

Reader's digest



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Reader's digest

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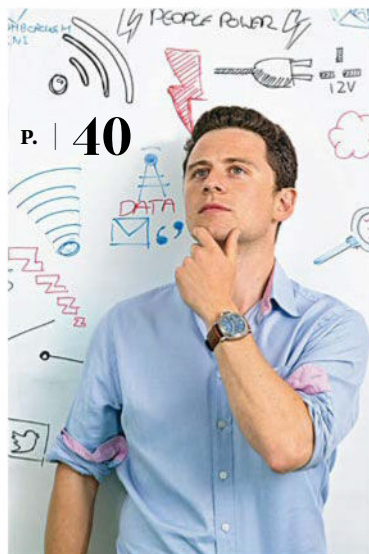
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Letters

READERS' COMMENTS AND OPINIONS

Royal Record

What a great life sketch of Queen Elizabeth II ('Mighty Monarch', April) on the occasion of her 90th birthday. You covered her life from a child to a teenager to a graceful young lady before she became a youthful, energetic monarch.



Over the years, Her Majesty has won the hearts of millions of people, including myself.

Today, as a regal ruler she exudes authority, kindness and motherly love.

PROFESSOR MUHAMMAD SALEH MEMON

Not everybody loves the idea of a monarchy. However, I must commend the Queen on her strong sense of duty to her country and the Commonwealth. I wish her health and happiness in the years ahead.

SUSAN HAMILTON

Surgery Guideline

Item 25 in '38 Secrets Hospitals Won't Tell You' suggests it's not necessary to abstain from eating or drinking as of midnight the day before your surgery (June). While this is correct, I suggest that readers follow the guidelines set by their own surgeon or anaesthetist. If one fails to follow their guidelines, regardless of what current studies show, the anaesthesia group may elect to cancel or postpone your surgery.

Surgeries may also start earlier than planned due to cancellations or procedures going more quickly than anticipated.

DAVID SCHWABACHER, nurse

Daily Catch-up

Thanks for the story about using regular morning emails to keep in

touch. My daughter started university in the early 1990s ('The Morning Report', June). At that time, I began writing a few sentences

LET US KNOW

If you are moved – or provoked – by any item in the magazine, share your thoughts. See page 6 for how to join the discussion.

to her each morning. That has continued to this day. It is a daddy-daughter bond.

ROSS RICHARDSON

Beyond Prison Walls

When Ann Walmsley mustered the courage to meet with a group of male prisoners at Kingston, Ontario's Collins Bay Institution, 'I'd Like to Help Find You Some Good Books', (April) she could never have imagined how such an experience would not only enrich their lives, but also her own. And for these incarcerated book club members, whose lives have become defined and confined by their past criminal behaviour, books and discussions with caring 'outside' book members have opened doors and new worlds, and given them a freedom to explore way beyond any prison walls. What a heartwarming story!

JUDITH CAINE

WIN A PILOT CAPLESS FOUNTAIN PEN

The best letter published 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, Professor Muhammad Saleh Memon.



PHOTOS: ISTOCK



'I'm Hair-larious'

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

My real dad is Groucho Marx.

BARRY STEWART

They said I needed to 'man up'

SARAH MENEZES

If you are looking for the baby, he went that way.

AMNA ARIF

Congratulations! It's a man!

MEHJABEEN SHAH

"I mustache you a question, is there something on my face?"

YAYAT GEGBU

Congratulations to this month's winner, Amna Arif.



CAPTION CONTEST

Come up with the funniest caption for the above photo and you could win \$100. To enter, see the details on page 6.

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FOR DIGITAL EXTRAS AND
SOCIAL MEDIA INFO, SEE PAGE 123.

Anecdotes and jokes

Send in your real-life laugh for
Life's Like That or All in a Day's
Work. Got a joke? Send it in for
Laughter is the Best Medicine!

Smart Animals

Share antics of unique pets or
wildlife in up to 300 words.

Kindness of Strangers

Share your moments of
generosity in 100-500 words.

My Story

Do you have an inspiring or
life-changing tale to tell?

Submissions must be true,
unpublished, original and
800-1000 words - see website
for more information.

Letters to the editor, caption competition and other reader submissions

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Editor's Note

Brave Decisions

IT TAKES RESILIENCE to persist with a big decision – particularly when the path seems littered with obstacles. Among the articles in this month's magazine, we bring you the stories of an inventor, a travel photographer and a foster mother. Each of their stories illustrates how often the greatest adventures start with a single brave decision.

Eco-entrepreneur Laurence Kemball-Cook ('One Step at a Time', page 40) was a final-year student when he set out to turn footsteps into electricity. Today, his Pavegen paving tile has become a multimillion-dollar enterprise. In 'The Coldest Place on Earth' (page 90), New Zealand photographer Amos Chapple travels to Oymyakon, in Russia's Arctic Circle. Chapple both marvels at the resilience of Oymyakon locals and fears the unrelenting hardships of their environment. Then there's Marie, who foster-parents baby Elin, thought to have a severe intellectual disability ('Elin Was Born Twice', page 98). The story will melt your heart as Marie describes how she and her family learnt to understand Elin's greatest need.

Laurence, Amos and Marie all make giant decisions that ultimately enrich their lives. I'm sure you'll enjoy reading about their experiences!



Louise

LOUISE WATERSON
Managing Editor

Serendipity

Hospitalised overseas, I made friends with closer ties to me than I could guess

BY ADRIENNE BROWN

Adrienne Brown lives in Perth, Western Australia. She belongs to two writers' groups, enjoys keeping fit by walking with friends and grows her own organic fruit and vegetables.

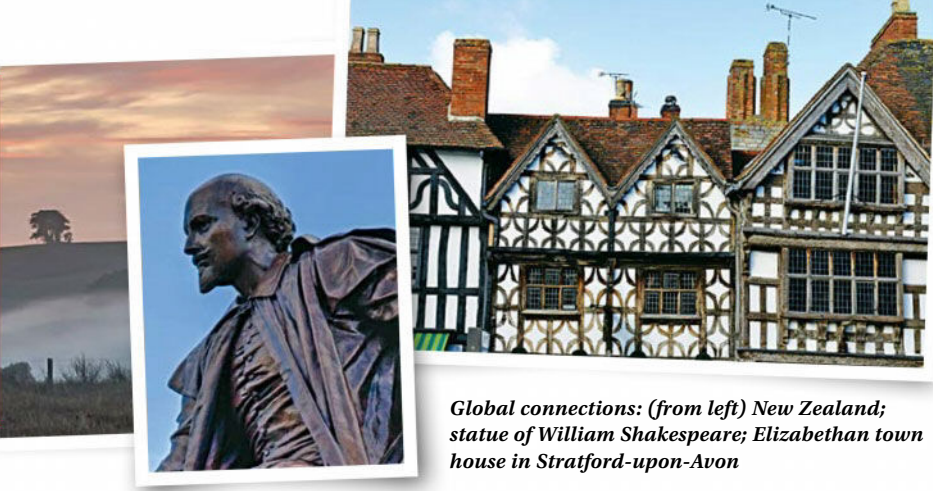
FOR ME, 2012 was a milestone year. I was turning 70, and just as I was deciding how to celebrate, a brochure arrived from a seniors' travel company about an escorted tour of the UK and Ireland. It was perfect, as they were visiting the birthplaces of my grandparents, Yorkshire and Connemara, where I'd always yearned to go.

On the day of departure, a friend from New Zealand, Don Martin, phoned to wish me well. I promised to call and share my adventures as soon as I arrived home.

The tour started off well in London with our accommodation overlooking the Palace of Westminster and Big Ben, a sightseeing tour and a Thames boat trip. However, the next morning I began to feel unwell during a tour of Hampton Court Palace. The next day, I was admitted to Warwick Hospital with pneumonia and placed on an antibiotic drip and oxygen. On regaining consciousness two days later I realised with horror that the tour had gone ahead, leaving me alone and barely able to function, surrounded by strangers thousands of kilometres from home in a country where I knew of no one to contact for help.

As I gazed across the room, another patient and her male visitor smiled. Introducing themselves as Sue and Roger Bliss, they said they had been told of my plight, and offered to contact my relatives in Australia. The relief that washed over me as I gave Roger my son's phone number was





Global connections: (from left) New Zealand; statue of William Shakespeare; Elizabethan town house in Stratford-upon-Avon

overwhelming. From that moment the retired British Merchant Navy captain and his artist wife were my guardian angels, keeping in contact with my son and daughter-in-law and making sure I had everything I needed, including their spare mobile phone.

Ten days later, I was discharged but was still too ill to travel. Sue and Roger suggested I stay at the Falcon Hotel in Stratford-upon-Avon, their hometown, where Roger's ancestors had lived for many generations (one, they assured me, sold his glove-making business to William Shakespeare's father). Each morning at ten they came with magazines, books and special treats. When I was well enough, they took me to see places of historical interest.

At dinner on the night before my flight home, I told Sue and Roger that words could never express my gratitude for their kindness. I then spoke of a friend in New Zealand who over the years had been there to listen,

advise and assist whenever needed, and how much this meant to me. I explained he was a retired veterinary surgeon living on a picturesque property in Muriwai, west of Auckland, with his horses and other animals. Sue suddenly exclaimed "Don Martin! And Hec and Anne?" (Don's brother and sister-in-law). Anne turned out to be Roger's stepsister and the couple had visited Don in Muriwai. We sat staring at each other in stunned silence before exclaiming in wonder at how this miracle of synchronicity with connections spanning thousands of kilometres and three countries had brought us together in a hospital when I was so much in need.

Ever since the bond between us has grown. We keep in contact and hope very much to meet again.

Share your story about a small act of kindness that made a huge impact. Turn to page 6 for details on how to contribute and earn cash.

Smart Animals

Are quick to adapt to a variety of situations



Hedgehugs and Kisses

LUZ KAWASHIMA

In March 2013, on a rainy night, my partner Reece remembered that he had forgotten a box in his car and went out to get it. On his way back inside he noticed a small shadow moving on the driveway in an area that was usually illuminated by the streetlight.

As Reece moved towards the shadow he realised it was a young hedgehog, all wet in the grass, eating mud. He quickly removed his jacket and picked it up. The hedgehog was very weak and unable to move about

quickly. He did not seem to be frightened, nor did he resist being scooped up.

Once inside, Reece called out to me, saying that he had something that would make my heart melt – he was right! We named the hedgehog Alf because, just like the TV show character of the '80s, he came out of nowhere. And, like Alf the alien, this little hedgehog was amazingly intelligent. Not only did he learn to eat his dinner and drink water from his bowls, and to use a paper-covered mat for his 'business', but he also learnt to wait for us inside his little

ILLUSTRATED BY EDWINA KEENE

indoor cubby house and also hop into his pet carrier whenever we took him out with us.

Alf knows us very well and recognises both our voices; he does not roll into a ball or put his spines up. Every day he allows us to pat him, just like you would a dog or cat. He loves playing with paper and towels and will bite and tug on the bed sheets if given a chance. Like all pets, Alf loves his treats, in particular small pieces of sugar-coated biscuits.

Unfortunately, in April 2014 I was in a car accident and had to spend two months in Auckland City hospital. And boy, did I miss Alf. Reece told me that Alf would search around the house for me, checking in places where I'd normally be, such as my desk, my favourite seat in front of the TV and even my side of the bed.

One evening, Reece set up a video call for me from my hospital bed and my heart rejoiced when I saw the little guy appear on my mobile phone. When I told Alf that I would be home soon, he opened up from being in a semi-ball position. He started moving his head and stretching out his arms as if trying to reach me through the screen.

The fact that Alf acknowledged that it was me gave me the strength to get

through my recovery. I cannot describe the feeling when I arrived home and saw his little face again.

Hard to Swallow

TRUDY ELZE

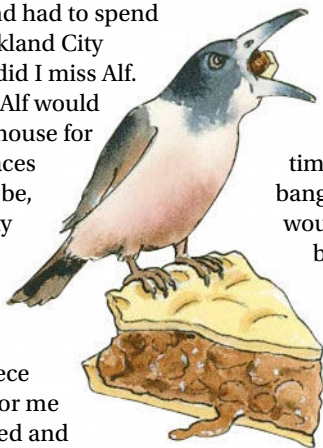
We usually feed our wild birds with oats and bits of chicken skin at mealtime. Last spring, while lunching on our deck, one cheeky butcherbird stole a hard, crusty corner off my husband's lunchtime pie. The bird couldn't break it up so tried to swallow it whole. The

crust got stuck on the way down and we could see it protruding from the poor bird's mouth.

No matter how many times the bird shook and banged his beak on the table, it would not dislodge from his beak. Perhaps sensing our concern for him, the bird flew off the deck, landed on the nearby birdbath and dipped his beak in the water several times.

A few gulps and the dry pastry went straight down.

With this, the bird shook his head, took another drink then came back looking for more! My throat was sore just thinking about it, but it didn't faze this smart little cookie.



You could earn cash by telling us about the antics of unique pets or wildlife. Turn to page 6 for details on how to contribute.

Amidst the trauma and violence of the Partition of India in 1948 were acts of incredible bravery and humanity

Lasting Friendship

BY ABBAS ALI

Abbas Ali lives in Karachi, Pakistan, with his wife and two children. A small business owner, the 47 year old enjoys playing sport, reading and spending time with his family.

IT WAS A COLD winter's day in January 1948. The city of Karachi was beset with sectarian violence in the wake of the Partition of India and the creation of Pakistan. A mob mentality had set in and the mob's members operated with impunity and complete disregard for life and property. Absolute chaos prevailed. The madness was justified in the name of religion, hatred and vengeance and was directed towards the Hindus of Karachi. A similar situation was occurring at the time in Bombay except there the Hindus were the aggressors towards Muslims.

Around then, my widowed maternal grandmother, Marium, lived in a house on Main Jamshed Road, in a quiet area of Karachi, along with her large family of 12 children. She would have been around 44 years old at that time. The house was known as Lakshmi Bhuvan, which means 'home where there is fortune and prosperity'. It was a rented place and the landlord was a Sindhi Hindu, a kind man who lived on the ground floor with his family. The first floor was leased to my grandmother who occupied every square metre of the space available. As was the architectural norm in those days, the two levels were not internally connected. A separate stonewall staircase on the outside of the house led to the upstairs area.

As the riots reached their zenith, the mob lay siege to the



PHOTO: GETTY IMAGES

Hindu homes in the surrounding Jamshed Quarters. Terrifying news of a Hindu massacre at the hands of Muslims spread like wildfire. Another Hindu neighbour, Dr Popatlal, who lived directly opposite my grandmother, was involved with Indian politics and this link drew the Muslim mob to Main Jamshed Road. The situation was out of control and all exit points out of the road quickly became sealed by the rampaging mob, trapping the Hindus. Dr Popatlal and my grandmother's landlord, along with both their families, turned to my grandmother for help. She welcomed them with open arms, endangering

herself and her children's lives and gave them asylum inside her small home. Around mid-afternoon, a mob of about 30 people, armed with clubs, sticks and machetes, barricaded the main gate of the house, preventing anyone from entering or leaving the house. They knew my grandmother was sheltering two Hindu families inside, and demanded she hand them over. Their intentions were dangerously clear.

My grandmother reacted with calm. She was undeterred by the situation; her faith in God was pure and sincere and her courage and conviction to oppose tyranny and oppression was

exemplary. When the mob entered the front yard my mother reassured her daughters. One was my mother who was aged ten at the time. She then asked four of her sons to follow her down the stone staircase outside. The other three sons were away at work. After descending halfway down the staircase, she made her children sit on the landing, while she stood in front of them, courageously protecting and shielding them from the mob. Modestly covered from head to toe by a full-length chadar, she addressed the crowd: "I am a Muslim woman and this is my family. Yes, I have given protection in my home to a Hindu family. If you want to massacre them, go through us, kill me and my children first."

The message somehow got through and the mob decided to leave them alone. Eventually they dispersed and the Hindu families were saved.

It is said that if you save one life, you have saved all of humanity. Immediately following the riots, a curfew was imposed to bring the situation under control. My grandmother was completely nonchalant about her actions that day.



Marium Ahmed, the writer's grandmother, left behind a moral legacy

“

My grandmother stood in front of her children, courageously protecting and shielding them from the mob

She felt that anyone in her position would have done the same thing. For her, it was just the right thing to do at the time.

The Hindu families showed their gratitude to her every time their paths crossed and she remained in touch with her landlord until he migrated to India in 1960.

My grandmother has left behind a moral legacy that her descendants now maintain. Today, we have friends, colleagues and acquaintances who are Hindus. My grandmother was a humanitarian and

devoted her life to the poor and needy until she passed away in 1968.

Lakshmi Bhuvan still exists today, intact and preserved. The separate stonewall staircase is still there. If the walls of the house could talk, they would tell the story of a brave Muslim family that defied an angry mob for the sake of justice 68 years ago.

**Do you have a tale to tell?
We'll pay cash for any original and unpublished story we print. See page 6 for details on how to contribute.**

THE DIGEST

HEALTH

Foods Low in the Glycaemic Index

Scientists have discovered that some types of carbs, once in the body, convert faster to glucose than others

Back in 1981, Dr David Jenkins, a nutritional scientist, tested a range of foods, each containing 50 grams of carbohydrate, on people. He measured the blood sugar reactions and used them to rate the foods on a scale he called the glycaemic index (GI). He discovered that certain starchy foods, such as potatoes and cornflakes, raised blood sugar nearly as much as pure glucose. These earned high GI scores.

One thing the GI doesn't take into account, though, is how much carbohydrate a serving of a food contains. You'd have to eat a lot of carrots to get 50 grams of carbs. A better measure, then, is the glycaemic load (GL), which includes both the GI and

grams of carbs per serve and so corrects this problem.

High-GL foods cause blood glucose levels to rise sharply, prompting the pancreas to secrete insulin to bring it back down. Low-GL foods create a smaller, more sustained rise in blood glucose and require less insulin.

Why is Low-GL Better?

