actually owned a cat, but are considering it, talk to cat owners, or offer to house-sit for a cat owner. You could visit a welfare shelter and interact with the kittens and cats to help determine whether you might enjoy their companionship. You may be surprised to discover how wonderful cats really are.

CHOOSING A CAT TO SUIT YOUR LIFESTYLE

Consider coat types as this affects the impact of shedding in your home and determines how much grooming you will have to do.

Personalities vary widely, so think about whether you would

prefer a cat that's affectionate, gentle, playful or independent.

Most cats enjoy company. If everyone in the house is out during the day, you might consider having two cats to keep each other

company. Make sure you consider a domestic cat or 'moggie'. They are popular because they are diverse and hardy, and there are always plenty available at rescue groups.



Stress Migraines

7 Steps to Relief

Busy lives can put you under strain that can lead to stress migraines

Stress migraines can come on at any time and can be moderate to severe, with worse cases being completely debilitating.

Migraines affect up to 20 per cent of women and six per cent of men. Sufferers experience severe headaches with a throbbing pain felt at the front or side of the head. However, there are a few things you can try to help relieve these stress migraines.

1 REST IN A DARK ROOM. Stress is one of the main causes of

migraines. Relieving tense muscles may help calm tension migraines, the most common type of migraine headache. You may also feel extra sensitive to light and sound, so try to rest. Lie down or sit in a dimly lit or even pitch-black room, close your eyes and try to relax your back, neck and shoulders. Minimal movement is advised so the migraine isn't put under any more stress. Try to stay there for a few hours, or at least until your migraine has let up a little. If you fall asleep, it's not a problem, and may also help.

2 GET YOUR CAFFEINE FIX. This is a bit of a Catch 22, as caffeine can help ease stress migraines, but may also trigger them. Caffeine has been known to help ease tension-headache symptoms by helping pain relief drugs work better and faster. This is why caffeine is often an ingredient in pain medications. See how you respond, and if you feel it is making the migraine worse, then stay well clear of the stimulant.

3 TRY MASSAGE. To undo clenched muscles and help you relax, a massage can be especially good for stress or tension migraines. Have someone else gently massage your head, neck and shoulder muscles, or do it yourself with a targeted massage. Gently rub the painful spot on your head with your fingertips for several seconds working in circular motions.

4 TREAT WITH HOT OR COLD COMPRESSES. Cold and heat can sometimes relieve the pain and muscle tension that occurs with migraines. You can ease symptoms of migraines with heat by taking a hot shower and training the shower head close to the affected areas of your head and neck. You can also try a hot water bottle, a warm towel, or a warm compress. If you prefer cold, wrap an ice pack (or frozen peas) in a towel, then put it where you hurt, on your forehead, temples or neck.

5 TRY THE ACUPRESSURE TECHNIQUE. Acupressure techniques are a type of targeted massage which have been known to instantly ease the pain of stress migraines. Place your thumbs near the base of your skull, find the depressions on both sides of where your head meets your neck, then press in and slightly upwards with your thumbs until you feel slight pressure. While pressing, move your thumbs in small circles for roughly two to three minutes. This should ease the pain.

6 RELAX YOUR NECK. Neck exercises may ease stress migraine pain caused by holding your head in one position for too long, such as when we are at work staring at a screen. Place your palm on your forehead, and using your neck muscles, press your forehead lightly against your palm. Keep your head upright, and your hand and arm still for resistance. This should ease some of the tension building around your temples and the front of your head.

7 TRY OVER-THE-COUNTER MEDICINE. If your migraines are affecting your daily life and aren't showing signs of improvement, seek your doctor's opinion. Migraine relief medications are safe and effective and can help treat the causes as well as the symptoms of migraines.

HEALTH

Teach Your Memory to Perform Better

BY Jonathan Hancock

Have you noticed what advertisers do when they want you to remember their message? They make you do something in return: ask questions, imagine possibilities or laugh. They know that evoking a response is the best way to switch your memory on.

Unfortunately, left to our own devices, we can slip into a much more passive approach. But here's the good news: active learning is an easy habit to get into. It simply means deciding that the material in front of you is worth knowing, then doing something to put your memory to work. Good teachers encourage their students to pay attention to key ideas, think about them, question them, and use them as soon as possible. They're in the business of creating engaged and active learners, and we could all do well to follow their lead.



LET'S GIVE IT A TRY Here's a fairly dry set of data: the ten countries with the most vehicles per person.

- | | |
|-----------------------|-------------------------|
| 1. <i>San Marino</i> | 6. <i>Liechtenstein</i> |
| 2. <i>Monaco</i> | 7. <i>Finland</i> |
| 3. <i>New Zealand</i> | 8. <i>Australia</i> |
| 4. <i>US</i> | 9. <i>Brunei</i> |
| 5. <i>Iceland</i> | 10. <i>Switzerland</i> |

You could just read a list like this a few times, hoping it sticks. Or, you could ask why these countries have so many vehicles. You could look for patterns, notice places you've visited or say them in your head in exaggerated accents.

Have a go yourself. Engage in what psychologists call 'elaboration' – processing, rather than just looking or listening. Then cover the list and see how well your memory works.

Your brain's amazing, but it won't do what you want by magic. So invest some energy when it matters, to start making your memory work.

ILLUSTRATION: GETTY IMAGES

GUT HEALTH

MICROBIOME SUPPORT

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INDIGESTION AND HEARTBURN?

FOOD INTOLERANCE? FODMAP?



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WORLD OF MEDICINE

HUMILITY IS GOOD FOR YOU

For psychologists, the concept of 'humility' means having a relatively accurate view of your own abilities, biases and limitations – and an interpersonal orientation that's more focused on others than yourself. It's a trait that's been associated with better relationships, higher life satisfaction, more openness to others and a greater willingness to learn and improve, according to a recent review led by psychology professor Daryl R. Van Tongeren.

PRE-DIABETES CAN BE MANAGED IN OLDER ADULTS

Even in older age, pre-diabetes can often be controlled or reversed, according to hopeful results from the Karolinska Institute in Stockholm. More than 900 seniors with the condition were followed for up to 12 years. Analysing subjects' health factors suggested that "managing blood pressure, incorporating physical activity to your daily routine, and maintaining a healthy weight can help bring your blood sugar back to normal," says lead researcher Ving Shang.

EASING DEMENTIA-RELATED AGITATION AND AGGRESSION

As well as memory problems, dementia patients also experience neuropsychiatric symptoms such as depression, apathy, anxiety, aggression or agitation. Although anti-psychotic medications are often used to calm people with dementia, certain non-pharmacological treatments, including massage and touch therapy, as well as gardening and cognitive stimulation, came out on top in an analysis of more than 160 studies. Moreover, these steps carry fewer risks than drugs. "Anti-psychotics have been associated with increased risk of death, falling, fractures, pneumonia – all sorts of outcomes we'd like to avoid," says co-author Dr Jennifer Watt. "I think this study provides some of the strongest evidence to date that we should be trying non-drug treatments first," says Dr Watt.



PHOTO: ADAM VOORHES



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*Kelvin Fleming,
panel beater*



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Every year millions of people visit their doctors complaining of tinnitus (ringing in the ears), and most are told that they just have to learn to live with it. Affecting approximately 20% of the population, tinnitus is a stressful condition that can cause sleeplessness, anxiety and social isolation. It is often accompanied by dizziness, sound sensitivity, blocked-ear or hearing loss.

Now there is a home-based treatment which comes from new research on the ear and brain. It uses high frequency stimulation, through music, to re-build and organise brain connections. The result, for most listeners, is relief or reduction of tinnitus and related conditions.

Benefits can also include better sleep, clearer hearing, better memory, relief of dizziness and vertigo and a general feeling that the brain is sharper and communication is easier.

For a free DVD and information pack call the Sound Therapy national enquiry line on 1300 55 77 96.



Kevin Kwan

SOCIETY WIT

Best known for writing Crazy Rich Asians, the Singaporean-born author's novels are a cultural phenomenon, soaring to the top of bestseller lists and inspiring a hit movie

BY *Melanie Egan*



No one was more surprised than Kevin Kwan himself when he started writing his first book and what emerged was a hilarious satire of ultra-wealthy families in contemporary Asia. “I never set out to write a funny book that had any sort of humour,” says the author of *Crazy Rich Asians*. “I was intent on writing a very serious book that would be almost a diatribe against income inequality, the one-percenters, extreme wealth and waste and the sort of toxic family dysfunction that occurs because of too much money.”

As he considers himself a “serious, brooding type”, what emerged took not only him by surprise, but his family and friends as well. “I’m not the joker in my family at all. They were like, ‘Where did this book come from?’” he says. “In a way I feel like I channelled the book and there is some other multiple personality writing my books.”

Crazy Rich Asians, and the next two books of the trilogy, *China Rich Girlfriend* and *Rich People Problems*, sold over two million copies and spent weeks on the *New York Times* bestseller lists. His latest book *Sex*

and *Vanity*, published in June, has proved just as popular.

I spoke with Kwan in a telephone interview from his Los Angeles home, where he was in complete lockdown because of COVID-19. As well as writing, he is working on various film projects, and the script for a new TV drama set in Asia that he laughingly calls “a mix between *Downton Abbey* and *Twin Peaks*”.

The 2018 release of the film version of *Crazy Rich Asians* was a global phenomenon. The first film with an all-Asian cast since Amy Tan’s *The Joy Luck Club* more than 25 years before, it grossed \$238 million worldwide and is seen as the flagship of a movement to create greater Asian

representation in mainstream entertainment. As actress Constance Wu, who played Rachel Chu, wrote in 2018 when Kwan was named as one of *Time* magazine’s 100 most influential people: “Kwan

doesn’t focus on making Asians cool; he focuses on making our stories whole. The bits we’re proud of, the bits we try to hide, the tremendous heart that beats underneath it all.”

The world of money and privilege is one that the 47 year old can write about with ease. Born in Singapore, he comes from pre-eminent families. His great-grandfather was a founding

“While parts are inspired by my ancestry, I’d never dream of writing about my family”

director of the Oversea-Chinese Banking Corporation and his paternal grandfather, an ophthalmologist, was knighted by Queen Elizabeth II for his humanitarian services. As a child, Kwan stayed in elegant colonial-style mansions, filled with family heirlooms and antiques, and played in luxuriant gardens with stone ponds.

Singapore today, he says, is a city of the future. "It's one of the few places in the world that has become this extreme ultra-modern, cosmopolitan metropolis. It is a very different island from the one I knew growing up."

Family is important to Kwan. The youngest of three boys, and the son of an engineer and a pianist, the family moved to Texas when he was 11. He tells me that his late father grew up in Australia, going to boarding school in Tasmania and then to the University of Sydney. "So he spent his formative years of more than a decade in Australia and I actually credit that with his wit and his humour. He had a sort of mordant wit. I would say it was a very Aussie attitude to life."

His father didn't talk a lot, Kwan says, but when he did say something it was often extremely witty and sarcastic and on point. "He could sum up someone in three words. It would always be amusing and funny and very apt."



Top: *Crazy Rich Asians* stars (from left) Constance Wu, Ken Jeong, Jimmy O. Yang, Michelle Yeoh and Henry Golding with Kevin Kwan. Above: His trilogy topped the prestigious *New York Times*' bestseller lists

Kwan says that his parents trusted and encouraged him and his siblings to make their own decisions from a very early age. "I can't think of a single piece of advice they ever gave me because they were not that type of parents at all. If they were the type of Chinese parents that share advice all the time, I would be a banker today." He mimics himself as a banker



Kevin Kwan's father, Samuel Kwan, as a young man at the family's Newton estate in Singapore

helping me open an account. "What are your financial needs? What can I help you with today?"

Instead, his parents wanted their sons to forge their own paths in life. "And that was the gift they gave us actually."

He emphasises that he doesn't rely on his extended family ties or relatives for inspiration for his novels. "While parts are inspired by my ancestry, I would never dream of writing about my family circle, specifically or even in disguise," he says. "There are a lot of more interesting characters to write about." However, such is the success of his novels that people claim certain characters are

based on them. "It's always people that I have never heard of," he says, laughing. "But I take it as a compliment, if they feel connected to that character and I somehow psychically managed to capture them."

A lot of people claim to be *Crazy Rich Asians's* Astrid Leong, a Singaporean socialite. "She's a very elegant, generous, soft-spoken humanitarian," he says. "She's a good character to claim to be. She's not only beautiful, she has a heart of gold – and is richer than Onassis."

By the time he got around to writing *Sex and Vanity*, Kwan was quite committed to writing satires and 'comedies of manners'. "One of the best satires that exists is *Room With a View* by E.M. Forster, and I wanted to write a homage." He says that his retelling in *Sex and Vanity* is not a plot-point by plot-point of *Room With a View*, which was first published in 1908. "The initial set-up is there, in that the main characters swap hotel rooms, but beyond that it really does change and take off in a different direction."

Writing a homage was a way to enter a world that he wanted to explore, he says. "This time around, I wanted to take a look at New York high society, specifically old guard New York society, and have some fun satirising that world."

A modern love story that tackles serious issues of Asian identity, *Sex and Vanity* moves between the isle

of Capri, the penthouses and apartments of Fifth Avenue New York, and the upper-class playground of the Hamptons.

No Kwan novel would be complete without a cast of some very over-the-top characters inhabiting his milieus.

One such character is the Instagram-loving billennial (billionaire millennial) Cecil, who has a canal with a gondola built in the living room of his townhouse, with two full-time gondoliers doubling as lifeguards. There is the hero's well-meaning and gaudily jewelled mother, a celebrated yoga guru who incorporates puppies into his classes, and the Chanel-wearing, globe-hopping sisters, Paloma and Mercedes.

After his books became successful, Kwan, who had been running a creative consultancy in New York, says that his life changed substantially. "I

have been very blessed and I'm very grateful and, at the same time, it's more success, more problems."

It means he has far less time for himself. "I've been working non-stop for the past five years really, especially once the movie came out, things exploded even more."

While it has been both stressful and exciting, for Kwan the best part has been meeting new people – other writers at book festivals, actors, people in Hollywood, organisers and journalists. "I have met more people and been introduced to more new ideas and more books than I ever thought I would."

The day we spoke to Kwan, he had just learnt that following a heated bidding war, the film rights to *Sex and Vanity* had been acquired by Sony Pictures and SK Global. It seems that his life is not going to slow down any time soon. **R**

"I'm very grateful and, at the same time, it's more success, more problems"

Never Too Old for Love

Together for 79 years, Julio Mora and Waldramina Quinteros have been married longer than most people have been alive. He is aged 110 and she is 104 – and they've just been awarded the Guinness World Record for the world's oldest married couple. Julio was born on March 10, 1910, and Waldramina on October 16, 1915. Combined, the Ecuadorian couple have lived just shy of 215 years. Their secret for a long-lasting relationship? "Mutual respect." REUTERS



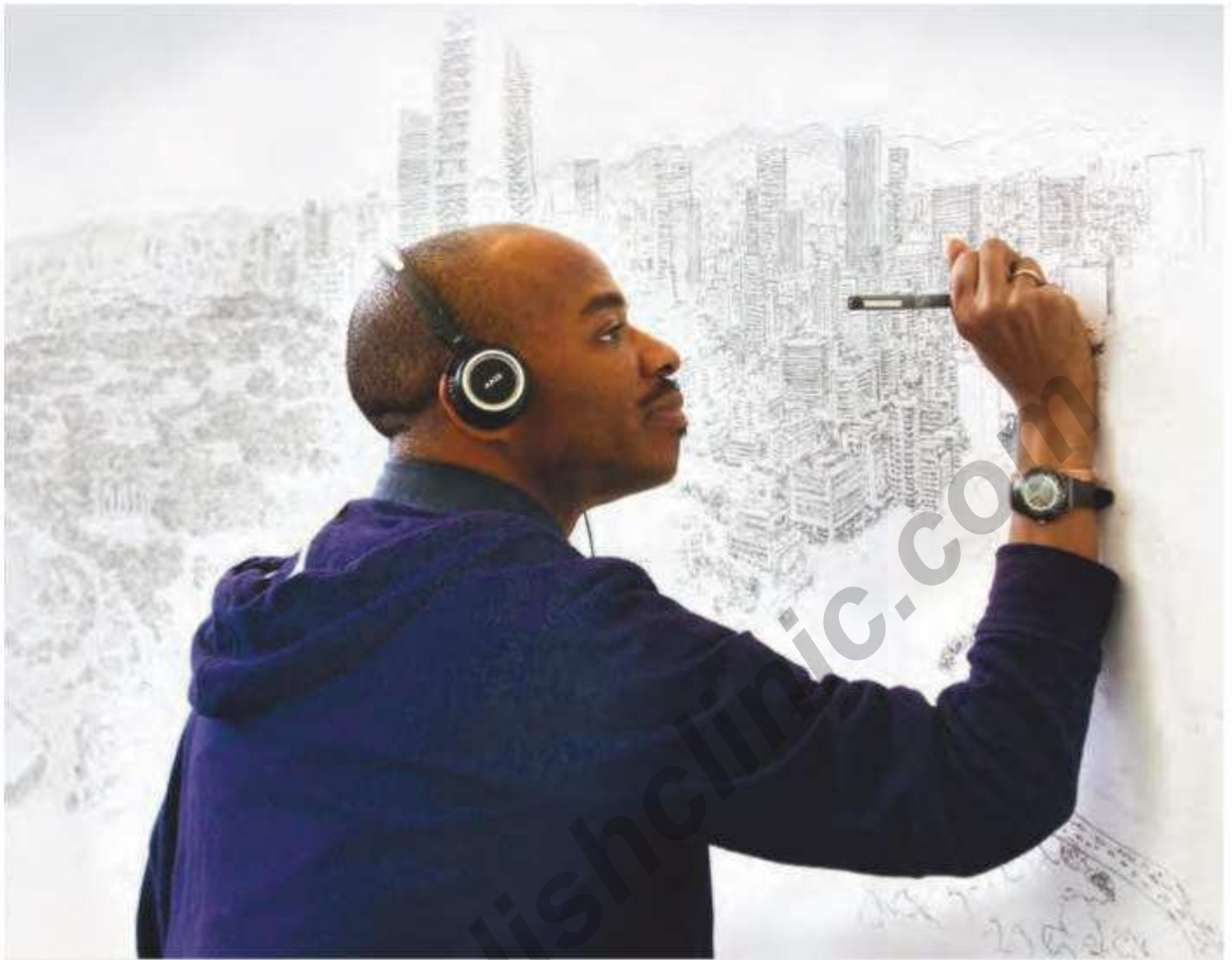
INSPIRATION

Real Super Humans

You won't believe the superpowered feats these men and women have pulled off

BY Beth Dreher





▲ THE MAN WITH THE PHOTOGRAPHIC MEMORY

All it took for British artist Stephen Wiltshire to memorise and draw intricate details of the Tokyo, Rome, Hong Kong, Dubai and New York skylines was a brief helicopter ride over each city. Wiltshire, who is autistic and

didn't speak until age five – his first two words were “paper” and “pen” – has a highly developed photographic memory. In his panoramic drawing of Rome, he recreated the exact number of columns of the Pantheon.

◀ THE WOMAN WHO CAN FLY

Nicknamed the ‘birdwoman’, as a BASE jumper and wingsuit pilot, Géraldine Fasnacht of Switzerland leaps thousands of metres off the sides of mountains and tall buildings. Wearing

what's known as a wingsuit, a full-length jumpsuit with additional fabric between the legs and under the arms, BASE jumpers ‘fly’ for a few minutes before deploying a parachute.





▲ HUMAN SPIDER

If you thought that the only way to harness the powers of Spider-Man was to endure a radioactive spider bite – think again. Fifty-eight-year-old Alain Robert, also known as the ‘French Spider-Man’, is famous for his spine-chilling feats in urban climbing. Without any safety equipment to keep him from falling, Robert hoists himself metres up into the sky, scaling multistorey buildings in broad daylight. Most of his climbs afford him no opportunity to rest and can last several hours. Among his death-defying ascents, Robert has climbed the Eiffel Tower, the Empire State Building, the Sydney Tower, the

Petronas Towers in Kuala Lumpur, and the Four Seasons Hotel in Hong Kong.

Although urban climbing is not technically illegal, Robert has been arrested over 100 times for trespassing and causing public disturbances. In March this year, the thrill-seeker was arrested and fined after successfully climbing a skyscraper in Madrid, the 144-metre-tall La Torre Agba in Barcelona, Spain. Though Robert flirts with death each time that he mounts a slippery, sleek building, he takes comfort in the knowledge that he is pursuing his passion – and using his superpowers to do so.

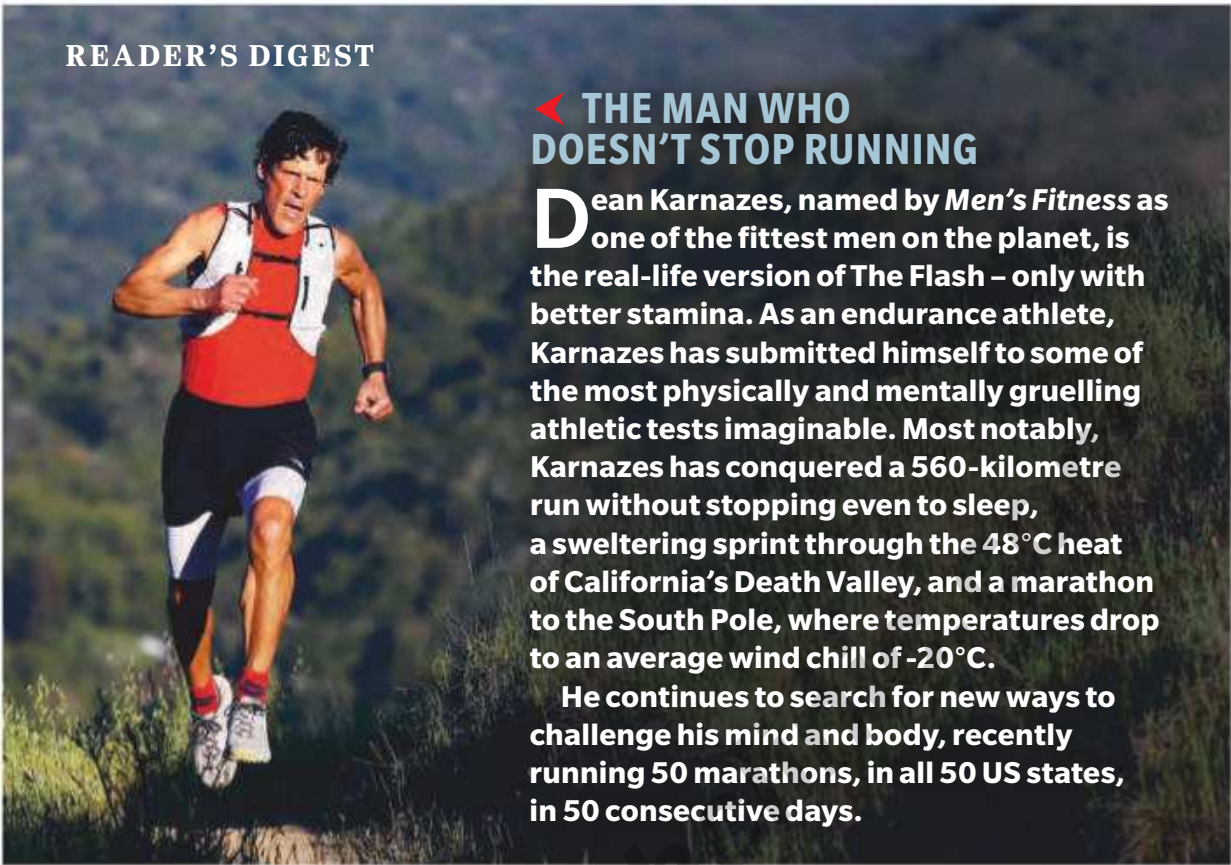
▼ SEEING WITH ECHOLOCAION

Daniel Kish, 53, can't see with his eyes – he had both of them removed during a childhood battle with retina cancer – but he has so finely tuned his hearing that he can navigate his bike through heavy traffic, climb trees, camp alone and dance fluidly. To orient himself, Kish clicks his tongue and listens closely as the sound bounces off objects around him and returns to his ears at different volumes. Bats, dolphins and beluga whales also use echolocation to navigate. Kish is so adept at getting around using echolocation that other visually-impaired people hire him to help them get around. “That tongue click is everything to me,” says Kish.



▲ THE SAMURAI

With his amazing ability to move a katana sword with seemingly superhuman speed and accuracy, Japanese laido Master Isao Machii holds multiple world records, including the fastest 1000 martial arts sword cuts and the fastest tennis ball cut by a sword. The tennis ball was travelling at 820 km/h. His most impressive feat, however, might be cutting a BB gun pellet travelling at 158 km/h – too fast for the average human eye to process.



◀ THE MAN WHO DOESN'T STOP RUNNING

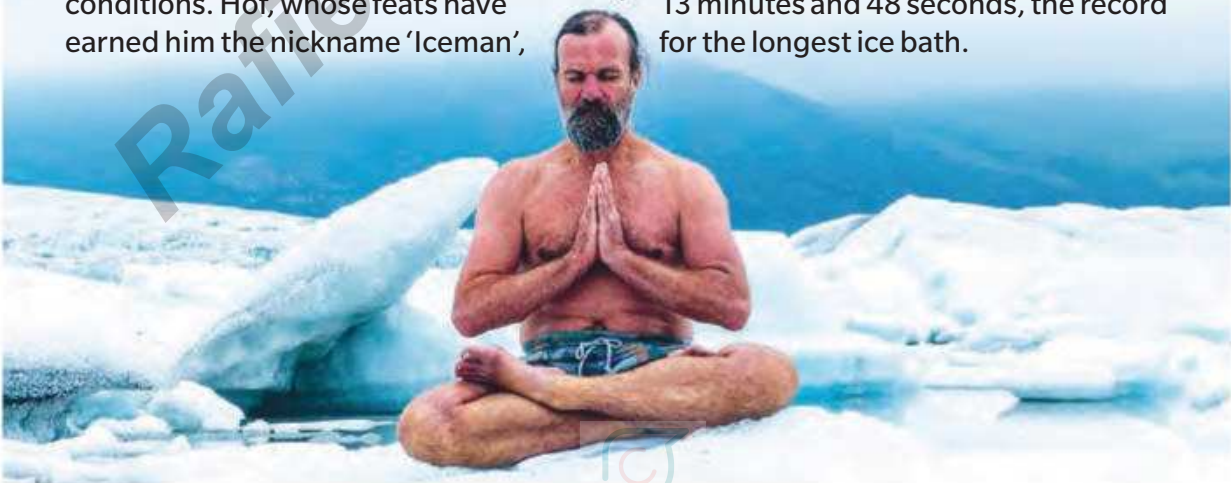
Dean Karnazes, named by *Men's Fitness* as one of the fittest men on the planet, is the real-life version of The Flash – only with better stamina. As an endurance athlete, Karnazes has submitted himself to some of the most physically and mentally gruelling athletic tests imaginable. Most notably, Karnazes has conquered a 560-kilometre run without stopping even to sleep, a sweltering sprint through the 48°C heat of California's Death Valley, and a marathon to the South Pole, where temperatures drop to an average wind chill of -20°C.

He continues to search for new ways to challenge his mind and body, recently running 50 marathons, in all 50 US states, in 50 consecutive days.

▼ THE MAN WHO CAN WITHSTAND FREEZING TEMPERATURES

Using the Buddhist meditation technique Tummo, as well as his own methods, Dutch daredevil Wim Hof keeps his body temperature steady while enduring extremely cold conditions. Hof, whose feats have earned him the nickname 'Iceman',

has completed several marathons and climbed Mt Kilimanjaro in sub-freezing temperatures wearing only shorts and shoes. Hof holds 20 cold-endurance world records, including, at one hour, 13 minutes and 48 seconds, the record for the longest ice bath.



PHOTOS: COURTESY WIM HOF; (RUNNER) GETTY IMAGES



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How to Build a Better Brain

New research shows that boosting your memory and brain cells doesn't require technology or special supplements. The simple solution: stick to the basics

BY *Sari Harrar* PHOTOGRAPHS BY *The Voorhes*

Dr Wendy Suzuki was a highly respected brain researcher with her own lab and a string of published studies when a high-energy gym class and a quiet cup of tea changed her neurons – and her life.

“I just wanted stronger muscles, but after six months of aerobic exercise, I noticed that difficult mental

jobs were easier. I could keep lots of little details in my mind,” recalls Dr Suzuki, 55, a professor at New York University’s Center for Neural Science. “It transformed my research. Exercise and the brain is a major focus of my work now. And I exercise almost every day.”

But that was only the beginning. While on holiday in Bali around that



time, Dr Suzuki met a monk who was staying at the same inn. He shared his morning meditation: "Simply brewing a cup of tea in silence and sipping it, without thinking about the million things you have to do today." Dr Suzuki, who had never been a serious meditator, felt invigorated. Now, she says, "I start every day with a meditation as I steep and sip my tea."

The encounter led to a 2019 study titled 'Brief, Daily Meditation Enhances Attention, Memory, Mood and Emotional Regulation'. The participants, who were not experienced

meditators, benefited from just 13 minutes a day of gentle breathing and relaxation for eight weeks.

If Dr Suzuki had looked into her own brain after establishing her new routines – and, as a neuroscientist, she is the rare person who could do such a thing – she'd have witnessed some amazing things: new brain cells sprouting new connections, new blood vessels feeding more oxygen and fuel to her neurons, and more brain tissue in areas involved with learning, memory and decision making. Both exercise and meditation, it turns out, can trigger chemical reactions that pave the way for a rejuvenation explosion. Even more astounding, this renaissance – called neuroplasticity – was once thought to happen only in children's brains.

But research now shows that the brain can do these tricks at any age. Benefits include improved memory and thinking skills, more creativity, and a reduced risk of dementia. Or, as Dr Suzuki enthusiastically says, "You can grow a bigger, happier brain."

Lately, an avalanche of new studies is pointing out exactly how to harness neuroplasticity. Advanced brain-imaging techniques enable researchers to get a peek at how everything from sleep to food to physical activity affects your little grey cells.

One insight worth mentioning right here: brain plasticity works both ways. "About 50 per cent of the things people do every day that affect

EAT YOUR FRUIT AND VEGETABLES

Participants in a 2019 study who ate more fruit and vegetables boosted their scores on thinking and memory tests





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their brain are toxic," notes cognitive neuroscientist Dr Sandra Bond Chapman. "They skimp on sleep. They multitask. They aren't active."

Besides changing those bad habits, what can you do to grow your own new brain cells? Hint: brain scientists don't recommend spending a lot of money on brain-training programmes or nutritional supplements. Nor do they advocate trying science-fictional stuff such as do-it-yourself electrical stimulation.

Fresh from the frontlines of brain science, here are simple things you can do to build a better brain.

YES TO GREEN VEGGIES, NO TO 'Nootropics'

In 2015, researchers from Deakin University published one of the first studies measuring food's physical effect on the left hippocampus, a sea-horse-shaped brain region crucial for memory, learning and decision making. It is also one of the first areas to shrink in people with Alzheimer's disease and other forms of dementia. Two hundred and fifty-five people filled out diet surveys and then underwent magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) scans that measured their brains. Four years later, they returned for another scan.

The study found that the left

hippocampus was heftier in the healthy eaters than in the unhealthy ones, regardless of age, sex, weight, exercise habits or general health. The average difference was 203 square millimetres. Sounds small, but that's room for a lot of extra brain cells – and strong new evidence that eating the right foods and skipping the wrong stuff could help protect against declines in thinking and memory that lead to dementia.

Brain-friendly fare associated with a bigger hippocampus included fresh fruit and vegetables, salads and grilled fish. The brain-shrinking diet was heavy on burgers, fries and soft drinks, as well as sausages, potato chips and red meat.

Healthy eating doesn't just prevent brain decline. It boosts scores on thinking and memory tests, according to a 2019 study that tracked 2621 American women and men for 30 years. "Plant-based diets have antioxidant and anti-inflammatory effects that may protect against cognitive decline and dementia," says lead researcher Claire McEvoy.

Even a little healthy food goes a long way. According to a 2018 Rush University study that tracked 960 people for 4.7 years, participants who ate just 1.3 extra servings of green leafy vegetables a day – that's 1.3 cups of salad or a smidge more than half a

HEALTHY EATING PREVENTS BRAIN DECLINE AND BOOSTS MEMORY SCORES



MOVE MORE

Women who stayed fit into their 80s delayed the development of dementia by nine years

cup of cooked spinach, kale, cabbage or broccoli – demonstrated cognitive abilities similar to those of people 11 years younger. And a January 2020 study in the journal *Neurology* showed that getting just 15.3 milligrams a day of plant compounds called flavonols – the amount in a small green salad plus one cup of cooked veggies and half a cup of berries – was associated with a 48 per cent lower risk of Alzheimer’s-like dementia.

“That’s not a lot on a day-to-day basis,” says lead study author Dr Thomas M. Holland. Animal and test-tube

experiments suggest that compounds in healthy diets – such as B vitamins, omega-3 fatty acids and beneficial polyphenols found in plant foods – help new cells make copies of DNA when they divide and multiply. Meanwhile, high-fat, high-sugar processed foods – from packaged meals to chips and sweets – harm brain cells by boosting inflammation and leaving brain tissue vulnerable to damage by rogue oxygen molecules called free radicals. This may interfere with brain plasticity, making processed foods an especially potent threat for the developing brains of kids and teens.

While food emerges as an important brain protector, experts say brain supplements (sometimes called nootropics) aren’t all that effective. These pills and capsules may contain vitamins, minerals, antioxidants and amino acids in addition to herbs, caffeine, green tea extract, mushroom powder, jellyfish protein or other ingredients. But studies show that they don’t activate brain cells in a significantly positive way. “Let the buyer beware,” says geriatric medicine specialist Dr David Hogan. In fact, at least one ingredient in some of these supplements could harm your health. A study of nootropics in the November 2019 *Journal of the American Medical Association* revealed that the drug piracetam, which is either not approved or only available by prescription in many countries, was found in four out of five brands tested, at levels

that could cause side effects such as insomnia and depression.

EXERCISE: MOVES THAT REPROGRAM THE BRAIN

Most of the time, your brain is the boss of your muscles – directing how you hit a ball or open a cereal box. But when it comes to growing new brain cells, more and more research shows that when you exercise, your muscles (along with your liver and body fat) take charge. When you're active, they send chemical signals telling your brain, "Hey, it's time to grow!" Recent research suggests physical activity has multiple brain benefits, encouraging the birth and growth of new brain cells and the extension of blood vessels that supply oxygen and blood sugar to brain cells.

In a 2016 US National Institute on Aging study, people who ran on a treadmill for 45 minutes three days a week boosted their levels of brain-derived neurotrophic factor, a chemical that acts like fertiliser for new brain cells. After four months of workouts, their scores improved on a memory test.

Without exercise, Dr Suzuki says, "little baby neurons don't get bigger and make thousands of new connections to other brain cells. With exercise, you get fully functioning adult brain cells." Studies suggest

that in younger adults, this can add to the overall number of cells in the hippocampus. And once age-related brain changes begin, starting in our 30s, exercise helps keep brain cells alive longer and replaces old cells with new ones. "There's evidence these new brain cells are very active," she says. "They're excitable, like teenagers. They get involved in more memory circuits than older cells do. You get more connections."

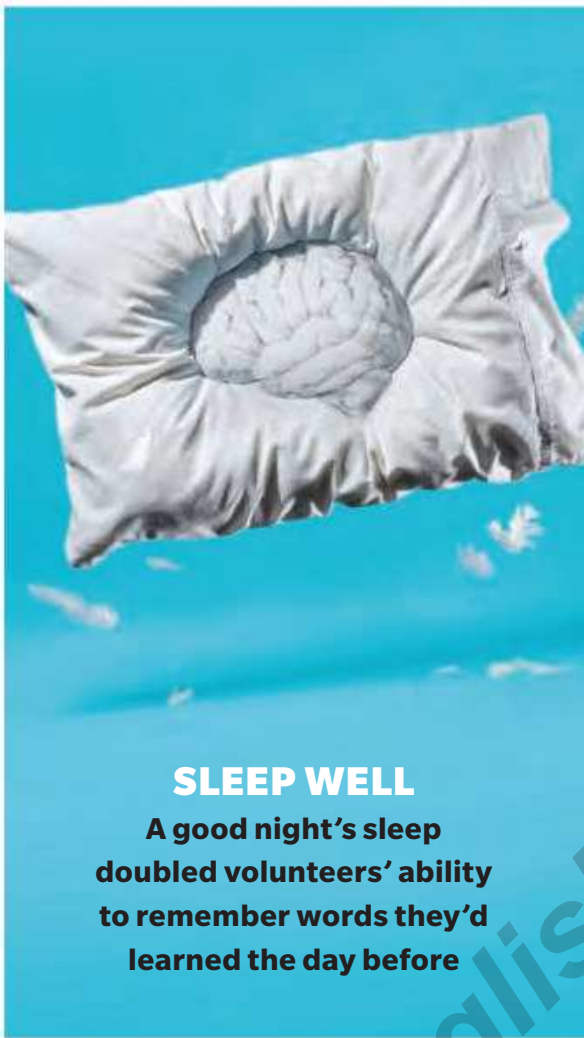
At any age, you might notice over time that you feel more alert and have an easier time remembering things after you start a new exercise routine. Sticking with it could reduce your risk of dementia. "Women who

were fit at midlife and stayed fit into their 80s delayed the development of dementia by nine years in one exciting study," Dr Suzuki says. "That's huge."

Again, a little goes a long way. In a 2019 Boston University study of 2354 adults in their 40s

through to 60s, sedentary people who boosted their daily walking by 7500 steps or more had bigger brains than those who didn't exercise – equivalent to 1.4 to 2.2 fewer years of brain ageing. The more light activity study participants logged, such as doing housework, shopping, gardening or walking the dog, the greater the overall size of their brains.

EXERCISE HELPS KEEP BRAIN CELLS ALIVE LONGER AND REPLACES OLD CELLS



SLEEP WELL

A good night's sleep doubled volunteers' ability to remember words they'd learned the day before

SLEEP: THE NIGHT-TIME BRAIN CLEAN-UP

In 2019, Boston University researchers put caps with attached wires on 13 people, sent them to sleep for the night inside a functional MRI machine, and then tracked the electrical activity that naturally ripples across the grey matter. It was like shooting a film of the brain's secret life, and it was a great show. The researchers found that as brain waves slowed during deep sleep, blood levels dropped in some areas, allowing more of the cerebro-spinal

fluid that normally surrounds and cushions the brain to pulse in and then recede like an outgoing tide. The watery ballet may increase communication in the slumbering brain. It also might wash away toxins – by-products left over from a long day of thinking – thought to interfere with memory.

The results suggest new ways sleep restores our little grey cells. Sleep deprivation messes with mental focus, stifles creativity, interferes with recall, and slows reaction times by as much as 50 per cent. The effects are immediate – in a University of South Florida study of 130 middle-aged women and men, missing out on just 16 minutes of sleep reduced their concentration the next day. In contrast, a good night's sleep doubled volunteers' ability to remember words they'd learned the day before, according to a 2015 study from the University of Exeter.

You may be surprised by the wide range of brain-powered benefits you reap from getting enough sleep. "Every aspect of brain health is related to sleep quality and quantity," brain and sleep scientist Michael Scullin says.

He cites a recent study that found that people were less likely to forgive each other when they got six hours of sleep than when they got seven and a half or eight hours. "When I see all of the impulsive, aggressive, negative messages people send to



PLAY GAMES

Playing old-fashioned games such as cards and chess was linked to sharper thinking, on par with a 1.4-point-higher IQ

one another, especially on social media, I have to wonder if lack of sleep isn't part of the reason," he says.

CHALLENGE YOUR BRAIN

Human intelligence comes in two varieties. There's dependable, reliable 'crystallised intelligence', which draws on the knowledge you've learned. Then there's creative 'fluid intelligence', a jazzy superpower that calls on abstract reasoning, working memory, mental focus and other cerebral talents to find out-of-the-box solutions.

So imagine the excitement in 2008 when University of Michigan scientists announced that brain-training games could boost fluid intelligence. Since then, the brain-training industry has grown into a US\$1.9 billion behemoth that promises to tune up your thinking, enhance memory and even stall declines that lead to dementia.

But brain training may work for only some people. In a 2020 study, Wayne State University neuroscientists measured fluid intelligence gains in 424 people aged 18 to 44 who performed various combinations of brain training, mindfulness training, and aerobic exercise for 16 weeks. Two hundred and eighty-two also had brain scans. A majority (74 per cent) improved their fluid thinking a little, while nine per cent got worse. Just 17 per cent (including people from the groups that got brain training) improved significantly. In this group, some brain areas involved in fluid intelligence – including the hippocampus and the larger anterior cingulate cortex – were bigger than average (though a few were actually smaller).

Without getting a brain scan, how do you know if you're one of the 17 per cent who might benefit a lot from brain games, along with exercise and mindfulness? Your attitude might be a clue. If you already love playing brain games, they will probably help.

“You have to increase levels of the feel-good brain chemical dopamine in order to generate brain-cell growth,” explains neuroscientist Dr William Shankle. “Don’t do things you don’t like because they’re supposed to boost brainpower. Pick something you love. Keep learning about it and doing it.” Over time, people who keep their minds active have slower declines in memory and thinking, he says. They build cognitive reserve, which helps the brain find workarounds even when there are physical signs of Alzheimer’s disease and dementia.

So do what you like. A study of 1091 older adults found that playing old-fashioned games such as cards, bingo and chess several times a week was linked to sharper thinking and memory skills – on par with a 1.4-point-higher IQ. In a Mayo Clinic study, people who kept up with arts and crafts such as sewing, woodworking and painting were 45 to 73 per cent less likely to develop mild cognitive impairment over four years.

Focus counts, too. “Chronic multitasking and constantly switching your attention from one thing to another disrupts the memory-formation system in your hippocampus,” Dr Chapman explains. “Allow

yourself to focus on just one thing and go deep. This can change brain structure and brain function for the better.”

CALM DOWN AND BREATHE

While you’re at it, try meditation. It may give the brain a helping hand by calming stress circuits that link up areas involved with memory and thinking, Dr Suzuki explains. In a 2013 study, university students who learned to meditate had better mental focus and got higher scores on school exams than non-meditators.

Yoga also encourages brain plasticity, according to a 2019 review of 11 brain-imaging studies. People who

practiced hatha yoga tended to have a larger hippocampus, amygdala (the area of the brain involved in coping with emotions), and pre-frontal cortex (involved with planning and making decisions). Yoga’s brain-changing power may come from its mix of exercise with deep stress reduction, the researchers note.

“You can sit still, breathe and reap brain-plasticity benefits,” Dr Suzuki says. If you’re new to meditation or yoga, start small. “You don’t have to meditate for an hour. Even ten minutes can be too long at first. Start with one minute. Find a style of meditation you enjoy.”



STUDENTS WHO LEARNED TO MEDITATE HAD BETTER MENTAL FOCUS



LIFE'S LIKE THAT

Seeing the Funny Side



"I think we're named after computer passwords."

Skin Deep

Suffering from an unsightly scaly rash, my friend Denise made an appointment with a dermatologist who happened to be very attractive.

After the examination, the doctor cocked his head and asked, "Denise, did you get your hair done?"

"Why, yes. Thank you for noticing," said Denise, flattered.

"I thought so," the doctor replied. "Because your scalp looks red and irritated."

SUBMITTED BY SANDY HAGGLUND

Dead End

I tried having my mother's phone disconnected, but the customer

service rep told me that since the account was in my dad's name, he'd have to be the one to put in the request. The fact that he'd been dead for 40 years didn't sway her. Then a solution hit me: "If I stop paying the bill, you can turn off the service, right?"

"Well, yes," she said reluctantly. "But that would ruin his credit."

SUBMITTED BY JEANNIE GIBBS

Injuries by Age

Age five: I jumped off a swing.
Age 21: I jumped off a bar table.
Age 38: Sleeping. I hurt myself while I was sleeping.

@ABBYHASISSUES

Gift of the Gab

My husband and his sister are notorious talkers. They can hold court on any subject and yak for hours. One day, he called her. All he had to say was “Hi”, and that launched her into a marathon session, going on about this, that, and the other.

When she finally paused to come up for air, she had just one question: “Who am I talking to?”

SUBMITTED BY CHRISTINE HOHMAN



CINEMATIC EXPERIENCE

I thought I liked seeing movies, but it turns out I just like eating chocolate in a dark room where no one's allowed to talk to me. @CARAWAINBERGER

My favourite thing about watching a new movie with my five year old is probably watching it 17 times a day for the next three months.

@THEBABYLADY7



THE GREAT TWEET OFF: SELLING AND BUYING EDITION

The folks of Twitter like to keep one hand on their phones, and the other on their wallets.

Anybody want to buy some exercise equipment? I'm having a going-out-of-fitness sale.

@JOHNLYONTWEETS

One of the World's Strongest Man events should be 'Pulling apart two shopping trolleys that are stuck together'.

@CHEESEBOY22

Accidentally went grocery shopping on an empty stomach, and now I'm the proud owner of aisle seven.

@DOMESTICGODDSS

My wife does this cute thing now and then, where she goes out shopping for next year's garage sale items.

@CRAVIN4

Two salespeople approached me at the furniture store. I'm following the one who called me "miss". The "Hello ma'am" one should take note.

@ANNIEMUMARY

If I worked in a used-record store, I would tell every customer that "all sales are vinyl".

@WOODYLUVSCOFFEE



I Am the
**FOOD
ON YOUR
TABLE**

I Am
Almonds ...
**The Health
Nut (Only Not)**

BY *Kate Lowenstein*
and *Daniel Gritzer*

If you've never seen a harvest machine shake my tree, sending almond fruits spraying into the sky like an explosion of glinting confetti, I recommend googling it for a small thrill. Then, next time you encounter a farmer who calls his wares "ammonds", you'll understand the joke when he tells it. They always tell the joke: "They're almonds in the tree and ammonds on the ground because we've shaken the 'L' out of them."

In California, where the majority of the world's almonds are produced, not everyone appreciates a good almond joke. In the past several years, almond growers in the water-starved state have caught flak for contributing to low river levels and endangering fish, among other things – as have growers in Australia, the world's second largest supplier of me. Unlike other crops, I need a lot of water or my trees will die – which will destroy a farmer's investment.

In my defence, I am far from the only water-hungry crop, and it's you humans who have turned me and my milks and butters into a health fetish that's helped boost my popularity. And, by the way, you admire me for more than my produce. Anyone who has watched a grove of me bloom into stunning pale pink during early spring can plainly see why I've been a symbol of light and vitality throughout history. In Greek mythology, the nymph goddess Nana became

pregnant when an almond fell out of a tree and into her lap. In Judaism, the menorah that God decreed to Moses was to have almond blossoms on each of its branches.

Up close, an almond tree looks as if it's loaded with immature peaches – green, fuzzy, ovoid. That's because, though you call me a nut, botanically I am the seed of a fleshy fruit. While my exterior never gets as fleshy as a peach's, I am otherwise unmistakably peach-like – it is my closest cousin. Farmers let my fruit dry on the tree till it splits, exposing the pit within. It has the same pocked appearance as a peach pit. And just like a peach pit, if you crack it open, you'll see a seed inside. That's me.

As interest in plant-based eating has soared, you've especially availed yourselves of sweet almonds (the most common kind), which you consume raw and roasted, whole with my skins, slivered and sliced, crushed into meal and flour, or as rich, luxurious butter. You appreciate my milk, too – and lest you dismiss that as a craze of the 2000s, it actually dates back to at least the 13th century, when it was sipped and used as an ingredient in cooking in medieval Europe and the Middle East. I like to recall that sweet, nutty simmered concoction of yore; my current liquid iteration is processed, pasteurised and adulterated with emulsifiers and stabilisers to the point that any almondy flavour is faint.

Why, then, have you made almond milk so popular that it constitutes two-thirds of the alternative-milk market in many parts of the world? Google me again and one reason comes up over and over and over: you've learned how exceptionally good I am for you. People who consume me aplenty seem to have an easier time with weight maintenance and a lower risk of Alzheimer's and some cancers – credit my high fibre, healthy fats and rich source of vitamin E. If you were to compare me with the walnut, a health-haloed peer of mine, you'd find that I'm higher in fibre and protein and lower in fat (though if I'm honest, walnuts would have plenty to say about their superior omega-3s and mineral content).

You may be instinctively smart to prefer me not too almondy, lest I harm you. To understand why, let's return to peaches. If you ate a peach seed, you would notice right away that it is intensely bitter – and tastes like a swig from a bottle of almond extract. Turns out my far-lesser-grown sibling, the bitter almond, has the same effect for the same reason: it, too, is overloaded with the chemical amygdalin, part of my chemical defence system to discourage animals from eating my seed. If my seed gets chewed up, I can't germinate and sprout a tree.

But amygdalin breaks down into two molecules that are like Jekyll and Hyde to you: benzaldehyde, which

carries that super-strong almond flavour, and hydrocyanic acid, which causes cyanide poisoning. One study found that 50 bitter almonds could kill an adult; just a few can kill a child. Hence the human preference for sweet almonds, which are bred to have much lower levels of amygdalin, the almondy-ness safely muted.

Manufacturers can deactivate hydrocyanic acid via a heating process. That's what they do to bitter almonds to create the almond extract used in baking and to give marzipan its trademark punch. Same with the peach and apricot seeds that are used to make persipan, a cheaper version of marzipan. Oh, and here's a fun one: pistachio ice cream is most often flavoured not with pistachios at all

but rather with almond extract. The green dye and mixed-in pistachio nuts are there to maintain the illusion. But I stand in for much more than just pistachios. After all, I represent life and rebirth. Just peruse the almond-shaped halo around the bodies of religious figures in medieval Christian art; in Italian that halo is called the *mandorla*, which is the word for – say it with me now – almond. With the 'L'. ®

GLORIOUS WHITE ALMOND GAZPACHO

- In a blender or food processor, combine **1 cup blanched almonds** with **2 cloves garlic** and add just enough **cold water to cover**. Blend or process until a smooth purée forms, adding more cold water as necessary.
- Add about **2 cups cubed, crustless white sourdough bread** and process until very smooth, adding more cold water as needed to create the

consistency of heavy cream.

- **Season with salt**. Blend in **2 tbsp extra-virgin olive oil** and **1-2 tsp sherry vinegar**, to taste. Refrigerate until well chilled, at least 2 hours.
- Serve cold, garnishing each bowl with **halved green grapes**, crushed **toasted almonds**, and a drizzle of **olive oil**.



PHOTO: JOLEEN ZUBEK

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An aerial photograph of a mountain valley. In the foreground, there is a green field with a white chalk drawing of a stick figure. A dense forest of evergreen trees covers a large portion of the middle ground. In the background, a wide valley is filled with patchwork fields in shades of green and yellow, with a river winding through it. The far background features majestic, rugged mountains with snow-capped peaks under a cloudy sky.

SEE THE WORLD...

Turn the page »



...DIFFERENTLY

This graffiti creation was best viewed from the air. *Beyond Crisis* by French artist Saype was sprayed onto a hillside high in the Swiss Alps. The massive 3000-square metre work was done in April this year to convey a sense of calm and hope during the COVID-19 pandemic.

It shows a girl sitting, completing a chain of stick figures holding hands. "It evokes the building of a world with more solidarity and more humanity," Saype said. Sadly, his artwork will not exist when that future arrives, as his biodegradable chalk- and charcoal-based pigments disappeared into the grass after a few weeks.

PHOTOS: PICTURE ALLIANCE/
KEYSTONE/VALENTIN





Rafiqienglishshahin.com



Loneliness, 2020'S OTHER HEALTH CRISIS

Maintaining regular social connections is essential, not just for our self-esteem, but also our all-round health

BY Helen Signy

WHEN WILLIAM YEATES was diagnosed with dementia at the age of 59 last year, he felt desperately alone. A former deputy high school principal who was married with three adult children, he felt as though he were sinking into quicksand with no one to throw him a lifeline.

"I wanted to be sociable and to be around my friends, but I didn't know

how," he says. He was aware that his social skills were diminishing, and he grew increasingly fearful of being ridiculed and judged. "I became anxious, my depression got worse and the quality of my sleep changed."

Everyone feels lonely from time to time, but research has shown there can be serious health consequences when loneliness becomes chronic.

A study by researchers from Brigham Young University in the US looked at the links between mortality

READER'S DIGEST

and loneliness. They found people who said they were experiencing loneliness, social isolation or who lived alone were about 30 per cent more likely to die earlier than everyone else – a rate comparable with obesity or smoking.

Loneliness increases the risk of depression, low self-esteem, sleep problems, cognitive decline and dementia. Once people start to experience poorer mental health, they develop a greater level of anxiety about meeting other people, socialise less frequently and then develop even more negative emotions.

Clinical psychologist Dr Rob Gordon describes how people can spiral from loneliness into negative self-image and critical self-talk, especially if they had a pre-existing tendency to low self-esteem.

“People tend to drift from ‘I am feeling lonely’ to ‘I would like to talk to someone’ to ‘No one is talking to me, no one likes me, I’m not a nice person, no one cares about me, I don’t really need to exist,’” he says.

This cycle, in turn, puts people’s physiology under stress. Loneliness can lower resistance to disease and create higher inflammatory responses in the body, leading to an increased risk of heart disease or stroke. To make things worse, people who are lonely are less likely to get enough exercise and are more likely to smoke or eat an unhealthy diet.