Studies have found that people who eat high-GL diets have higher rates of obesity, diabetes, heart disease and cancer. Several long-term studies have shown that people who ate more high-GL foods had a substantially

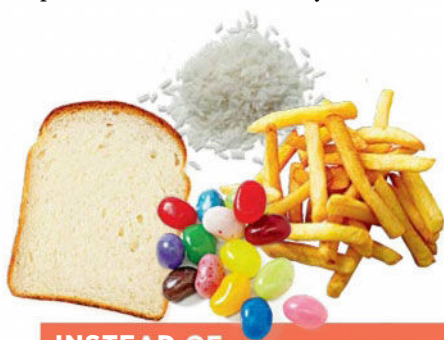


A glucose meter (glucometer) measures the approximate level of glucose in the blood

higher chance of developing type 2 diabetes. However, multiple studies have shown that dietary changes – even minor ones – to low-GL options cut those risks. Eating low-GL can also help if you already have diabetes.

How to Choose Low-GL

First and foremost, reach for more fresh, non-starchy fruits and vegetables, nearly all of which fall very low on the GL scale. (Go easier on starchy vegetables such as potatoes, parsnips, corn and peas.) Dairy and protein foods are often very low,



INSTEAD OF

White potatoes or French fries

White rice

White bread

Cornflakes or rice cereal

Corn

Chips, pretzels or jelly beans

Sugary beverages or juices

having few or no carbs. Choose breakfast cereals with at least 5 grams of fibre per serving and they will likely be low GL. And opt for whole grains (such as brown rice, barley, bulgur, oatmeal and coarse whole-wheat bread) over refined grains like white rice, bread and white flour products.

What Should I Avoid?

No foods are banned completely from a healthy diet, but see the chart below for foods to cut back on, eat in smaller portion sizes or swap for choices that don't raise blood sugar as much.



TRY

Sweet potatoes or fries made from sweet potatoes

Brown or converted rice, quinoa, bulgur, pearly barley or pasta cooked al dente

Coarse wholegrain bread, genuine sourdough bread or dense rye bread

Bran cereal or oatmeal

Beans and lentils

Nuts, frozen grapes or veggie sticks

Milk, water or tomato juice

NEWS FROM THE World of Medicine

Pneumonia in Smokers is a Cancer Clue

A study in the *American Journal of Medicine* tracked 381 heavy smokers hospitalised with pneumonia. Nearly 10% were diagnosed with lung cancer within a year. Less than 1% of smokers without pneumonia have a chance of being diagnosed with lung cancer in a given year. Researchers say smokers hospitalised with pneumonia should be screened for lung cancer.

Two-Minute Cure for Arachnophobia

Spiders give you the creeps? Dutch researchers exposed 45 arachnophobes to a tarantula for two minutes, then administered a dose of either the beta-blocker propranolol or a placebo. Related research shows that a fearful memory may be eased if propranolol is given during that memory's activation. Those given the drug were far less likely to avoid spiders over the next year. Study authors suggest the technique could be used on people suffering from anxiety disorders.

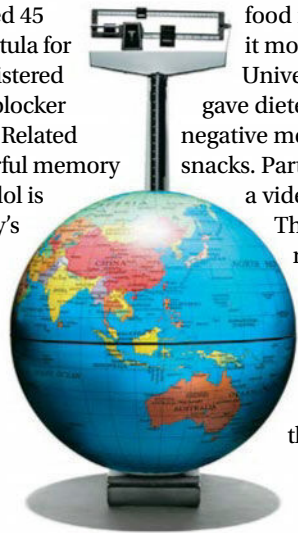
Antibiotic Resistance is a Growing Threat

The effects of medicine-resistant infections may soon pose a larger risk than cancer. Annual deaths caused by drug resistance are estimated to increase from 700,000 in 2015 to about ten million in 2050, according to the UK's Review on Antimicrobial Resistance. The world's population is taking more antibiotics, rendering the drugs less effective, and companies are producing fewer new antibiotics.

Mixed Junk Food Messages

Negative messages about unhealthy food may make you crave it more. In an Arizona State University study, researchers gave dieters either positive or negative messages about sugary snacks. Participants then watched a video while eating cookies.

Those who received the negative message ate 39% more cookies than the positive-message group. If you're trying to diet, think about the pros of healthy food rather than the cons of junk food.



Common Causes of Iron Deficiency

BY BONNIE SCHIEDEL

Iron is a workhorse nutrient. It helps cells work properly, sharpens memory and concentration, drives energy supplies, helps form oxygen-carrying haemoglobin in red blood cells and may even ward off depression. But you may not have enough. Here's why.

POOR IRON ABSORPTION This could be due to not eating enough iron-rich food, or eating food that hinders the way your body absorbs it. "Because iron is absorbed in the gut, faulty absorption could also be due to a digestive issue such as untreated coeliac disease or colitis," says Dr William Ehman, from the University of British Columbia. A 2010 study published in the *International Journal for Vitamin and Nutrition Research* suggested that people who are obese may not be able to absorb iron well. And absorption can be blocked for those taking large amounts of antacids or a proton-pump inhibitor (PPI) medication to treat acid reflux.

TOO-VIGOROUS WORKOUTS If you are training extra-hard "you can lose small amounts of iron through sweat and urine," explains registered

dietitian Alex Paton, who specialises in sport nutrition. Running can also cause minor GI bleeds, because the body is being jostled and shaken, she adds. Another factor is foot strike – red blood cells bursting in the feet when they hit the ground. Firm insoles in running shoes protect against this.

GIVING BLOOD Blood donation causes a brief drop in haemoglobin, but your body recovers quickly. It's a good idea to eat iron-rich foods for a few days after donation, and space out donations if your iron levels are in the low-normal range.

SIGNS OF IRON DEFICIENCY

Symptoms of iron deficiency can be vague, says Ehman. Possible symptoms are a sore, inflamed tongue; dizziness; restless leg; headache; difficulty maintaining body temperature; shortness of breath; brittle nails; irritability; and rapid or irregular heartbeat. In mild cases, you might not notice any symptoms at all. Your doctor can order tests to check your iron levels.

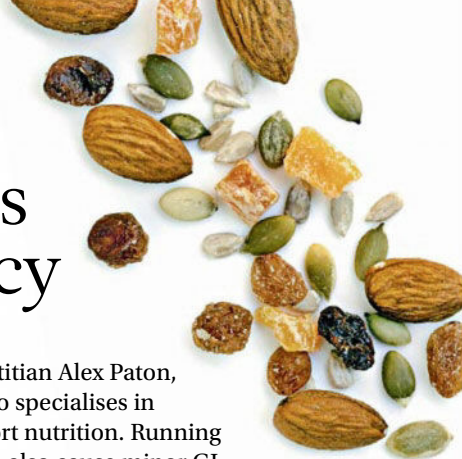


PHOTO: ISTOCK

What to Know About Prostate Cancer Screening

... and why some doctors don't think it's always useful

FALSE POSITIVES Tests are based on prostate-specific antigen (PSA) blood levels. About 80% of positive results are false positives, which causes a lot of unnecessary anxiety.

OVER-DIAGNOSIS An abnormal PSA typically requires further testing – either a biopsy or ultrasound. Both are uncomfortable and can cause problems such as infection.

OVER-TREATMENT About 75% of prostate cancer cases are not fatal even if left untreated, while 25% are aggressive killers. But we can't yet reliably distinguish between them. Surgery, radiation and hormone therapy have significant side effects such as incontinence, infection and permanent impotence. Knowing the risks, many doctors opt for a strategy called 'watchful waiting', in which an elevated PSA level is tracked every three to six months and treatment is recommended only if there is a rapid or large rise (suggesting the cancer may be an aggressive one).

KNOW YOUR RISK FACTORS

These include age (most prostate cancers are diagnosed over age 65); ethnicity (risks are higher for



people of African descent compared to Caucasians, lower for Asians, Indigenous Australians and Pacific Islanders); and family history – your risk is significantly higher if you've had two or more relatives diagnosed, especially a father or brother diagnosed when younger than 65.

GET THE DIGITAL RECTAL EXAM

It's an annual check for over-50s, but start earlier if you have risk factors.

BALANCE THE RISKS Talk to your doctor about the implications of false positives, over-diagnosis and over-treatment and have a plan of action in place before you test.

REDUCE FALSE POSITIVES Certain things increase PSA levels, including low-grade trauma to the prostate (such as a recent rectal exam or long bike ride) and ejaculation. Avoid all for at least 48 hours before the test.

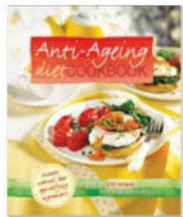
EGGS

Spicy Vegetables with Eggs

You will need:

- 1 tablespoon olive oil
- 1 small brown onion, finely chopped
- 1 red capsicum (bell pepper), chopped
- 1 long red chilli, thinly sliced
- 1 clove garlic, crushed
- 1 teaspoon cumin seeds
- ½ teaspoon ground coriander
- 410 g can chopped tomatoes
- 4 eggs
- 2 tablespoons roughly chopped fresh coriander (cilantro) leaves, to garnish
- Wholemeal (whole-wheat) pitas, warmed, to serve (optional)

For over 100 recipes to keep you fighting fit, check out the **Anti-Ageing Diet Cookbook**, ISBN 978-1-921744-62-4, available from Reader's Digest.

**Preparation** 15 minutes**Cooking** 15 minutes**Serves** 4

1 Heat oil in a large frying pan over medium-high heat. Add onion and capsicum and cook, stirring, 3–4 minutes, or until soft. Add chilli, garlic, cumin and ground coriander and cook, stirring, 1 minute, or until fragrant.

2 Add tomatoes and bring to the boil. Reduce heat to low and simmer, uncovered, 5 minutes, or until thickened slightly. With a large spoon, make 4 indentations in tomato mixture. Gently break 1 egg into each indentation. Cover and cook 5–6 minutes, or until egg whites are set and yolks are still soft.

3 Sprinkle with fresh coriander and serve with warmed pitas, if desired.

PER SERVING

615 kJ, 147 kcal,
8 g protein, 10 g fat
(2 g saturated fat),
8 g carbohydrate
(5 g sugars), 2 g fibre,
135 mg sodium



SAVE TIME

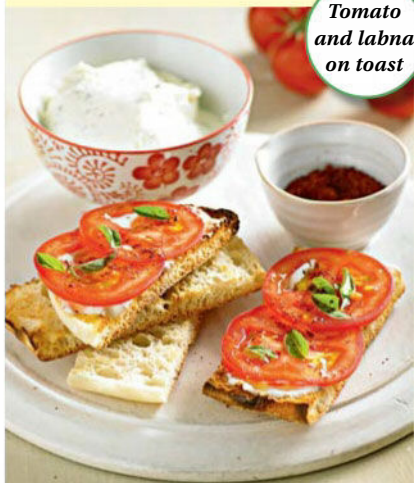
When time is short, throw together something healthy and sustaining 'on toast'.

On Toast

Here are some ideas for nutritious toast toppings. Choose wholegrain bread or mixed grain types or rye or pumpnickel.

- Peanut butter and banana
- Tahini, ricotta, honey and sunflower seeds
- Avocado and tomato
- Avocado and fetta
- Tomato, labna and sumac
- Cottage cheese, orange and poppy seeds
- Baked beans, baby spinach and cheddar
- Ricotta, figs and walnuts

*Tomato
and labna
on toast*



THE PERFECT BOILED EGG

A perfect soft-boiled egg has a firm but tender white and a runny yolk, with no cracks in the shell to allow the white to seep out.

- Use fresh eggs at room temperature. If the eggs are too cold, they may crack during cooking.
 - Use a tablespoon or slotted spoon to submerge the eggs in a saucepan of cold water so that they are about 2.5 cm below the surface.
 - Place pan over medium-high heat. Bring to the boil, then reduce the heat to a simmer.
 - Use a pan just large enough to fit all the eggs, to prevent them from banging together while cooking.
 - Set the timer once the eggs are simmering.
 - Simmer for 3 minutes for very soft boiled, 4 minutes for a set white, 6 minutes for a soft but not runny yolk, and 10 minutes for hard boiled.
 - Serve with wholegrain toast or lightly steamed asparagus.
- Tip:** Plunge eggs into cold water after taking off heat. This stops them cooking, so they don't become rubbery.



DIY Curtain Poles vs Tracks

Curtain poles and tracks do the same job but couldn't be more different in style. Here's why



CURTAIN POLES

■ **COMMONLY MADE OF WOOD,** metal or plastic, curtain poles are usually exposed to view and are often seen as decorative features in their own right. Ornamental end-stops, called finials, stop the curtain from sliding off the poles.

■ **CURTAIN POLES ARE MOST EFFECTIVE** across a short distance such as a single window. Longer poles require more supporting brackets which can interfere with the running of the curtain.

■ **MATCH THE WEIGHT.** For lightweight curtains or curtains across short distances, use slim poles measuring less than 25 mm in diameter. Heavyweight curtains should be hung on thicker poles.



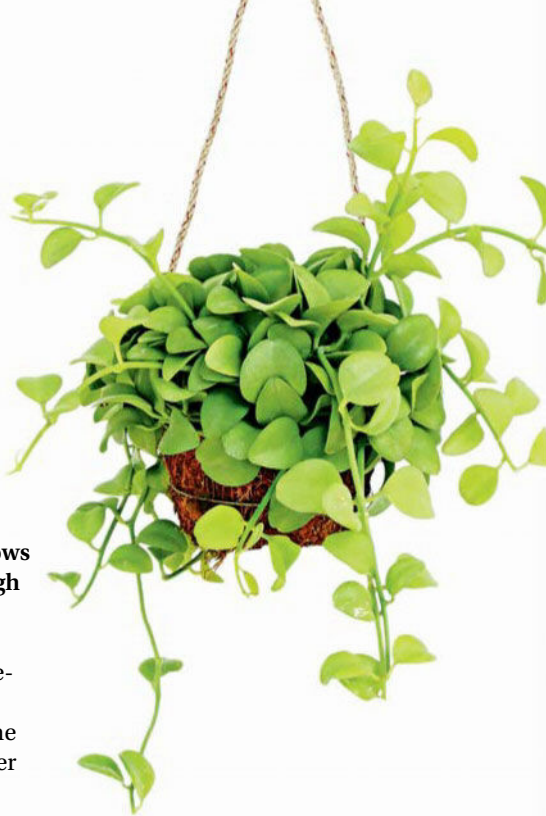
CURTAIN TRACKS

■ **DESIGNED TO BLEND** into the wall colour or be concealed behind a curtain, pelmet or valance, curtain tracks are meant to be discreet. They are commonly available in PVC and metal and can be hand-drawn, corded or electrically operated.

■ **CHECK THE LOAD.** The track must be strong enough to hold the weight of the curtain fabric. Refer to the load rating printed on the packaging, or ask your supplier for advice.

■ **EXPANDABLE TRACKS** are a helpful product if you're planning to do your own installation work. As the name suggests, expandable tracks have moving parts that slide to make the track longer or shorter, so it's easy to match the size you require.

Keep Plants Alive While You're Away



1 When you're headed off on a trip, move your indoor plants out of direct sunlight – near windows with sheer curtains will give enough light without burning foliage.

2 Use a potting mix with moisture-retaining polymer gels, crystals or chemicals (or add polymers to the mix). These compounds retain water for later use by thirsty plants.

3 If your house is in a very hot area, take your pot plants to the coolest room in the house – this will probably be the bathroom. Cooler temperatures will prevent your plants from drying out as quickly, but be careful not to starve them of light for too long.

4 Move outdoor pots close together, so the plants will provide each other with shade and humidity.

5 Delicate outdoor plants need protection. In winter, use glass

or plastic covers or cloches. In warm weather, use 'tents' made of shade cloth and stakes. Make sure you allow reasonable air circulation to prevent fungal problems developing.

6 To conserve water in outdoor pots, add saucers, then move them to a location sheltered from the wind and cluster them together.

7 Temporarily bury potted plants to their rims in a protected garden bed and mulch well.

10 Wildly Underrated Cities in Europe

Sometimes it's the less popular locales that prove the most spectacular holiday spots of them all

BY MARIA BARILLARO

1 SPLIT, CROATIA Known for fine dining, excellent shopping and loads of bars to choose from, Split is also home to Diocletian's Palace, a UNESCO World Heritage Site and formerly a retirement palace built for the Emperor Diocletian around the year 300 CE. If that weren't enough reason to book your trip to Split right now, then the captivating view of the Adriatic from this coastal town will surely do the trick.

2 VÉZELAY, FRANCE Before you book your ticket to Paris, consider Vézelay. Built in the 11th century, this ancient city in Burgundy is known for

its vineyards, and the famous Basilica of Sainte-Marie-Madeleine. Built on a hilltop, the town is nothing short of picturesque, with fine wine, inspiring architecture and beautiful landscapes.

3 GIBRALTAR The imposing landscape will inspire awe in even the most jaded traveller. Historically, Phoenicians were thought to be the first inhabitants of Gibraltar (around 950 BCE), but new evidence suggests that Neanderthals were here as far back as 28,000 BCE. The Rock of Gibraltar, off Spain's south coast, is its only official landmark, but the densely populated city is so rich in

PHOTOS: ISTOCK



1

SPLIT, CROATIA



2

VÉZELAY, FRANCE



3

GIBRALTAR

its own unique culture and history that it never disappoints.

4 PORTO, PORTUGAL If the name of this city reminds you of wine, your head is in the right place: this is indeed the place where port wine originated. Built during Roman times, this beautiful port city's architecture, landscapes and history will certainly impress. Soak in the beauty with a glass of the finest wine and you've got the recipe for a perfect vacation.

5 BRUGES, BELGIUM This city deserves a spot on your travel bucket list. Bruges still has most of its historic architecture intact, preserved better than any other mediaeval city in the world. With its living history, breathtaking landscapes, canals, Flemish art treasures and, of course, world-renowned chocolate, a trip to Bruges is one you won't regret.

6 PRAGUE, CZECH REPUBLIC The historical capital of Bohemia, Prague is rich in culture, history and magnificent architecture, both modern and old. Churches, cathedrals

and other monumental buildings from the Gothic, Renaissance and Baroque eras dot the city, and the locals are friendly and welcoming.

7 DRESDEN, GERMANY The city of Dresden was largely destroyed during World War II. Since then, the elegant baroque city has been faithfully rebuilt. Home to some of Germany's largest universities, 50 museums and 60 galleries, with a 700-year tradition of fine music, the city is picture-perfect. In warm weather, enjoy the food and camaraderie in the *biertgartens* – you don't need to be a drinker as they are family friendly.

8 FERRARA, ITALY Located in Northern Italy, Ferrara has nearly nine kilometres of Renaissance walls surrounding a city filled with immense cathedrals and castles that date back to the 15th and 16th centuries. Home to the powerful Este family, its artists and court, much of the city's original planning and structure is brilliantly preserved, garnering it a UNESCO World Heritage Site designation.



4 PORTO, PORTUGAL



5 BRUGES, BELGIUM



6 PRAGUE, CZECH REPUBLIC

6

Dogs for Small Spaces

Whether you're in a high-rise apartment or a tiny house, these breeds will fit right in

BY SIMONE CASTELLO



PUG Even-tempered and loyal companions, pugs' compact size and adaptable nature

make them perfect for small space living. These four-legged jesters are curious by nature, so they require a lot of time to explore their surroundings on walks.



YORKSHIRE TERRIER

If you're looking for an affectionate dog that's small in size yet big in personality, then a Yorkie,

as they're commonly known, might be the perfect match. Their energy can be quelled with daily walks, and they shed far less hair than other dogs.



ENGLISH BULLDOG

These dogs are renowned for being calm, courageous and very protective of their

human friends. The best part? English bulldogs don't require much exercise outside of regular walks and the occasional vigorous playdate.



CHIHUAHUA Looking for a dog that's small, sweet and more than a little sassy? Look no further than the

Chihuahua! They are considered perfect apartment dogs because of their tiny stature and the fact that they don't require a lot of exercise.



CAVALIER KING CHARLES SPANIEL

This breed suits apartment living well, being mild-mannered

and affectionate with humans and other animals. Daily exercise is important, however, so be prepared for regular visits to the park.



DACHSHUND This short, energetic breed is considered very intelligent, which means they become

bored easily. If you plan on leaving them at home on their own for long periods of time, make sure there's plenty to keep them entertained.

Hours of great reading!



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DRAMA IN REAL LIFE

IT'S A COBRA!

Struck twice by a Mozambique spitting cobra, five-year-old Mikayla Robbertse was set to lose her arm – or her life

BY GLYNIS HORNING

PHOTO: GETTY IMAGES



Charmaine Robbertse was tired but content. It was a week before Christmas, and the 46-year-old former insurance broker had finally settled her large family in the home they had always dreamt about – a rambling farmstead on 60 hectares of rugged bushveld near Lephalale (Ellisras), far north of Pretoria, in South Africa.

Charmaine was devoted to her family. Her husband, Bertus, was a supervisor at a nearby chemical company, and together the couple had seven children from previous marriages, three grandchildren, and a changing array of foster children – children the pair tried to put back together with patience and love.

But one foster child was particularly special. Mikayla, an elfin five year old with lively brown eyes, was the daughter of Bertus's 25-year-old son, Lampie. The little girl's mother separated from Lampie before she gave birth, but when Mikayla was born with foetal alcohol syndrome, the young mother struggled to cope. Lampie was often away for work, so Charmaine and Bertus became Mikayla's full-time carers and officially fostered her soon after.

By nine o'clock that Monday night in 2011, Mikayla's excited chatter about their new home "with the wild animals" had stopped, and she dozed happily on a sofa near Lampie and her pet Pekingese, Jimmy. Bertus scooped Mikayla into his arms, and Charmaine led the way to her bedroom. She lifted the cheerful, stripy cerise and lime duvet in a routine bush check for creepy crawlies, then Bertus slid

Mikayla in. The couple smiled down at the child for a moment, then crept out.

WAKE-UP CALL

It was 11.30pm when the bushveld stillness was broken by Mikayla's piercing screams. "Snake! Kayla's been bitten by a snake!" exclaimed Lampie, shocked into being fully awake when he discovered a puncture wound on his daughter's left middle finger and another on her elbow.

Bertus left his son to find and identify the snake, and quickly bundled Mikayla into the cab of his Nissan van. Charmaine cradled the child on her lap while Bertus drove as fast as he dared down the dirt road to the Ellisras Hospital, about 40 minutes away.

As they pulled in, the call came from Lampie: he had found a metre-long Mozambique spitting cobra behind a bedroom cupboard. The snake – one of the most dangerous in

Africa – is capable of spitting venom and blinding victims with deadly accuracy. Lampie would have returned most snakes to the wild, but he fiercely dispatched this one with a spade, his thoughts on his daughter.

At Ellisras, doctors placed a mask over Mikayla's pale face and gave her oxygen before injecting two vials of polyvalent antivenom into her slender arm. "Is that enough?" asked Charmaine anxiously. She was assured it was for a child so small and that Mikayla should be fine by morning.

But by dawn Mikayla was struggling to breathe. Charmaine was told that the child needed to be transferred to nearby Marapong Private Hospital. After an examination at Marapong, the doctors advised that Mikayla needed more specialist care at the Steve Biko Academic Hospital in Pretoria. But that was 300 km away and there was no ambulance available.

NIGHTMARE RIDE

With Bertus called away for work, Lampie arranged to have a friend drive his stepmother and daughter. In readiness for the journey, the Marapong doctors taught Charmaine how to perform CPR and urged her, "Stay calm, the child's life depends on it." This became her mantra as she nursed Mikayla in the back seat of Lampie's friend's car.

Three times the child stopped breathing; three times a terrified Charmaine managed to revive her. But by the time they reached Warmbaths, Mikayla was unconscious, and they were still 100 km from Pretoria.

A rapid response vehicle had been alerted and raced to meet their car. Soon its flashing red lights were in view, bringing Charmaine unspeakable relief. The paramedics managed to stabilise Mikayla, but she was so weak they sped her not to the Steve Biko

THE SPITTING COBRA

The Mozambique spitting cobra (*Naja mossambica*) is most common in the northeastern parts of Southern Africa, parts of Mozambique and East Africa.

"This species appear to be very aware of what is going on around them," comments Professor Graham Alexander, a herpetologist from the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg. "They are likely to see you before you see them."

Spitting cobras frequently enter dwellings at night and often bite victims while asleep. They release a cytotoxic venom, which destroys tissue cells around the bite, but there may be additional neurotoxic effects. They can also eject venom up to 2 metres away and often aim for the eyes. If left untreated, the venom can cause blindness. The head of a dead snake can still transfer venom, even if the snake has been decapitated.

Ashleigh Austen

Academic Hospital but to the closer private Netcare Montana Hospital.

Although the Robbertses could not afford the fees, Mikayla spent three days in the clinic's ICU. Her kidneys and lungs were failing, doctors informed them gravely. Mozambique spitting cobra venom is cytotoxic, with digestive enzymes that eat flesh as they spread, and as these reached her liver, they were affecting it, too.

At the same time, Mikayla's small hand was swelling obscenely and slowly turning black. The doctors were terribly sorry, especially as she was left-handed, but her finger and probably her arm would need to be amputated to save her.

THE SNAKE MAN

With mounting private hospital expenses, it was decided to transfer Mikayla to the Steve Biko Academic Hospital, a government hospital, for the operation. On the way, a desperate Charmaine called a mobile number slipped to her by a paramedic at Montana. It was for Arno Naudé, an expert in snake identification and bite treatment, who lectures to medical students at the University of Pretoria.

When she told Arno that Mikayla would likely have her arm amputated, he had one word: "Whoa!" Doctors can be too quick to amputate, he said, and advised that they wait for the venom to run its course. In the end, however, the decision was made for them – Mikayla's liver, underdeveloped from

the foetal alcohol syndrome, was too seriously affected by the venom for her to undergo surgery.

Two days before Christmas, Mikayla's little face and body had become

Doctors told Charmaine and Bertus she was unlikely to survive the night and advised them to summon the rest of the family

distended and her skin had turned yellow. Doctors told Charmaine and Bertus she was unlikely to survive the night and advised them to summon the rest of the family.

Arno joined the family during their tearful bedside vigil. He told Charmaine that Mikayla should have been given at least eight vials of antivenom – four times the dose she received. He explained that smaller patients need just as much antivenom as adults. Now, he said, there was nothing to do but wait and pray.

CHRISTMAS GIFT

Charmaine and Bertus did both, fervently, and by morning Mikayla had stabilised. By Christmas Day she was conscious, smiling through nausea at the gifts her family brought, and asking after Jimmy, her little Pekingese dog.



Mikayla's swollen left hand (top) where the snake venom had damaged tissue; the hand (below) was temporarily attached to her groin to promote blood flow and tissue regeneration



Mikayla continued to rally, and on December 28 was wheeled into theatre – not for an amputation but for doctors to open the massive blister that covered her hand and inspect the damage below. This was more extensive than imagined – the venom had tunnelled under the skin, eating away tissue to halfway up her forearm.

A plastic surgeon, Dr Anton Brewis, assessed the damage. He explained

that the wound would need to be cleaned of every bit of infected tissue. Following that, he was confident that he could save Mikayla's arm with a surgical procedure that temporarily attached her hand to a flap of skin on her groin.

On January 13 the wound was cleaned a final time, and exposed to the bone. Mikayla's hand was stitched into place and remained there for the next two weeks while the flesh attached itself, slowly rebuilding her hand.

There was surprisingly little pain from the wound itself, but cleaning it was an ordeal, and Mikayla's liver struggled to cope with the powerful medications she required. However, the feisty child never complained and on January 27 Mikayla's hand was separated from her groin and the remaining wounds on her forearm were patched with skin harvested from her thigh.

On January 31, six weeks after she was bitten, Mikayla returned to Lephallale. Residents turned out to welcome her with banners and balloons tied to the trees, but all Mikayla wanted was to play with Jimmy and her toys, which included a large candy-striped knitted snake.

"Some snakes are naughty," Mikayla observed simply, "but some snakes are nice."

SURVIVING A SNAKE BITE

TO KEEP SAFE

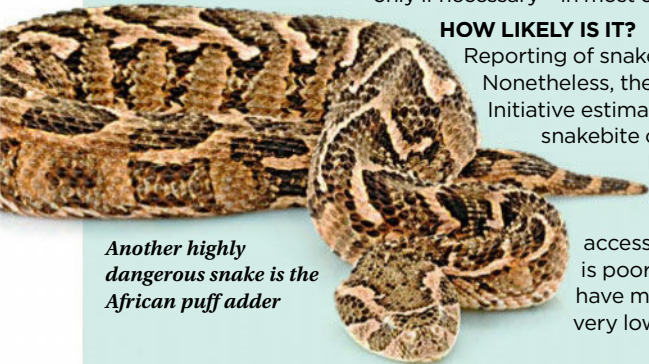
- Snakes are not generally aggressive and will tend to attack only when they feel threatened or are disturbed. They are commonly found in warm places (near water heaters) and on or under surfaces where they can absorb solar heat (rocks, paving, corrugated iron).
- Use mosquito nets tucked under mattresses when staying in the bush or camping. Always turn on lights or use a torch if you get up at night, and wear closed shoes. Check inside your shoes before putting them on.
- Don't have rubbish, compost heaps or long grass near your home or tent; they attract rats and other creatures that snakes prey on.

IF SOMEONE IS BITTEN

- Don't waste time or take risks catching or killing the snake, says South African snakebite expert Arno Naudé. Just try to note its size, colour and main characteristics, such as diamond markings or a hood.
- Don't cut, suck or tie a tourniquet around the bite; leave it alone or apply a firm bandage to the whole limb. Keep as still as possible – use a splint for limbs – to prevent the spread of venom into the circulatory system.
- Rinse venom from eyes with clean water (milk will also work), keeping the eye open and rolling the eyeball under a stream of fluid.
- Don't administer antivenom yourself; the patient may have an allergic reaction that requires medical assistance.
- Keep the patient calm but quickly get them to the nearest hospital with a trauma unit. Phone ahead to check they have polyvalent antivenom, which is effective against most lethal snake venom.
- The hospital should treat the patient's symptoms and administer antivenom only if necessary – in most cases it won't be.

HOW LIKELY IS IT?

Reporting of snakebite is not reliable. Nonetheless, the Global Snakebite Initiative estimates that, worldwide, snakebite claims some 125,000 lives a year – mainly in tropical developing countries where access to medical resources is poor. Developed countries have much lower injury and very low mortality rates.



Another highly dangerous snake is the African puff adder



Pictured here in hospital, Mikayla quickly reverted to her usual bouncy self after the series of operations

coming top of her class last year.

Far from being self-conscious, Mikayla, now ten, proudly displays her 'funny hand' for educational talks about snakes with a local snake handler in primary schools, demonstrating that apart from writing, she can do most things with it, even holding a glass of juice.

And instead of being afraid of the snakes the handler uses, "she loves them!" says Charmaine.

In fact, Jimmy has had a rival for Mikayla's affections: Fudge, a ball python, a gift from the snake catcher that he offered to care for at his home.

"We don't feel comfortable with snakes in the house," Charmaine confides. But, says Mikayla, happily, "Fudge is sweet, he doesn't bite. People must just know which snakes *do*. And take care!" **R**

WORK IN PROGRESS

In November 2012, Mikayla had the swelling on her hand reduced by liposuction to help her bitten finger grow straight. Her surgeon also transferred tendons from her left forearm to her hand to improve finger extension. Steel rods were inserted in her finger, but failed to work and had to be removed.

Focus shifted to helping Mikayla use her right hand for writing and drawing, overcoming her natural lefthandedness. She was moved to a special school, where she has surged ahead,

YOUR CUTE WEDDING HASHTAGS 20 YEARS LATER

#DoYouHaveAnyCashOnYou

#CanYouPickUpMilkAndWineOnTheWayHome

#AndIceCream

#ThatDressLooksFineLetsGo

#WouldItKillYouToMakeTheBed

#StopTellingMeHowIFeel

#IDidntSayAnything KIMBERLY HARRINGTON, WWW.MCSWEENEYS.NET

A Curator's Journey



Divia Patel; the Victoria and Albert Museum (right) is the world's largest decorative arts and design museum – over 4.5 million objects

For museum curator Divia Patel, preserving the rich story of Indian saris is a personal mission

AS TOLD TO KATHY BUCHANAN

I am an expert on modern and contemporary art and design from India and am based at London's Victoria and Albert Museum, where I have worked for over 15 years. The museum has the most important collection of South Asian art and textiles outside of India.

As curators, we need to leave our own legacy of new research and scholarship and over the years my research has covered photography, art, design and textiles.

Early Inspirations

I was born in Kenya, in East Africa, to Indian parents, who were also born in Africa. We all moved to England when I was about five.





My grandfather learnt how to do basic tailoring at a young age and quickly became a well-respected men's tailor. I loved watching his incredible work with fabric, he made exquisite men's three-piece suits and would make my sister and me skirts and blouses. I would occasionally ask him to create pieces for me from magazine pictures.

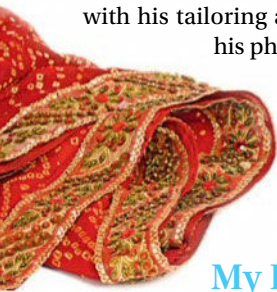
I still have strong memories from my time growing up in Kenya. I remember the intense colour of the incredible dark red earth, the stunning, flat spectacular landscape and being surrounded by nature and animals like giraffes.

My mother treasured her silk saris and she has told me stories of how she would wait for months for friends to travel to India by boat to bring new saris back for her. I have inherited some of these including a very regal, bright purple silk, woven with silver design, which was in the family for well over 50 years and is a favourite of mine. It is a very light silk so is a pleasure to wear. This sari has a sense of history and my mother only wore it on special occasions. She knows which party each stain came from on each of these saris. They have that 'wear' to them.

My mother was an artist and, like many Asian women, was

taught embroidery at home at a young age. In her spare time she would embroider. I still have the beautiful bed covers she made.

My father was a good amateur photographer. In 1950s Africa, it was rare to have a top-end Rolleiflex camera; he took composing images seriously and developed his own photos. I see a lot of my aesthetic and desire to be creative as coming from my mother and her love for textiles, from my grandfather with his tailoring and my father with his photography.



"A hundred years from now people will see how we lived today because we continue to acquire modern collections"

My First Sari

Lots of young Asian women don't know how to wear a sari and rely on their mothers to help. I really wanted to learn how to put a sari on myself when I was ten. It takes a bit of practise learning how different fabric drapes. I find them very comfortable and it gave my mother great pleasure knowing that one of her daughters was wearing her saris.

My sister gave me my first sari at 18. It was a plain silk sari and cost around £30 at the time. I remember wearing my mother's dark red sari with gold thread and embroidery, with tie-dyed dots to family weddings. Saris were relatively expensive and she had

around 30 saris of different quality collected over many years. There was silk for special occasions and some nylon work saris for day-to-day. The tradition is to wear a silk sari through your life and then pass it on. Some women have hundreds of saris.

First Visit to the V&A

I grew up in outer London and went to the V&A for the first time as a teenager. I was in awe of the architecture, the sense of space and the immensity of it all. My father died a couple of

years after we arrived in England, so my mother was a single parent for a lot of the time and visiting museums was done through schools.

It is difficult when you are 16 to know what you want to be in life. My first university degree was in economics and politics. I then became an assistant in the Registrar's department at the V&A to gain experience and get an insight into how the museum works. After that I knew that I wanted to be a curator in the Indian Department and so I undertook a Master's degree in South Asian history and anthropology at the School of Oriental and African Studies in London. My Indian background and knowledge of the Gujarati language has

helped my curatorial career and I love being able to research, write articles and books about the V&A collections and generally immerse myself in aspects of my heritage.