Studies have shown loneliness

—
**PEOPLE CAN
SPIRAL FROM
LONELINESS
INTO NEGATIVE
SELF-IMAGE
AND CRITICAL
SELF-TALK**
—



is associated with poorer general health and wellbeing, suicide and dementia. Lonely people are more likely to be readmitted to hospital after discharge, to stay in hospital for longer, and to be taken into residential care. They are also more likely to visit their GP or the emergency department more often than others. At work, loneliness is linked to poorer performance; in the UK, it's estimated that loneliness could be costing businesses up to £2.5 billion a year due to absence and lost productivity.

THE 2018 AUSTRALIAN LONELINESS REPORT by the Australian Psychological Society and Swinburne University found one in four Australians feels lonely, with many reporting anxiety about socialising and 30 per cent saying they didn't feel part of a group of friends.

Both young and old people are affected, though people over 65 are the least lonely. People with disabilities are at increased risk, as are people who live alone. "People tell me their friends don't ring them anymore – loneliness is absolutely real for people with dementia," says Yeates, who now runs webinars to bring together others who are affected.

"One lady told me she doesn't get any visitors; the only time she has any human contact is in the weekly webinar. I invited her out for lunch but she couldn't do it, she was too fearful."

Worryingly, as many as one in eight young people aged 18–25 report a very high intensity of loneliness, and are more likely than older people to feel greater levels of social anxiety. Even school-aged children report they feel lonely and isolated and do not have meaningful connections with people around them.

While people have always felt lonely – it's part of the human condition – there's no doubt that the modern world, with longer commuting times and greater numbers of people living alone, has exacerbated the trend. Irene Verins, a manager at Mental Wellbeing, VicHealth, says loneliness in younger people aged 18 to 25 is often driven by unrealistic expectations based on social media.

So serious is loneliness internationally that the UK Government appointed a Minister for Loneliness and in 2011 launched a Campaign to End Loneliness. It's estimated that every £1 spent on tackling loneliness in Britain delivered a £2-£3 saving in costs for the economy.

That's because the loneliness of individual people impacts the social cohesion of the whole community. The fewer lonely people, the lower the healthcare costs and the greater the wellbeing of everyone. "This is a national issue," says Verins.

THIS YEAR, public health experts have raised the alarm about an increase in loneliness caused by forced



LIVING ON MY OWN

“It’s almost like having an empty bubble around you”

Larry Signy, 89, has been living alone since his wife, June, entered a dementia care unit last year. Here, he explains how he feels:

“The worst thing about loneliness is that although you talk to people, your thoughts are always with your wife. You get a physical ache and tears in your eyes when you wish, almost beg, for just one more conversation with your wife.

Your mind continually reminds you that she is not there. You sit watching TV in the evening, and although you know she is not

there, you frequently look across to her seat to check. When you go to bed, you are conscious that you are alone, even when you turn the lights out you see the dark shape of a second pillow next to you, with no head on it.

It means that you find you have emotions you never before realised you had.

Living in the countryside means everything is quiet. I turn on the TV as soon as I get up. It’s background noise, human voices.

When I do talk to people, though, I often find that I always want to bring the conversation

round to my wife – I have to remind myself that they have lives and thoughts of their own.

Before lockdown, I was starting to go to local theatres and cinemas, that was fine, but I always noticed that on the way out almost everyone had someone else to talk to about the play or film – I was very conscious of the fact that I didn’t.

Now, far too often I have to force myself to leave the house. It’s almost as if when I’m indoors I’m in a friendly atmosphere – outside is a much bigger environment and I’m even more alone.

“But although I meet neighbours, chat to checkout people in the shops, have phone calls with friends and relatives come in and out, I’m always aware that there’s no one in the house with me.

It’s hard to explain, but it’s almost like having an empty bubble around you. Well, not only hard to explain, impossible.”

isolation during the COVID-19 pandemic. Crisis organisations such as Lifeline and the Australian Red Cross have fielded hundreds of thousands of calls from people who have no one else to talk to. The Australian Psychological Society has warned that loneliness is a looming health issue, while the Australian Medical Association wants an increased focus on the mental health impacts of isolation.

ALTHOUGH LONELINESS and isolation are not the same thing, they reinforce each other. Loneliness is a personal experience of feeling a lack or loss of companionship. It's about how we see the quality of our relationships and whether we have a connection with people in our lives. It is possible to live with a family or have a large group of friends and still feel lonely.

Isolation is being physically cut off from our normal social connections, and can lead us to feel lonely. At the same time, people who are lonely tend to self-isolate. The more they withdraw from social interaction, the lonelier they become.

An Australian Government survey in April found that the majority of respondents (57 per cent) reported feeling lonely and isolated more often since the outbreak of the coronavirus. The COVID-19 Monitor, a research project from Vox Pop Labs in partnership with the Australian Broadcasting Corporation, found that the number

**ALTHOUGH
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READER'S DIGEST

of Australians reporting poor mental health more than trebled from before the pandemic to the end of April.

People have dealt with isolation in two ways, says Dr Catherine Barrett, a clinical psychologist and academic who founded the Kindness Pandemic community in the early days of COVID. Some have enjoyed the time spent alone and have understood that it was temporary. Others have felt lost and disorientated, which has made them sad and lonely.

"We lost the unsolicited communications that are part of everyday social interaction - the chat in the lift after a meeting, the coffee with a work colleague," Dr Barrett says.

That unsolicited interaction shows us how we are perceived by others - it forms our sense of who we are. "Those who have a well-established identity will be able to do without it. But others lost their markers - their anchor for their sense of self."

It is still too early to gauge the long-term impact of the loneliness so many of us experienced during COVID-19.

For many the impact has been short term and is already starting to resolve, says Rachel Bowes, Lifeline's head of crisis services and quality. But, "for those with existing mental health problems," she says, "it will be harder for them or take longer to recover and go back to what they would consider to be normal for them."

RED CROSS VOLUNTEER Kath Cooney is a social worker trained in psychological first aid who has been making up to 30 wellbeing calls a day during the pandemic to people facing isolation.

One call has stuck in her mind. "She was an older woman in her 90s. She lived on her own, but she went out three days a week to lunch programmes where she was helping, she went to the library, she had a full life. Then all the things that kept her from being lonely were gone overnight, and there was nothing to replace them."

The lady was not sleeping and could not find the energy to get out of her chair. She was frustrated because she could not choose her groceries herself and she had lost interest in eating. "Everything was hard," says Cooney.

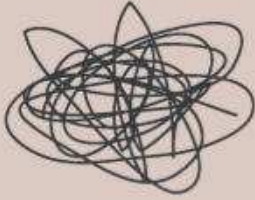
The Red Cross enrolled her in its Telecross programme, which offers a daily telephone call to check on people's wellbeing and provide a friendly voice.

For Cooney, the conversations were mutually beneficial - reaching out to relieve the lady's loneliness also helped her feel like she was doing something positive during the pandemic. "She had such good stories, she wasn't hard to listen to," says Cooney.

Reaching out is something we can all do.

"We know at Lifeline how important just a phone call can be," says Lifeline's Rachael Bowes. "We just

WHAT YOU CAN DO IF YOU'RE FEELING LONELY



Start small. Initiate contact with one other person. Don't overthink things. Chances are, they will welcome the chance to connect.

Chat to your neighbours. They are always around you, even during lockdown.

Smile at a stranger. Unsolicited connections will improve your mood.

Think about one or two close relationships. What can you do to talk to that person more?

Find small ways of adding yourself back into your community. Go for a coffee in a local café or visit the library.

Consider volunteering. It's a great way to remind yourself that you are valuable.

Offer help to someone.

Postpone major life changes, like moving house or changing jobs.

Don't compare yourself to other people. It's not about the number of relationships you have, it's the quality that matters.

Exercise regularly and eat healthy food.

talk to people, build that connection and create a space where they can talk about what's on their mind. We can all do that."

She says it's important to be proactive in initiating contact with people you think may be lonely. That's because there is stigma attached to loneliness, and lonely people may feel like they're a burden on others.

The good news is that dealing with isolation during the pandemic has

forced us to develop new ways of connecting and looking out for each other – an investment that will reap rewards into the future.

Peter Gordon, 37, a visually impaired student from Hobart, has found a bunch of new friends during daily online 'happy hour' chats organised by Blind Citizens Australia to respond to their members' needs during the pandemic.

"We got together to talk about

READER'S DIGEST

cooking, exercise, music. We got to talk about the good parts of coronavirus and the bad parts. We could relate to each other – like the fact we couldn't read the tapes on the ground at Woolies with a cane. I've met all sorts of people and I've stayed in contact with them via social media."

TACKLING LONELINESS might mean nothing more than bringing in a neighbour's bins, paying for someone's coffee, or stopping to chat to an acquaintance in the street. "All these little generous acts help build relationships that address loneliness," says Dr Barrett. Within two weeks of its formation, half a million people had signed up to the Kindness Pandemic community in the early days of COVID, committing small acts of kindness to help others.

"What we did to make it work during COVID taught us something about how we want to live our lives," she says. "Kindness impacts on the other person, on you and on the sharing group. It's about human connection – after all, we all breathe the same air."



LONELINESS RESOURCES

Need to talk? Here's a list of organisations that can offer a listening ear.

Lifeline Australia: It's fine to call just for a chat. 13 11 14; lifeline.org.au

Red Cross: COVID Connect is a free service for anyone who could do with a friendly volunteer wellbeing-call during Covid-19. redcross.org.au/covidconnect

Beyond Blue: For help if loneliness is leading to depression or anxiety. 1300 22 4636; beyondblue.org.au

Gather My Crew: Technology to help coordinate and roster practical support for people doing it tough. gathermycrew.org

Men's Sheds: Offer a safe and friendly environment where men can meet together. To find your nearest men's shed, visit mensshed.org/find-a-shed/

The Kindness Pandemic: thekindnesspandemic.org



Tip Off

After a man ran off with the tip jar containing \$220 at a pizza shop in Pennsylvania, investigators didn't have to do a lot of legwork to track him down. Nicholas M. Mark, 22, had just applied for a job at the establishment, leaving his name and contact details, authorities said. AP



**You are
not alone.**

**We're here
to listen.**

 **13 11 14**


lifeline.org.au

LAUGHTER

The Best Medicine



Gouda One

● There are good cheese puns and bad cheese puns. Between them, there's a gruyerea.

MICHAEL MCKEAN, ACTOR

● *When should you go on a cheese diet?*
If you need to cheddar a few kilograms.

● A cheese walks into a bar. The barman says: "We don't serve your rind here."

● *What does cheese say to itself in the mirror?*
Looking Gouda...

● *Why did the cheese lose a fight with a stone?*
Because the roquefort back.

● *Did you hear about the cheese that failed?*
It fell at the final curdle.

@dailycheesejoke;
www.thecourtyarddairy.co.uk



Eggonomics

A hipster from the city moved to the country and bought a piece of land. He went to the local feed and livestock store and boasted to the proprietor about how he was going to take up chicken farming and make a lot of money. He then asked to buy 100 chicks.

"That's a lot of chicks," commented the proprietor.

"I mean business," said the hipster. A week later the hipster was back.

"I need another 100 chicks," he said.

"You're really serious about chicken farming," the proprietor commented.

"Yeah," the hipster replied. "If I can iron out a few problems."

"Problems?" asked the proprietor.

"Yeah," replied the hipster,

"I think I planted that last batch too close together."

AGDAILY.COM



Suit-ably Garbed

JUDGE: Sir, you have been charged with stealing penguins from the zoo.

ME: I needed groomsmen for my wedding, your honour. @dafloydsta

“I had to borrow money for my wedding garb. The only two things in life that are certain are debt and tuxes.” OTIS CAMPBELL

Worst Nightmare

GURU: We all attract what we fear.

ME: I am absolutely terrified of ten billion dollars. @LEOKOLADE

The Medium is the Message

An elderly couple had just learned how to send text messages. The wife was a romantic type, and the husband was more of a no-nonsense guy. One afternoon, the wife decided to send her husband a text. She wrote, “If you are laughing, send me your smile. If you are crying, send me your tears. And if you are sleeping, send me your dreams. I love you.”

Her husband texted back, “I’m on the toilet, please advise.” Friarsclub.com

Not Creative

What happens when an artist has trouble finding inspiration? She draws a blank.

SUBMITTED BY CHERYL HERMAN

Sounding Off

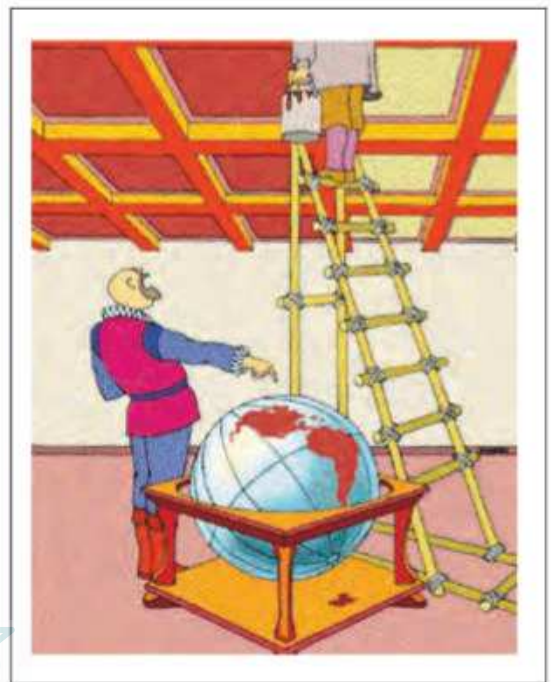
“Your story is so important and I’m grateful you’ve had the chance to be open with us. I’m proud of us for cultivating the space for this vulnerability. But could you consider maybe letting someone else share?”

Me, to the car alarm that’s been going off for four hours outside my window. JES TOM, COMEDIAN

Love in Pandemic Times

I tried going on a Zoom date, but there was no connection.

GIANMARCO SORESI, COMEDIAN



The Real-Life Lord of the Flies





ADVENTURE

*Our expectations are that teenagers washed ashore
on a deserted island would soon turn to barbarity.
But what if we are wrong?*

BY *Rutger Bregman*

FROM THE BOOK **HUMAN KIND: A HOPEFUL HISTORY**

THE STORY PUBLISHED in 1954 takes place on a deserted island somewhere in the Pacific. A plane has just gone down. The only survivors are some British schoolboys, who can't believe their good fortune. It's as if they've just crash-landed in one of their adventure books. Nothing but beach, shells and water for kilometres. And better yet: no grown-ups.

On the very first day, the boys institute a democracy of sorts. One boy – Ralph – is elected to be the group's leader. Athletic, charismatic and handsome, he's the golden boy of the bunch. Ralph's game plan is simple: 1) Have fun. 2) Survive. 3) Make smoke signals for passing ships.

Number one is a success. The others? Not so much. Most of the boys are more interested in feasting and frolicking than in tending the fire. Jack, the redhead, develops a passion for hunting pigs and as time progresses he and his friends grow increasingly reckless.

When a ship does finally pass in

the distance, they've abandoned their post at the fire.

"You're breaking the rules!" Ralph accuses angrily.

Jack shrugs. "Who cares?"

"The rules are the only thing we've got!"

When night falls, the boys are gripped by terror, fearful of the beast they believe is lurking the island. In reality, the only beast is inside them. Before long, they've begun painting their faces. Casting off their clothes. And they develop overpowering urges to pinch, to kick, to bite.

Of all the boys, only one manages to keep a cool head. Piggy, as the others call him because he's pudgier than the rest, has asthma, wears glasses and can't swim. Piggy is the voice of reason, to which nobody listens. "What are we?" he wonders mournfully. "Humans? Or animals? Or savages?"

Weeks pass. Then, one day, a British naval officer comes ashore. The island is now a smouldering wasteland. Three of the children, including Piggy,

READER'S DIGEST

are dead. "I should have thought," the officer reproaches them, "that a pack of British boys would have been able to put up a better show than that." Ralph, the leader of the once proper and well-behaved band of boys, bursts into tears.

"Ralph wept for the end of innocence," we read, and for "the darkness of man's heart ..."

THIS STORY NEVER HAPPENED. An English schoolmaster made it up in 1951. "Wouldn't it be a good idea," William Golding asked his wife one day, "to write a story about some boys on an island, showing how they would really behave?"

Golding's book *Lord of the Flies* would ultimately sell tens of millions of copies, be translated into more than 20 languages and be hailed as one of the classics of the 20th century.

In hindsight, the secret to the book's success is clear. Golding had a masterful ability to portray the darkest depths of mankind. Of course, Golding had the zeitgeist of the 1960s on his side, when a new generation was questioning its parents about the atrocities of the Second World War. Had Auschwitz been an anomaly, they wanted to know, or is there a Nazi hiding in each of us?

I first read *Lord of the Flies* as a teenager. I remember feeling disillusioned afterwards, as I turned it over and over in my mind. But not for a

second did I think to doubt Golding's view of human nature.

That didn't happen until I picked up the book again years later. When I began delving into the author's life, I learned what an unhappy individual he'd been. An alcoholic. Prone to depression. "I have always understood the Nazis," Golding confessed, "because I am of that sort by nature." And it was "partly out of that sad self-knowledge" that he wrote *Lord of the Flies*.

And so I began to wonder: *had anyone ever studied what real children would do if they found themselves alone on a deserted island?* Thus began my quest for a real-life *Lord of the Flies*.

After extensive online searching – and some trial, error and good fortune – author Rutger Bregman stumbled across the story of six Tongan castaways, schoolboys who had been rescued by an Australian sea captain, Peter Warner, after being marooned on the island of 'Ata for more than a year.

Warner – the son of businessman and politician Sir Arthur Warner, one of the richest and most powerful men in Australia in his day – ran away at the age of 17 in search of adventure, spending several years sailing the seven seas. He eventually returned to the family fold to work for his father, but the sea still beckoned. He visited Tonga from Tasmania – where he owned a fishing fleet – in the winter of 1966 in

the hopes of trapping lobster in Tongan waters, but was refused permission by King Taufa'ahau Tupou.

It was while heading back to Tasmania that Warner stumbled upon the minuscule island of 'Ata, and spied burned patches on the green cliffs.

Curious about the evidence of fire, Captain Warner drew closer to investigate and was astonished to see a wild-looking naked boy, followed by others, all screaming at the top of their lungs. He was even more taken aback when the boys spoke to him in perfect English and told him of their incredible tale.

To help recount the tale, Captain Peter Warner introduced the author to one of the boys, Mano Totau, who now lives a couple of hours from Warner just north of Brisbane.

Fifteen years old at the time and now almost 70, to this day Mano considers Captain Peter Warner one of his closest friends.

THE REAL LORD OF THE FLIES, Mano told us, began in June 1965. The protagonists were Sione, Stephen, Kolo, David, Luke and himself, six boys, all pupils at St Andrew's, a strict Catholic boarding school in Nuku'alofa. The oldest was 16, the youngest 13, and they had one main thing in common: they were bored witless. The teenagers longed

for adventure instead of assignments, for life at sea instead of school.

So they came up with a plan to escape: to Fiji, some 800 kilometres away, or even all the way to New Zealand. "Lots of other kids at school knew about it," Mano recalled, "but they all thought it was a joke."

There was only one obstacle. None of them owned a boat, so they decided to 'borrow' one from Mr Taniela Uhila, a fisherman they all disliked.

The boys took little time to prepare for the voyage. Two sacks of bananas, a few coconuts and a small gas burner were all the supplies they packed. It didn't occur to any of them to bring a map, let alone a compass. And none of them was an experienced sailor.

No one noticed the small craft leaving the harbour that evening.

But that night the boys made a grave error. They fell asleep. A few hours later they awoke to water crashing down over their heads. It was dark. All they could see were foaming waves cresting around them. They hoisted the sail, which the wind promptly tore to shreds. Next to break was the rudder.

"We drifted for eight days," Mano told me. "Without food. Without water." The boys tried catching fish. They managed to collect some rainwater in hollowed-out coconut shells and

The teenagers longed for adventure instead of assignments

shared it equally between them, each taking a sip in the morning and another in the evening.

Then, on the eighth day, they spied a miracle on the horizon. Land. A small island, to be precise. Not a tropical paradise with waving palm trees and sandy beaches, but a hulking mass of rock, jutting up more than 300 metres out of the ocean.

These days, 'Ata is considered uninhabitable. The teenagers had a rather different experience. "By the time we arrived," Captain Warner wrote in his memoirs, "the boys had set up a small commune with food garden, hollowed-out tree trunks to store rainwater, a gymnasium with curious weights, a badminton court, chicken pens and a permanent fire, all from handiwork, an old knife blade and much determination."

It was Stephen – later an engineer – who, after countless failed attempts, managed to produce a spark using two sticks. While the boys in the make-believe *Lord of the Flies* come to blows over the fire, those in the real-life *Lord of the Flies* tended their flame so it never went out, for more than a year.

The kids agreed to work in teams of two, drawing up a strict roster for garden, kitchen and guard duty. Sometimes they quarrelled, but whenever that happened they solved it by

imposing a time-out. The squabblers would go to opposite ends of the island to cool their tempers, and, "After four hours or so," Mano later remembered, "we'd bring them back together. Then we'd say "OK, now apologise." That's how we stayed friends."

Their days began and ended with song and prayer. Kolo fashioned a makeshift guitar from a piece of drift-

wood, a coconut shell and six steel wires salvaged from their wrecked boat – an instrument Warner has kept all these years – and played it to help lift their spirits.

And their spirits needed lifting. All

summer long it hardly rained, driving the boys frantic with thirst. They tried constructing a raft in order to leave the island, but it fell apart in the crashing surf. Then there was the storm that dropped a tree on their hut.

Worst of all, Stephen fell off a cliff and broke his leg. The other boys helped him back up to the top. They set his leg using sticks and leaves. "Don't worry," Sione joked. "We'll do your work, while you lie there like King Taufa'ahau Tupou himself!"

The boys were finally rescued on Sunday, September 11, 1966. Physically, they were in peak condition. The local doctor later expressed astonishment at their muscled physiques and Stephen's perfectly healed leg.

They tended their flame so it never went out for more than a year

The Real-Life Lord of the Flies

The mood when the boys returned to their families was jubilant. Almost the entire island of Ha'afeva – population 900 – had turned out to welcome them home.

Warner was proclaimed a national hero. Soon he received a message from King Taufa'ahau Tupou IV himself, inviting the captain for another audience. "Thank you for rescuing six of my subjects," His Royal Highness said. "Now, is there anything I can do for you?"

The captain didn't have to think long. "Yes! I would like to trap lobster in these waters and start a business here."

This time the king consented. Warner resigned from his father's company and commissioned a new ship. Then he had the six boys brought over and granted them the thing that had started it all: an opportunity to see the world beyond Tonga. He hired Sione, Stephen, Kolo, David, Luke and Mano as the crew of his new fishing boat.

The name of the boat? The *Ata*.

THIS IS THE REAL-LIFE *LORD OF THE FLIES*. Turns out, it's a heart-warming story – the stuff of best-selling novels, Broadway plays and blockbuster movies.

It's also a story that nobody knows.

While the boys of 'Ata have been consigned to obscurity, William Golding's book is still widely read.

The real *Lord of the Flies* is a story of friendship and loyalty, a story that illustrates how much stronger we are if we can lean on each other. Of course, it's only one story. But if we're going to make *Lord of the Flies* required reading for millions of teenagers, then let's also tell them about the time real kids found themselves stranded on a deserted island. "I used their survival story in our social studies classes," one of the boys' teachers at St Andrew's High School in Tonga recalled years later. "My students couldn't get enough of it."

So what happened to Warner and Mano? If you happen to find yourself on a banana plantation outside Lismore in NSW, you may well run into them: two old men, trading jokes, arms draped around each other's shoulders. Friends for life. **R**



Edited from the book *Human Kind: A hopeful history* © 2019 by Rutger Bregman. Published by Bloomsbury. Available at all good bookstores.

Sibling Rivalry

No one is as obnoxiously well-behaved as a child whose sibling is getting yelled at. @HENPACKEDHAL

HEALTH



Before You Flush

We asked doctors for the inside scoop about poop to answer the questions you'd rather not ask

BY the Editors OF THE HEALTHY.COM

It's something everyone does but no one really wants to discuss – at least in public. Although it's not a popular topic around the water cooler, it's normal to have questions about your pooping habits. What's normal? Why does it smell? You get the idea. To find out more, we asked doctors about the science behind some of our strange pooping habits.

WHY DO I WAKE UP AT NIGHT ONLY TO PEE? The sophisticated, intelligent neurons in your gut that control colon contractions, which push out waste, are influenced by your body's circadian rhythm, the internal clock that wakes you when it's light out and makes you feel sleepy at night, says neurogastroenterologist Dr Pankaj Jay Pasricha. So most people don't have

the urge to empty their colon in the middle of the night. On the other hand, the bladder, which acts as a reservoir for the continuous flow of urine produced in the kidneys, can stretch only up to a certain volume before you have to go. Normally, you can sleep six to eight hours without having to urinate, but certain medical conditions (type 2 diabetes is one) or drinking too much water before bed can wake you to use the bathroom at night.

WHY AM I GASSY FIRST THING IN THE MORNING?

The colon is fairly dormant during the middle of the night, but it gets revved up and starts contracting when you wake up, sweeping out the gas that's been trapped there all night. "The highest volume and longest emission of the day is usually in the morning when the colon wakes up," says gastroenterologist Dr Anish Sheth, author of *What's Your Poo Telling You?*

WHY DOES DRINKING COFFEE MAKE YOU POOP?

It's not just you: some 30 per cent of people feel the urge to have a bowel movement after their morning coffee, the *Washington Post* reports. Don't just blame the caffeine. Coffee stimulates the distal colon, which speeds up waste removal, so to speak, according to research in *Diseases of the Colon & Rectum* and the *European Journal of*

Sport Science. Coffee's acidity may be a factor. Its chlorogenic acid causes the stomach to produce more gastric acid, which could cause the stomach to get rid of its contents more quickly than normal.

WHY DOES POOPING SOMETIMES GIVE YOU THE CHILLS?

Dr Sheth calls the feel-good sensation "poo-phoria". It occurs when your bowel movement stimulates the vagus nerve, which runs from the brainstem to the colon. When the vagus nerve is stimulated, it can cause sweating and chills, as well as a drop in blood pressure and heart rate. It takes a large amount of poop to trigger poo-phoria, which is why it might not occur every time you head to the loo.

WHY DOES EATING SPICY FOOD MAKE IT HURT TO DO A NO 2?