My first trip to India was after I finished university and I had already begun working at the V&A. The experience was overwhelming. The colours, smells and noise were very powerful and exciting. We went as a family with my grandfather to his village in Gujarat to understand the rural India in which he grew up. We also visited cities such as Mumbai, Delhi and Agra and saw many of the famous monuments of India's past. It was a powerful experience because of the sense of history and connection to culture that I got from it.

My grandfather also took us to Dandi where Mohandas Gandhi led the Salt March in 1930. [An act of civil disobedience against British salt taxes and laws.] It was an important event in the Indian independence movement. My grandfather returned from Africa to join the march, as he felt very strongly about Indian independence. The march went past my grandfather's old house en route to the sea. He took us to where the Salt March ended on that visit, which was very special to see.

Now I go to India once a year to conduct research on aspects of the collection. For *The Fabric of India* exhibition (V&A October 3, 2015 to January 10, 2016) I visited more often to speak to textile makers and designers and to acquire pieces for display. Our

earliest piece in the exhibition was from the third century, borrowed from the British Museum, and the latest was made in 2015 and acquired specially for the V&A. Included in the show was a particularly special sari made of khadi (handwoven fabric made from handspun thread) in 2013. This sari references the fabric used and made popular by Gandhi during the Independence movement.

From the 1900s European fabric was flooding India's markets and Indian weavers were suffering. From the 1920s Gandhi asked Indian spinners and weavers to boycott European products and spin their own material. Those famous images of Gandhi and his followers wearing the white cap and loincloth were taken during the Salt March. Gandhi promoted them as a symbol of the independence movement. The spinning wheel was used on the independence flag at the time and khadi is still used today by contemporary designers because of the connection to Indian independence. Even if you don't know the history, these saris are beautiful and the fabric is entirely handmade, handspun and handwoven.

Even growing up in different countries, I was always aware of my Indian heritage and learning about it was very important to me. A lot of South Asians are known for their interest in the law or accountancy. I feel very passionately about the cultural side and want to be able to convey it to a much wider audience. **R**

PROFILE

ONE STEP AT A TIME

Could turning our footsteps into electricity help meet our energy needs? One young eco-entrepreneur thinks so
BY DAVID THOMAS

PHOTOGRAPHED BY JAMES CLARKE

PROFILE

ONE STEP AT A TIME

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PROFILE

ONE STEP AT A TIME

Could turning our footsteps into electricity help meet our energy needs? One young eco-entrepreneur thinks so
BY DAVID THOMAS

PHOTOGRAPHED BY JAMES CLARKE

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**30-year-old
Laurence
Kemball-Cook,
the founder
of Pavegen**

LAURENCE KEMBALL-COOK seems like the kind of young man any mother would want her daughter to bring home. He has a neat, healthy, clean-cut appearance and a polite, even charming manner. His office near London's King's Cross Station is relaxed, a little scruffy, filled with informally dressed staff who all radiate the same air of youthful enthusiasm as their boss.

Yet this 30-year-old engineer, inventor and entrepreneur is, by his own admission, an obsessive workaholic. "Some people would probably say that I'm a perfectionist, to a point that can be quite frustrating," he says.

He's also the creator of 'Pavegen', a paving tile for which he now holds a patent, that turns the force of people's footsteps into clean, renewable energy.

"My vision is for Pavegen to be to cities what 'Intel inside' is for PCs," he says. "I want to cover every single city in the world with our tiles. I want

to work at the energy company E.ON.

"They said, 'Laurence, can you design a street light that's powered by solar or by wind?'" he recalls. "But when the sun's not shining there's no power and when the wind's not blowing there's no power. So I tried for a year and I failed.

"I was really upset. Then one day I was walking through Victoria Station in London and I thought about all the people there. I'd read that 38,000 people an hour walked through the station. What if we could harness that energy as a power source?"

Laurence admits, "The idea of generating energy from footsteps isn't new and other people have tried it. They're using things such as the piezoelectric crystals you find in cigarette lighters to create a charge. But the power is so low that you can never do anything meaningful with that energy."

Laurence took a different route. The weight of a footstep on his tile makes a horizontal flywheel inside it rotate.

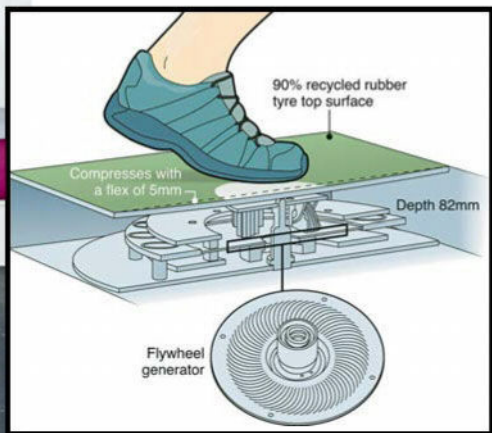
"The more people walk, the more this flywheel spins," he explains. "Then we withdraw the power from the flywheel as we need it. We can suck it out bit by bit."

"I want to cover every city in the world with our tiles, and to turn every bridge, road and building into a kinetic-energy device"

to turn every bridge, road and building into a kinetic-energy device."

The idea first came to him while he was studying industrial design and technology at Loughborough University. As part of his course he was sent

Laurence Kemball-Cook puts his tile technology through its paces; (below) each time a pedestrian walks over a tile, it produces seven watts of energy



Every pedestrian that passes over a tile generates around seven watts in energy. These tiles generate electricity with a hybrid solution of mechanisms that include the piezoelectric effect (an electric charge produced when pressure is exerted on crystals such as quartz) and induction, which uses copper coils and magnets.

At the 2013 Paris Marathon, where Pavegen installed tiles at the finish, the runners crossed 176 tiles, leaving 401,756 footsteps that generated 3,141,926 joules – enough to recharge 1880 mobile phones or power an electric Nissan Leaf car for 24 km.

TODAY Laurence manufactures the tiles at a factory in Romania. “I love the people in Eastern Europe,” he says. “My engineers there speak very emotionally about the Communist days. They couldn’t buy anything from outside Romania, so they had to make everything themselves. It’s amazing, that can-do attitude.”

He’s already exporting his tiles from Romania via London to the world. “We’ve done more than 135 projects in over 30 countries. We’ve been contracted by the mayor of Washington DC to install Pavegen just outside the White House. We covered the Champs-Élysées in Paris with our tiles for the Paris Marathon. At the Milan Expo we made a system for Coca-Cola so that as

people danced on the floor it powered the music and made it go louder.”

But his ambitions are as much moral as commercial. Once the tiles are manufactured, the system requires no fossil fuels, generates no CO₂ and produces no pollutants, which is why he says, “Some people might define their aims as wealth or success, but for me it’s just, *Let’s get it out there and do good.*”

But could this really make a difference to energy use? Julie Hirigoyen, chief executive of Britain’s branch of the non-profit World Green Building Council, thinks so. It is a “hugely innovative technology”, she says.

She likes the way that it “engages users and makes them aware that they’re helping to solve a problem. We certainly need every clever form of renewable solution.”

Hirigoyen sees Pavegen as one of those possible solutions, but cautions that the manufacturing cost – which Laurence estimates as £230–£310 per square metre of tile – remains a problem except in places with very substantial footfall, such as shopping centres, railway stations and airports.

He is well aware that price is an issue but claims, “In the next 24 months we’ll make our tiles the same price as normal flooring. And when you install them, they’ll give you energy for free.”

There’s no doubting Laurence’s good intentions for his technology. In a project funded by Shell in 2014, Laurence brought Pavegen to the Morro



da Mineira *favela*, one of the poorest areas of Rio de Janeiro. Two hundred tiles were placed under the surface of a local football pitch, so now the players help power the floodlights.

This was clearly a project that meant a huge amount to Laurence: “It’s a crazy environment, where the kids run around with machine guns, but it was an honour to work with those guys.”

IT’S ALL A LONG WAY from the quiet cathedral city of Canterbury, Kent, where Laurence grew up. At school, he says, “I was really into taking things apart and putting them back together. I just loved it.

“I’ve always had an engineering heritage. My grandfather helped develop early radar technology and worked on the first computers for disabled people. My uncle has also spent his whole life inventing things.”

To that family background he added the determination that’s required by anyone who wants to turn small ideas into big businesses. “Nothing will stop





Pavegen tiles being installed at the 2012 Olympics (left); runners bound over them at the Paris Marathon (below)



me," he says, not as a boast, but simply as a statement of intent. "I've always said that if I have an idea I'll do it. I believe as an entrepreneur that you should jump off a cliff and learn how to swim on the way down."

Laurence says that as a student he "industrialised" the world of university. He had six desks in his bedroom, each with a specific function – one for electronic engineering, one for drawing and another served as a mechanical workshop. "There were rigs full of springs and generators on my bed."

His Pavegen idea became his final year project. "When I submitted it, my lecturer swore at me because I had four suitcases of work."

After graduation, he accepted the offer of an internship with a design company in New York, but then changed his mind. "I owed it to myself to keep going with Pavegen." There were plenty of low points, he admits. "I survived on bread and water, and sat in my flat for days and weeks on end, working all night, focused on the challenge. I often felt like giving up."

Laurence wasn't just searching for a way to generate power. He also had to make a tile strong enough to survive out on the streets. "You've got weathering, you've got vandalism," he points out. You have to withstand 15 million, 20 million steps. And you also have to take excessive point-loads, whether they are women in stilettos or fire engines going 50 miles per hour."

Slowly, things started coming together. He displayed his work at a design show in London with 1000 other young designers and "suddenly it went viral". The media picked up on the idea of paving stones that could generate power and that, in turn, attracted Laurence's first clients.

The developers of a huge shopping mall in London contacted him because their planning permission depended on the use of sustainable energy, which Pavegen could provide. Transport for London, which was planning for the 2012 Olympics, asked if it could put Pavegen tiles into an underground station close to the Olympic Stadium. During the course of the games, a million people walked over them.

By his mid-20s, Laurence had become a feted young entrepreneur and was invited to accompany UK Prime Minister David Cameron on a trade mission to China.

But he didn't get everything right. Early Pavegen tiles had large, round lights that lit up whenever anyone stepped on them. They looked great, but, says Laurence, "when we started installing them we saw that women all walked around the lights. They were worried there were cameras in there, looking up their skirts."

THERE'S ALSO ANOTHER SIDE to the tiles: they can be used to gather data about footfall. Shopping-centre companies could see exactly how many people go where, and when, and determine precisely which are the most valuable spots in their developments.



"I still live in the same bedroom that I did when I started the company. If I focus on the business, good times will come"

Managers of stations, airports or stadiums could detect and prevent dangerous levels of overcrowding building up.

To date, Pavegen has earned around £3m and is valued at £20m. But, says Laurence, "I still live in the same bedroom that I did when I started the

company and I'm happy there. I have a faster bicycle than I did back then, but that's it. There's no point in taking money out of the business at this stage. If I focus on the business, good times will come."

Laurence's dedication has come at a personal price. As he puts it: "Total girlfriends lost: three." He adds, "A lot of my friends have got families and kids at this stage of their lives, but I've chosen not to because this is my challenge – and until I've done it I don't want to worry about that."

So when he's not working, Laurence likes to compete in cycle races and Ironman triathlons. "I've cycled [from London] to Amsterdam in a day, cycled to Paris in a day. At the weekend I'll run a half-marathon or go swimming in the Serpentine in London. I learn a lot about myself when I'm training. It's like a meditative state."

On the walls of his office, alongside the mass of framed awards that Pavegen has won for technology, environmentalism and entrepreneurship, are printed inspirational statements from thinkers and businessmen from Albert Einstein to Sir Richard Branson.

One day, if he really does manage to power the world's cities with his tiles, Laurence Kembell-Cook may be as celebrated as Einstein and as rich as Branson. And perhaps young entrepreneurs of the future will look at their own office walls and his exhortation: "Jump off a cliff and learn how to swim on the way down." **R**

Laughter

THE BEST MEDICINE

WEIGHT FOR IT...

A woman noticed her husband standing on a bathroom scale, sucking in his stomach. "Ha! That's not going to help," she said.

"Sure it does," he shot back. "It's the only way I can see the numbers."

Seen online



Instagram is just Twitter for people who go outside.

@JOSHGONDELMAN

ADVANCED SNOOZING

My brother was trying to awaken his son for school one day, but the boy wouldn't budge. "Gimme a minute," he said. "I'm watching previews for tomorrow's dream."

SUBMITTED BY KIMBERLEE WOODWARD

ANGRY ACTIVIST

Sue went to university and joined an animal-rights group. When she returned home, she was shocked to find her mother wearing a pricey fur coat.

"Don't you realise some poor, defenceless animal had to suffer for you to get that coat?" Sue asked her mother, impassioned.

"Don't talk about your father like that again!" came the reply.

SUBMITTED BY CATHERINE HISCOX

COURTROOM CLASH

A defendant isn't happy with how things are going in court, so he gives the judge a hard time.

Judge: "Where do you work?"

Defendant: "Here and there."

Judge: "What do you do for a living?"

Defendant: "This and that."

Judge: "Take him away."

Defendant: "Wait, when will I get out?"

Judge: "Sooner or later."

SUBMITTED BY PAT FERRY

PARKING PROBLEMS

Caught up running errands, my mum's friend forgot where she'd parked.

A police officer, noticing her agitation, asked, "Is something wrong?"

"I can't find my car," she explained.

"What kind is it?"

She gave the helpful police officer a quizzical look. "Name some."

SUBMITTED BY JACKSON HALL

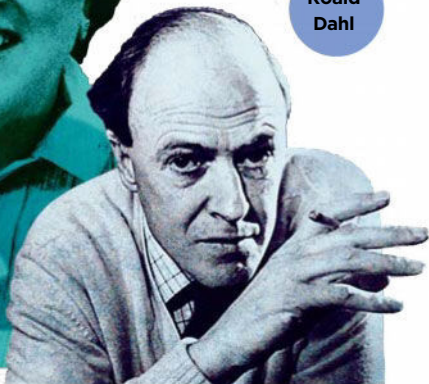




Harry
Houdini



Julia
Child



Roald
Dahl

3 Celebrities Who Spied On the Side

BY LINDA RODRIGUEZ McROBBIE FROM *MENTAL FLOSS*

Harry Houdini

THE MAGICIAN WHO SPIED HIS WAY TO STARDOM

At the start of his career in the late 19th century, Harry Houdini gained notoriety by waltzing into police stations and demanding officers lock him up. It was a great publicity stunt, making headlines and catching the eye of American and British intelligence

agencies. According to a 2006 biography, both Scotland Yard and the Secret Service used him to gather sensitive information for them during his tours across Europe and Russia.

In return for his services, the book says, Houdini asked for publicity. Scotland Yard superintendent William Melville helped him organise escape stunts in front of London theatre managers.

Julia Child

THE CHEF WITH A TASTE FOR DANGER AND ADVENTURE

Julia Child wasn't always into French cooking. As she famously recounted in her autobiography, *My Life in France*, it wasn't until she lived in Paris in her mid-30s that she learned what good food tasted like.

How did Child keep busy before that? By performing equally inventive work for the Office of Strategic Services (OSS), precursor to the CIA. Child joined the spy outfit in 1942 after discovering that the Women's Army Corps had a height limit; at 1.8 m, she was too tall to serve. One of Child's first assignments was to help cook up a shark repellent to prevent underwater explosives used to target German U-boats from being set off by curious creatures. By all accounts, she excelled at her work. Child then went to Ceylon (now Sri Lanka) and then China, where she worked as chief of the OSS Registry, enjoying top security clearance and even a little danger. (The CIA remains mum about exactly what she did.)

Working at the OSS also turned out to be a recipe for love, with Julia falling for fellow officer Paul Child and marrying in 1946. Within two years, Paul was transferred to the US Information Agency in France, where Julia,

who had quit her job, took up cooking to occupy her time. The rest, as they say, is culinary history.

Roald Dahl

THE LADIES' MAN WHO FELL IN LOVE WITH WRITING

Long before he wrote *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory*, Roald Dahl was a fighter pilot for the Royal Air Force during World War II. But after sustaining injuries in a 1940 crash, he was transferred to a desk job at the British embassy in Washington. He charmed his way into high society and became so popular among DC ladies that British intelligence decided he should seduce powerful women and use them to promote Britain's interests in the US.

It wasn't all fun and games. Clare Boothe Luce, a member of the US House of Representatives married to

Time magazine founder Henry Luce, was so frisky in the bedroom that Dahl begged to be let off the case. In the end, however, his work with the ladies paid off. Dahl not only rallied support for Britain at a time when many Americans didn't want the country to enter the war, he also managed to pass valuable

stolen documents to the British government. While penning propaganda in US papers, Dahl discovered something else: his own talent for writing. **R**

“
**She was so
frisky in the
bedroom
that Dahl
begged to be
let off the
case**”
—



SEE THE WORLD ...

Turn the page ➡➡





A man in a green jacket and cap is walking across a narrow wooden bridge or trolley over a canal. The background is filled with dense, vibrant green foliage and trees, suggesting a lush, forested area. The scene is captured from a low angle, emphasizing the man's presence in the landscape.

... DIFFERENTLY

Boat lovers – and railway buffs – will be fascinated by this unique monument to the art of hydro-engineering. To travel the 80.5 km from Elbląg to Ostróda in Poland by canal, boats would have had to overcome a difference in height of almost 100 metres over a section of the route. This would have required more than 30 locks. However, an ingenious system of inclined planes and rail-mounted trolleys designed by German architect Georg Steenke, and first opened in 1860, masters this difficult task. With the help of counterbalances and water power, boats are pulled across the dry, hilly sections of the canal – on railroad tracks.

PHOTOS: ALAMY

SCIENCE

ARE WE NATURAL-BORN RACISTS?