The compounds that give those curried chicken wings their heat remain relatively unchanged as you digest them, so they make their way into your poop. "When capsaicin comes in contact with our skin or mucosa, it can bind to a receptor called TRPV1 (transient receptor potential vanilloid 1 ion channel)," says gastroenterologist Dr Christine Lee. "This receptor is found all over your body, including your digestive tract from lips/mouth to anus." She explains that the capsaicin, a chilli pepper extract found in spicy

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food, is sometimes not completely digested. This means that when it passes through your digestive tract, it can trigger TRPV1 receptors. "By the time it reaches the end of your digestive tract, any remaining available capsaicin in the food waste can fire off these receptors in your anus and allow you to feel the pain/burn yet one more time," Dr Lee says.

WHY CAN'T YOU POOP WHEN YOU'RE ON HOLIDAY? Almost 40 per cent of people get constipated when they travel, and it's mainly due to changes in your routine, according to Dr Levine. Different meal times, a shifted sleeping schedule, or jet lag can throw off your body's circadian rhythm and affect your digestive process.

WHY DO YOU HAVE TO POOP MORE WHEN YOU GET YOUR PERIOD? When your period begins, your body releases hormones called prostaglandins, which help your uterus contract – and can also affect your bowels. According to Ada McVean with McGill University's

Office for Science and Society, the problem occurs when the prostaglandins leave the uterus and are "detected by the smooth muscle cells of the large intestine," triggering them to contract.

WHY DOES POOP REFUSE TO SINK? Poop that floats may contain fat, which can be a sign your body is having problems absorbing nutrients from food. Malabsorption is linked with conditions such as coeliac disease or chronic pancreatitis. Still, the occasional floating stool is no reason for concern.

WHY DOES SURGERY AFFECT YOUR BOWEL MOVEMENTS? The medications you are given at the time of surgery, the pain relievers you may take afterwards, and the inactivity that occurs during recovery can all be a constipation trifecta. Your doctor will likely offer you stool softeners before and following surgery and, if not, ask your doctor if it might be recommended for you, writes Dr Richard C. Selenick in his blog on HuffingtonPost.com.



If Kids Wrote the Dictionary ...

My daughter calls a single slipper from a pair of slippers a "slip" and I'm never going to correct her. @MILLIONDOLLRFAM

My four year old calls our microwave "the pizza heater", and there's nothing to correct because she's right. @XPLODINGUNICORN

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DRAMA IN REAL LIFE

"I DIDN'T KNOW HOW LONG I'D SURVIVE"

With his leg caught in the sharp, whirling teeth of a gigantic corn conveyor and no one around to hear his screams, this farmer grabbed his pocketknife and did the unthinkable

BY Carson Vaughan

PHOTOGRAPHS BY Geoff Johnson





The morning of Good Friday started like any other for Kurt Kaser, a third-generation farmer in northeast Nebraska. The 63 year old, taciturn and as lean as a fence post, woke around 5.30, his wife, Lori, by his side. He pulled on his muck boots, stuck an old pocketknife in a front pocket, and headed outside to start his day.

With 3000 pigs and roughly 600 hectares of corn and soybeans, not to mention a small trucking business, Kurt's to-do list never really shrank so much as recycled itself, though he understood all too well the dangers of rushing on the job. In sixth grade, he'd jumped down from his father's tractor only to land with one foot inside the corn picker. Though he didn't break any bones, the teeth mauled his foot and ankle so badly he spent the next three months in and out of a hospital bed, the surgeons finally grafting skin from the top of his leg to the bottom before it could fully repair.

"Everybody gets in a hurry and we just don't think," he says. "I got lucky on that one."

On this April morning in 2019, he sent a few of his workers out to load some corn, then hopped in a

grain truck himself to do the same. It was a beautiful day for a drive, Kurt remembers. Only the slightest northwest breeze. No rain in Thurston County, thank goodness – this part of the United States had just endured historic flooding that destroyed a billion dollars' worth of crops.

Kurt had lived there, just a few kilometres outside the small town of Pender (population 1100) his entire life – long enough to know the fickleness of spring and appreciate a calm and sunny morning when he caught

one. Long enough to marry Lori and raise a son and two daughters. Long enough to stumble and stand again, to become dependent on booze and finally cut it loose, to feel his community supporting him when he needed it the most.

The goal that Good Friday was simple enough: transfer the

**HE FELL
BACKWARDS
ONTO THE
GRAVEL PATH.
THE BLADES,
STILL
CHURNING,
SLOWLY PULLED
HIM INTO THE
HOPPER**

“I Didn’t Know How Long I’d Survive”



Until it was repaired, the grate covering the auger was missing a few bars, leaving a hole large enough to fit a leg

corn he'd just picked up from a soggy field 16 kilometres south to the silo on his homestead, quiet now that he'd dispatched his help and Lori had left for Sioux City, Iowa, nearly an hour away.

He parked his truck alongside the tractor next to the silo and tilted his truck's long, corn-filled bed using the hydraulic hoist. Connected to the tractor was a large bin called a hopper, which Kurt wheeled beneath the truck bed to catch the corn when he opened the gate. Inside the hopper, covered by a protective grate, was a giant iron corkscrew, about nine metres long, called an auger. Its job was to rotate, slowly and constantly, to convey the corn up a long yellow chute and dump it into the top

of the gleaming chrome silo. With everything now in place, Kurt turned the auger on.

Despite all that prep work, something went slightly off-kilter, as often happens in the life of a farmer. In this case, the corn released too quickly, causing a torrent of kernels to pile up over the sides of the hopper and atop the protective grate, concealing the auger's rotating blades. Kurt stepped onto the corn-filled hopper to lower the truck's gate and stem the flow.

In his haste, he forgot that the grate had a rather large hole in it, one he'd cut himself months earlier when the ground was frozen solid and he couldn't fit the auger beneath the grain bin. He remembered it only when his foot sank into the corn



After his leg was caught in the auger, Kurt used a basic pocketknife, similar to this one, to do the unthinkable

through that very hole – and into the whirring auger funnel. It snagged his foot and wrenched him forwards, shredding his jeans, then his ankle. He fell backwards onto the gravel path. The blades, still churning, slowly pulled him into the hopper, all the while tearing flesh from bone.

“When the corn quit running out of the truck,” he says, “my clothes were still grabbing on the auger and jerking my leg as I was trying to pull it out.” He could plainly see his tibia over the hopper’s red casing, at least 15 centimetres of bone exposed beneath his knee. He could see his own severed foot bobbing like a rag doll up the hopper towards the silo’s opening, tethers of denim still connected.

But the machine wouldn’t release

what was left of his leg. He couldn’t reach the controls to shut down the auger. He needed to call for help. He knew his mobile phone was on him – surely his mobile was on him. He patted his pockets, his chest, his thighs. He came up empty. Half of the phone would later be found in the silo, another victim of the auger. He could scream for help, but the auger would drown out his cries, and anyway, there was no one around to hear them. How long he could stay conscious he didn’t know.

“I was holding that one bone in my leg that was all bare and stuff – there wasn’t no meat or nothing on it – but [the auger] was jerking on that and I was getting wore out,” Kurt says. “I just didn’t know how long I’d survive.”

“I Didn’t Know How Long I’d Survive”

That was when he remembered the cheap black-handled pocketknife in his jeans, one of the countless promotional items he and every other farmer receive from seed-corn dealers and equipment manufacturers. He unfolded the small blade, just eight or nine centimetres long. There were no second thoughts, not with the ravenous auger still drawing him in and the hole in the grate big enough to pull at least a few centimetres more of him inside. A knee. A thigh.

With his left hand, he gripped the bone below his knee. With his right, he began to saw away at muscle, tendons, tissue – the blood painting his fingers red. He could feel the ping, the snap, the sudden release of his nerves with every cut. The handle became slicker and slicker, until he lost his grip and watched the knife slip from his hand. He miraculously caught it in his left.

“I would have been clean out of luck,” he says.

Regripping the knife, he continued the horrific act of amputating his own leg. Was each stroke of the knife agony? He honestly doesn’t recall. Maybe it was shock. But one thing and one thing only ran through his mind: “Survival,” he explains. “Wanted to get the hell out of there.”

When the muscles were cut through and the last tendon severed, Kurt swung his leg – what remained of it – away from the machine and dropped his knife to the dirt.

Now on autopilot, he crawled to the tractor, way up into the cab, and shut down the auger. Then he crawled to his idling truck and shut it off too. No need to waste the diesel, he surely would have been thinking, had he been thinking at all.

After manoeuvring himself down off the truck, he dug his elbows into the gravel and slowly began pulling himself towards the garage, towards the phone in the office, a long, 65-metre silent crawl. Several times along the way he slowed down, stopped, thought maybe he’d just rest a minute. Then he thought again. To stop, to pass out, meant death. So he kept clawing his way

Kurt was moving dry corn up this chute into a silo when the accident occurred



towards the garage, one foot and a few breaths short, the longest 65 metres of his life.

Finally inside, Kurt crawled to the desk and hoisted himself up just enough to grab the receiver. He collapsed back onto the floor and immediately called not emergency services but his 31-year-old son, Adam Kaser, who'd spent about half his life volunteering with the Pender Fire and Rescue Department. Kurt didn't waste his words.

"I need an ambulance now," he said. "I lost my foot."

In the midst of buying tractor parts from a local dealership, in the midst of a routine day, Adam was certain he'd misheard, especially when his father mentioned the 'auger' and 'hopper'.

"Get me an ambulance now," his father repeated, and the line dropped cold.

Adam darted away from the check-out. He jumped in his vehicle, stomped the pedal to the floor, and raced the six kilometres to the farm, calling emergency services on the way. Hands strangling the wheel, he feared the worst: that his father would bleed out before he arrived.

Less than five minutes later, he pulled off

Highway 16 at the farm and ran directly for the hopper, but his father wasn't there and the auger was silent – the truck and the tractor too. The picture didn't reconcile. No blood. No painful cries. No droning auger. He then noticed the open door to the garage, and inside, his father splayed out on the floor in a dusty shirt and baseball cap, legs hidden by the office wall, smoking perhaps the last cigarette of his life.

"How bad is it?" Adam asked.

Kurt looked up from the floor, smoke trailing from his lips. "I messed up big-time," he said.

Strangely, there was virtually no blood. His doctor would later guess this was due to Kurt's decades of heavy smoking. Nevertheless, his foot was missing and his leg was horribly mangled, dusted with dirt and debris, the bones protruding beyond his calf muscle.

Though he'd already called for help from the road, Adam now

called the chief of his rescue squad, told the squad to "kick it into overdrive", that his father had severed his foot and would likely need an air ambulance. Adam then snapped into 'firefighter mode' as he calls it. He started asking his father questions, keeping him lucid until the

**KURT SLOWLY
DRAGGED
HIMSELF
TOWARDS THE
PHONE IN THE
OFFICE.
TO STOP, TO
PASS OUT,
MEANT DEATH**

“I Didn’t Know How Long I’d Survive”



Kurt has learned his lesson. “Use your head,” he says. “Don’t do stupid stuff”

roughly 12-person team arrived a few minutes later.

The rescue squad carefully loaded Kurt onto a stretcher and into the ambulance, then raced back to Pender Community Hospital. Kurt doesn’t remember much of the ride, but he does recall the helicopter flight to hospital and all that sodden, muddy farmland below.

After two surgeries and three weeks in hospital, Kurt returned to the farm, the stump of his left leg wrapped in a clean elastic bandage just below the knee. For a while, he was stuck inside with a pair of crutches and a walker and too many get-well-soon cards to read in one sitting.

“It’s frustrating,” Kurt says, “but it’s just the nature of a farmer. Don’t think. Gets in a hurry. Gets tired. Whatever.”

Four months after the accident, Kurt received his prosthetic leg, and soon the farmer was back to doing what he loves. Strong-willed, as his family has always known him to be, he helped with the harvest last autumn, and even ran that same leg-chewing auger as he unloaded corn into grain bins.

“When we went down to the hospital to see him, the first thing out of his mouth was ‘Why are you guys not working?’” farmhand Tyler Hilkemann told a television station. “Ever since he got his leg, you can’t stop him. One of these days we might steal it from him.” **R**

Victorian Era Humour

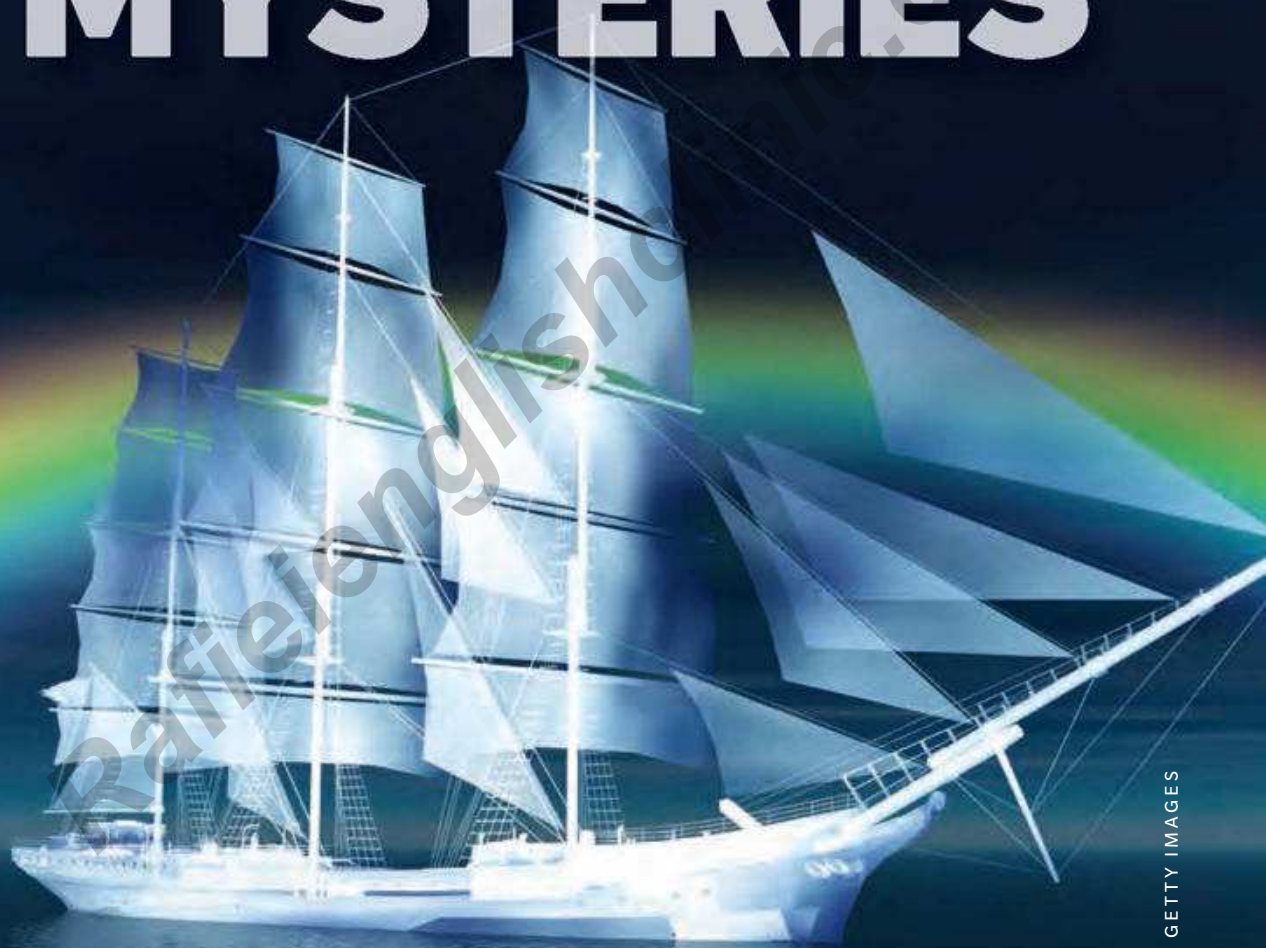
From Answers magazine, 1906:

Alice: “Look what a lovely engagement ring George has given me.”

Grace: “Yes; it’s lovely. It nearly broke my heart when I had to send it back.”

@VictorianHumour

10 GHOST SHIP MYSTERIES



... that can't be explained

These ghost ships aren't home to phantom sailors, but they are equally mysterious, with crews that seemingly vanished in thin air

BY *Marissa Laliberte*

The Jian Seng

Some ghost ships are so mysterious, they barely even have a backstory. In 2006, an Australian Coastwatch plane found a ship floating 180 kilometres south-west of Weipa, Queensland, in the Gulf of Carpentaria. It had a broken tow rope, so becoming lost while being dragged through the water might explain why it was empty.

But that was about all investigators had to go on. The name *Jian Seng* was printed on the side, but there was nothing else to identify the ship. Investigations found no records of distress signals, no identifying documents or belongings, and no reports of a missing boat. They couldn't even figure out who it belonged to or where it came from. The most they could surmise is that it probably supplied

food and fuel to fishing boats, but that didn't answer why no one tried to save it when the tow rope broke.

The Mary Celeste

On November 7, 1872, a captain, his wife, two-year-old daughter, and seven crewmen set out from New York to Italy aboard the *Mary Celeste*. They should have arrived a month later, but the British ship *Dei Gratia* caught sight of the boat drifting in the Atlantic. Its crew went onto the *Mary Celeste* to help anyone onboard but found it completely empty.

Six months' worth of food and the crew's belongings were still there, but its lifeboat was gone. The ship's floor was covered in a metre of water, but that was far from flooded or beyond repair. It's become one of the world's most famous ghost ships - thanks largely to the fact that Sir Arthur Conan Doyle used the boat as inspiration for his short story, *J. Habakuk Jephson's Statement*. Theories of what happened range from pirates and mutiny to murder.

The most likely explanation is that the captain didn't know the extent of the damage and ordered the crew to abandon ship at the first sight of land, but the world will never know for sure.

The *Carroll A. Deering*

In 1920, the *Carroll A. Deering* five-masted commercial schooner and its ten-man crew successfully made it to Rio de Janeiro, despite needing to change captains when its original one fell ill. However, something strange happened on its way back to Virginia in January 1921. A lightship keeper in North Carolina said a crewman who didn't seem very officer-like reported the ship had lost its anchors while the rest of the crew was "milling about" suspiciously.

Another ship spotted the *Carroll A. Deering* near Outer Banks the next day in an area that would have been a strange course for a ship on its way to Norfolk, Virginia. The following day, a shipwreck was spotted, but dangerous conditions kept investigators away for four days. When they went aboard, they found food laid out as if they were getting ready for a meal, but the crew's personal belongings and the lifeboats were gone.

The US government followed leads on pirates, mutinies, and more, but they all came to a dead end.

High Aim No. 6

Fishing boat *High Aim No. 6* left Taiwan on October 31, 2002. When the Australian Navy came across the ship in January 2003, something was amiss. The engine was on full throttle and the main fuel tank was empty, but the auxiliary fuel tanks were still full and untouched. Ten tons of

bonito tuna were kept cold, but not a crew member was to be found.

It was set to be one of the most mysterious ghost ships of all time until one crew member was found.

The Indonesian fisherman was arrested and confessed that the crew had worked with pirates to kill the ship's captain and main engineer, but their reason for doing this remains a mystery.

The missing yacht

In 2013, the *Nina* yacht's crew reached out to meteorologists with concerns about dangerous weather conditions, then stopped responding. Given the 116-kilometres-per-hour winds and eight-metre-high waves, it seemed obvious that the boat had met its match and never made it through the storm. A fruitless search effort might have been the end if it weren't for a mysterious message.

Three weeks after anyone had heard from the crew, an undelivered text reached one of the meteorologists. "Thanks storm sails shredded last night, now bare poles," it read, noting that the boat was still on the move. The family of a 19-year-old girl on the boat took that message as a sign that she was still alive. Their private search turned up satellite photos that they thought might be of the missing *Nina*, though most experts say it was just a large wave.

Remains found

When Filipino fishermen boarded a seemingly abandoned yacht in 2016, they weren't prepared for the sight they would find: the mummified body of a German sailor. Manfred Fritz Bajorat had been sailing around the world for about 20 years. He'd last been seen in 2009, although a friend said he'd heard from Bajorat on Facebook in 2015.

There was no evidence of foul play, so a year would seem like enough for the warm, salty air to mummify the body ... until an autopsy revealed he'd probably only been dead for about a week.

The *Kaz II*

In April 2007, two brothers and a skipper set off on a two-month yacht journey around Australia. Just three days later, the *Kaz II* was found off the Great Barrier Reef with a half-empty coffee cup, an open newspaper, and knives strewn on the floor – but no one aboard.

A coroner suggested that one of the inexperienced sailors had fallen off and the other two drowned in their rescue attempts. But that's just one theory with no evidence backing it up, so their fate is lost in history.

The *Sam Rataulangi*

This ghost ship mystery is a pretty recent one, and one that has most likely been solved. The Myanmar ghost ship mystery was the *Sam*



The *MV Joyita*

In 1955, merchant ship *MV Joyita* set off on a two-day journey in the South Pacific. It would never reach its destination. The rescue team's search found nothing, and it wasn't until more than a month later that another captain spotted the partially sunken ship. There was no sign of any of the 25 passengers, and an investigation deemed its doom "inexplicable".

Over the years, dark theories circulated, from Soviet submariners kidnapping the crew to Japanese fishermen killing everyone on board. As recently as 2002, family members were still researching what could have gone wrong, and one professor insists the most likely scenario is that a corroded pipe was leaking and flooded the boat, forcing the crew to abandon ship. As of 2012, all aboard were still declared as 'missing'.

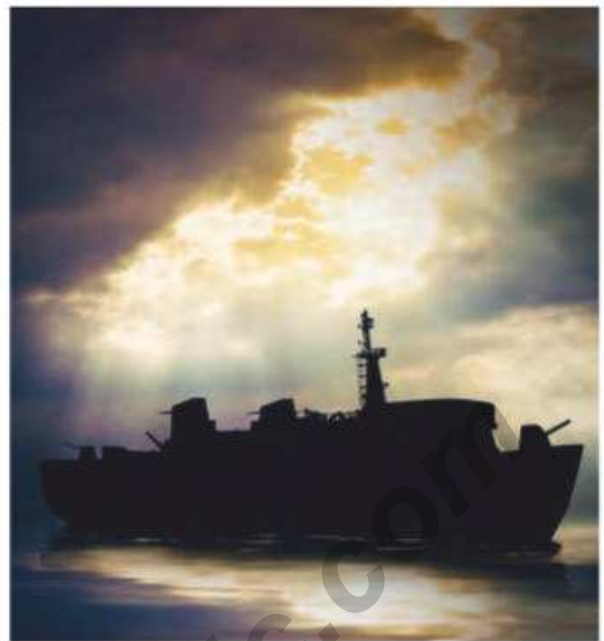
READER'S DIGEST

Rataulangi PB 1600 freighter. Fishermen found it off the coast of Myanmar, empty of people and cargo, in August 2018.

Shortly afterwards, though, Myanmar's Navy discovered that the freighter had been on its way to be dismantled, being towed by a tugboat when bad weather hit. The cable connecting it to the tugboat snapped, so the *Sam Rataulangi* was abandoned by its crew.

Whaling ship *Jenny*

Now, this ghost ship might be one of the most disturbing of all. The story, which is unsubstantiated, comes from anonymous accounts of a whaling ship called *Hope*. As the story goes, in 1840, the *Hope* came across the *Jenny*, a schooner, completely frozen in ice in the Antarctic Drake Passage. The crew of the ghost ship *Jenny* was



still on board but frozen to death. The captain was frozen at his desk, where an open log's last entry read: "May 4, 1823. No food for 71 days. I am the only one left alive."

The story of the ghost ship *Jenny* is most likely at least a little sensationalised, but could it have a basis in truth? **R**

Shoe-Stealing Foxes

An urban fox in a Berlin neighbourhood is the culprit behind a string of shoe thefts. After resident Christian Meyer noticed that one of his expensive new running shoes had disappeared from his verandah, he decided to investigate. After spotting the fox with two blue flip-flops in its mouth, he followed it into a thicket where he discovered its secret stash of more than 100 shoes, "most of them just gnawed on a little". The pile contained sneakers, Crocs, sandals and slippers in a range of colours, shapes and sizes. In August 2019, a fox in Melbourne repeatedly visited a woman's verandah and stole three boots over the course of a week. Perhaps foxes, like dogs, just enjoy chewing shoes. [LIVESCIENCE.COM](https://www.livescience.com)

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Humour on the Job



Taking the Cake

The Gutsiest Customer of the Year award goes to a woman in Texas who pulled a cake off a supermarket shelf and devoured much of it while shopping. When she reached the checkout, she demanded that she be given a steep discount for the cake since half of it was missing. The shop had a better idea - they banned her from their supermarkets. *THE WEEK*

Missing a Beat

Feeling ill, my supervisor went to a nearby doctor, who ordered an electrocardiogram. Upon reading the results, the doctor declared that my

boss was suffering a cardiac arrest and called an ambulance to whisk him off to hospital. There, doctors performed their own tests. But those came back negative. After some quick sleuthing, the problem was solved: the first doctor had read the electrocardiogram upside down.

SUBMITTED BY SUZANNE CLARKE

Best to Walk Home

Our Uber driver just asked us what Give Way signs mean. *@TYLERCOATES*

My Uber driver is making racing car noises as he swerves in and out of lanes. *@ARNAUD_PALMER*

My Uber driver has just texted me and said "I'm out front, blowing bubbles."

Sure enough, he was blowing bubbles out of his car window.

@_RYANECCLES

Do You Want Fries With That?

● I work at McDonald's and last week I spent more than 15 minutes trying to explain to an elderly man that we do not sell hot dogs.

He claimed they were called 'McDogs'. He then threatened to report me to our head office for "withholding products from him"!



● A customer came to the counter and wanted to buy a Big Mac burger. When I told her we didn't have those, she asked for a Whopper instead. I told her we didn't have those either, and she became angry at me and walked away. I work at KFC.

PLEASEFIREME.TUMBLR.COM

Not So Smooth Lines

I'm the only female on the sales side working at an exotic car dealership. Every single day, repeat every single day, I have at least one potential customer leaning on my desk and asking me if I come with the car. As if they are ever so smooth for coming up with that pick-up line.

PLEASEFIREME.TUMBLR.COM



IMPERFECT FIT FOR THE JOB

A job recruitment agent shares anecdotes about some of the most memorable candidates he has sent to firms for interviews.

● I referred the wrong candidate to the wrong company for an interview one time and the guy got hired.

● I had a candidate take his dog to the interview because he couldn't find anybody to 'babysit' his beloved pooch.

● I had a candidate fall asleep right in the middle of an interview with the employer.

● I had a candidate that accepted a job from one of my clients on Friday. He called me on Monday and said that he could not accept the position because he had a vision from God over the weekend that he was supposed to go to Brazil and become a missionary. He and his family did just that. They went to Brazil for a year, where they were missionaries. When he returned he called me to see if the company that offered him the job would still be interested in speaking with him.