BY CHRIS MOONEY
FROM *MOTHER JONES*



A simple test revealed the writer's ingrained prejudice. Equally simple psychology can help all of us to remove it

I'M SITTING in the soft-spoken cognitive neuroscientist's spotless office, nestled within New York University's psychology department, but it feels like I'm at the doctor's office getting a dreaded diagnosis. On his giant monitor, David Amodio shows me a big blob of data depicting

where people score on the Implicit Association Test (IAT). The test measures racial prejudices that we cannot consciously control. I've taken it three times now. This time, my uncontrolled prejudice, while clearly present, has come in significantly below the average for white people like me.



That certainly beats the first time I took the IAT. That time, my results showed a ‘strong automatic preference’ for European Americans over African Americans. That was not a good thing to hear, but it’s extremely common – 51% of online test takers show moderate to strong bias.

**“You’re not, like,
a total racist,”
David Amodio
tells me**



The test asks you to rapidly categorise images of faces as either ‘African American’ or ‘European American’ while you also categorise words (such as *evil*, *happy*, *awful* and *peace*) as either ‘good’ or ‘bad’. Faces and words flash on the screen, and you tap a key, as fast as you can, to indicate which category is appropriate.

Sometimes you’re asked to sort African American faces and ‘good’ words to one side of the screen. Other times, black faces are to be sorted with ‘bad’ words. As words and faces keep flashing by, you struggle not to make too many sorting mistakes.

And then suddenly, you have a horrible realisation. When black faces and ‘bad’ words are paired, you feel yourself becoming faster in your categorising – an indication that the two

are more easily linked in your mind.

You think of yourself as a person who strives to be unprejudiced, but you can’t control these split-second reactions. As the milliseconds are being tallied up, you know the tale they’ll tell: when negative words and black faces are paired, you’re a better,

faster categoriser. Which suggests that racially biased messages from the culture around you have shaped the very wiring of your brain.

We’re not born with racial prejudices. We may never even have been ‘taught’ them.

Rather, explains University of Virginia psychologist Brian Nosek, prejudice draws on “many of the same tools that help our minds figure out what’s good and what’s bad.” In evolutionary terms, it’s efficient to quickly classify a grizzly bear as dangerous. However, the trouble comes when the brain uses similar processes to form negative views about groups of people.

But here’s the good news: research suggests that once we understand the psychological pathways leading to our prejudices, we just might be able to train our brains to move in the opposite direction.

Brains are filing cabinets

Dog, cat. Hot, cold. Black, white. Male, female. We constantly categorise. We have to. Sorting anything from

furniture to animals to concepts into different folders inside our brains is something that happens automatically, and it helps us function. In fact, categorisation has an evolutionary purpose: assuming that all mushrooms are poisonous and that all lions want to eat you is a very effective way of coping with your surroundings. Forget being nuanced about nonpoisonous mushrooms and occasionally nonhungry lions – certitude keeps you safe.

But a particular way of categorising can be inaccurate, and those false categories can lead to prejudice and stereotyping. Much psychological research into bias has focused on how people ‘essentialise’ certain categories, which boils down to assuming that these categories have an underlying nature that is tied to inherent and immutable qualities.

Like other human attributes (gender, age and sexual orientation are some examples), race tends to be strongly – and inaccurately – essentialised. This means that when you think of people in that category, you rapidly or even automatically come up with assumptions about their characteristics. Common stereotypes with the category ‘African Americans’, for example, include ‘loud’, ‘good dancers’ and ‘good at sports’. Essentialism about *any* group of people is dubious – aged people are not inherently feeble-minded, women are not innately gentle – and when it comes to race, the idea of deep and fundamental

differences has been roundly debunked by scientists.

Even people who know that essentialising race is wrong can’t help absorbing the stereotypes that are pervasive in US culture. In polls, for example, few Americans admit holding racist views. But when told to rate the intelligence of various groups, more than half exhibited strong bias against African Americans. Even the labels used seem to affect the level of prejudice: another study found that test subjects associated the term *black* with more negative attributes – such as low socioeconomic status – than *African American*.

We’re herd animals

Humans are tribal creatures, showing strong bias against those we perceive as different from us and favouritism towards those we perceive as similar. In fact, we humans will frequently divide ourselves into in-groups and out-groups even when the perceived differences between the specific groups are completely arbitrary.

In one study, subjects are asked to rate how much they like a large series of paintings, some of which are described as belonging to the ‘Red’ artistic school and others to the ‘Green’ school. Then participants are randomly sorted into two groups, red or green. In subsequent tasks, people consistently show favouritism towards the arbitrary colour group to which they are assigned.

In other words, if you give people the slightest push towards behaving tribally, they'll happily comply. So if race is the basis on which tribes are identified, expect serious problems.

One simple evolutionary explanation for our tendency towards tribalism is safety in numbers. You're more likely to survive an attack from a marauding tribe if you join forces with your buddies. And primal fear of those not in the in-group also seems closely tied to racial bias.

Amodio's research suggests that one key area associated with prejudice is the amygdala, a small and evolutionarily ancient region in the middle of the brain that is responsible for triggering the notorious fight-or-flight response. In interracial situations, Amodio explains, amygdala firing can translate into anything from "less direct eye gaze and more social distance" to literal fear and vigilance towards those of other races.

Racism's effect on racists

Prejudice often has an unintended consequence – it can interfere with how our brains function and make us less innovative. We're not talking about artistic creativity here but seeing beyond the constraints of traditional categories, or thinking outside the box.

Carmit Tadmor, a psychologist at the Recanati School of Business at Tel Aviv University, and her colleagues used a simple test in which

individuals were asked to list possible uses for a brick. People who could think outside traditional categories – aside from being used in building, bricks make good paperweights, for example – score better. This study showed that people who essentialised racial categories tended to have fewer innovative ideas about a brick.

But that was just the beginning. Next, a new set of research subjects read essays that described race either as a fundamental difference between people (an essentialist position) or as a construct, not reflecting anything more than skin-deep differences (a nonessentialist position). After reading the essays, the subjects moved on to a difficult creativity test that required them to identify the one key word that united three seemingly unassociated words. Thus, for instance, if a subject was given the words *call*, *pay* and *line*, the correct answer was *phone*. Remarkably, subjects who'd read the nonessentialist essay about race fared considerably better on the creativity test. Their mean score was 32% higher than the mean score of those who read the essentialist essay.

"Essentialism appears to exert its negative effects on creativity not through what people think but how they think," concludes Tadmor. That's because "stereotyping and creative stagnation are rooted in a similar tendency to overrely on existing category attributes." Those quick-judgement skills that allowed us to

survive on the savanna? Not always helpful in modern life.

A solution to prejudice

The upshot of all this research is that in order to rid the world of prejudice, we can't simply snuff out overt racism. Nor can we fundamentally remake the human brain, with its rapid-fire associations and its groupish tendencies. Instead, the key lies in shifting people's behaviour. And that just might be possible. In a massive study, Brian Nosek of the University of Virginia and his colleagues tested 17 different proposed ways of reducing people's unconscious bias on the IAT.

The single best intervention involved putting people into scenarios in which a black person became their ally while white people were depicted as the bad guys. In this intervention, participants read an evocative story told in second-person narrative in which a white man assaults the participant and a black man rescues him. Then the participants took the IAT – and showed 48% less bias than a control group. (Note: the groups in these various studies were mostly white; no participants were black.)

Another successful variation had nonblacks think about black role models or imagine themselves playing on a dodgeball team with black teammates against a team of white people

(who proceed to cheat). It appears that our tribal instincts can actually be co-opted to decrease racial prejudice, if we are made to see those of other races as part of our team.

When it comes to weakening racial essentialism, Tadmor undertook another tack. Subjects were exposed to one of three 20-minute multimedia presentations: one exclusively about American culture; one exclusively



To rid the world of prejudice, we can't simply snuff out overt racism or remake the human brain

about Chinese culture; and one comparing American and Chinese cultures, which presumably led to a more nuanced perspective on their similarities and differences.

Tadmor found that white research subjects who had heard the multicultural presentation (but not the American-only or Chinese-only presentation) were less likely than members of the other study groups to endorse stereotypes about African Americans. That was true even though the research subjects had learned about Chinese and American cultures, not African American culture specifically.

In a variation, the same 20-minute lecture also produced fewer discriminatory hiring decisions. After hearing one of the three kinds of lectures, white study subjects were shown a series of résumés for the position of sales manager at a company. Some applicants had white-sounding names,

culture picked a white candidate 86% of the time. But subjects who had heard the culture-comparing lecture selected the white candidate only 56% of the time.

These studies suggest that, at least for the short time span of a psychology experiment, there are cognitive

ways to make people less prejudiced.

To be sure, it will take more than consciousness raising to erase the deep tracks of prejudice that America in particular has carved through the generations. But it's a start. Taking the IAT

There are cognitive ways to make people less prejudiced



and some had black-sounding names.

White subjects who had heard the lecture exclusively about American culture (with topics like Disney, Coca-Cola and the White House) picked a white candidate over an equally qualified black candidate 81% of the time. Subjects who had heard the lecture exclusively about Chinese

has made me realise that we can't just draw some arbitrary line between prejudiced people and unprejudiced people and declare ourselves to be on the side of the angels. Biases have slipped into all our brains. And that means we all have a responsibility to recognise those biases – and to work to change them. **R**

MOTHER JONES (NOVEMBER/DECEMBER 2014), © 2014 BY MOTHER JONES
AND THE FOUNDATION FOR NATIONAL PROGRESS, MOTHERJONES.COM.

* * *

CATS RULE, OK

Cats are notorious for making humans follow their wishes.

And here's one reason why we are so swift to obey. Cats soliciting food will make an urgent cry in the 220 to 520-hertz frequency range while purring at a lower frequency. Babies also cry in this frequency range (usually between 300 and 600 hertz), and humans find it difficult to ignore. *MENTAL FLOSS*



Feeding *the* Olympics

Keeping everyone fed at this year's Rio Games will be a culinary challenge of epic proportions.

We look at what the athletes will be eating

PHOTO: ISTOCK

BY DAVID THOMAS

NAPOLEON ONCE SAID THAT ARMIES march on their stomachs – and exactly the same is true of athletes. To countless millions, next month's Olympic Games in Rio de Janeiro, from August 5 to 21, will be the planet's greatest festival of sport. But as Professor David Russell, whose company was hired to oversee the creation and delivery of food at London 2012, points out, the Olympics is also "the world's greatest food event".

At Rio, there will be 10,500 athletes from more than 200 countries, some 7000 team officials and 8 million spectators. The restaurant at the athletes' village expects to serve some 60,000 meals a day, getting through a daily total of 250 tonnes of food.

The eight key principles that underpin the Rio food and drink operation start with a commitment to safety. The 2500-strong catering team will work round the clock to ensure that everything consumed will be healthy, safe and uncontaminated by natural food poisons or illicit chemicals.

"Food purity is the number one priority," Russell says. "How to look after the welfare of the athletes consumes hours and hours of our time."

The next challenge is the complex matter of meeting the nutritional needs of every conceivable size and shape of competitor. "Each trains their body to be at peak performance. They all have their own nutritional needs and every individual's diet is different during their event, before it or after it," says Russell.

With a floor space of 24,700 m², the athletes' restaurant in Rio will be a

grand affair, with ten serving islands separated by themes. As at the last Olympics, nutritionists will be on hand to give advice. "A lot of athletes know exactly what food they need," says Russell. "But others, who are coming to major games for the first time, spend hours talking to those guys."

THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN competitors' eating habits was perfectly illustrated at the Beijing Olympics of 2008, where US swimming superstar Michael Phelps, whose body did not appear to possess a single gram of excess weight, said that he consumed between 33,000 kilojoules (kJ) and 42,000 kJ a day.

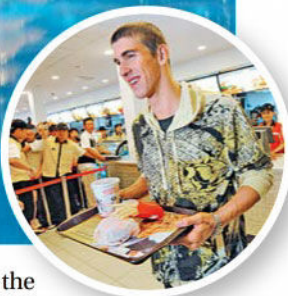
He described sitting down to a typical breakfast of three sandwiches filled with fried eggs, cheese, fried onions, tomatoes and lettuce; a bowl of grits (thick maize porridge); three slices of French toast with powdered sugar and three chocolate-chip pancakes.

By contrast, US gymnast Nastia Liukin, who won the Beijing women's all-round gold medal, had a daily intake of just 5000 kJ.

The 18-year-old Liukin revealed that she might have a breakfast of

*A monster diet
for the Olympic
champion included a
McDonald's meal
in Beijing*

Michael Phelps 42,000 kilojoules a day



eggs, or yoghurt, or oatmeal, but certainly not all three. "Then for lunch I'll have a salad with chicken or fish or some sort of protein and then for dinner I keep it really light with probably just a piece of fish and vegetables."

So you have one gold medallist eating far more at a single breakfast sitting than another does in an entire day. Likewise a male marathon runner, who wants to combine maximum endurance with minimum weight, might eat around 13,000-15,000 kJ a day, while a triathlete, who needs upper body strength as well as endurance, gets through 25,000 kJ (women would consume roughly 75-80% as much as their male equivalents).

Now factor in the very different types of food habitually eaten by competitors from, say, Belgium and Brazil, or Jamaica and Japan. Add to that the personal principles, medical conditions or religious dietary laws that affect the food they are allowed, or allow, themselves to eat.

FLÁVIA ALBUQUERQUE IS THE FOOD and beverages manager at Rio 2016. She is well aware of the challenge she faces in meeting the different nutritional needs of the athletes. "The food will have information that explains how many kilojoules, how much protein, carbohydrate, fat and salt they



Gold medal-winning gymnast Nastia Liukin kept her meals light

Nastia Liukin
5000
kilojoules a day

have,” she says. The presence of gluten and lactose will also be flagged, with options free of these substances served for those with an intolerance.

Although Albuquerque points out that “we will not put chilli in foods, we will offer it separately”, an event of this nature is a chance for the host nation to showcase its own vibrant cuisine. “We’re going to offer a good variety of the best tastes of Brazil. We hope that the foreign athletes try these and enjoy them,” she says.

Alongside options such as Italian, Asian, ‘tastes of the world’, halal and kosher, there will be a traditional Brazilian *churrasco* (barbecue). The

athletes should also get the chance to try the likes of *pão de queijo* (baked bread balls filled with cheese), *brigadeiro* (a classic Brazilian sweet) and the more obviously healthy açaí, the Amazonian fruit popular with athletes for its high-energy value.

Whatever the specific dishes on offer at Rio, they will not be there by chance. Olympics organisers talk to the federations that govern the various sports to discuss their specific needs. Competitors can come to the Games reassured that if quinoa or feta cheese is important to them, it will be there.

Mike Naylor, a top nutritionist who is advising the British Olympic squad,

describes this as “performance-focused eating.” He explains: “Every meal and every piece of food has a purpose, whether it’s to improve recovery, or prepare the athlete for the next session, or just maintain general wellness and reduce the number of missed training sessions.”

Most competitors eat more when they train than when they compete. “You get the main fuel in days before the event, topping up the muscles’ stores of glycogen [a form of glucose that acts as the body’s energy reserve],” Naylor says. “Then on the competition day you eat to feel neither too hungry nor too full.”

Even so, he adds, “Food can have a direct competitive effect on the day of an event. Marathon runners, for example, can only store so much carbohydrate in their muscles, so they need top-ups during the race.”

FOR THE NUTRITIONISTS, THE REAL work is done before the competitors even set foot inside the dining hall at the Olympic Village. The British Olympic squad will be based at a preparation camp in Belo Horizonte, 350 km from Rio.

Competitors will arrive there in mid-July and not be flown to Rio until three or four days before their event takes place. That way, their environment, their training and their diets can be controlled with absolute precision.

“We’re not policing or babysitting athletes,” Naylor insists, but he

admits, “There are little ways we can play with the environment to give athletes a nudge and encourage them to eat the food they need.

“So, if you want someone to increase their vegetable intake, but decrease carbohydrates, you’d put the vegetables before the carbs and meat in the serving line so there’s less room on the plate for a lot of high-kilojoule food.”

Megan Pugh, who was a groom for the German showjumping team that won gold at Sydney 2000, before working on the equestrian events at Athens 2004 and Beijing 2008, had a similar approach to the horses she cared for.

“There are so many tricks you play on them, just like with humans,” she says. For example, it’s very important that horses, like humans, drink enough water to keep properly hydrated during competition. “I shove heaven knows how many carrots into a bucket of water,” she says. “I know that the horse is so greedy that he’ll never take his mouth out of it. He’ll just drink as he’s playing with the carrots.

“In showjumping you’ve got an athlete on the top and an athlete on the bottom,” adds Pugh. “A top horse is a highly demanding animal with its own personality – just like the rider. So feeding is horse specific. You wouldn’t give the same diet to a big, old laid-back stallion as you would to a nervous, highly strung mare.”

Like its rider, a horse wants to eat the food it’s used to, in the way it’s used to. Teams therefore fly in their

Showjumping horse 80,000 kilojoules a day

*Olympic steeds
consume up to
80,000 kilojoules
a day when
competing*



own supplies, under strict supervision by the International Olympic Committee, to ensure that all the feed is free of banned substances.

Top European teams such as Germany and France use 'haylage', a grass-based foodstuff that is nutritious and free from dust, which can affect the horses' respiratory systems.

A typical showjumper's day, Pugh says, involves 30 to 40 minutes training and a food intake of around 62,000 kJ. This rises to 67,000-80,000 kJ during competition, when the physical and mental stress can cause the horse to lose weight and strength unless it is

given regular snacks of haylage to top up its energy.

FOR ALL THE SIMILARITIES between two- and four-legged Olympians, there is one big difference: horses don't consider eating to be a social activity. But for the human athletes at Rio, the dining halls at the Olympic village and at other Games sites are the places where they mingle with other young people from all over the world.

Whatever the differences in achievement and ability, this communal

eating space is a great leveller, with golden girls and also-rans standing side by side in the line for food, or sharing spaces at the same tables.

"It's a unique environment," says British hockey player Anne Panter. "It doesn't matter if you're a superstar, you're just like any other athlete preparing for an event."

There are, of course, some stars who are even more super than others. Usain Bolt will surely cause the same commotion at Rio as he did at the 2012 Games. Four years ago, Bolt's first appearance in the dining hall, flanked by a Jamaican shot-putter and discus-thrower as bodyguards, brought the place to a standstill as he strolled to the rotisserie section, where Caribbean-style chicken was served.

Similar excitement hit the McDonald's restaurant at the Beijing Olympics when Michael Phelps popped in for a bite. McDonald's, one of the Games' major sponsors, will provide 8-10% of the food athletes consume: a Big Mac has become the traditional treat the competitors allow themselves when competition is over and they can – for a while at least – eat whatever they like.

What Russell recalls most clearly from the last Olympics is the way that the mood of the dining hall changed

during the day. "You can sense the level of tension prior to really big events," he says. "When you walk into the canteen at breakfast, the room is quiet, suppressed. People are eating as individuals, isolated on their own, in their own space, taking time out to think and prepare. But by late afternoon, the place is filled by the sound of people's voices.

"There'll be big tables of 20 people, real multicultural groups, where all the athletes who've been competing against each other are telling their stories of the day, tweeting and taking selfies. You can see lifelong friendships being formed. I just thought, *This feels like a church in the morning and a party in the afternoon.*"

And that atmosphere of fun and celebration is exactly what he foresees for Rio. The beach volleyball, for instance, will be held at Copacabana, where *agua de coco* (coconut water) will be served in fresh coconuts.

"We planned London like a military operation. We were trying to achieve perfection," says Russell. "At Rio they will create something very different. It will be a relaxed environment, more like a party.

"And if there's one thing Rio knows, it's how to hold a great party." **R**



UPON IMPACT

Standing in the park, I was wondering why a Frisbee looks larger
the closer it gets ... then it hit me. **STEWART FRANCIS**

Life's Like That

SEEING THE FUNNY SIDE

JULY
1955

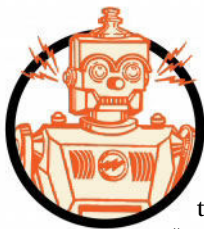
From the Archives

On the face of it, a charming 61-year-old story. Had it occurred today, we may have seen an arrest.

At a bus stop, a beautiful young girl was leaving amid the fond farewells of a group of boys and girls. Since she was embracing and kissing them all around, our departure was considerably held up.

Finally our handsome young bus driver heaved himself out of his seat and got in line with the affectionate youngsters. When it came to his turn, he gave the girl an enthusiastic kiss and hug, then picked her up and put her aboard the bus – and we were off.

SUBMITTED BY MRS A.M. STEVENS



MAN OR MACHINE?

My grandson, aged four, was sitting on his grandfather's lap when he felt his pacemaker through his shirt.

"Grandpa, what's that?"

he asked.

"That's my battery."

Aghast, the boy said, "Grandpa, are you a robot?"

SUBMITTED BY SYLVIA SWENSON

FLIGHT CONTROL

My wife and I and our two kids were catching a flight recently. High winds during the landing made for an extra rough approach. Not being a good flyer, I was scared. I turned to my eight-year-old son and asked if he would hold my hand.

Shaking his head he said, "Get a grip, Dad. You're, like, 48 years old."

I was good after that.

SUBMITTED BY MURRAY SWANSTON

BETTER THAN MILK

I walked into our family room just in time to see our kitten standing on a side table, sniffing my husband's wineglass. "Get down!" I yelled.

As she jumped away, I turned to my husband and son: "I've never seen her do that."

My son shrugged. "Really? We watch her drink out of your glass all the time." **SUBMITTED BY REBECCA PERVERE**

**WHAT A SCOOP!**

My collection of vintage kitchen utensils includes one whose intended purpose was always a mystery.

It looks like a cross between a metal slotted spoon and a spatula, so I use it as both. The mystery was recently solved when I found one in its original packaging at a rummage sale.

It's a pooper-scooper.

SUBMITTED BY PATTY BROZO

WORST POSSIBLE RESPONSE

We were in a restaurant, perusing the menu, when I let my husband know that he rarely paid attention to me when I spoke. Well, of course he disagreed, so we went back to reading our menus in chilly silence. After a few uncomfortable minutes, I said, "I think I'm getting a headache."

He responded: "Go ahead, sweetheart; get whatever you want."

SUBMITTED BY ANGEL SALAMANCA

**The Great Tweet-off: Child-rearing edition**

These amusing Twitter posts give us an insight into the frustrations of parenthood.

Looks up from phone "Kids! We're leaving the playground in 22 per cent."

@ABHORRENT_WIFE

My 11yo wrote me an apology for misbehaving in the car that included "I love you so much but sometimes forget to care about your existence." **@MANDA_LIKE_WINE**

50% of parenting is looking for things with your kids that you've already thrown away.

@FATHERWITHTWINS

[Bedtime] **Me:** Your mum told you to stay in bed. **3-year-old:** There's a scary monster in my closet.

Me: Scariest than Mum? **3-year-old:** *goes to bed* **@XPLODINGUNICORN**

Funny how our kids can be so different in a million tiny, precious ways, yet are all exactly the same in a hundred huge, maddening ones.

@DADANDBURIED

A parent's job is basically a daily struggle to help a crazy person stay alive. **@ILIKE**



Grand Plans

A can't-miss babysitting guide for grandparents

BY ANDRE MAYER

THE FIRST TWO DECADES of parenthood are both tough and rewarding. By doing everything from toilet training to hosting birthday parties to puzzling through maths problems, you learn to be a drill sergeant, social convenor and crisis manager.

But once your kids grow up and move out, you might not have much use for those traits any more – until the fateful day your offspring ask you to look after *their* offspring. You might then worry your babysitting skills have slipped.

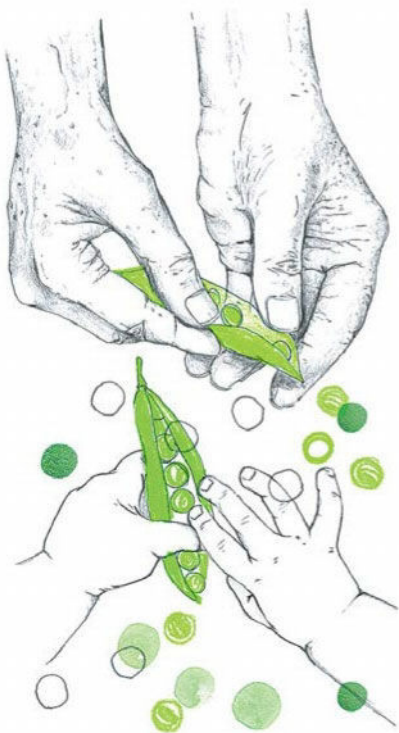
“Taking care of a child is not typically something one forgets how

to do, but [some particulars] may have changed,” says author and family psychologist Sara Dimerman. “And each child is different.”

Here’s the good news: you’ve still got it. You might just need to brush up on some techniques, whether you’re watching a young baby or a world-weary adolescent.

Respect routine

While your grandchildren aren’t strangers, you may not live with them on a daily basis. You and the parents should go over their routines – such as appropriate times for naps, dinner and



bed – as well as the kids’ idiosyncrasies, from food sensitivities to their favourite stuffed toys.

“Sometimes problems arise when grandparents assume they know better and do things their own way rather than following through with the parents’ requests,” points out Dimerman. “This can create conflict and may not always be in the child’s best interests.”

Once the parents feel confident you won’t scar their progeny, feel free to trust your instincts. You’ve got experience. You also have licence, as a grandparent, to bend the rules a bit if they don’t work for you or your routine.

Keeping them amused

Given the ubiquity of smartphones and other video-playing devices, some grandparents may think children can’t entertain themselves any other way. That’s simply not true, says Charlotte Livingston, a grandmother to three young boys.

With her ten-year-old grandson in particular, she says, “I feel that at home, there’s a heck of a lot of screen time. I actually like to limit that.”

Rather than simply switching on the TV or a tablet, Livingston keeps her grandsons absorbed in reading, crafts and outdoor activities, such as biking. She also brings along board games when she’s on babysitting duty.

The longer haul

If your grandkids are staying for a longer spell, it can be helpful to establish a daily routine, as though they were actually living with you. That might include stricter bedtimes and even some chores, suggests Patricia Adair, who has nine grandchildren and one great-grandchild.

Adair often gets them to help around the house or garden. Asking the younger set to lend a hand by mowing the lawn or to peel carrots for dinner helps them appreciate what goes into maintaining a household, she says,

and it can open up opportunities to have casual yet meaningful discussions about family and school.

Back to reality

For many kids, a trip to their grandparents’ house means a few more sweets, a few more stories and more freedom in general.

Still, you should ensure your charges understand that the party ends when they return home, says Kathy Buckworth, author of *I Am So the Boss of You*.

Being at Grandma and Grandad’s can be like a mini-holiday, Buckworth says, but after the fact, “it is normal to have a ‘re-entry’ period where the child is reintroduced to real life with Mum and Dad.”

R

YOUR HEALTH BY THE NUMBERS

BY JESS COX

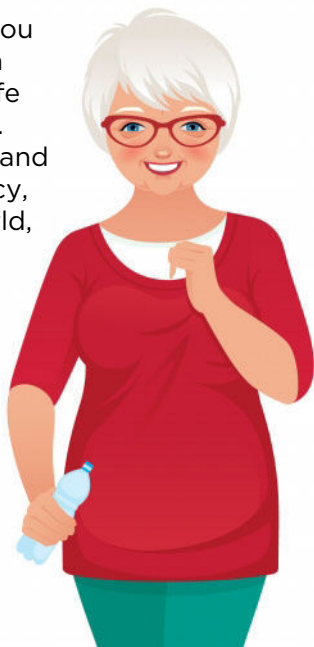
The human body is a well-designed machine – and staying healthy is a numbers game. Learn these vital statistics to give you a healthy edge

**20
MINUTES
3
TIMES A WEEK**

That's how much intense aerobic exercise you should do to help protect yourself against heart attacks and strokes. This means exercise that increases your heart and breathing rates, such as running or cycling.

48 Globally, if you were born in 1950, your life expectancy was only 48.

Fast-forward to 2013, and newborns' life expectancy, averaged across the world, is 71. Girls will now live to 73 and boys to 68. WHO statistics show that life expectancy has improved in nearly every country. Heart disease remains the leading cause of death worldwide.



1470 kJ

(351 kcal)

A 70 kg person will burn this much energy just by digging in the garden for an hour.

7.5

If you're trying to lose weight, aim for no more than 600 kJ (140 kcal) of added sugar a day – about 37 g or 7.5 teaspoons.

Scarily, that's the same amount in just one can (375 ml) of sweet fizzy drink.

120/80

Blood pressure readings consist of two numbers (120/80 for example). The upper number is your systolic blood pressure or the highest pressure when your heart beats and pushes blood.

The second number is your diastolic blood pressure or the lowest pressure when your heart relaxes between beats. Both numbers are expressed as mmHg (millimetres of mercury).



LOW BLOOD PRESSURE/ HYPOTENSION

Anything lower than 120/80

NORMAL BLOOD PRESSURE

120/80 to 129/85

HIGH-NORMAL BLOOD PRESSURE

130/85 to 139/89

HIGH BLOOD PRESSURE

140/90 or higher

VERY HIGH BLOOD PRESSURE

180/110 or higher

100 g

Nutrition information panels on food labels are often presented in standard formats which show the average amount per serve and per 100 g (or 100 ml if liquid). You can use this to compare products.

INGREDIENT

Total fat

Saturated fat

Total sugars

Sodium

HIGH

More than 20 g

More than 5 g

More than 15 g

More than 600 mg

LOW

3 g or less

1.5 g or less

5 g or less

120 mg or less



250 & 251

These are the codes for the food additives sodium nitrite (250) and sodium nitrate (251), commonly added to processed cured meats such as ham, salami, sausages and bacon. Last year, the World Health Organization (WHO) found processed meats to be 'probably carcinogenic'. Try to avoid them, or limit consumption.

OTHER FOOD ADDITIVE NUMBERS TO BE AWARE OF

SULPHUR DIOXIDE (220)

SODIUM METABISULPHITE (223)

These preservatives, often found in wine and dried fruit such as apricots, can trigger asthma attacks in children.

'THE SOUTHAMPTON 6'

TARTRAZINE (102), PONCEAU 4R (124), SUNSET YELLOW (110), CAMOISINE (122), QUINOLINE YELLOW (104) AND ALLURA RED (129)

These artificial colours, often found in children's favourite foods – along with

the preservative sodium benzoate – were linked in a landmark 2007 University of Southampton study to hyperactivity and behavioural problems in children.

SODIUM BENZOATE (211)

POTASSIUM BENZOATE (212)

ASCORBIC ACID (300)

Often found in non-cola fizzy drinks, juices and cordials, these substances can combine to form benzene, which is a known carcinogen.



1 SERVING

For serves of chicken, beef, pork and salmon

DECK OF CARDS

about 85–110 g

For white bread, white rice and potatoes

TENNIS BALL

about 2/3 cup

For pasta and fibre-rich types of cereal and rice

CRICKET BALL

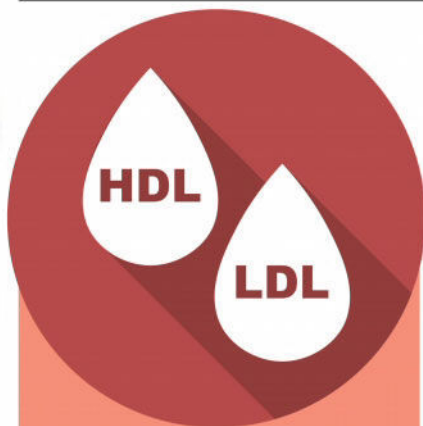
about 1 cup

For milk, yoghurt and soups

TAKEAWAY COFFEE CUP

about 250 ml





5 MMOL/L

Do you know your cholesterol numbers? You should have a cholesterol test every five years, or every two years if there is a family history of high cholesterol, or yearly if you have a high risk of cardiovascular disease or known high cholesterol.

TOTAL CHOLESTEROL Anything below 5 mmol/l is desirable.

LDL A healthy reading is anything less than 3.5 mmol/l. If you have heart risks such as diabetes or high blood pressure, your doctor may prescribe medications to try to lower your LDL cholesterol to below 1.8 mmol/l.

HDL 1–2.2 mmol/l for women and 0.9–2 mmol/l for men.

TRIGLYCERIDES A reading of less than 1.7 mmol/l is normal. Above 2 mmol/l is high; above 4.5 mmol/l is very high.

10,000

The magic number of steps you should aim to take in a day. This equates to about 7–8 km, or just over 1.5 hours walking. A pedometer is a great motivational tool to increase your steps. Buy a good-quality pedometer for accuracy.



WAIST = HEIGHT ÷ 2

Half your height or less is your ideal waist measurement. Scientists have found that this simple calculation is just as reliable as the body mass index (BMI) to waist ratio for predicting future health risk. Ideally, your waist measurement should be less than 95 cm for men (90 cm for Asian men) and 80 cm for all women.

BMI

To calculate your BMI, divide your weight in kilograms by your height in metres squared. For example, if you weigh 60 kg and are 1.65 m tall:

BMI = 60 ÷ (1.65 x 1.65) = 22

Normal weight = 18–24

Overweight = 25–29

Obese = 30+

Morbidly obese = 40+



*The magnificent Sheikh
Lotfollah Mosque
in Esfahan was built in
the 17th century*

START AT THE BEGINNING Iran stands apart from most other Middle Eastern countries thanks to its Persian heritage. In ancient times it was the heart of the Persian Empire – the largest empire the world had seen, stretching from Egypt across to Turkey and down into India in the 5th century BCE. It lasted just 200 years before falling to the Macedonian warrior-king Alexander the Great.

BY HAZEL FLYNN

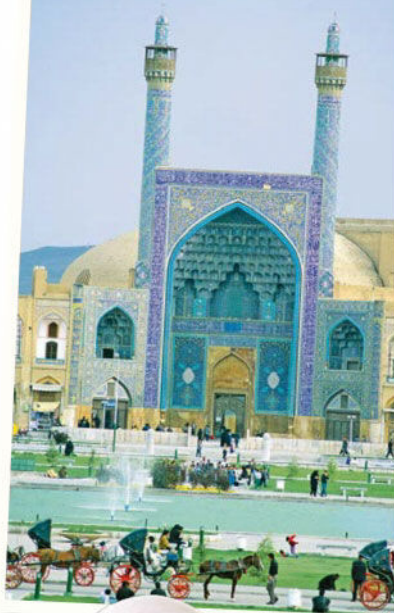
Iran

TELL ME MORE In the 600s Muslim Arabs became the new conquering force, bringing with them Islam, which displaced Zoroastrianism (a monotheistic religion founded by prophet Zoroaster) as the main religion. However, the people did not adopt the Arabic language, sticking with their traditional Persian (also called Farsi), and favouring the minority Shi'a branch of Islam.



“... engaging directly with the Iranian government on a sustained basis, for the first time in decades, has created a unique opportunity – a window – to try to resolve important issues.”

US President BARACK OBAMA, January 2016



*Hassan
Rouhani,
current
President
of Iran*

AND AFTER THAT? The country's strategic position and plentiful natural resources had both Russia and Britain eyeing it from the 1800s. By 1913 the British government owned all the country's oil and controlled its banks and Russia ran much of what was left. Britain decided to secure its interests and back a 1925 coup by military officer Reza Khan, who crowned himself Reza Shah Pahlavi. But in 1941, Britain and the Soviet Union forced him out and installed his son Mohammad Reza Shah Pahlavi in his place. A democratic movement gained ground but was squashed by vested international interests with help from the CIA. On the surface, Iran advanced under the Shah's reformist programmes, but fearsome secret police kept the population in check.