TONY, KEVINSHERIDANLLC.COM



Rafiqenglishclinic.com



What You Need to Know About VAPING

There is growing evidence that smoking e-cigarettes could be the next health threat for people young and old

BY *Simon Hemelryk, Diane Godley
and Melanie Egan*

When Lucas Radcliff* first tried vaping around a year ago, it wasn't to help him stop smoking. The 19-year-old student from Sydney's north was initially attracted to e-cigarettes because they were the latest trend among the group of friends he made while overseas.

"I didn't smoke before," he told Reader's

READER'S DIGEST

Digest. "But I was taking a gap year in the US and it was just one of those things going around my friends. Everyone was saying that it was healthier than smoking so I started doing it."

He returned to Australia earlier this year. He also brought back a small number of e-cigarettes and introduced vaping to his friends. It quickly grew in popularity among them. Although it is illegal to buy, sell or use liquid nicotine in Australia without a prescription, Lucas has been able to buy it online from overseas vendors, as well as under-the-counter from unscrupulous shop owners.

VAPORISER NICOTINE

E-cigarettes, also known as vaporisers (vapes), pods and sticks, turn nicotine- and other chemical-filled liquids into inhalable vapour. They are promoted by some tobacco companies as an alternative to tobacco cigarettes.

Smokers who switch to vaping to try and kick the habit are advised to start with the same amount of nicotine and slowly reduce it until they stop vaping completely. The first thing is to work out how much you smoke and match it. General advice is if you're a pack-a-day smoker, then 1.8 per cent or 18 mg/ml (18 mg of



E-cigarettes turn nicotine and other liquids into inhalable vapour

nicotine per millilitre of fluid) e-liquid is a good start. Heavier smokers could start at 2.4 per cent.

Problem is, in Australia, unlike Nicotine Replacement Therapy (NRT) products, which are approved by the Therapeutic Goods Administration (TGA) for use to help quit smoking, no similar assessment of e-cigarettes has been conducted. So, the quality, safety and efficacy remain unknown, and therefore nicotine-filled e-cigarettes are illegal. However, in some special cases, a limited quantity of nicotine-containing e-cigarettes can be legally imported under the Personal Importation Scheme, but only to help quit smoking, and only if you have a valid prescription from an

Australian-registered medical practitioner. This is set to change early next year with people wishing to obtain vaporiser nicotine for use in an e-cigarette no longer able to personally import it. They would need a doctor's prescription and to have it dispensed by a pharmacist or medical outlet.

For smokers in Australia and New Zealand, who have switched to vaping to quit smoking, it typically costs around \$20 per week, compared with \$200 a week for one-pack-a-day smokers. The difference in cost is due to the hefty taxes on cigarettes, which are among the highest in the world.

But here's the thing – young people aren't buying e-cigarettes to wean themselves off smoking tobacco. Instead, they purchase colourful, pre-loaded disposable vapes that resemble USB sticks, come in a multitude of fruity flavours, and contain a nicotine strength of up to five per cent (50 mg/ml) – twice the amount recommended for a heavy smoker.

And despite being illegal to sell, possess or use in all states and territories in Australia, our research found that Australian youths as young as 14 were able to access vapes easily, cheaply and safely, via friends, from tobacco shops and online from overseas sellers. Sold in brightly coloured wrappers to match a flavour, each one is labelled: **WARNING: This product contains nicotine. Nicotine is an addictive chemical.**

“At around \$40 for a three pack of disposable vape pods, it's a cheap way to get a buzz,” Lucas told Reader's Digest. “The nicotine hit is immediate.” One pod provides up to 300 puffs, he adds, and usually lasts around three days.

At parties, the pods are normally shared so one pod may only last one night. “It feels really good,” he says. “And the fruity flavour doesn't stink up the room.” But, as Lucas freely admits, if you're vaping more often than just socially, it's very easy to get addicted.

SMOKING-LIKE EXPERIENCE

E-cigarettes contain e-liquid (aka 'e-juice' or 'vape juice'), which is a mixture of water, food grade flavouring, a choice of nicotine levels, including zero nicotine, and propylene glycol or vegetable glycerine. Inside, a tiny battery drives a heating element that changes the e-liquid into fine particles so that when puffed, the person inhales aerosol vapour instead of smoke.

The 'smoking-like' experience provides the same smoking rituals as tobacco cigarettes, such as the hand-to-mouth action, throat hit, inhaling and exhaling.

While in Australia that 'nicotine-like buzz' is illegal for recreational or unsupervised medicinal purposes, this is not the case everywhere. In some European countries,

the legal limit is capped at 20 mg/ml (20 mg of nicotine per ml of e-liquid) in e-cigarettes. In the US, New Zealand, and online stores, e-cigarettes containing up to 50 mg/ml can be legally sold, purchased and smoked.

With an estimated 40 million vapers globally, the vaping industry is projected to have an annual turnover of \$US18 billion by 2021, according to the McKell Institute, the Australian public policy think-tank.

However, in 2016, Australia's global market share was small, with the 2016 National Drug Strategy Household Survey revealing just 1.2% of Australians were e-cigarette users compared with 6.2% in the UK, 4.5% in the US, 2% in the EU and 1.5% in New Zealand.

AN INCREASE IN USE?

While older vapers are generally attracted to e-cigarettes as a way to help them quit tobacco, millions of young people across the globe are drawn to the disposable sticks or pods because of their convenience, fruity flavours, and claims that vaping is safer than cigarettes. What's not clear is whether this age group is aware that a 'stick' can contain the equivalent nicotine to a cigarette.

In most countries, it's illegal for people under 18 to buy e-cigarettes, but they are notoriously easy to purchase online. In the UK, the proportion of under 18s who had experimented with e-cigarettes nearly

doubled to 15.9 per cent between 2014 and 2018. In the US, it is estimated that five million young Americans, or one in four high school students, now vape. One survey found that kids whose first exposure to nicotine was a flavoured e-cigarette were more likely to become hooked than those whose first exposure was a cigarette.

In Australia, e-cigarette use is trending upwards, with the 2019 National Drug Strategy Household Survey reporting a rise across all age groups of people who had ever used e-cigarettes from 8.8 per cent in 2016 to 11.3 per cent in 2019. The highest increase was among young people aged 18-24: 26% had used an e-cigarette in their lifetime (up from 19.2% in 2016); and 64% of current smokers reported they had used an e-cigarette (up from 49% in 2016).

However, Associate Professor Coral Gartner, head of the Nicotine & Tobacco Regulatory Science Research Group at University of Queensland, cautions that these findings refer to 'lifetime' use – and a single puff of an e-cigarette would be included. What is more significant, in her opinion, are current users (in the last year). Among 18-24 year olds, current use has gone up from 2.8 to 5.3 per cent in three years.

Dr Gartner does not believe that these statistics point to an 'explosion' in vaping among young people, and rather the real problem remains the nicotine product that is causing the



The 'smoking-like' experience provides the same rituals as tobacco

greatest harm in Australia – tobacco cigarettes. “Cigarettes are still used by 2.9 million Australians who easily access them at retail outlets, despite being the leading preventable cause of disease burden.”

HEALTH EFFECTS

Lucas tried vaping because he was told it offered the pleasure of the smoking ritual without the harmful toxins – but the safe comparison claim that first made him drop his guard and try vaping is the focus of much debate among health officials and researchers around the world. So how harmless are e-cigarettes, really?

Many experts argue that because e-cigarettes have only been used

since 2006, it's difficult to be certain about their long-term health effects. “We don't have any evidence as to whether e-cigarettes are harmful in the long term,” says Professor Charlotta Pisinger, a Danish specialist in tobacco prevention and a leading figure at the European Respiratory Society (ERS).

“You can smoke from age 15 to 70 before the consequences are apparent. In animal studies [of vaping], we have seen airway inflammation and a scarring of the lungs and impairment of lung function, indicating

there may be development of COPD [chronic obstructive pulmonary disease]. Human experiments have shown acute airway obstruction. Studies have also shown an increased risk of myocardial infarction [heart attack],” says Professor Pisinger.

There may be other harmful compounds in e-cigarette solutions.

“E-cigarettes were shown to contain toxic and irritant chemicals within the e-liquid itself but also in the emissions generated by the devices,” says Dr Vera da Costa e Silva, head of the Convention Secretariat of the WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control. “With the currently available evidence, e-cigarettes are unlikely to be harmless.”

READER'S DIGEST

The first study to link e-cigarettes to respiratory illness was conducted by a team at the University of California, San Francisco, and published in December 2019. It involved 32,000 people over three years who did not have any reported pre-existing lung disease. The study revealed just how harmful these products can be: e-cigarette use significantly increased the risk of developing lung diseases such as asthma, bronchitis, emphysema or chronic obstructive pulmonary disease.

“What we found is that for e-cigarette users, the odds of developing lung disease increased by about a third,” says the study’s joint author, Dr Stanton Glantz, a professor of medicine and director of the UCSF Center for Tobacco Control Research and Education. “We concluded that e-cigarettes are harmful on their own, and the effects are independent of smoking conventional tobacco.”

CAN E-CIGARETTES HELP SMOKERS TO QUIT?

That would appear to leave only one potentially valid reason for using e-cigarettes: to help people quit tobacco. But, they may not be particularly helpful in aiding people to quit tobacco, either.

The ERS says measures such as plain packaging, marketing bans and higher taxes have been the main reasons why tobacco usage in markets across Europe has been reduced, just

as it has in Australia and New Zealand. “The claim that e-cigarettes are the best way to help people quit tobacco, such as heavy smokers or those who feel they can’t stop, is untrue,” says Professor Pisinger.

Not everyone agrees with her. New Zealand-based vape company, Gaia Organic E-liquids, which are nicotine-free, says despite the health risks, vaping can assist with reducing a person’s dependency on nicotine. “Vaping is 95 per cent safer than smoking and 99 per cent of my customers are ex-smokers,” says Gareth Evans, group general manager.

The company doesn’t promote vaping to non-smokers, and with the New Zealand government setting a mandate to have a ‘smoke-free’ country by 2025, the switch from tobacco to vaping in New Zealand may make a lot of sense.

Yet, a 2017 EU Commission Report found that of the close to 28,000 individuals surveyed, only 14 per cent of smokers or former smokers successfully quit after using e-cigarettes. And the ERS believes that vaping may discourage people from seeking more effective and safer ways to quit cigarettes.

STARTING YOUNG

Hannah Edgerton, a rehabilitation support worker, continues to smoke cigarettes despite taking up vaping to try to stop. “It’s helped me cut down a bit,” says the 20 year old. “But it

DOES VAPING LEAD TO SMOKING?

Studies have shown young people who vape are also more likely to smoke. However, the reasons are not clear. Dr Coral Gartner says there are two opposing hypotheses to explain this relationship. The first is the 'gateway' hypothesis, that vaping leads young people who wouldn't otherwise smoke, to take up smoking. "This could occur through developing nicotine dependence, if they have used a vaping product that contains nicotine, and developing familiarity with a smoking-like behaviour," she says. In this way, using a flavoured vaping

product could be a softer introduction to nicotine use.

The alternative reason is 'shared liability'. This suggests that young people who vape and then take up smoking later would have done so anyway because there are common risk factors, such as personality traits. It could also be a combination of these two explanations, with both the gateway effect and shared liability playing a role.

There is also a logic test – if vaping causes smoking then an increase in vaping prevalence should be followed by an increase in smoking prevalence.

In the country with the highest teen vaping rates, the US, teen smoking has continued to decline over the period that teen vaping has increased. "If there was a strong gateway effect," says Dr Gartner, "we would expect smoking to also be increasing."

doesn't give you the same hit as cigarettes and I still get through a pack or more every two weeks."

Countless numbers of people like Hannah continue to smoke tobacco cigarettes and use e-cigarettes – a double whammy to their health. More disturbing still, there is growing evidence that young people who

vape because it is 'harmless' start to crave nicotine and move on to cigarettes which may contain more. "It's been observed that e-cigarette use by minors at least doubles the chance they'll start smoking," says Dr da Costa e Silva.

The use of flavours in e-cigarettes appears to be designed to appeal to



young palates, too. A trawl of on-line retailers and vape shops reveals e-cigarettes and vapes with names such as 'Watermelon', 'Cheese Cake' and 'Lychee'. Some of these flavours contain nicotine. "Firms say you need these flavours to persuade adults to switch to e-cigs," says Professor Glantz. "I believe that's baloney."


Evans disagrees. He says the flavours in e-liquids help to trick the brain. Once smokers have tasted the sweet flavours of vapes, he argues, smoking cigarettes will taste awful and they won't want to go back to it.

GOVERNMENT MEASURES

Yet, despite all the warning signs, governments are playing catch up. Some countries and companies have already acted. Greece and Norway have outlawed all advertising of e-cigarettes. The WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control suggests taxing e-cigarettes so that they become difficult for minors to afford. South Korea and Belgium already tax them at the same level as tobacco. Late last year the

Apple Corporation announced that it was removing all apps related to e-cigarettes and vaping from its apps store.

Perhaps the most powerful thing governments can do is to severely restrict their availability. Globally, outright bans of e-cigarettes have been introduced in several countries. Singapore, Argentina, India, Brazil, Thailand, Hong Kong, the Philippines and Cambodia have all banned them. In Europe, Belgium recently banned online and cross-border sales, though such bans are notoriously hard to enforce. Australia is likely to close off the remaining loophole early next year – prohibiting personal importation via online purchasing or by carrying it into the country in luggage.

While the verdict on health risks is still out, the message, according to Professor Pisinger, appears simple enough: "The only way to assure that you are not at risk while the investigation continues is to consider refraining from use of all e-cigarette or vaping products." 



In Cold Storage

Halfway through eating a spring onion, my son decided he'd had enough and put the rest of it in the fridge for later, saying, "I'm just going to put this onion in ice-olation!" A sign of our times!

JENNIE GARDNER

Did anyone else in quarantine start to get a tan from the light in your refrigerator? MEME ON FACEBOOK

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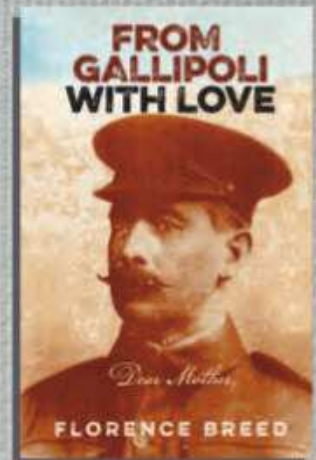
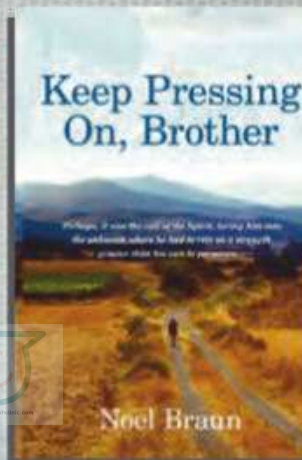
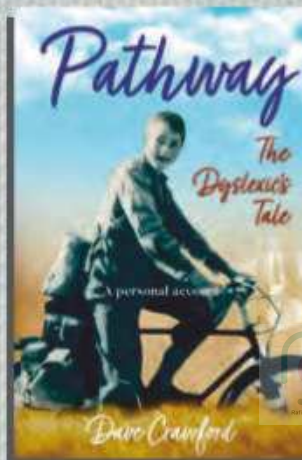
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RECENT TITLES...



Curtain CALL

Olly Mann recounts the joys of a well-packed theatre and wonders when the show will go on

ILLUSTRATION BY *Eva Bee*

THE FINAL performance of *Les Misérables* in 2020 – after an uninterrupted run of approximately 795 years – was on March 15. Producer Sir Cameron Mackintosh suspended performances of his blockbuster musicals in London’s West End until 2021 – because they can’t turn a profit while maintaining social distancing.

Which means, as it happens, that I caught it just before it closed. I went

on March 13, with my mate Josh, after it had emerged over dinner one night in a Korean restaurant, that he had never seen it.

“WHAT?!” I said, spitting kimchi everywhere (we weren’t wearing masks, it was March). “It’s a classic!”

Josh – who works for the civil service, watches current affairs programmes and thinks musicals are actively bad for you – replied sternly, “The Victor Hugo novel is a classic. I’ve read it. Isn’t the musical just a bit... naff?”



Les Misérables

SONDHEIM

CLOSED
UNTIL FURTHER NOTICE



A REBORN DREAM OF A PRO...



evanbee

Now, I've never read the book, and have no intention to, but I've seen the musical loads, and I was not going to let this go.

"Naff?," I retorted. "Only if you think joy is naff! Only if you think emotion is naff! Only if you think The French Revolution is naff!" It turns out the background to the story is actually the failed Paris Uprising of 1832, not the French Revolution 50 years earlier, but hey, you go to *Les Mis* for the wigs and the harpsichords, not for a history lesson, right?

Anyway, Josh and I went to see the show, just as London was beginning to lock down. It felt risky, if I'm honest, taking our seats among 1074 coughing tourists from every nation on Earth. But it certainly added a frisson to the melodrama on stage. As Valjean spluttered his final lines to Cosette's ghost (spoiler!), I must admit, I empathised somewhat more intensely than in pre-COVID times. I glanced to see if a tear had, perhaps, moistened Josh's face. It had not. But, still, during the obligatory standing ovation, he rose with the crowd. He'd thought the sung-through libretto was a bit silly, he told me in the bar afterwards. But the barricades had stirred him.

I have not, of course, been to the theatre since. Which is significant, because theatre is my thing. Ever since my wife and I first negotiated a childcare rota, Thursday evenings have been theatre night. I go to the



"It felt risky taking our seats among 1074 coughing tourists from every nation on Earth"

West End, my wife stays at home. She hates all theatre and finds it boring, so this works well. She gets to ride a horse on Mondays and Wednesdays. Sometimes I meet a friend – Sam for the contemporary drama, Ben for the jukebox musicals. Sometimes I go with my mum – if I can get a box, so she can stretch her legs.

Often, if I'm seeing something I know no one else will come to, such as weird Russian circus or an off-West End revival of *Aspects of Love*, I just go by myself.

And I never regret it. Even if the production is a bit below par. Even if I'm a bit tired. Even if I haven't had time to eat before and all I can find in

the interval is a dodgy egg sandwich from the corner shop. Even then. Because theatre is my thing. For two or three hours, I switch off my phone, get involved in someone else's story, and share an intimate experience with a roomful of strangers. It never fails to make me feel better. It's like therapy.

SO IT WAS A STRANGE SENSATION to realise that, almost certainly, I would not be visiting a theatre again this year. The productions I had tickets for offered me the opportunity to reschedule, so I rebooked them all for late in the year, on the basis that surely this whole 'virus thing' would be over.

Now that doesn't seem at all certain, and, even if those shows did re-open, I'm not convinced I would actually want to go. For the first time in my life, I might choose not to go to the theatre.

There are filmed productions, of course, available to stream on

television at home, but not only is this not really the same experience as watching the event live; for me it subverts the thing I love most about theatre, which is – however glitzy or epic the production – its temporality. Its smallness.

I'm a broadcaster, and if a radio show or podcast I was working on reached just 1000 listeners, I'd be furious. It wouldn't be worth making it. Yet, when I go to the theatre, an entire cast and crew of talented professional creatives work their socks off to entertain me and 1000 or so others (often far fewer, in fringe venues). Then, after all their exertions, the communal experience evaporates – except in the memories of those who were there. That is what makes it special. That is what makes it feel like a treat.

Roll on 2021.

Do you hear the people sing?



Cats on a Plane

Forget *Snakes on a Plane*. Passengers on board a trans-Atlantic flight in September were reportedly forced onto their hands and knees in search of two cats who decided to bust out of their pet carriers in first class and go rogue in economy. One was found curled up in a passenger's bag, which left one still on the loose. In a message on Twitter, one passenger wrote: "I am on my stomach searching for this cat," followed by "Wheels down. Cat still Missing in Action." The Twitter writer concluded: "The woman [presumably the owner] sat on the plane. Screaming. Where is my baby?!?"

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SKYSCRAPERS OF THE WORLD

Why make tall buildings? Because we can. From all around the globe, these structures are feats of engineering marvel

BY Tina Donvito

1 BURJ KHALIFA 828 metres

The Burj Khalifa in Dubai, United Arab Emirates, has held the title of tallest building in the world since 2010, when it was created as part of the shopping and entertainment district of Dubai. At 828 metres tall, the building also has the highest number of floors, at 163. The Burj Khalifa mainly houses a hotel and luxury residences, but visitors can visit several observation decks and a lounge at floor 154. It contains a total of 57 lifts and eight escalators. But the Burj Khalifa is set to be eclipsed as the tallest building in the world when the 1000-metre Jeddah Tower, currently under construction in Saudi Arabia, is completed in 2021.



2 SHANGHAI TOWER

632 metres

The tallest building in China and the second in the world, Shanghai Tower was opened in 2017. Along with Jin Mao Tower (23rd tallest) and Shanghai World Financial Centre (10th), the three buildings are the centrepiece of the city's financial district. One of the most populated cities on Earth, Shanghai may benefit from expanding upwards. At 632 metres and 128 floors, this 'vertical city' is a mix of offices, shopping, dining, a museum and 118th floor observatory.



3 MAKKAH ROYAL CLOCK TOWER

601 metres

The four clock faces of the Makkah Royal Clock Tower, lit by LED lights, are the largest and highest in the world. At 601 metres and 120 floors, this gorgeous clock tower looks like it's been there for ages, but it was only completed in 2012. The spire is capped with a shining mosaic gold crescent that weighs 35 metric tons. Located in the historic centre of the holy city of Makkah (Mecca), Saudi Arabia, near the Grand Mosque, the third-tallest building houses a hotel that caters to the many Muslims making pilgrimages to the city, with six smaller buildings surrounding it also offering accommodation.



4 PING AN FINANCIAL CENTRE

599.1 metres

The 599.1-metre, 115-storey office building is the focal point of the fast-growing Chinese city of Shenzhen. Named for Chinese insurance company Ping An and completed in 2017, the building easily connects with the city's metro and commercial and residential districts. In the building's podium, an amphitheatre-like space features retail and dining options. The observation deck at the top offers 360-degree views.



5 LOTTE WORLD TOWER

554.5 metres

The Lotte World Tower quite literally towers over the rest of the skyline of Seoul, South Korea. At 554.5 metres tall, it has more actual floors (123) than Ping An. The building, completed in 2017, serves many purposes: office space, luxury hotel, residences, and convention centre; next door are the popular amusement parks of Lotte World as well as the shopping and entertainment mall. Visitors can go up to the observation deck on floor 123.



6 ONE WORLD TRADE CENTER

541.3 metres

New York's One World Trade Center is both a monument to the Twin Towers, which were destroyed on September 11, 2001, and an assertion of the financial district's continued vitality. With 94 floors topped by a 124.3-metre spire, the office building opened in 2014 next to the 9/11 Memorial. Also called Freedom Tower, visitors can take in the 360-degree views from the observatory at the top, which also features exhibitions and restaurants.



7 GUANGZHOU CTF FINANCE CENTRE

530 metres

The tallest building in the ancient city of Guangzhou is the CTF Finance Centre. Guangzhou's economic prowess is on full display with its collection of skyscrapers, led by this building at 530 metres and 111 floors, completed in 2016. Encompassing a hotel, residences and offices, the building's observation deck has a spectacular view of the city and Canton Tower. The 604-metre Canton Tower doesn't make this list because it's solely a television and observation tower.



7 TIANJIN CTF FINANCE CENTRE

530 metres

Set in a development area of Tianjin, China, the 97-storey Tianjin CTF Finance Centre houses office space, 300 luxury serviced apartments and a five-star hotel. Its convex and concave surfaces, along with its tapered shape, help shed wind loads at such a massive height. Strong gusts of wind, reaching up to 160 kilometres per hour, can cause tall, thin buildings to sway. The glass façade 'skin' reinforces the curvature of the tower form and reflects the sky.



8 CITIC TOWER

527.7 metres

The curvature of the tallest building in Beijing was inspired by Chinese 'zun', a ritual wine vessel originating in the Chinese Bronze Age, thus its nickname, 'China Zun'. Completed in 2018, the office tower, which also boasts a luxury hotel,



PHOTOS: GETTY IMAGES

was built in the centre of the city's new 30-hectare central business district. At 527.7 metres and 109 floors, visitors can ride up in fast double-decker lifts to the observation deck at the top of this elegant addition to the Beijing skyline. There is also a rooftop garden on the top floor.



9 TAIPEI 101

508 metres

The Taipei 101 held the title of the tallest building in the world until knocked off the top, figuratively speaking, by the Burj Khalifa. Located in Taipei, Taiwan, in the Xinyi District, the 508-metre tiered building is shaped in the traditional 'pagoda' style and features heavily in New Year's celebrations. The 101-floor office building also holds a shopping mall, restaurants and an observatory on the 89th floor, where you can also head up to the outside area on the 91st floor.

How to measure buildings

Most official measurements, such as those by the Council on Tall Buildings and Urban Habitat (CTBUH), use architectural height, from the ground floor entrance to the top, including spires but not including antennae or flagpoles. Also, the number of floors may be different than the floors' actual numbers – some buildings skip unlucky numbers, or use letters, such as floor 42A as well as floor 42. Our list only includes buildings that were completed and opened by August 2020 – several new buildings are set to take their place when they open their doors in the near future.

DID YOU KNOW?

10 Surprising Innovations from World War I

BY Jacopo della Quercia



1 DAYLIGHT SAVING TIME

It was not until World War I that governments around the globe officially adopted daylight saving time. Why? To conserve resources such as fuel and extend the workday for the war effort. The Germans and Austro-Hungarians did it first, in 1916, and the Allies followed shortly after.

2 TRENCH COATS

While Charles Macintosh invented weatherproof outerwear about a century before World War I, Burberry and Aquascutum modernised the design and issued it in khaki to keep British officers warm and dry. The term *trench coat* was first used in an advertisement in 1916. Today, many trench coats come with flaps and rings that were originally created for securing pistols, map cases and even swords.

3 BLOOD BANKS

Up until World War I, transfusions were done by transferring blood directly from person to person, and they were rarely performed. Then Oswald Robertson, a US Army Reserve doctor consulting with the British army, recognised the need to stockpile blood before casualties occurred. In 1917, he helped establish the first blood bank on the Western Front.

ILLUSTRATION: SERGE BLOCH

4 HOLLYWOOD

With Europe in the line of fire, its film industry had to scale back. That opened the door for the Americans. Hollywood soon made fortunes producing wartime propaganda. The war itself provided material for many movies in the 1920s and '30s, including *Wings*, a 1927 silent film set during World War I; it won the first Best Picture Academy Award.

5 WRISTWATCHES

Timepieces known as wristlets were sold in the 19th century, but they weren't popular with men until World War I demonstrated their superiority to pocket watches in battle – particularly for military leaders coordinating precision attacks. By the war's end, an entire generation of young men either had a wristwatch or wanted one for Christmas.