Mohammad Reza Shah Pahlavi and his wife, Empress Farah Pahlavi

WHAT HAPPENED NEXT? The unhappy populace rioted and in 1979 the Shah fled and religious leader Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini took control. That November Khomeini supporters seized the US embassy in Tehran and held more than 50 hostages for 444 days. In 1989 the Ayatollah called on Muslims around the world to kill author Salman Rushdie for supposed blasphemy. Moderate forces within Iran were brutally repressed. In recent years Iran was designated a 'state sponsor of terrorism', and major economic powers imposed trade sanctions. There was growing fear that Iran would develop its own nuclear weapons.



BY THE NUMBERS

79 million
population of Iran

US\$6752
annual average
household income in
Iranian cities

HAVE RELATIONS IMPROVED? Yes. After a decade of on-off diplomatic negotiations, a deal was reached last year between Iran and China, Russia, France, the US, the UK and Germany. Iran agreed to make changes so its nuclear facilities would be used for energy, not weapons, in return for the lifting of sanctions. Not everyone is happy: both Saudi Arabia and Israel mistrust the deal, but if it works it will have increased global security and given the Iranian people a chance to make economic progress.



Quotable Quotes



**THE DIFFERENCE
BETWEEN A HERO
AND A COWARD IS
ONE STEP SIDWAYS.**

GENE HACKMAN, actor

We are all heroes
in our own movies.

NG CHIN HAN,
Singaporean actor



Not sure which is harder on a relationship:
sharing a dresser for three years or
sharing an iPhone charger for one day.

RHEA BUTCHER, comedian

**AT EVERY MOMENT,
WE ARE VOLUNTEERS.**

STEPHEN COLBERT, TV personality

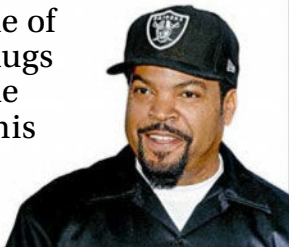


***Instant gratification
takes too long.***

CARRIE FISHER, actress and writer

Tupac was one of
the biggest thugs
I know, and he
always wore his
seat belt.

**ICE CUBE, rapper
and producer**



**LIFE IS ALWAYS
GOING TO BE
STRANGER THAN
FICTION, BECAUSE
FICTION HAS TO BE
CONVINCING, AND
LIFE DOESN'T.**

NEIL GAIMAN, author

What I learned was that these athletes were not
disabled, they were superabled. The Olympics
is where heroes are made. The Paralympics is
where heroes come.

JOEY REIMAN, author, on the Atlanta 1996 Paralympic Games



HEALING THROUGH FORGIVING

New research is revealing it can heal you
emotionally – and physically

BY LIA GRAINGER

FOR WEEKS, KARSTEN MATHIASSEN had been consumed by rage. Several months earlier, the Danish circus director's wife had left him to live with another man. Overwhelmed with hatred for his wife's new lover, the 40 year old lay awake at night, a knot of pain growing in his stomach, angry thoughts swirling. He began drinking in the evenings to get to sleep. ➡➤

Eventually, it was the concern of his two young children that persuaded Karsten he should meet this man towards whom he felt so much anger.

When the two met at a Copenhagen coffee shop, Karsten knew he would forgive his wife's new partner. Instead of one cup of coffee, the two men had many, talking for hours.

As Karsten headed home, he was amazed to discover that his anger and sadness were gone. But more than that, he felt physically good – for the first time in months. He slept like a baby that night and awoke with a clear mind and a relaxed body.

“Forgiveness was a great gift I gave myself,” says Karsten.

WE OFTEN THINK of forgiveness as something we do for the sake of someone else, but new research shows that's not the whole story.

“When people engage in forgiveness, it changes their physiology,” says Dr Robert Enright. As the founder of the International Forgiveness Institute and the author of *The Forgiving Life* and *8 Keys to Forgiveness*, Enright has been pioneering the study of the power of forgiveness for three decades.

“Forgiveness helps you get rid of what we call toxic anger,” he says. “The type that can literally kill a person.”

In a 2009 study published in the journal *Psychology and Health*, Enright and a team of researchers examined the effects of forgiveness on cardiac patients with coronary heart disease.

They found that those subjects who had engaged in forgiveness experienced significantly improved cardiac blood flow, even four months after the forgiving had taken place.

In another study, Charlotte vanOyen Witvliet, a psychology professor at Hope University, examined the emotional and physiological effects that occur when people rehearsed hurtful memories and nursed grudges. When participants recalled a grudge, their physical arousal soared. Their blood pressure and heart rate increased, and they sweated more. They also found ruminating about their grudges stressful and unpleasant.

However, when Witvliet asked the participants to try to empathise with their offenders or imagine forgiving them, they experienced greater perceived control and lower physiological stress responses. Her results were similar to other studies that suggest chronic unforgiving responses may erode health whereas forgiving responses may enhance it.

A 2011 study presented to the US Society of Behavioral Medicine showed that forgiveness can help relieve sleeplessness, and a study conducted at the Duke University Medical Center in North Carolina, US, found that forgiveness can strengthen the immune systems of patients with HIV. With every passing year, new research is revealing that forgiveness can help heal everything from insomnia to diseases that have their bases in stress.

ROSALYN BOYCE'S LIFE unravelled in 1999 after a man broke into her London home and raped her as her two-year-old daughter slept in the next room. The perpetrator, a serial rapist, was captured three weeks later and given three life sentences.

But for Rosalyn the nightmare was far from over. The memory of the attack filled her mind constantly, and she was forced to move out of her family house to escape it. Eating became impossible. Doctors diagnosed her with post-traumatic stress disorder and reactive depression and prescribed Prozac and tranquillisers. She began

"Afterwards, I was euphoric," she says of the meeting. "I don't think about the rape anymore. It disappeared in a puff of smoke."

FEW PEOPLE HAVE a better understanding of what forgiveness is than Marina Cantacuzino. A former journalist, Marina is the founder and director of The Forgiveness Project, a web site and exhibition series which uses personal stories from around the world – including Rosalyn's – to explore the limits and possibilities of forgiveness.

"Forgiveness is not about condoning or excusing," Cantacuzino says,



Forgiveness is a reframing – viewing an incident through a more compassionate lens

drinking a bottle of wine every night to block things out.

As her mental and physical health deteriorated, Rosalyn realised she would have to heal herself. Through therapy, she discovered that the only way was to forgive her attacker.

"To me, forgiveness meant that I no longer had to feel any attachment to my rapist and I could free myself from the crime," writes Rosalyn. "Once I chose to perceive forgiveness in these terms, a massive burden was lifted."

In 2014, Rosalyn was able to meet her attacker and forgive him through a restorative justice programme.

dispelling the myth that to forgive means to say what happened was acceptable. Another common misconception is that forgiveness demands reconciliation with the perpetrator – it does not. You can forgive and choose not to resume the relationship. Instead, forgiveness demands a reframing of the past – viewing the incident and perpetrator through a wider and more compassionate lens.

She also explains that offering forgiveness does not mean giving up the right to justice. You can forgive someone, but they may still have to go to prison or pay a price for what they

have done. One of her favourite definitions actually comes from a prison inmate: “Forgiveness is letting go of all hope for a better past.”

AFTER MOVING FROM England to Lebanon in 1966 and watching as the country was torn apart for 15 years by civil war, Alexandra Asseily was consumed by her incredulity at humanity’s capacity for violence.

“I needed to forgive the people

although she acknowledges that a correlation between anger and cancer has not yet been scientifically demonstrated.

That may not be the case for long. Enright has teamed up with Slovakian oncologist Pavel Kotouček to study whether forgiveness can even help in the battle against cancer. Kotouček says he’s had many cases in Slovakia and England in which a patient’s bitterness appeared to be suppressing



It can take many forms, but at its most basic, forgiveness is the offer of goodness to the one who has hurt you

who brought Lebanon from being a lovely place to destroying it,” says the psychotherapist. She decided to spend time with men who’d been brutal combatants in the conflict. “When I could see them as human beings instead of monsters, I realised I had passed my own test.”

In 1984 she helped found the Centre for Lebanese Studies at Oxford University, England, where she strives to promote forgiveness as a tool for healing. In her work, Asseily says she often encounters people who have become ill. She describes one woman living in Rome who has remained with her unfaithful husband for many years, and who is now dying of cancer.

“She is bitter, and I think she has eaten herself up inside,” says Asseily,

the immune system. “There is strong evidence that if you can improve the immune profile of a cancer patient, you can control their cancer.”

The study will occur across Europe through the umbrella organisation Myeloma Patients Europe, and will provide cancer patients with guided forgiveness therapy alongside conventional treatments such as marrow and stem cell transplants, radiation and chemotherapy.

FOR AZARIA BOTTA, a 33-year-old teaching assistant from Vancouver, Canada, it was a falling out with one of her best friends that opened her eyes to the healing powers of forgiveness.

It was the summer of 2004, and Azaria was off on a backpacking

trip in Europe with one of her oldest friends. The two young women set off excitedly, travelling through the UK before arriving in Paris. It was there that Azaria's friend announced she would be taking a week-long romantic trip with a young Colombian backpacker.

Azaria was shocked and infuriated. She passed the week alone in Paris, filled with anger and disappointment. She also developed strange headaches along with an upset stomach. Azaria continued to stew even after her friend returned to Paris, showering her with apologies.

Back in Vancouver, Azaria's anger stayed with her – and so did her headaches and stomach pain. It was only after a pleading apology from her friend and a tearful reconciliation that Azaria's head finally cleared and her appetite returned. It was then she made the connection: her anger had been making her sick.

"I felt lighter," says Azaria. "Letting go of that anger was the first step."

EXPERTS ARE ADAMANT that there is no one specific path to forgiveness.

"It's different for everybody," cautions Cantacuzino. Over the years, some people [who] become worn down by hatred consciously decide to make a change. Others, she says, might meet someone like the offender or see a TV programme that triggers them to think differently about the situation.

Enright agrees that forgiveness can take many forms, but at its most basic, it is the offer of goodness to the one who has hurt you.

"This can take the form of respect, or a returned phone call, or a kind word about them to someone else," he says. "The paradox is that as you have mercy on those who have not had mercy on you, you heal emotionally and – sometimes – physically." **R**



FLIP THIS MAGAZINE

You all know palindromes (words/phrases that read the same forwards and backwards), but what about ambigrams – words that read the same upside down or when viewed from different perspectives? Try flipping these phrases.

pod

NOON

SOHOS

WOW MOM

NOW NO SWIMS ON MON

*Clockwise from top:
Rapala's Original Floating
minnow; Rattlin' Rapalas
wiggle and rattle; and Deep
Tail Dancers, with enlarged
lips to dive deep down*



Anglers were desperate
for 'a lure fish can't pass up'

Fishing Lure

BY PAGAN KENNEDY FROM THE NEW YORK TIMES

IN THE EARLY 1960s, word spread of a fishing lure with seemingly mystical powers. In the lake country of Finland, an artisan named Lauri Rapala had handcrafted artificial minnows out of balsa wood that zipped around with realistic movements. A US magazine described the product to its readers as 'a lure fish can't pass up'. Desperate to obtain the lures, US anglers hunted for a way to buy them, usually

with no luck. Imports were few, and bait shops often required a \$20 deposit (about \$160 in today's dollars) to rent a Rapala lure for the day.

Inspired by the craze, George Perrin decided to create his own version out of plastic. Perrin, who owned Pradco, a company in Arkansas that manufactured crisper drawers for refrigerators, soon discovered that it took a lot of research and development to make plastic behave like a fish. To test prototypes, Perrin stood on the diving board of a friend's swimming pool and cast his rod, adding or subtracting metal balls – called 'rattles' – inside the minnow so that it would float just under the sur-



face of the water. And when the angler twitched the line, the lure would dart around in a flash of silver.

People searching for the Finnish lure soon discovered Perrin's invention, called the Rebel F10 Minnow. In 1963, the year after Perrin had started production, his company, Rebel Lures, sold half a million of them. (Rapala, meanwhile, built a factory to meet the

demand, and its lure became widely available in the US by the late 1960s.) Lawrence Taylor, a spokesman for Rebel Lures, said an old-timer at the company joked that at the height of the minnow boom, "we made enough lures to outfit every man, woman and child in the country." ■



REELING THEM IN

John Caprio, a biology professor at Louisiana State University, studies fish perception.

Q *Many lures contain little metal rattles. Does that sound actually attract fish?*

A: These products are often designed by people who don't know enough about what fish hear. If you analyse the sound frequencies these steel balls give off, they're far too high for the fish to perceive. But of course, fish don't buy lures. Humans do.

Q *Fish can sense electricity in a way that we can't, isn't that right?*

A Yes. Ever watch on TV where they show sharks hitting a metal cage with a diver in it? Well, why is the shark doing that? To get the diver? Most likely not. That metal and seawater are creating an

electrical current. If you ever look at the underside of the mouth of a shark – hopefully not too close – you'll see these tiny pores that are electroreceptors.

Q *Are there any lures that use electricity to attract fish?*

A There are some on the market that have little batteries in them. Unfortunately, they don't create the right kind of current.

Q *So what is the best way to attract a fish?*

A Sound. But the appropriate sounds. You don't want to warn the fish away. You need to know the frequency that will attract the particular fish that you're after.

13 Things Airlines Won't Tell You



BY MICHELLE CROUCH

1 Here's what a safety demo *doesn't* say: we dim cabin lights at night so your eyes are adjusted to the dark in case there's a crash and you need to find a way out. We put up tray tables at takeoff and landing so passengers next to you can escape if needed. And you should open your window shade so firefighters can see inside.

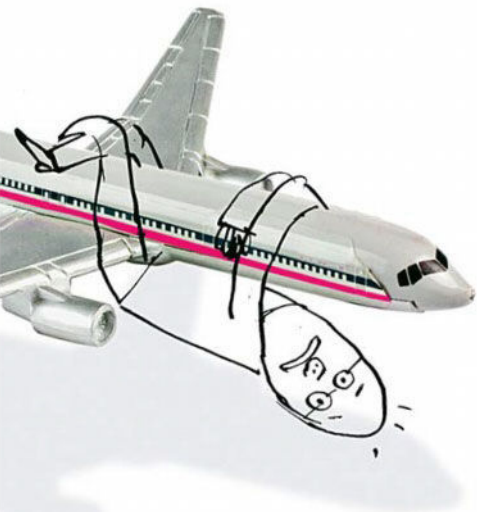
2 We're extremely stingy about fuel. It's expensive to carry because it's heavy, so keeping levels low saves us a lot of money. But it also means if there's rough weather or an unexpected delay, we're more likely to make an emergency landing because we're running out of fuel.

3 It's no secret that flight attendants are sometimes cranky. But that's partly because

we're tired and working long hours. That's why the little things like a simple 'please' and 'thank you' go a long way, as do good manners, into making everyone's flight more pleasant. "It meant the most to me when people would say 'good morning' in return as I greeted them when they got on the plane," comments a former flight attendant.

4 If you book a group trip, search for only one ticket at a time. Why? Because if you search for, say, four tickets, and we have only three at the lowest fare, all four are bumped to a higher price bracket.

5 Some airlines don't allow two pilots flying together to eat food from the same source within an hour of each other. Either they have to eat



at different restaurants, or one waits at least an hour to make sure the other doesn't get poisoned or sick.

6 Lost your luggage? Don't delay reporting it – even if the lines to do so are long. Most of us require you to file a report within a very short time period. If you miss the deadline, your claim may be denied.

7 You're not imagining it: our seats really are getting tinier. In the Boeing 777s now used for long-haul, we recently shrank the seats by 2.54 cm so we could fit an extra seat in each row.

8 You don't want that pretzel you dropped on the tray table. Most airlines don't clean trays between flights. Before you touch anything, clean it with sanitising wipes.

9 If your flight is cancelled, get in line at the ticket desk or the gate counter – but also get on the phone. You'll probably reach an airline phone agent before you get to the frazzled agent behind the desk.

10 We pay a fee every time you book through price-comparison online sites like TripAdvisor and Orbitz, so we're making it harder for you to use them. Some airlines don't release fares at all to certain third-party sites.

11 Check the seat map about four days (100 hours) before your flight. That's when we start upgrading elite frequent fliers from economy to business class and some of the best seats open up.

12 We are totally disgusted when we see you walking around barefoot on the plane. That patterned carpet? Everything you can imagine has been spilled on it: vomit, milk, baby pee, and blood, to name a few.

13 If we cancel your flight, we will offer to put you on another one. But you should also know that even if you have a 'nonrefundable' fare, we will give you your money back if you ask.

R

Sources: Charlie Leocha, Travelers United; Melisse Hinkle, cheapflights.com; Chris Lopinto, expertflyer.com; Rick Ingersoll, author of *Frugal Travel Guy Handbook*; George Hobica, airfarewatchdog.com; airline captain, attendant

All in a Day's Work

HUMOUR ON THE JOB

TALES FROM EMERGENCY

Stories doing the rounds in hospital casualty departments

■ "A patient came into the emergency department at 0400 with no complaints. He said: 'I have been having chest pains for four months but I am not having chest pains now. The reason I'm here now is because I heard that 4am is the best time to come because there are not that many people.'"

■ "Had a woman call an ambulance because she had déjà vu in the shower and got nervous."

■ "Got a frantic call from a woman who claimed she had overdosed and needed help immediately. We arrived on the scene, and she handed us an empty mints container, saying she took them all. That night she learned that you cannot overdose on mints."

Source: Overheard in the ER



NOT HIRED

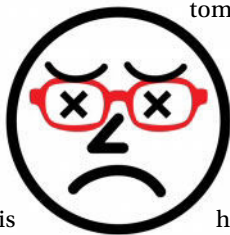
My boss and I took a job applicant to lunch, where we tried, with little success, to get him to open up about his experience and qualifications.

Frustrated, my boss set his salad aside and proposed a specific and complex situation to the young man, then asked, "What would you do?"

The applicant hesitated, then, looking my boss straight in the eye,

said, "Are you going to eat all those tomatoes?"