6 SOY SAUSAGES

In 1918, in Cologne, Germany, Mayor Konrad Adenauer applied for a patent for his vegetarian sausage, a novel way of substituting meat with soy. Soy 'meat' products are now a multibillion-dollar industry.

7 PILATES

When World War I broke out, circus performer Joseph Hubertus Pilates was interned in Britain for being a German national. He used the time to perfect an exercise

routine he had developed that involved rigging springs to hospital beds. Today, millions of people do Pilates.

8 DISPOSABLE PADS

Made from wood pulp, the Kimberly-Clark company's 'cellucotton' became a staple in military hospitals as a more absorbent and less expensive alternative to cotton bandages. When the war ended, the company's executives learned that many nurses had used cellucotton as sanitary napkins, and an affordable new product was born.

9 PLASTIC SURGERY

World War I left thousands of men scarred. New Zealand-born army surgeon Harold Gillies and his colleagues performed more than 11,000 operations, mostly on soldiers with facial wounds from gunshots. He was knighted for his efforts and became known as the father of modern plastic surgery.

10 MODERN PASSPORTS

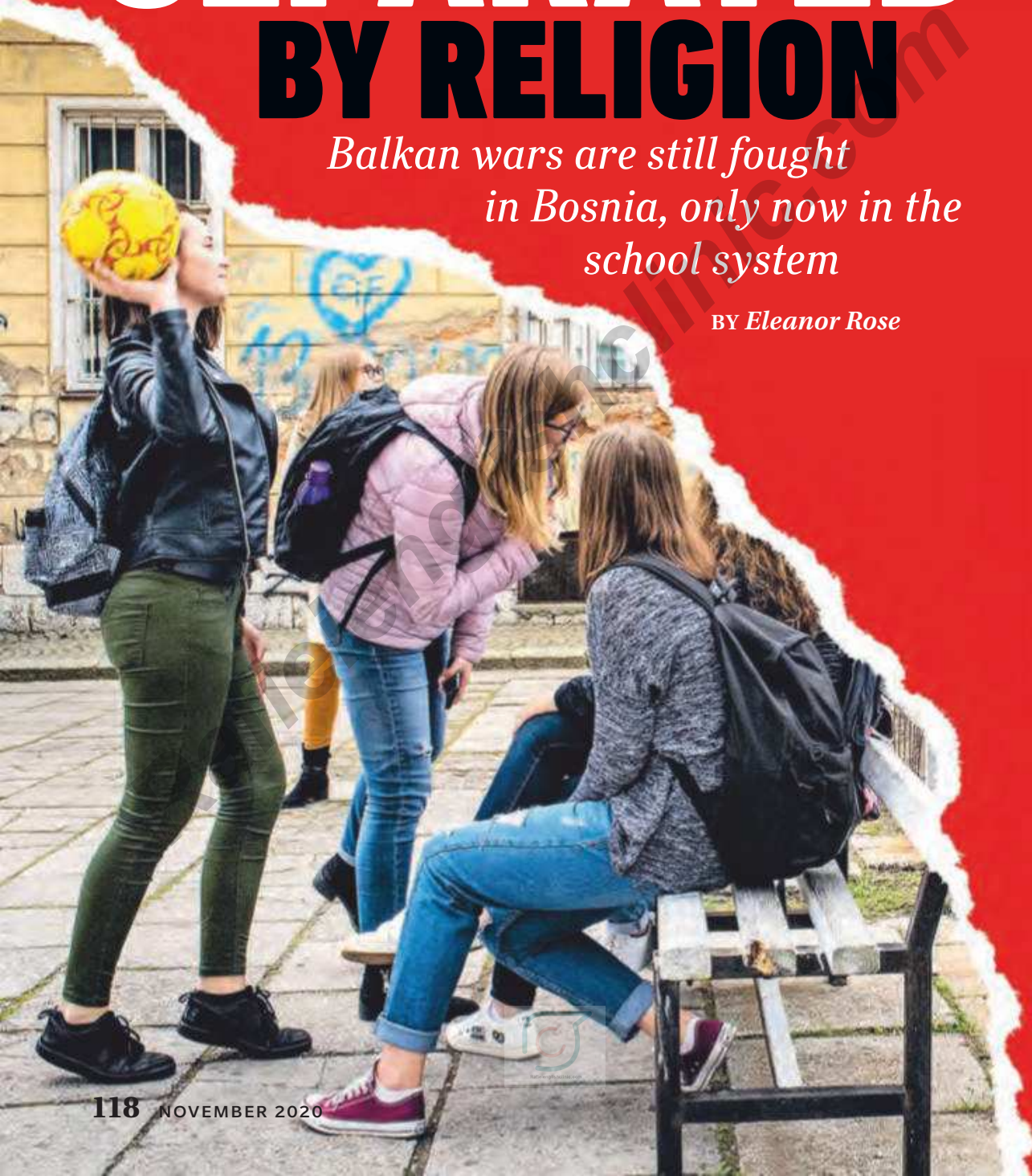
In hopes of restoring tourism in Europe, the League of Nations issued guidelines for uniform passports in 1920. The standard documents were to include a cover embossed with the issuing country's name and coat of arms – the same basic look they have today in most countries.

IN THE NEWS

SEPARATED BY RELIGION

*Balkan wars are still fought
in Bosnia, only now in the
school system*

BY Eleanor Rose





In the school in Travnik, children from Croatian Catholic families attend class in the right side of the building, while students on the left are predominantly Muslim

Awire fence divides a schoolyard in Travnik, in central Bosnia and Herzegovina. To the right is a clean blue facade, marked with pillars and a set of carved wooden doors. The brown wall to the left of the fence is pockmarked with shell holes from the 1990s war and splattered with graffiti.

This is where Elisabeth Hrgić and Inas Dagoja, both 25, went to school – Elisabeth to the well-maintained right of the fence, Inas to the crumbling left. She is a Bosnian Croat and a Catholic, he a Bosnian Muslim (Bosniak). They never met while they studied here; the school bells rang at different break times on either side, and they used separate entrances. It wasn't until they were 20, in 2014, that they met in a local night club and fell in love.

They took a photo here on their wedding day in June 2019, separated by the fence – Elisabeth in a white dress, pressing her hands against Inas through the gaps between the wires. She posted it on Facebook alongside a caption urging friends to “teach your children that they are all the same”. It went viral. Thousands of Bosnians shared it, and newspapers across the Balkans printed it.

“The fence was a mental border – they didn't tell us, ‘don't go over there’, but in our heads we didn't want to,” Elisabeth tells Reader's

Digest in the schoolyard a few days after the wedding.

Elisabeth's school, the private Catholic School Centre Petar Barbarić is attended by Croats. Theoretically, anyone can attend Inas's school, the public Mixed Secondary School Travnik, however in practice pupils are mostly Bosniaks. Officials say the fence in this schoolyard was built for security, but for many Bosnians it is a symbol of widespread segregation in education, not only in Travnik but across the country.

The nationwide debate sparked by the now-famous photo had less to do with the fence in Travnik, which separates a public school and a private school, than it does with a whole larger issue of a systematised segregation across government-run schools elsewhere in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Bosnia has three main ethno-religious groups – Croats (mostly Catholics), Bosniaks (Muslims) and Serbs (Orthodox). They were pitted against each other in the 1992-95 conflict in which 100,000 people were killed. Linguists consider the language spoken by the three groups largely similar, with some small differences. But after the war, the Dayton Accords – still the country's de facto constitution – only briefly mentioned education and the issue was largely left to the ministries of education in the country's ten cantons.

A system called “Two schools under one roof” was installed in some ethnically mixed parts of Bosnia, segregating schools as a short-term measure, with the help of the Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) – an international governmental body that helped restore peace in the country.

More than 20 years later, some of those schools have unified, but 56 are still running across 28 sites. Experts say they block ongoing reconciliation and are breeding grounds for the ethnic divisions that could threaten the peace. In 2001 the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development deemed the schools a “hostage to [the] latent nationalism” touted by Bosnia’s most powerful political parties, and in 2018 the OSCE publicly renewed its calls for leaders to “end the discriminatory and damaging practice... to ensure a stable and prosperous future.”

The type of partition varies. In some schools, pupils use different entrances and physical spaces within a building. In others, facilities are shared according to a timetable. Disagreements over time slots fuel feuds between families. At one school in Vitez, 16 kilometres from Travnik, Croat and



Elisabeth Hrgić went to school on the well-maintained right of the fence, and Inas Dagoja to the crumbling left

Muslim pupils shared an IT lab until a dispute broke out over equipment maintenance. It was solved when a second lab was built and the students were completely separated.

The ‘us and them’ mentality perpetuated by segregated schooling has a profound impact on children. Aleksandra Krstovic, national programme officer, education, with the OSCE Mission to Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH), explains: “Several studies have shown that the social distance, prejudice and stereotypes between the young people in BiH are significant, and that the level of trust, acceptance and understanding of ‘the other’ is very low.” An OSCE 2018 report says that children learn from segregation that “the differences between them are irreconcilable”.

Locals say divisions are most visible in taboos around inter-ethnic love. Elisabeth and Inas tread a difficult path; one Bosniak friend sparked a row at their wedding, complaining about a Croat song. And, when the couple's photograph went viral, they began to receive online abuse. "Your parents didn't teach you right," said one message on Facebook; others are too unpleasant to print. The pair know other mixed couples who've split because of the intolerance they faced.

The atmosphere is driving young people to emigrate, says Elma Salihagi, projects coordinator at an educational non-governmental organisation in the Bosnian town of Jajce, where several schools are split.

Bosnia's population has dwindled from 4.3 million in 1991, shortly before the war, to 3.3 million today. In 2018, 4474 people gave up Bosnian citizenship, 1385 of them 18 to 25 years old, according to officials quoted in media. "People say it's about unemployment, but it's not," Salihagi says, alluding to high joblessness statistics. "It's this system making people go – the mentality that everything should be divided in three – Bosniak, Croat, Serb. It's absurd," she adds.

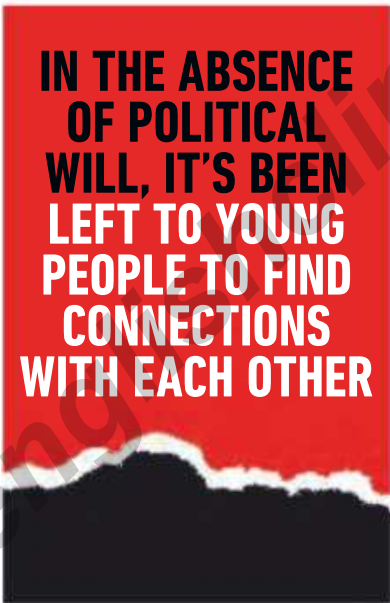
Politicians and local authorities have shown little interest in tackling segregation, even where divisions are stark. In Stolac and Čapljina, two towns in the southwestern municipality of Mostar, segregated primary schools simply ignored a 2014 Supreme Court ruling on a case brought by crusading legal aid group Vaša Prava to merge.

Meanwhile, in Mostar city itself, dubbed Bosnia's most divided, Croats and Bosniaks lead separate lives on either side of the River Neretva, which marked a front-line during the war. Most schools on the western side of the river cater only to Croats, and on the eastern side to Bosniaks.

That's why pro-unity campaigners were keen to integrate pupils in a rare Mostar facility

where Bosniak and Croat children were both present – the Mostar Gymnasium, a grand Austro-Hungarian school opened in 1902. It stands on the west bank of the river, at the crossroads between the two communities, and before the war it had a multi-ethnic intake. Afterwards, however, it began operating as 'two schools under one roof', segregating 650 pupils.

NGOs and the OSCE saw the



**IN THE ABSENCE
OF POLITICAL
WILL, IT'S BEEN
LEFT TO YOUNG
PEOPLE TO FIND
CONNECTIONS
WITH EACH OTHER**



Students from the Bosniak side attending a class in the school in Travnik

potential for a pioneering project that would bring Mostar's young people together. After intense lobbying by the international community and the promise of donor funds for refurbishment, the Bosniak and Croat schools legally joined in 2004. In 2009, the parents' councils unified, too.

But with scant support from local politicians, the experiment never quite took off. Today the only class Croats and Bosniaks take together is IT; and in 2014, the parents' council decided to split in two again. Croat and Bosniak students can interact during 15-minute breaks as they dash to the shop for a snack, but many don't. Fifteen-year-old Ajla*, explains: "we see each other in the hallways. We have acquaintances, not friends." To her, it's a missed opportunity for her to truly get to know more Croats.

In the absence of political will, it's been left to young people to find connections with each other. But it's not easy when the sense of difference is strong. Faris Čović, 19, arrived at a recent festival on the west side of Mostar to hear shouts from Croat football hooligans, calling him rude names "from the east". Impressively, it hasn't put him off.

As vice-president of the city's student council, Faris was in a meeting last year when a coordinator mentioned plans by politicians to name a new bridge over the river after a Croat army official. "You just knew that name would contribute to division and conflict," he explains. So the teenagers on the student council discussed it. "Why not call it the 'Student's Bridge'?" they asked.

They drafted a letter and joined

READER'S DIGEST

forces with other youth groups. Some 20,000 students signed a petition – and the city yielded. Today, the Student's Bridge joins Mostar's Croat university on the west bank to the Bosniak university to the east.

It's a small victory in a city mired in complex problems. But other stories, too, show how young people are driving change where officialdom has failed. Seventeen-year-old student Nikolas Rimac was in class in May 2016 at his mixed secondary vocational school in Jajce when his history teacher broke the news that Bosniaks and Croats from his and another secondary, called Nikola Šop, would soon be split. Although Nikolas had always attended mixed schools, he'd once visited a local segregated school where he saw pupils forced to use different toilets and hated the idea.

He gathered Croat and Bosniak classmates from the two schools. First they demanded meetings, but school authorities brushed them off. Then they wrote letters to the regional government, which also ignored them. Finally they began mounting street protests, carrying placards with slogans such as 'Segregation is a bad investment' and 'We are here to create the future not repeat the past'.

Local media and international diplomats lent support, but there was also



Nikolas Rimac led Croat and Bosniak classmates in street protests against the planned segregation of his school in Jajce

a backlash. The principal of Nikola Šop banned students from joining the protests. One girl's mother even lost her local government job after speaking on television about the issue, sending a ripple of fear among families. Many kids dropped out.

Then, in summer 2017, Nikolas had an idea. Teachers and students should simply down tools and walk out of classes. "You've nothing more to lose," he told teachers.

On the day of the planned strike, Nikolas watched as the vast majority of the school's teachers and pupils streamed out into the yard. Local media came to watch them all relaxing outside, sharing their food. "See? We're enjoying ourselves together," Nikolas told reporters.

One morning a few days later, Nikolas woke to a ping in his email inbox.

A local journalist had sent him a news story saying the regional government was dropping its school segregation plans. His heart swelled. “It felt like we’d banished everything bad in the world in a snap,” says Nikolas. “Bosnia is a place where everybody wants change, but nobody is willing to. So we were the change.”

More than 100 students took to the streets for one more protest, this time demanding the unification of segregated schools across the country. They wore masks so the students from Nikola Šop couldn’t be singled out. “It’s not the end,” says Nikolas, now 20 and attending university in Sarajevo.

He hopes students and teachers will use the networks they formed during the Jajce battle to continue their campaign. In November 2018, the OSCE awarded the protesters its Max van der Stoel Award for improving the conditions of national minorities.

It will be a long struggle. Because of Bosnia’s decentralised power-sharing government and complex legal system, there is no single catch-all approach to end ‘two schools under one roof’ or other forms of discrimination in schools,

according to the OSCE’s Krstovic. “The agreement reached, after student’s protests in Jajce, is specific, and each of these cases has to be addressed individually,” she adds.

While the OSCE works at a higher level to convince Bosnian leaders to find a solution, pressure from citizens themselves is the only strategy yielding shorter-term results.

Back in Travnik, kids on rollerblades and scooters mingle on a warm Friday evening on the town’s main bustling thoroughfare.

They are from both Croat and Bosniak families, Elisabeth Hrgić says, but from how they look and talk, you couldn’t tell.

Neither Elisabeth nor Inas know that a few days after they show the Reader’s Digest issue around their hometown, a yellow JCB bulldozer will arrive in their old schoolyard to tear down the fence that once kept them apart. Although the school director denies it, the Bosnians conclude it’s because of the viral photo.

Catholic school officials plan to replace the fence, but instead of bisecting the playground, the new barrier will surround the whole property – both schools together. **R**



Mansplaining

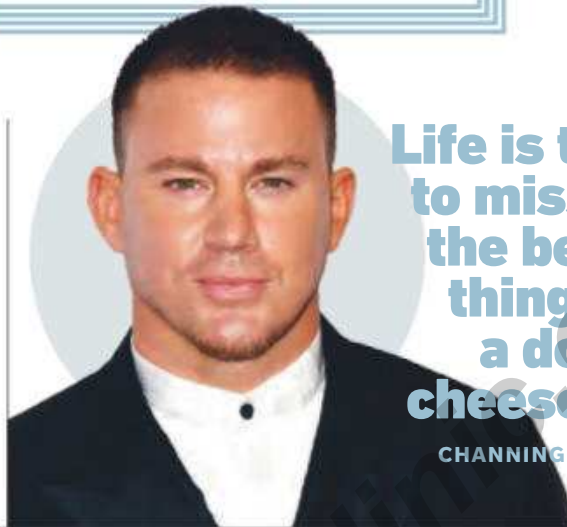
Thinking about the time that I said that I was distantly related to Marie Curie and a guy explained, “It’s pronounced Mariah Carey”.

EILEEN MARY O’CONNELL

QUOTABLE QUOTES

Books help kids to explore the world. They are the real ambassadors.

GENE LUEN YANG,
CARTOONIST



Life is too short to miss out on the beautiful things, like a double cheeseburger.

CHANNING TATUM, ACTOR

IF THINGS ARE GOING UNTOWARDLY ONE MONTH, THEY ARE SURE TO MEND THE NEXT.

JANE AUSTEN, AUTHOR

It is our attitude at the beginning of a difficult task which, more than anything else, will affect its successful outcome.

WILLIAM JAMES,
PSYCHOLOGIST



A kiss is a lovely trick designed by nature to stop speech when words become superfluous.

INGRID BERGMAN, ACTRESS



Growing up with an outhouse is a humbling experience. It's like bungee jumping – I'm glad I did it, but I don't want to do it again.

TREVOR NOAH, TV HOST

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BONUS READ

THE SEARCH FOR LIFE ON KANGAROO ISLAND

*Raging bushfires.
Devastated wildlife.
And the compassionate souls
who went to the rescue*

BY *Ceridwen Dovey*





**A lone koala clings
to a charred trunk
in a severely burned
plantation of
eucalyptus trees**



ARRIVED ON KANGAROO ISLAND in March, bracing myself for the sight of hectares of blackened trees and white ash, but I had not expected the parasitic bright green vines wrapped around almost every charred trunk, glowing phosphorescent in the sunlight. This was no parasite, I learned. It was epicormic growth, bursting directly from the burnt trunks themselves, a desperate bid for photosynthesis in the absence of a leaf canopy.

The growth looks nothing like a eucalyptus tree's normal adult leaves. It's soft and waxy, with rounded edges instead of long pointy tips, and it blooms from cracks in the trunks or right from the tree's base, rather than along the branches where leaves typically grow. It is beautiful, and also very strange, in keeping with the surreal phenomena that became almost commonplace over this past apocalyptic summer in Australia, even before the coronavirus pandemic further up-ended life as we know it.

A few weeks earlier, in Sydney, I'd watched red-brown rain fall to the ground after rain clouds collided with ash in a smoke-filled sky. During a recent downpour here

on Kangaroo Island, burnt blue gum trees foamed mysteriously, as if soap suds had been sprayed over them.

Even in less strange times, Kangaroo Island can feel like the edge of the Earth. Although it is located less than 16 kilometres off the southern coast of Australia, about 120 kilometres from Adelaide, it is a geographical Noah's Ark; its isolation from the mainland 10,000 years ago because of rising seas transformed it into an ecological haven. It is vast and rugged, with dramatic views of bush or sea- or cliff-scapes in every direction. National parks or protected wilderness areas make up a third of the island's 4400 square kilometres. Much of the rest of the island is farmland or privately-owned backcountry.

In recent years, the island has re-branded itself as a high-end tourist paradise, with unspoiled wilderness, farm-to-table produce, fresh oysters,





Dana Mitchell bottle-feeds an injured baby koala at the Kangaroo Island Wildlife Park, which has become a base for rescue and rehabilitation

and wine from local vineyards. But while there is luxury accommodation here and there, the island's few small settlements feel decidedly unglamorous, befitting laid-back regional and coastal towns.

The fires started here in December, after dry lightning strikes on the island's north coast and remote western bushland areas, and then jumped containment lines, ripping through the island in early January, with high winds and hot temperatures fuelling the front. Two people died and hundreds of properties were affected, many of them farms. Tens of thousands of stock animals were lost in the blaze.

While the bushfires all over Australia were horrific, burning more than an estimated 18.6 million hectares, people around the world focused on Kangaroo Island because of the relative scale of the fires. These consumed close to half the island, as well as bringing death and suffering to the island's abundant wildlife, including wallabies, kangaroos, possums and koalas. Wildlife experts worried that certain vulnerable species endemic to the island, such as the glossy black-cockatoo and a mouse-like marsupial known as the Kangaroo Island dunnart, might be lost forever.

In July, Flinders Chase National



The firestorms are estimated to have killed 45,000 of the island's koalas as well as destroying crucial elements of the ecosystem they need to survive

Park, the vast nature preserve encompassing the island's western edge, reopened certain sections to self-driving visitors, who are invited to 'share in the bushfire recovery journey'. Ninety-six per cent of the park was burnt in the fires and there were rumours that parts of this natural bushland, which depends on fire to propagate, might never fully regenerate, because the heat from the fires was so intense that the soil seed bank may have been destroyed.

Climate change researchers are warning that while fires in Australia are "natural", they're now so hot and frequent that even fire-adapted plants don't have the chance to

recover. Matt White, an ecologist at the Arthur Rylah Institute for Environmental Research in Victoria, told me the fires are almost certainly decreasing biodiversity, despite "the oft-repeated rhetoric about the resilience of Australian flora". Now the fires are long out, and the immediate danger has passed, but life on the island is very far from normal.

KANGAROO ISLAND was given its modern name by the British navigator Matthew Flinders, who sailed the HMS *Investigator* to its shores in March 1802. Flinders and his men were amazed to find kangaroos - a subspecies of

the mainland's western greys – that were so unused to humans that they “suffered themselves to be shot in the eyes”, Flinders recalled in his expedition notes, “and in some cases to be knocked on the head with sticks”. In gratitude for this meat after four months without fresh provisions, he named it Kangaroo Island (misspelling his own).

The recent fires killed as many as 40 per cent of the island's 60,000 or so kangaroos, yet worldwide attention has focused mostly on the fate of the koalas. At least 45,000 koalas, or some 75 per cent or more of the island's population, are thought to have died.

Koalas have always had the species advantage of being considered cute, cuddly Australian icons, but they are not native to Kangaroo Island. They were introduced only in the 1920s, in an early attempt at conservation; habitat loss and hunters trading in their fur had driven koalas on the mainland to near extinction.

Since then, the island had become overpopulated with koalas, which some people thought were in danger of eating themselves out of house and home. In fact, since the late 1990s a government-run koala sterilisation programme had tried to stem population growth, not only for the koala population's sake but also because

the animals wreak destruction on native vegetation.

In the wake of the fires, many wildlife advocates believe that preventing species extinction, or saving species that are endemic or unique to the island, should be the priority. Some of the island's farmers, meanwhile, feel that wildlife has unfairly consumed

all the attention when so many stock animals burned during the fires.

One islander confided to me that, while he felt bad for the farmers, stock animals are “replaceable”, and often covered by insurance, but wildlife is not.

“Australia is a global deforestation hotspot,” Suzanne Milthorpe, from the Wilderness Society Australia, told me. “We are ranked second in the world for biodiversity loss, and three unique animals have gone extinct in the last decade alone.”

All of this helped me understand, during my March visit, why legitimate, professional koala rescues on the island really do matter, and why the stakes feel so high for those who are skilled at and committed to this gruelling work.

AS SOON AS THE STORY began to circulate, during the fires, that the Kangaroo Island Wildlife Park, outside Parndana, had become the impromptu centre for

THE IMMEDIATE DANGER HAS PASSED, BUT LIFE ON THE ISLAND IS VERY FAR FROM NORMAL

the emergency treatment of burned wildlife, the place was inundated with journalists. The largely open-air park, already home to 600 or so animals, including snakes, wombats, cassowaries and an alligator, is owned by Dana and Sam Mitchell, a couple in their late 20s who moved to the island in 2013, after meeting while working at a wildlife park in Victoria. Journalists turned up even as the fires were burning, sleeping uninvited on the floor of the park's café, barging into the Mitchells' house at all hours.

This, to be fair, had some positive outcomes. An Australian TV channel, for instance, arranged for a popular home renovation show to build a wildlife hospital in the park, and the Mitchells have raised more than \$1.6 million through crowdfunding to pay for professional veterinary costs, new buildings for wildlife care, and an island-wide koala rescue and rehabilitation programme.

Yet it was overwhelming, too. Dana had to evacuate twice with their toddler, Connor, during the peak of the fires, while Sam stayed with staff and other family members to defend the property; with fires bearing down on them, the park and its animals were spared only after the wind changed direction.

Meanwhile, hundreds of injured

wild animals were brought to the park by Army personnel, the State Emergency Service and firefighters. As the roads reopened, many locals also began to arrive with injured wildlife, unsure where else to take them. Since the start of January, more than 600 koalas have been brought to the park, though not all have survived.

STAFF AND VOLUNTEERS SWIRLED IN AND OUT OF THE CLINIC FOR RESCUED JOEYS

Kangaroos with melted feet and koalas with melted paws had to be put out of their suffering. Orphaned baby koalas arrived with ears or noses burnt off. There were severely dehydrated older koalas with kidney disorders, and possums and wallabies blinded by the heat. "We were having to make it up on the spot," Sam told me. "We were just a small wildlife park. These animals weren't my responsibility, but nobody else was doing anything. The government wasn't giving any direction." In the first weeks, they operated a triage centre out of a tin shed, with no power.

Sam and Dana soldiered on and established an impressive setup for koala rescue, treatment, rehabilitation and release. Behind their house is a series of brand-new buildings and dozens of koala enclosures, tended to by vets and veterinary nurses from Australia Zoo, Zoos South Australia, and Savem, a veterinary equivalent of



The burns on the paws of koalas are usually caused by them coming into contact with burning trees or from fleeing across fire grounds

Doctors Without Borders, as well as trusted local volunteers.

Sam has a grim sense of humour to help deal with the trauma of the past months, but he and Dana are physically and emotionally exhausted, as is everybody I met on the island. I felt bad asking them to retell their experiences during the fires. Yet they did so, graciously, describing the warning of white ash hitting the park even before the smoke. Desperate for sleep after staying awake several nights, Sam eventually brought a blanket outside and laid it on the grass, setting his phone alarm to go off every 15 minutes. He was worried that if he slept inside he wouldn't see the fire coming.

IN SPITE OF THEIR FATIGUE, they welcomed me into the joey clinic. Dana was in the middle of individually bottle-feeding some 15 baby koalas while also caring for Connor. Staff and volunteers swirled in and out of the clinic, eating breakfast, getting medical supplies, asking about treatment plans. Dozens of rescued, slightly older joeys under 18 months old live in enclosures outside, since they no longer depend on milk, along with 30 older koalas; the number changes constantly as they recover enough to be released. Dana sat cradling a baby koala they'd named Maddie, feeding it a morning bottle of Wombaroo, a low-lactose formula.



Beneath the bark of many eucalypts are epicormic buds which lie dormant until the canopy is scorched by fire. These buds spurt into life to aid the recovery of the tree

Nearby sat Kirsten Latham, head keeper of Australia Zoo's koala programme, holding ten-month-old Duke, who was swaddled in a towel. Rescued in January with second-degree burns and missing several claws – crucial for tree-climbing – he had to be fed with a syringe before he started taking the bottle. “You have to really concentrate when you're feeding them, as they can aspirate the milk when they're young,” Kirsten said. “It helps to wrap them in a towel and keep a hand over their eyes, because when they're drinking from their mums they keep their heads tucked right into the pouch, where it's dark and quiet.” These feedings are done

three times a day, and it can take each person three hours to feed all the baby koalas during a mealtime.

In the clinic's kitchen, I found Kailas Wild and Freya Harvey, both fit and sunburned, studying a map of the island's plantations and bushland, planning their next koala rescues. Old friends and skilled climbers, they've been on the island for weeks, doing the dangerous work of climbing the tall, burnt blue gum trees to reach koalas perched at the very top, sometimes as high as 25 metres.

Kailas is an arborist and volunteer for the State Emergency Service in New South Wales, and Freya is currently based in New Zealand, but

they both dropped everything to go to Kangaroo Island as soon as they realised their tree-climbing skills could help save wildlife. It took them a little while to earn Sam's trust; his classic Australian suspicion of 'blow-ins' was compounded by having been let down by others who turned up offering help but haven't followed through. But now that they have it, the three of them have formed a close-knit team, coordinating koala rescues and treatment daily.

The ground rescue crew that Kailas and Freya have been working with is a local family of four: Lisa and Jared Karran and their children, Saskia and Utah. They live near Kingscote, where Jared is a police officer, and have spent almost every day since the fires out in the bush rescuing animals. At first, the ground was so hot it was smoking, and they had to wear special boots so the soles didn't melt. Now the risk is falling trees. They work up to 12 hours a day, the kids uncomplaining and involved, outfitted with gloves and hard hats, handling the koalas like pros, and accompanying Jared for long drives at the end of each day to release rehabilitated survivors into a distant unburned plantation. As of last count, they've helped rescue 143 koalas.

THE TEAM IS TRYING TO FIGURE OUT IF KOALAS IN THE WILD HAVE ENOUGH FOOD TO SURVIVE

Outside the clinic, in a nearby field, a helicopter lands after conducting an aerial survey using a thermal-imaging camera to locate koalas by detecting their body heat; this is one of several ways that Sam and the rescue team are now experimenting with technology to find where koalas are clustered and whether those habitats are burned or still viable.

The team is also trying to figure out if koalas remaining in the wild have enough food to survive. The fear is there will be a second wave of koala deaths, from starvation.

A newer member of the koala rescue team is Douglas Thron, an aerial cinematographer and wildlife rescuer from Oakland, California, who was brought to the island by Humane Society International. Douglas had been on the island since late February, using his drone - configured to carry an infrared camera and a 180x zoom lens and spotlight - to help the team identify where in the vast acreage of burnt blue gum plantations there were koalas needing rescue or resettlement. So far, he had spotted 110, of which 60 had been rescued.

Douglas, Kailas and Freya had spent most of the previous night in the bush, using the drone to do thermal imaging and closer spotlighting of the treetops in the darkness, when

it's easier to see the koalas' heat signatures. From the ground, Douglas used a video screen attached to the drone controls to identify ten koalas in a burnt eucalyptus plantation. It would be up to the ground rescue team to see what they could find by daylight.

“WE WERE CALLING IT POMPEII,” said Lisa Karran as we drove past a tragic tableau of carbonised Tamar wallabies huddled in a clearing beside rows of burnt blue gums. The hardest part, she said, was seeing the incinerated family groups together – baby koalas holding onto branches beside their mums, dead possums and kangaroos with their young beside them.

Standing amid rows of charred trunks, Utah, 13, was reading the koala pole – an extendable metal pole with a shredded feed bag attached to the end, which the climbers shake above the koala's head to scare it down the tree. Saskia, 15, held the crate at the base of the tree. Jared had spotted this particular koala – “because I'm koalified!” he joked – curled right at the top of a black trunk with no leaves.

In recent weeks, the group has rented a mechanised crane, which makes it easier to get to the tops of the trees. But there are still many rescues where

the koala is so high up that Freya or Kailas need to use the arborist's technique of throwing a weight and line to climb the burnt and brittle trees, and then shake the koala pole above the animal's head. Typically, a koala grunts or squeals and climbs down a trunk amazingly fast. After Lisa or Utah plucks it off the trunk at the bottom and places it in a crate, it becomes surprisingly docile, gazing up at its saviours.

Hours and hours passed like this in the hot plantations. It was gripping to watch. Each rescue had a unique emotional texture – a dramatic arc of growing tension as those on the ground waited for the climbers to encourage the koalas down, the adrenaline spike of grabbing the animals behind their

A FEMALE KOALA CLIMBED A TREE, THEN STARED BACK DOWN AT THE HUMANS FOR A LONG WHILE

strong necks and getting them into the crate, and the communal relief if they were found to be healthy.

During one rescue, a koala kept up a plaintive high-pitched wail but would not budge from its perch. Freya and Kailas both had to climb up in order to coax it down. Once on the ground the team knew this koala was seriously unwell: its paws were covered in fresh blood from the loss of several claws – a sign of previous burns or infections. Kailas, in particular, was devastated, and sobbed openly. They knew from experience what fate awaited this

The Search for Life on Kangaroo Island

koala. Later that night, after its condition was checked, it was euthanised.

The next day was Jared's last time doing rescues with his family. The next Monday, he'd be back at work as a police officer. "There'll be criminals robbing the bank, and I'll be gazing up into the trees, looking for koalas," he said wistfully.

AT DUSK, THE KARRANS drove out to one of the only plantations that didn't burn, called Kellendale. They had six healthy koalas in the back seat and boot of their SUV, rescued from plantations with no leaf cover for food. After the eerie silence of another long day spent in burnt plantations – not a single insect hum or bird song – it

was a joy to see a flash of pink from the belly of a galah cockatoo, and to hear the soft rustling of living eucalyptus leaves in the breeze. It felt like paradise.

Utah and Saskia released the koalas from their crates one by one, and the family laughed together as one of their feistiest rescues, a female koala, sprinted for a tree, climbed up, then stopped and stared back down at the humans for a good long while. Then she climbed higher, cosily wedged herself in the fork of a branch, and held on tight. **R**

This is an edited version of an article originally published in the June 2020 issue of The Smithsonian magazine.

Puzzle Answers

From pages
150-152

3-2-1 CONTACT

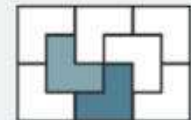
2	15	8	7
13	4	5	12
10	3	14	11
9	16	1	6

PLACE YOUR CHIPS

★	10	10	10	10
★	10	25	10	5
5	★	25	10	25
5	10	25	25	25
5	10	5	5	10

FILL IN THE BLOCK

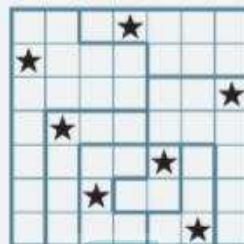
Six more.
One possible arrangement is shown.



SUDOKU

3	7	4	9	6	1	5	8	2
8	9	2	4	7	5	3	6	1
1	5	6	2	8	3	7	9	4
2	1	8	6	5	9	4	3	7
4	6	5	7	3	8	1	2	9
9	3	7	1	4	2	6	5	8
5	4	3	8	9	7	2	1	6
6	8	1	3	2	4	9	7	5
7	2	9	5	1	6	8	4	3

STAR SEARCH



A FRIENDLY NEIGHBOURHOOD

- Erikson orange  Basuri purple 
- Derringer yellow  Cruz blue 
- Astor green  Feng Brown 



'Your Opinion Counts'

How do you feel? What do you think?

What should the Government do? What do you need?

We want to hear from you. We'll even reward you for your opinions.

Roy Morgan Research was founded specifically to give a voice to Australians. For 80 years we've conducted public opinion surveys and published our findings so that politicians and other decision makers know how Australians truly feel about important issues.

There's never been a more important time for Australians' opinions to be heard.

Should masks be mandatory? Should all borders between Australian states now be opened or not? What about Jobkeeper? Are you watching more or less TV? How helpful have your service providers been? Roy Morgan is about to conduct a series of surveys that are the largest ever in Australia reflecting the thoughts & opinions on the issues that we now face. We are hoping that you will participate and tell us what you really think.

Rest assured, **your privacy is maintained because all the data is 'anonymised'**, meaning it is grouped together and not linked back to any individual participant.

To thank you for your contribution, **you will earn up to \$200*** this year in gift cards, an eftpos card or a donation to charity if you prefer.

Have you ever seen a story that said "*more than 60% of Australians use a music streaming service*" or "*more than 1.6 million Australians are using Tik Tok*" and wondered where they got that information? By sharing your views you can help ensure such findings accurately reflect what real Australians think and do.

This invitation includes everyone in your family - we'd like you all to be part of this important nationwide study. Your opinions count so make sure that they are heard.

To participate please text **'My Opinion Counts'** to **0455morgan** or **0455 667 426** or email **myopinioncounts@roymorgan.com**

If you would like more information on this study please visit www.roymorgan.com/myopinioncounts or call 1800 337 332.

Thank you

Michele Levine
CEO Roy Morgan



* For every full calendar month we receive data from your devices you will receive a \$10 E-Gift Card and then additional gift cards for further survey participation.

RD RECOMMENDS



Non
Fiction

One Hundred Summers, A Family History

Vanessa Branson BLOOMSBURY

As the sister of entrepreneur Richard Branson, Vanessa Branson could be forgiven for suffering, even a little, from the enormous shadow cast by her globally successful sibling. Quite the opposite, as she is an overachiever in her own right, having built her own entrepreneurial arts and philanthropic businesses. Her family memoir delves into the history of the Bransons, starting in 1918 to the present day. The characters within the family are very relatable, even with their brilliant and unique eccentricities. After reading this, you'll come to understand that both her and Richard's success had a lot to do with their unusual upbringing, and unorthodox parents, who shared an upbeat attitude that in life, basically anything is possible. Great reading for a lazy weekend.



COMPILED BY DIANE GODLEY

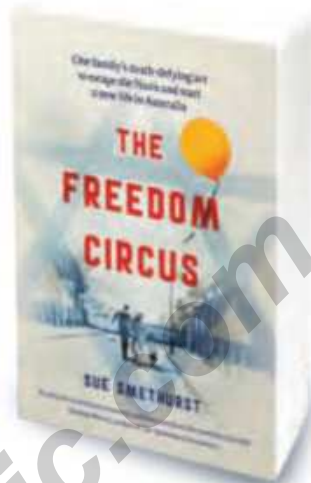
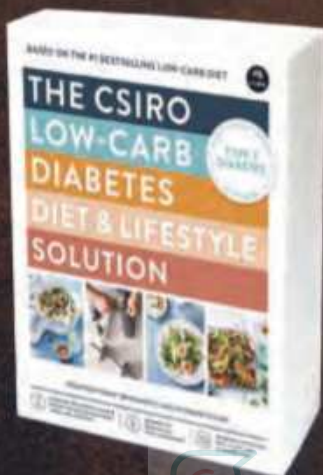


The CSIRO Low-Carb Diabetes Diet & Lifestyle Solution

Professor Grant Brinkworth
and Dr Pennie Taylor

PAN MACMILLAN

Is it possible to achieve permanent control of your weight to treat or, better still, avoid the onset of type 2 diabetes? With the reputation of previous diet strategies behind this latest diet book, the 80 new recipes spanning over 12 weeks of meal plans offer an easy-to-follow outline designed to achieve healthy weight loss and improved metabolic health and blood glucose control. Based on global findings as well as the original CSIRO research, the diet and lifestyle options offer a way to help prevent type 2 diabetes.



The Freedom Circus

Sue Smethurst

PENGUIN
RANDOMHOUSE

Always playful and immaculately groomed, in her youth Sue Smethurst's grandmother-in-law Mindla Horowitz was a circus performer. That was before World War II turned her life in Poland into an unrecognisable nightmare. Finally telling Sue the story of her wartime capture in Poland, internment in a Nazi camp in Russia, and eventual escape to Australia came without the trauma many Holocaust survivors fear. The process brought relief and composure to Mindla.

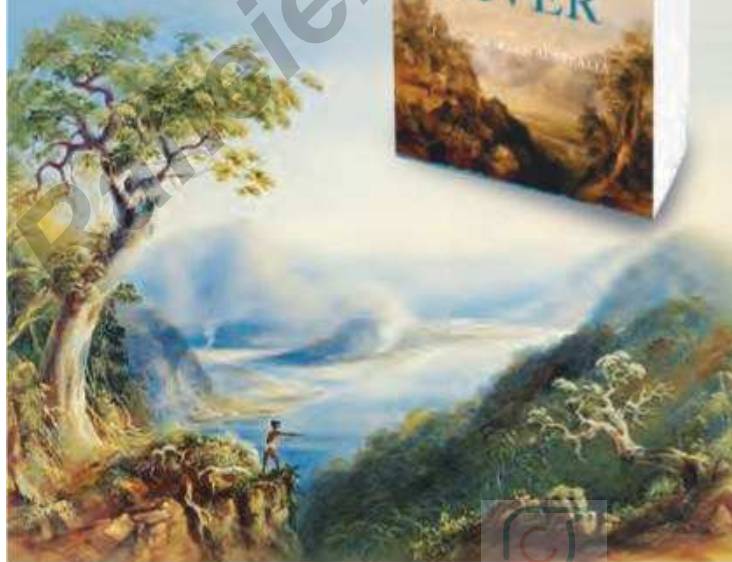
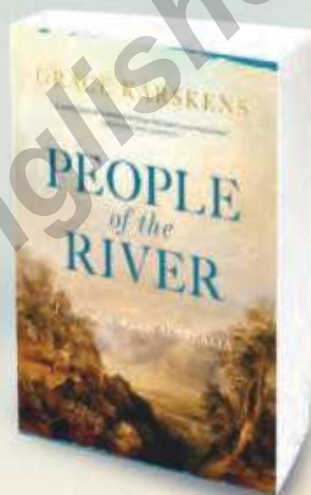
PHOTOS: GETTY IMAGES

People of the River

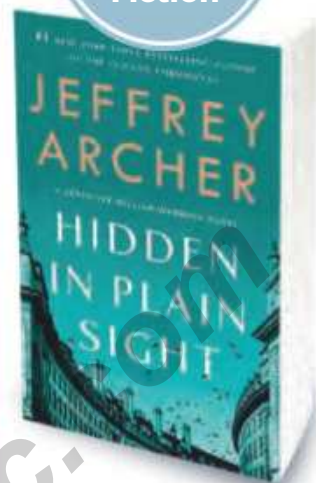
Grace Karskens

ALLEN & UNWIN

The Hawkesbury-Nepean River was known as *Dyarubbin* by the Aboriginal people who had relied on its bounty of fish and wild fowl for 50,000 years. In *People of the River*, Grace Karskens, author of *The Colony*, and professor of history at the University of New South Wales, casts her net over the mighty river where two cultures collide as the young colony settles the rich land from 1794. Illustrated with old etchings, maps and photographs, this 678-page book is an absolute must for anyone interested in Australia's colonial history. *M.Egan*



Fiction

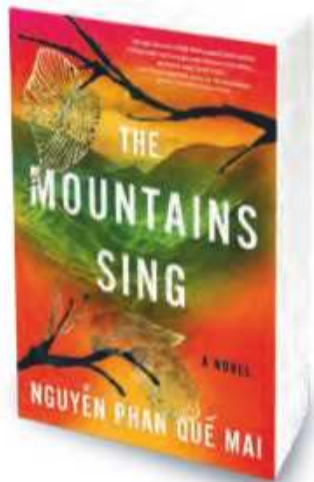


Hidden In Plain Sight

Jeffrey Archer

PAN MACMILLAN

The best-selling author returns with his second book featuring the rather stodgy Detective Sergeant William Warwick and his team, now reassigned to the Drugs Squad. They are soon hot on the trail of a notorious London drug dealer and his criminal network. Meanwhile, Warwick's wicked nemesis, financier Miles Faulkner, is once again making his life uncomfortable. Sprinkled with humour, there are some satisfying twists and turns, and Archer fans will enjoy this police procedural. *M.Egan*

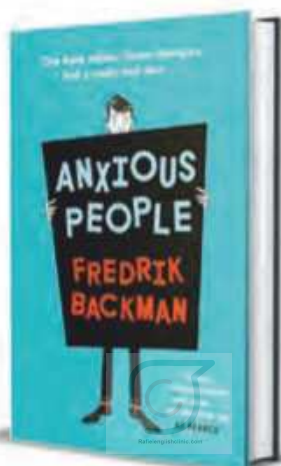


The Mountains Sing
Nguyen Phan Que Mai
 BLOOMSBURY

Inspired by her own family's story, Vietnamese poet Nguyen Phan Que Mai tells an epic tale of loss and love. Starting in Hanoi as American bombs drop over the city, Dieu Lan and her granddaughter's home is reduced to rubble. With the rest of the family dead, missing or fighting, the pair have to fend for themselves. Dieu Lan regales in harrowing detail a half-century of colonisation, foreign invasion and violent dispossession. A beautifully written book that will absorb you from the beginning.

Anxious People
Fredrik Backman
 PENGUIN

If you are looking for something light-hearted, then *Anxious People* will fit the bill. From the best-selling author of *A Man Called Ove*, Backman's latest novel is a touching and unpredictable comedy about a hostage situation that wasn't supposed to happen. After a bank robbery goes wrong, the thief flees and ends up in an apartment that is being viewed by potential buyers. But as time goes by and the anxious strangers reveal truths about their lives, they also begin to suspect that it's the hostage-taker who may be in need of rescuing.



The World's Worst Parents
David Walliams
 HARPER COLLINS

Many of you may know David Walliams from his *Little Britain* comedy, but he's also a name among young readers (ages 8-11). Continuing on from the successful *The World's Worst Children* series, it's now time to laugh along with quirky parents. With characters like Harriet Hurry, the mum who never sits still, and Monty Monopolize, the dad who takes over the Lego set, you're sure to identify with at least one of these mums and dads. If you don't, your kids will.



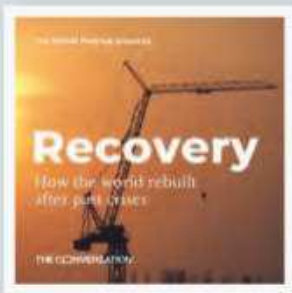
Podcasts

**A Sandpiper to Bring You Joy**

Six words – one for each year of the young girl’s life – soften a hardened heart. How an unlikely friendship made at the beach and words of harmony, courage and undemanding love connected two lives for a period, and why we should not lose focus of what is truly important.

**Billionaire Boys Club**

In 1980s Los Angeles, a group of wealthy young yuppies aim to get rich quickly running a lucrative Ponzi scheme. Led by charismatic Joe Hunt, the members of the ‘Billionaire Boys Club’ become involved in swindling, kidnapping and murder. Actor Timothy Olyphant and podcaster Tracy Pattin co-host.

**The Anthill: Recovery**

This six-part series looks back to times of major crises for humanity at large – such as the Black Death, the Spanish Flu and the Soviet collapse. A panel of academics discusses what we can learn from the rebuilding that followed, as we now try to sort ourselves out during the COVID-19 pandemic.

**An Old-Fashioned Girl**

by Louisa May Alcott

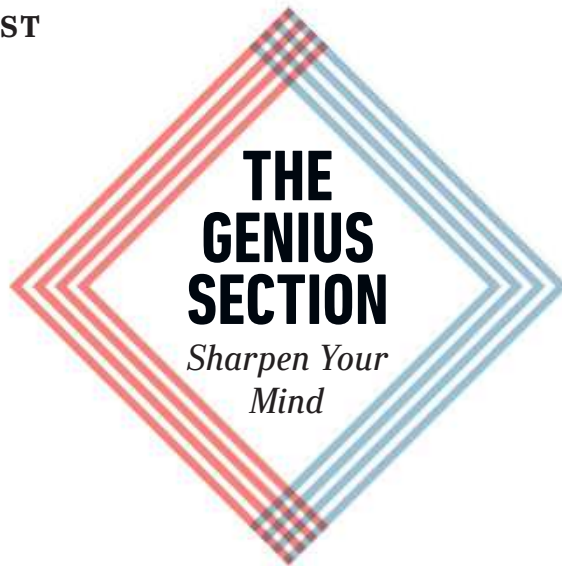
From the author of *Little Women* comes the delightful story of the somewhat preachy Polly Milton, a 14-year-old country girl who visits her friend Fanny Shaw and her wealthy family in the city.



HOW TO GET PODCASTS To listen on the web: Google the website for ‘Billionaire Boys Club’, for example, and click on the play button. **To download:** Download an app such as Podcatchers or iTunes on your phone or tablet and simply search by title.

TO LISTEN TO RD TALKS GO TO

www.readersdigest.com.au/podcasts and click on the play button.



IN PRAISE OF HITTING REPEAT

Surprising benefits of 'Been there, done that, love it'

BY Leah Fessler

ADAPTED FROM **THE NEW YORK TIMES**

Scrolling through social media feeds can quickly convince you that everyone's life is more interesting than yours. During a particularly adventurous week on Instagram some months ago, I saw waterskiing in Maui, hiking in Yosemite, and swimming with wild pigs in the Bahamas. Wild pigs!

Impulsively, I started googling flights to new places, imagining adventures. Then I ordered food from the place I eat at every week and ... felt bad about not trying somewhere new.

This fear of missing out, or FOMO, is rooted in a common tic: evolutionarily, we're disposed to find novel experiences more exciting



and attention-grabbing than repeat experiences, according to research in the *Journal of Experimental Biology*. That's our fight-or-flight psychology at work. Because our brains can't process all the stimuli around us, we evolved to pay attention to potentially dangerous new things more intently than to familiar things, which we've already established won't hurt us.

What's more, words such as *repetition* tend to be associated with more negative emotions than words like *novelty*, says Michael Norton, a professor at Harvard Business School.

"Classic research shows that when we think about upcoming experiences, we think about variety," says Norton. "If I ask you right now to select a yoghurt for each day next week, you'll pick your favourite flavour - say, blueberry - a few times, but you'll mix in some strawberry and peach. Because who wants to eat that much blueberry yoghurt? Over the longer term, though, as the original experience fades in time and memory, repetition can become more pleasurable."

He adds, "We're simply more boring than we'd like to admit." Yet, because few of us have the time or money to regularly indulge in new experiences, we feel bad about our lives' monotony.

**“THERE IS JOY
IN REPETITION
PARTLY BECAUSE
EVERY HUMAN
MIND WANDERS”**

Recent research about repeat and novel experiences in the *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* suggests that we ought to reconsider those negative feelings. Ed O'Brien, a professor of behavioural science at the University of Chicago, launched a series of studies on the topic. Many of us happily listen to our favourite song

on repeat, he notes, or rewatch favourite movies and TV shows.

"There's a general belief that if you want to seem like an interesting, cultured person, the best thing you can do is

to showcase that you're open to new experiences," he says. "That may be true, but I think we take for granted the other value of really digging deep into one domain."

To test this hypothesis, Professor O'Brien and his team exposed all participants to the same stimulus, including museum visits, movies and video games. Next, some people were asked to imagine repeating the experience, while others actually did repeat what they had done. The researchers found that across the board, participants said that repeating experiences was often far more enjoyable than they had predicted.

There is joy in repetition partly because every human mind wanders. Consequently, we miss a substantial part of every experience.

"As I'm enjoying a museum or a beer, my mind is also thinking about emails I need to send, phone calls I need to return, and the name of my third-grade teacher," Professor Norton says. "So repeating things can really be seen as another opportunity to actually experience something fully." This is especially true when the experience is complex, such as going to a museum or watching a movie, leaving ample room for continued discovery.

"Our studies show that people are too quick to assume that they've 'seen all the layers' even in those cases where they haven't," Professor O'Brien says.

It's safe to assume there are more explorable layers in any experience, according to Ellen Langer, a professor of psychology at Harvard University. That's because the process of looking for new insights is fulfilling in and of itself.

"When you're noticing new things in any experience, neurons are firing, and that's the way to become engaged," Professor Langer says. "All you need to do is approach whatever task is at hand by searching for the things that you didn't see in it the first time around."

If you're unsure about how to be more mindful in repeat experiences, she offers three tips. "First, recognise that everything is always changing, so

the second experience is never exactly the same as the first experience," she says. "Second, if you're looking for novelty, that's itself engaging, and that engagement feels good." And third, you must realise that events are neither positive nor negative.

"It's the way we understand events that makes them positive or negative," she says. "So that if we look for ways the experience is rewarding, exciting, interesting, we're going to find evidence for that. Seek and ye shall find."

"THE PROCESS OF LOOKING FOR NEW INSIGHTS IS FULFILLING"

Beyond helping us feel excited at the prospect of strolling around the neighbourhood rather than jet-setting to a tropical beach, Professor O'Brien's research suggests we should think twice about our cultural obsession with doing and accomplishing as much as humanly possible.

"Coffee will never taste as good as it does if you quit it for a month. So it's true that novelty is fun, but given enough of a break in between, repeat experiences regain that initial buzz," Professor Norton says. "This is why people do seemingly crazy things, like creating time capsules. If you looked at your third-grade report card every day, you'd get sick of it – but if you bury it in a time capsule and unearth it 20 years later, that's fascinating." **R**

THE NEW YORK TIMES (NOVEMBER 7, 2019),
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PUZZLES

Challenge yourself by solving these puzzles and mind stretchers, then check your answers on page 139.

BY *Marcel Danesi*

3-2-1 Contact **Difficult**

Enter the numbers from 1 to 16 into the grid (some of them have been given). No two numbers that share a common factor may be in horizontally or vertically adjacent boxes. For example, 4 and 6 can't be in adjacent boxes because they share a factor of 2. We're not counting 1 as a factor, so 1 may be adjacent to anything. Every pair of adjacent boxes that contain adjacent numbers (4 and 5, for example) is marked with a dot. With these rules, there's only one solution. Can you find it?

	15	•	
	•	•	
•	3		11
	16		6

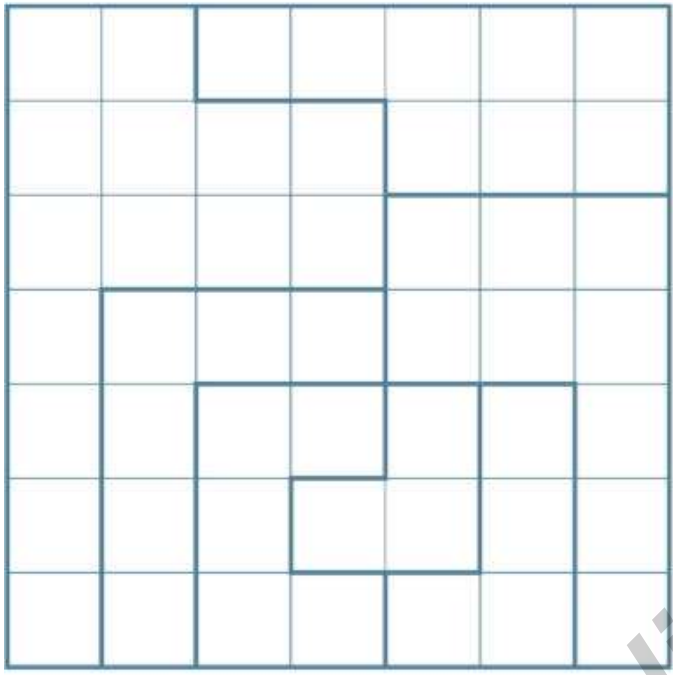
	10		10	40
				50
	★	25		65
				90
5			10	35
15	40	90	60	75

Place Your Chips **Easy**

You have a stack of poker chips that are each worth \$5, \$10 or \$25. You need to place them on the squares of this grid – but no more than one chip per square – so their value totals the amount of dollars shown for each row, column and long diagonal. Not every square needs to have a chip on it. Several chips and one blank space (designated by a star) have been placed to get you started. Can you finish the grid?

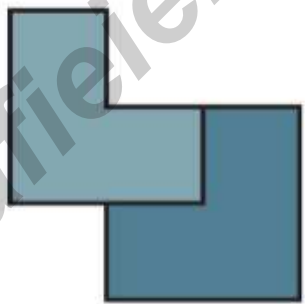


(PLACE YOUR CHIPS) FRASER SIMPSON; (FILL IN THE BLOCK; 3-2-1 CONTACT) DARREN RIGBY



Star Search Moderately Difficult

Place stars in seven cells of this grid so that every row, every column and every bolded, outlined region contains exactly one star. Stars must never be located in adjacent cells, not even diagonally. Can you find the solution?



Fill in the Block Moderately Difficult

Here are two identical shapes. How many more of them do you need to make the smallest possible rectangle with no holes in it? You can't move the two shapes already in place.



BRAIN POWER
brought to you by



ジュースアップ
Juice up

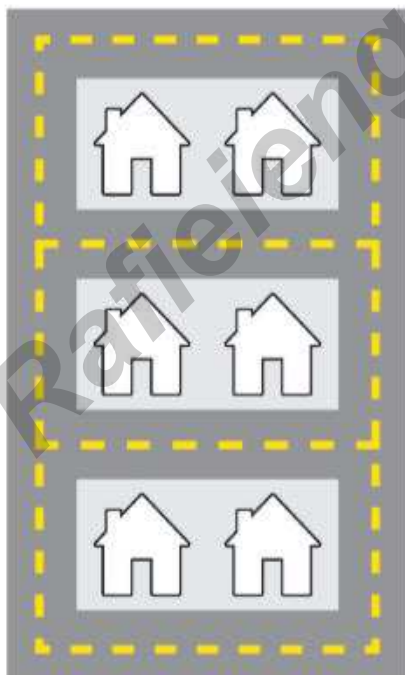


Puzzle Answers
PAGE 139

	7		9		1		8	
8								1
	5		2	8			9	
		8	6			4		
4								9
		7			2	6		
	4			9	7		1	
6								5
	2		5		6		4	

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.



A Friendly Neighbourhood
Moderately Difficult

Astor, Basuri, Cruz, Derringer, Erikson and Feng each live in one of the six houses in the neighbourhood shown. The houses are purple, brown, green, blue, yellow and orange. From the statements below, see if you can determine where each neighbour lives and what colour their house is.

Astor: I can walk to a brown house without crossing any streets.

Basuri: My house is northeast of a yellow one.

Cruz: There is a green house southwest of mine.

Derringer: I live directly between a green house and an orange house.

Feng: I can't see the purple house from mine because Cruz's house is directly in the way.

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TRIVIA

Test Your General Knowledge

- 1.** While her brothers were inventing the aeroplane, Katharine kept their bicycle shop afloat. What was their surname? **1 point**
- 2.** Which layer of the Earth, normally found between the crust and core, occasionally pushes up to the surface? **1 point**
- 3.** Which crack shot starred in Thomas Edison's 1894 short film, *The "Little Sure Shot of the Wild West": an Exhibition of Rifle Shooting at Glass Balls, etc.*? **2 points**
- 4.** What animal is the largest primate in the world? **1 point**
- 5.** What city's historic Imperial Hotel is on its *Ringstrasse* (ring road)? **2 points**
- 6.** Which country's flag used to include an orange stripe, for the House of Orange? **1 point**
- 7.** The title character in *The Life Aquatic With Steve Zissou* (2004) was



- 15.** In 1972, the International Tennis Federation authorised what TV-friendly colour for tennis balls? **1 point**

- likely modelled on what real French oceanographer? **2 points**
- 8.** What is someone who shoes horses called? **1 point**
- 9.** What famous British rock star revealed in January 2020 that he has Parkinson's? **2 points**
- 10.** Conch, helix, tragus and rook are all ways of piercing which body part? **1 point**
- 11.** How many sides does an octagon have? **1 point**
- 12.** Fujian, Taiwan and Guangdong are all known for what beverage, whose name means 'black dragon'? **1 point**
- 13.** The Cervantes Prize is awarded to people writing in what language? **1 point**
- 14.** Which snowy country has been experiencing a tourism boom because of the *Frozen* movies? **2 points**

16-20 Gold medal **11-15** Silver medal **6-10** Bronze medal **0-5** Wooden spoon

Answers: 1. Wright. 2. The mantle. 3. Annie Oakley. 4. Gorilla. 5. Vienna. 6. The Netherlands. 7. Jacques Cousteau. 8. Farrier. 9. Ozzy Osbourne. 10. The ear. 11. Eight. 12. Oolong tea. 13. Spanish. 14. Norway. 15. Yellow.

WORD POWER

Politically Correct

This month, we've chosen words often used by politicians in speeches or the written form. Stymied by this political vocabulary? Don't demand a recount of votes – just turn to the next page for answers.

BY *Emily Cox and Henry Rathvon*

- 1. independent** – A: online ballot.
B: politician who does not belong to a political party. C: new policy.
- 2. discernment** – A: secession.
B: lack of agreement. C: perception.
- 3. inviolate** – A: purplish in shade.
B: ravaged. C: pure.
- 4. propitious** – A: favourable.
B: mighty. C: patriotic.
- 5. recant** – A: take back.
B: narrate. C: pour out, as wine.
- 6. deficit** – A: traitor. B: when a government spends more money than it takes in. C: voting power.
- 7. maxim** – A: upper limit.
B: true saying. C: winter coat.
- 8. vicissitude** – A: shift of luck.
B: legal exception. C: check on power.
- 9. scrutiny** – A: examination.
B: uprising about taxes.
C: political mystery.
- 10. cabinet** – A: people who are entitled to vote. B: group of top government ministers. C: bronze ornament in parliament.
- 11. magnitude** – A: attractiveness.
B: ancient monarchy. C: great size.
- 12. compliance** – A: falsehood.
B: obedience. C: makeshift tool.
- 13. impunity** – A: devilishness.
B: oneness. C: freedom from harm.
- 14. upbraid** – A: criticise.
B: teach speaking skills.
C: improve living conditions.
- 15. reiterate** – A: paying back a political favour. B: say again.
C: flee from danger.

Answers

1. independent – (B) politician who does not belong to a political party. The independent was popular because of his powerful message about the environment.

2. discernment – (C) perception. Using her powers of discernment, Jen determined that the 'free trip' she'd won was a scam.

3. inviolate – (C) pure. Secured in a glass display case, the priceless painting was kept inviolate.

4. propitious – (A) favourable. The beautiful sunny weather made it propitious for going to the beach.

5. recant – (A) take back. Given the new evidence, will you recant your earlier statements?

6. deficit – (B) when a government spends more money than it takes in. The government wanted to raise taxes to decrease the budget deficit.

7. maxim – (B) true saying. My favourite maxim is 'Measure twice, cut once'.

8. vicissitude – (A) shift of luck. Farmers are especially vulnerable to the vicissitudes of Mother Nature.

9. scrutiny – (A) examination. I doubt your theories about the Loch Ness Monster will hold up to scrutiny.

10. cabinet – (B) group of top government ministers. The cabinet met weekly to discuss matters of state.

11. magnitude (C) great size. The sheer magnitude of the new soccer stadium is awe-inspiring.

12. compliance – (B) obedience. A few dog treats assures Fido's compliance.

13. impunity – (C) freedom from harm. Adam is the boss's son, so he's allowed to break the rules with impunity.

14. upbraid – (A) criticise. After his first novel was upbraided by reviewers, Melvin considered quitting writing altogether.

15. reiterate – (B) say again. "Let me reiterate what I stated last night: You are grounded!" Mary said.

VOCABULARY RATINGS

4-7: Fair

8-10: Good

11-15: Word Power Wizard

On your entire order! – Quote code **RM11S** when ordering

Only
\$2
Postage

Realistic 90 cm Santa Figure

An impressive 90 cm tall, this Santa is the ultimate Christmas decoration! His traditional costume is trimmed with faux fur and, with his long white beard, he looks just like the real thing.

Realistic Santa Figure • STSTU
\$99 or \$24.75 x 4 mths

So big and impressive!



90 cm tall!



Stands in one quick movement



Instant Christmas Tree includes lights, decorations and ribbons



Small size - perfect for a side table

Fold flat, so they are easy to store for next year!



180 cm

Pull-Up, Fully Decorated Christmas Trees

These Christmas trees appear as if by magic – you can simply pull them into shape! They stand an impressive 96 cm or 180 cm tall and are ready to enjoy, fully dressed with baubles, bows, holly leaves, snowflakes and bright LED lights. Then, when the festivities are over, you can fold them down and fit them into the carry bag.



Both store away in a carry bag

Collapsible Christmas Tree

Large (180 cm) • CXTRB \$149 or \$37.25 x 4 mths

Small (96 cm) • CXTS \$49 or \$24.50 x 2 mths

Shopping Trolley With Fold-Away Seat

- a comfy rest whenever you need one!

Tired out by shopping? You can fold a comfortable 29 x 25 cm seat out of this trolley and sit down anywhere, anytime! Designed to support up to 90 kilos, it's made from tough carbon steel and water-resistant polyester and measures 92H x 35W x 58D cm overall. The bag is roomy enough for a weekly shop, rolls along smoothly on large durable wheels and even folds down for easy storage.

Shopping Trolley With Seat • FLDST
\$49 or \$24.50 x 2 mths

Folds flat



Large durable wheels roll easily, even up and down stairs



Seat flips down for a comfortable place to rest



Big enough for your weekly shop

Slip into these very stylish trainers!



Easy to open zipper



Choose from 4 colours

Burgundy

Euro Sizes	36	37	38	39	40	41
Australian Fractional Sizes	5	6	7	8	9	10

Zip-On Trainers - so fashionable as well as practical

At first glance these look like very stylish regular trainers with smart, contrasting laces. In fact, they're much easier to put on and take off thanks to the long zip at one side. Both the upper and lining are leather and the insole has built-in arch support – though you can remove this to fit your own orthotic if you prefer. Supremely comfortable for walking or exercise, they're finished with a tough, rubber, slip-resistant sole. In 4 stylish colours Burgundy, Navy, Beige and Black.

Slip-On Zippered Trainer • SOZT
\$69 or \$23 x 3 mths



◀ **Santa At The Chimney**

Santa prepares for a Christmas delivery. Your Sequin kit includes design printed in full colour on a polyester banner, pre-sorted sequins and beads, dowel, decorative finials and instructions.

41 x 61 cm.

• **65048 \$32.95**

▶ **Stitch Garden Wallet & Notions**

This great value pack for stitchers includes a 28 x 33 cm project wallet with two quilted inner pockets, eight PVC plastic sleeves each with 15 compartments for storing thread bobbins, 50 assorted skeins of embroidery thread, horse head thread organiser, and a 15 cm embroidery hoop.

• **65084 \$49.95 or \$24.98 x 2 months**



Only \$2 Postage on your entire order! Quote code RM11S when ordering

Wrap-Around Vibration Massager

- soothing relief just where you need it

Tight muscles in your back? Tense neck or shoulders? Now you can target soothing relief wherever you need it most. Generously padded for comfort, this 25L x 12W x 5D cm vibrating massager has straps that adjust from 90 - 130 cm to hold it securely in place just about anywhere on your body. It's powered by 2 AA batteries (not supplied) and you can choose from two vibration speeds. Note: Not suitable for people with pacemakers.

Wrap Style Vibration Massager • WVBRM \$24.95



*Perfect for
shoulders*

**2 Vibration
Speeds**

*Adjustable
straps*



Neck



Lower back

Lightweight Floor And Carpet Sweeper

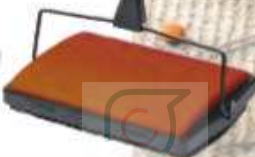
- effective and easy to use

*Super light.
Super effective!*

This lightweight sweeper makes quick work of dust, dirt and pet hair on carpet as well as things a vacuum cleaner hates such as paperclips, screws and even pens! It's also perfect for kitchen crumbs and scraps on hard floors. Each time you push it forwards or backwards the extra-wide bristles get to work, and it's easy to empty directly into the bin. It measures 27.5 x 20 cm with a 94 cm handle and could even help you save on electricity! Minor assembly required.

**Lightweight Sweeper • LTSWP
\$49 or \$24.50 x 2 mths**

*Roller brush cleaning
tool included*



*No power
needed
- so simple
to use!*





Mobile 3-Tiered Clothes Airer - 15 metres of hanging space!

You'll be amazed how much you can hang on this compact clothes rack. It packs the equivalent of a 15-metre line into just 78 x 64 cm of floorspace and even has notched arms for hangers. 170 cm tall, the hanging racks fold down for easy storage. You can wheel it easily from the laundry to the balcony or garden so it's perfect for drying, airing or hanging freshly-ironed clothes. Home assembly required.

Folds neatly for easy storage

3-Tier Clothes Airer
• TCLTR \$79 or
\$19.75 x 4 mths

Only \$2 Postage! - Quote code RM11S when ordering

\$2
Postage
on your entire
order!

▼ Plus Size Knits

It doesn't have to be a challenge to find well-constructed knitting patterns for your body type anymore! Includes 25 stylish and sophisticated patterns from sweaters and cosy cardigans to fuzzy ponchos, soft shawls, infinity scarves and much more. 128-page pattern book.



• 63996 \$34.95

Christmas Towels ▶

Delight your guests this Christmas with festive hand towels. Your Counted Cross Stitch kit includes two white cotton towels with 16-count Aida band, DMC cotton thread, needle, chart and instructions. Two towels, each 30 x 50 cm.



• 65127 \$49.95 each set or \$24.98 x 2 months

Soft and roomy cotton nightie



Flattering ruffled detailing on yoke

Pretty Cotton Nightie

- cool comfort for summer!

You're sure to love the comfort of this flattering nightie. The pure cotton fabric is soft, breathable and absorbent and the classic design means there are no lumps or bumps to irritate when you're lying down. Even the three-quarter sleeves are hemmed rather than elasticated so they won't cut into your skin. Available in S, M, L, XL.

Comfortable Nightgown

• CNITY \$59 or \$29.50 x 2 mths

Easy Manual Washing Machine - just turn the handle!

Now you can wash, rinse and spin up to 4 kilos of laundry in minutes without electricity. Simply attach the handle to this amazing machine and turn! It stands securely on a non-slip base, is easy to empty and fill and, at just 60H x 39W x 39D cm and under 5 kilos, easy to carry. A must when you're camping, it's also ideal for a tiny apartment, washing delicates or saving money on small loads.

Mini Washing Machine

• SWAM \$119 or \$29.75 x 4 mths

GREAT FEATURES

- Simple to use
- Requires no electricity
- Efficient wash, rinse and spin



Secure base, compact design



Washes up to 4 kg of clothing

Perfect for small, delicate items



Spins both clock and anti-clockwise

Uses no power - so easy to wash!

Walk comfortably all day!

Eye-catching floral detail perfect for day or evening

Pretty, Pearly Sandals - such glamorous comfort!

With their pearly gleam and eye-catching floral decoration, these lovely sandals will take you from morning tea to evening cocktails. They're also comfortable enough to wear all day. The insole is padded and moulded to provide a gentle massaging effect as you walk and the PU upper has a strap with a touch fastener which adjusts for a perfect fit. The hard-wearing sole and flattering 3 cm heel are also designed to provide a secure grip.

Comfortable 3 cm heel height

Euro Sizes	36	37	38	39	40	41
Australian Fractional Sizes	5	6	7	8	9	10

Gabbeni

Lucy Sandals • LUCA
\$29.95

\$2
Postage on your entire order!

Only \$2 Postage! - Quote code RM11S when ordering



◀ Waiting For My Turn Puzzle

1000-piece jigsaw puzzle.
69 x 49 cm.
• 64441
\$34.95



The Astrologer Owl Crystal Art ▶

A colourful diamond mosaic project complete with the canvas stretched onto an art frame. Your Crystal Art kit includes colour-printed fabric with an adhesive finish, acrylic facets sorted by colour, tool, wax and tray. 40 x 50 cm.

• 65108 \$84.00 or \$21.00 x 4 months



Low-Impact Resistance Exerciser

- stretch, strengthen, sculpt and tone

From Pilates and Yoga to strength training, this versatile kit makes it easy to work out anywhere, any time. 93 cm long, the bar has a strong steel core generously padded with foam for comfort. It also separates into two sections for easy transport and storage. The loops are slip resistant and the rubber straps adjust so you can choose how hard you work out. *Mat not included.*

Pilates Resistance Bar Exerciser

• PLATS \$59 or
\$29.50 x
2 mths

Exercise in
the comfort
of your own
home

Resistance
bands to help
tone legs,
thighs and
arms

PERFECT FOR:

Pilates, Yoga, stretching, resistance band exercise, low impact toning



Easy Yoghurt Maker Set - fresh, healthy, delicious, saves money, too!

You'll be amazed how easy it is to make plain yoghurt just the way you like it. Simply mix milk with a little store-bought natural yoghurt or starter, pour it into the glass jars and pop them into this 23 cm diameter yoghurt maker. Set the timer and, when complete, pop them into the fridge to finish setting. Eat it plain straight from the jar, or add your favourite flavourings, fruit or cereal, or use it in savoury recipes. Delicious!

Yoghurt Maker Set • YOGHT
\$59 or \$29.50 x 2 mths

Easily make
plain yoghurt,
then add your
own topping



Delicious
homemade
yoghurt! Simply
top the plain
yoghurt with
fruit, honey,
nuts or cereal

7 glass containers for
making individual
servings of yoghurt



Reversed Arms Figurine Set - the ultimate mark of respect

For centuries, soldiers have leaned on a weapon held upside down as a mark of respect or mourning. This finely-detailed

figurine captures both the pose and the depth of its meaning. Cold cast bronze and standing 20 cm tall, it fits into an acrylic display stand with an 18 x 18 cm frame to display 3D objects such as medals and mementos. You can create your own unique way of showing you'll never forget. Medals not included.

Resting at Reverse Arms & 3D Frame Set

• RAFS \$99 or
\$24.75 x 4 mths

Stand 3D Frame

Figurine

Figurine fits perfectly
with the acrylic frame

3D FRAME
TO DISPLAY
A PRECIOUS
PHOTO OR
MEDALS

3 piece set includes:

- Figurine • Stand
- 3D Frame

\$2

Postage
on your entire
order!

Only \$2 Postage! - Quote code RM11S when ordering



André Rieu - Christmas Collection

Christmas Around The World

DVD: • *Star Of Bethlehem*
• *The Angel* • *Tulip Song* • *Deck
The Halls With Boughs Of Holly*
• *Slumber My Darling* • *We*

Wish You A Merry Christmas • *Gesù Bambino*
• *Winter Wonderland* • *Hallelujah*, and more!

The Christmas I Love DVD: • *Angels We Have
Heard On High* • *O Christmas Tree* • *The Little
Drummer Boy* • *Jingle Bells* • *Ave Maria*

• *Christmas Rose* • *Winter (Largo
from The Four Seasons)* • *Let Us
Be Happy And Jolly* • *White
Christmas* • *Evening Prayer
(from Hänsel & Gretel)*

• *O Come All Ye Faithful*
• *Silent Night* • and more!

2 DVDs, 50 Tracks.

MANDRO • \$29.95



Rich Man, Poor Man - The Complete Collection

9
DVDs

A multi-award winning mini-series based on Irwin Shaw's best-selling novel. Follow Rudy Jordache and his troubled brother Tom as they navigate divergent paths away from their impoverished immigrant upbringing. While ambitious Rudy seems destined for success, Tom suffers from an endless string of bad luck but in the end, finds love.

Includes Book I and II.

9 DVDs, 26 hrs.

MRMR • \$79 or
\$19.75 x 4 mths



Photo Storage Box - safely store your treasured family memories

Keep your favourite photos at your fingertips. This quality polypropylene storage box provides a protective environment - keeping them safe from dust, insects or damage. Each of the six clip-lock cases holds up to 100 15 x 10 cm prints - all fitting neatly in a 14H x 19W x 22D cm outer case. That's up to 600 prints in total and it's much more compact than conventional photo albums.



Also perfect for sorting craft items



Protect and store your precious memories

Photo Storage Box

• PHTOS
\$29.95

SAVE \$10
Buy two for \$49.90
or \$24.95 x 2 mths

Stores 600
15x10 cm
photos

Foam Leg-Raising Cushion

- lift, relax, comfort and support

Raising your legs can help you relax at the end of the day. It may also reduce pressure on your lower back so you can sleep or lie in bed more comfortably. This 15H x 45W x 59L cm cushion has been designed to provide gentle support for your calves and heels with an ergonomic shape and a layer of memory foam over a firm foam core. It's finished with a zip-off washable polyester cover.

Ergonomic shape



Washable cover

Foam Leg Raiser Cushion • CLEGR \$59 or \$29.50 x 2 mths



Suitable on a bed or flat surface for extra comfort and support

Keep Your Plants Moist And Healthy - no dried-out plants while you're away!

Do you worry your plants will dry out while you're away? Here's an easy way to keep them moist and healthy! Simply fill these glass globes with water and push the stems into the soil so the roots can absorb the moisture they need. 24 or 25 cm tall and supplied in a set of four, the cute bird, mushroom, snail and owl designs will also add a decorative touch to your indoor or outdoor pots.

Decorative Watering Globes
 • DPGBS \$24.95 The Set



Set of 2

Stops plants from being over or under watered

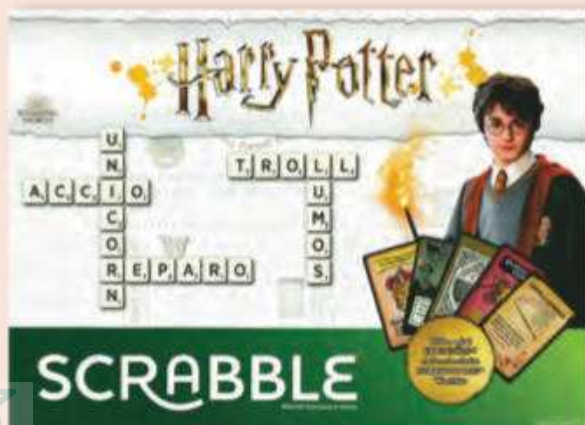
\$2
Postage
 on your entire order!

Only \$2 Postage! - Quote code RM11S when ordering

Harry Potter Scrabble

With this special edition, Scrabble™ celebrates the unique vocabulary from the world of Harry Potter. Just like the original, this game comes with a board, four racks, and instructions. It also includes a special glossary for players to find wizarding words they can play with their scrabble tiles.

• 64487 \$42.95 or \$21.48 x 2 months



Adjustable Orthotic Footbed Sandals

- so easy to wear!

As easy to wear as thongs, these sandals are designed to be much more comfortable. Slip them on and you'll love the feel of the shaped, orthotic sole and the security of the broad instep strap, which you can adjust for the perfect fit. They're also made from soft, fully-lined microfibre finished with a slip-resistant rubber sole. You even have two fashionable colours to choose from – Red or Navy.

Women's Orthotic Footbed Thongs

• OTAT \$59 each or \$29.50 x 2 mths



- Arch Support
- Contoured Heel
- Rubber Sole for extra grip



Just in time for Summer

Euro Sizes	37	38	39	40	41
Australian Fractional Sizes	6	7	8	9	10

Reversible Patio Mat - Heavy Duty & Weatherproof



Perfect for camping, picnics, beaches or parks

Large Mat
- 2.74 x 3.66 m

Reversible!



Small Mat
- 2.74 x 1.82 m



Folds flat

This attractive outdoor mat will brighten up your patio as it protects your decking or tiles. Made from tough woven polypropylene in striking blue and white, it's weather-resistant, reversible, lightweight and easy to carry. You can use the corner ties to anchor it and, afterwards, simply hose it clean. Perfect for picnics, camping or for outside your caravan. Choose small or large.

Shell Reversible Patio Mat

• RPMS Small (274 x 182 cm)
\$49 or \$24.50 x 2 mths

• RPMS Large (274 x 366 cm)
\$79 or \$19.75 x 4 mths

Snoring? Tired? Or Carrying extra Kgs?

You might have Sleep Apnea which can be serious...



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BULK BILLED SLEEP STUDY

ask us how

Other CPAP suppliers may have closed their doors but
we are still open and here for you



MASSIVE SAVINGS

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Free after sales support
No hidden fees



All clinicians are standing by via phone and video chat
to help all sleep apnea sufferers with support and sales

CPAP DIRECT

Sleep Apnea Specialists

Yes we are open and now have free home delivery
or touchless in store collection options for your safety.

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