SUBMITTED BY JOHN RICHMAN



EASY DIAGNOSIS

After my mother suffered a bout of serious headaches, we persuaded her to visit her doctor. While we were in his office, the doctor asked, "Have you been seeing any flashes of lights or auras?"

"I don't know," Mum said, "I didn't have my glasses on."

SUBMITTED BY JUDY KELLEY

ABSTRACT MATHS

I was doing maths with my class. I wrote "10.8" on the whiteboard and then rubbed out the decimal point to show the effect of multiplying this number by ten. I then asked one seven year old if he knew where the decimal point was.

"Yes," he replied. "On your eraser."

SUBMITTED BY DANIELLA ROBERTS

HONEST ... BUT STILL FIRED

Winding his way through the office cubicles, my son Mike spotted one of his employees playing a video game on the computer.

"Why aren't you working?" Mike asked him.

The employee had an excellent excuse: "I didn't see you coming."

SUBMITTED BY ROSEMARY SIEVE

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

My high school assignment was to ask a veteran about World War II.



Since my father had served during the war, I chose him. After a few basic questions about his training, I gingerly asked, "Did you ever kill anyone?"

Dad got very quiet. Then, in a soft voice, he said, "Probably. I was the cook."

SUBMITTED BY MARIAN BABULA

OVERHEARD AT OUR LOCAL TAKEAWAY

GIRL: *Yuck!* Why does this sandwich have bacon on it?

FRIEND: You ordered a BLT.

GIRL: *Whaaaaaat?* I thought the B stood for bread.

SUBMITTED BY ALYSSA HOOVER

PAPER TIGER

Our office manager is a tyrant when it comes to keeping the printer area clean. Recently, a colleague printed something, but when he went to pick up the document, it was gone.

"You know I throw out everything that's more than 24 hours old," the manager told him.

"But I just printed it," my friend insisted.

"Sorry," she replied, "but I'm not in tomorrow."

SUBMITTED BY NOEL ROWLAND

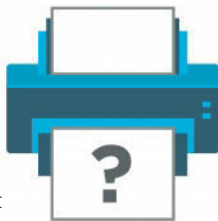




PHOTO FEATURE

The COLDEST Place on Earth

Welcome to the
village in Russia's
Sakha Republic with
an undisputed place
in the record books

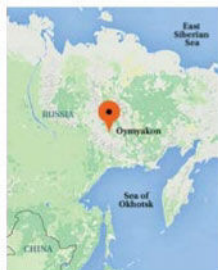
BY NATASHA GEILING FROM *SMITHSONIAN*
PHOTOGRAPHS BY AMOS CHAPPLE



FOR MOST PEOPLE, THE VILLAGE OF OYMYAKON wouldn't be a top-of-the-list travel destination. It is the world's coldest permanently settled area, located a few hundred kilometres from the Arctic Circle in the Russian tundra. But for New Zealand photographer Amos Chapple, it offered an opportunity he couldn't refuse.

Working as an English teacher in Russia to support his travel photography, Chapple viewed a trip to Oymyakon, which has set records as one of the coldest places people live on Earth, as a chance to embark on a unique photography project.

Driving to Oymyakon along the Kolyma Highway, or 'Road of Bones', built by Gulag prisoners during the Soviet era



At a latitude of 63.28°N, Oymyakon is part of the Sakha Republic. Day length varies from three hours in December to 21 hours in June

A temperature of -67.8°C was recorded in 1933 at Oymyakon's weather station, while a temperature of -71.2°C was noted in 1924. But Chapple first had to get himself to Yakutsk in northeastern Russia, the region's capital city, six time zones away from Moscow.

Temperatures drop to around -40°C during January in Yakutsk, but despite its harsh conditions, it is an economically vibrant place, settled in large part due to an abundance of natural resources around it – diamonds, oil and gas are all plentiful.

Oymyakon, on the other hand, boasts just one major road leading in and out of it. Known as the 'Road of Bones', it was built by Gulag inmates under Stalin's regime. The skeletons of the prisoners who died during its construction were used in its foundations. Oymyakon is some 1000 km from Yakutsk and, in order to reach it, Chapple had to travel for two days, via a combination of shared vans and hitchhiking.



At one point, he found himself stranded at a petrol station. “I was eating reindeer meat for two days,” Chapple says, recalling the small café and teahouse, ironically named Café Cuba, that served as his sole option for food during that time. “Reindeer was the staple meat of the tundra.”

Reindeer isn’t the only thing that inhabitants of this ice-covered region eat, but their diet is meat-heavy. Chapple also ate a dish of macaroni pasta and frozen chunks of horse blood, as well as a Yakutian speciality of thinly shaved frozen fish.

“It’s basically like frozen sashimi, and it’s divine,” he says. “Somehow the texture of the frozen fish, with the warm bits at the end, is very distinctive and delicious.”

WHEN HE ARRIVED IN OYMYAKON, WHERE

the population hangs at around 500 permanent inhabitants, Chapple was struck by the emptiness of the place. “The streets were just empty. I had expected that

Far left A 24-hour petrol station en route to Oymyakon. In these extreme conditions, petrol will turn solid if a car’s engine is turned off

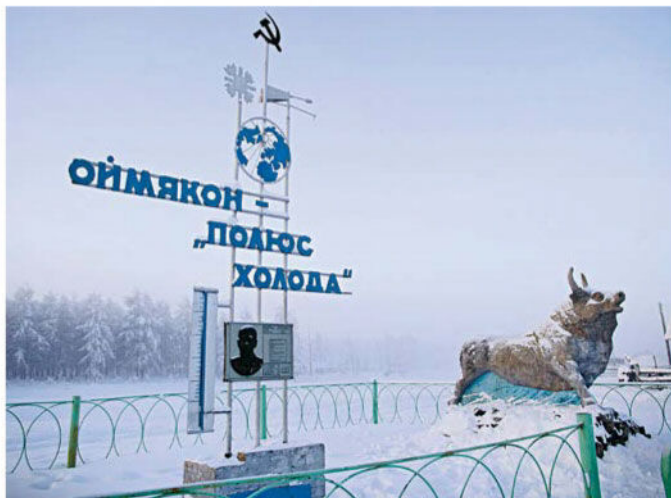
Above Alexander Platonov, a retired teacher, dressed for a quick dash to the outdoor lavatory





Above A man visits Oymyakon's only shop as paper waste is burnt in a 40-gallon drum

Left The nearest proper market is 1000 km away in Yakutsk, where Arctic hare and frozen fish are on sale



Above Topped by a hammer and sickle, a Soviet-era monument announces Oymyakon as "the Pole of Cold"

they would be accustomed to the cold and there would be everyday life happening in the streets, but instead people were very wary of the cold," he says. "It felt extremely desolate. It wasn't, but everything was happening indoors, and I wasn't welcome indoors."

In the hours Chapple spent wandering the village streets, his main companions were street dogs or village drunks (alcoholism is rampant in Oymyakon).

Still, life in the village goes on. Schools don't close unless the temperature falls below -40°C . Farmers bring their cows to the village's watering hole – a 'thermal' spring that stays a little above freezing – then lead them back to their insulated stables.

The thermal spring is the village's lifeblood, its entire reason for existence: reindeer herders would visit the spring in order to hydrate their animals, returning again and again until the village became a permanent settlement (in the Even language spoken in Siberia, Oymyakon means 'unfrozen water')



***Left** Nikolai Petrovich closes the door to his cows' heavily insulated stable after putting the herd to bed for the night*

***Below** The village at dawn. The heating plant, at left, produces a constant plume of coal smoke*



Right
*A truck
driver
thaws the
drive shaft
of his truck*



LIVING IN THE COLDEST PERMANENTLY INHABITED

place on Earth does have some distinct drawbacks, however. It's dark – completely, utterly dark – for up to 21 hours a day during the winter. Bathrooms are mostly outdoors, because indoor plumbing presents a challenge due to frozen pipes. Residents have cars, but must leave them running outside, sometimes overnight, so the mechanics don't freeze up. Despite this, sometimes more extreme measures are necessary.

“A guy I was staying with left his car running all night, but even so, in the morning, the drive shaft was completely frozen. Without any ceremony, he pulled out a little flamethrower, went under the truck and started fanning the bottom of his truck with a flamethrower,” Chapple says. “It's part of the toolkit [for living in Oymyakon], a little flamethrower.” **R**

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BONUS READ

Elin Was Born Twice

BY LISBETH PIPPING

It was thought
that the baby girl
was severely
handicapped. But
the love of her
foster parents
changed all that





WE MET AT A HOTEL IN THE TOWN PITEÅ, in the north of Sweden, where I am participating in a weekend gathering for foster parents and their children. It's an opportunity for such families to meet one another, share experiences and listen to talks given by experts. On this occasion, family members from about 100 foster homes have gathered at a lovely centre on the northern shores of the Baltic.

As a behavioural scientist specialising in research on children with parents with intellectual disabilities, I am scheduled to give a speech about my own childhood, a childhood spent with a mother who was intellectually challenged. I am looking forward to meeting people who have the courage to get involved with children as emotionally scarred as I once was; people who give children a second chance at life. I have a son and a daughter of my own, but I have never had the courage to become a foster parent. It requires a very big heart and the strength to handle the pain and suffering that these children have experienced.

In the hotel lobby on the first day of the conference, a girl who looks about eight years old is happily bouncing about, her long, blonde curly hair whirling around her happy face. She is holding hands with a woman, and in her other hand, she is carrying a large bath towel. It is plain to see that they are mother and daughter – they have the same curly hair and similar body language, and a strong bond between them is very apparent. I assume they are staying at the hotel as a part of a family holiday and not for the foster family gathering.

The girl stops dead in her tracks to look at me, or rather at my shoes.

They are pink with lots of lovely flowers and other curious details on them.

"Hi lady! I love your shoes! I'd love a pair just like them!" the girl says, and approaches me, not shy at all. "What's your name? I'm Elin. I'm off to the hot tub with my mum." The words trip on her tongue and convey her energy.

I barely have a chance to say "Hi" back, before they are off. Elin's bright blue eyes and happy voice remain with me as I take the lift up to my room. I start to think about Elin and her mum. *Where are they from? And what are they doing at this spa hotel?*

While tying my same shoes later in the day, before heading down to

dinner, I suddenly remember Elin's cheerful voice. *Will I get the chance to see her again?* I can't stop thinking about the little blonde girl.

As the lift doors open onto the restaurant, Elin spots me straight away. "Hi, lady with the nice shoes! Would you like to sit with us?" she shouts. She immediately finds a chair at a nearby table and drags it over to hers.

This is how I get to know Elin and her family: her mother, Marie, father, Jonas, and brother, 12-year-old Oscar. Elin chats away all through dinner.

the adults around the dinner table. But Elin wants to stay up a bit longer and talk to the "lady".

"Elin, her name's Lisbeth," Marie tells her.

"All right, then. I'd like to stay and chat some more with lady Lisbeth."

I manage to get a word in. "Hey, Elin. I'll see you tomorrow, because I'll be here all weekend."

Elin falls silent. Then she looks at me. "Promise me you'll join us for dinner tomorrow night, and I want you to join us for breakfast, too. Promise!"



I AM EXCITED TO HEAR MARIE TELL ME WHAT IT WAS LIKE WHEN ELIN FIRST JOINED HER FAMILY

"Where did you buy those shoes? Were they very expensive?" The questions and information are endless. She informs me that she is about to turn nine, that she loves horses, dogs and cats, and that she plays the clarinet, and that she knows how to dance.

She wants to know if I have any children. I tell her that my daughter Jonna also loves horses, which makes her excited. Marie occasionally interjects that Elin needs to eat her dinner, too, or it will get cold.

When the clock is nearing nine, Jonas tells Elin that it is time to go to bed. Her brother says goodnight to

I start to laugh and promise her that I will join them, adding that she had better hop into bed, so that she won't be too tired the next day.

Elin's voice trails off as she walks towards the lifts with her dad, and it suddenly gets eerily quiet around the table. Marie and I look at each other.

"Hi, great to meet you," we say in unison and start to laugh. Marie offers me a glass of wine, and I accept. We leave the table, go and sit down in the lounge and start to talk about what it's like to be a foster parent.

"Do you want to hear about when Elin came to us?" Marie asks.

"Elin?" I say surprised. "I thought Oscar was the one who was placed."

To me, it had seemed obvious that it was Oscar, the quiet older brother, who had been placed with them. That's the only logical conclusion I could draw after my short time with the family. It's not that I think placed children should behave a certain way. It's just that Elin has such a confident way about her, in the certain assurance that she is deeply loved, besides the fact that she and Marie look so much alike with their blonde curls, blue jeans and similar gestures. And their closeness is very obvious. I had just assumed that Elin is Marie's biological daughter.

Marie bursts into laughter. Then she looks me deep in the eyes and asks me why I would think that.

"Because I get the feeling that you've carried Elin in your stomach," I say honestly.

"Well, not in my stomach," says Marie, "but I carried her around *on* my stomach."

Enough Love to Share

I ask Marie to tell me her story. I am excited to hear what it was like when Elin came to live with Marie and Jonas and Oscar. I don't know what to expect. I settle in my chair with my glass of wine, and prepare to listen.

"Her mother, who lives in the north of Sweden, is mentally handicapped and had five children. Elin is the youngest one. When she was

born her mother couldn't cope with yet another child, let alone five, so when Elin was seven months old, all of the kids were removed by the social welfare office," Marie informs me. All the children were placed, but finding a foster home for Elin was difficult.

"One day in the spring of 1997 I got a call from social services. We had previously had a foster child who had been given protected identity status due to death threats from the child's father," Marie says by way of explanation. She stares into her glass of wine: I can tell that telling this story brings back strong memories.

"I guess that social services had you registered as competent foster parents after something like that?" I said.

"Yes, they probably had," she said. "Now they told me they had a seven-month-old little girl who needed a new home. I remember Jonas and I sitting there with these two social workers in their office, thinking how wonderful it would be to take care of a little baby again.

"But there was something about their body language when they spoke to us about Elin. It was if they were hiding something from us. I started to get uneasy. I couldn't focus on what they said. My mind was wandering, and I remember thinking that things might turn out the way they did the last time we had been foster parents, when we'd had to protect our address, so that the aggressive and dangerous father couldn't find his child or us. It



had been a tough period, and I wasn't sure I'd be able to do that again.

"My husband nudged me, and I came back from my thoughts and to what the social workers were saying. I apologised, and asked, 'There's something I need to know. I get the feeling you're hiding something from us.'

"The room fell quiet, but eventually, they began telling us about how they believed Elin had a severe intellectual disability and that she could neither see nor hear. 'She doesn't babble, she doesn't follow your gaze, she can't sit up, and she's basically a vegetable,' they said. 'We don't know if it's congenital or acquired,' they told me.

"No-one in the room said a word. I was afraid to look at Jonas. My first thought was, *would we be able to care for a severely handicapped baby? Would I be able to cope?* And how would our son Oscar react to my

spending all my time with the new baby? He had just turned five.

"But when I gazed into Jonas's eyes, I knew that we didn't have a choice. We both knew that we had a lot of love to share. So I said, 'Of course we'll manage!' Jonas nodded in agreement, and in that moment I felt that we could manage anything."

We each take a sip of wine. And somehow I can understand what she means, why she would feel so confident that they would be able to manage. After spending the evening in the company of this family I can tell that their relationship is unusually strong and harmonious. They obviously love each other very much, without restricting one other.

I nod encouragingly at Marie, prompting her to go on.

"Elin was staying at an emergency foster home, and we were allowed to

see her that same week. I was so nervous before we left, unsure of how I'd react. I didn't even know if you could see that she was mentally disabled.

"I remember that first time we met, what it was like to hold her thin, stiff body. It was like she had no joints in her body. She was like a log. And her eyes were dead. There was no life left in them. Emptiness was all I could see. It scared me to see that there could be such emptiness inside such a little baby.

"Right then, I felt a bit insecure, but just a tiny bit. We would manage this. If only she could feel safe with us, everything would work out just fine."

Marie looks determined as she says this, and I can detect a will of iron behind her smile.

"Oscar had been waiting eagerly for the new baby. He had told everyone at the nursery that he would be getting a baby sister. The other kids had accused him of lying, because his mummy didn't have a big belly. Oscar



ELIN STARTED TO SCREAM – LOUDLY AND DEMANDINGLY – BUT I COULDN'T TELL WHAT WAS WRONG

"The day arrived when she would come and live with us. By this time, she was nine months old. I recall it being one of those wonderfully warm days a week before Midsummer's Eve, in the third week of June. The wind was a bit chilly, but the sun was warm. I lifted Elin up from the stroller, I patted her fine hair gently and talked to her. I told her that she would be living with us, and that we had done up one of the rooms on the top floor for her, and that we'd painted it in pale colours. I told her that we'd bought a new bed. No reaction. She just kept staring into space," Marie frowns as she recalls that day.

informed them that it was possible to have a baby sister even without a big belly. He had a picture of her, and her name was Elin.

"When we got home, he came rushing to meet us. He studied Elin for a long time. Then he said, 'She's really cute', and kissed her forehead. They immediately found each other. Well, it wasn't like Elin acknowledged him or showed that she could see him, but Oscar's immediate love warmed all our hearts.

"Those first few weeks were like a honeymoon. Elin ate and slept normally, she never cried – she didn't utter a sound. She was just there. I

felt that this would work out, that we would manage just fine. We've faced tougher challenges than this.

"But the minute I had that thought, everything was suddenly turned upside down. Elin had been living with us for close to a month when something happened. Jonas had left for work and dropped Oscar off at his nursery school. I'd just put on a pot of coffee and was about to go out on the terrace and sit in the sun with the paper. That's when Elin started to scream – not cry – but scream, loudly and demandingly.

I ran to her room and picked her up, but I couldn't tell what was wrong.

Carry Her Close

"I tried to console her in every possible way, but to no avail. The screaming just got louder and louder; it was ear-splitting. She cried non-stop for four hours before she finally fell asleep, exhausted, on my chest. But she soon woke up again and her heart-rending scream echoed between the walls. She screamed until she vomited. I tried to feed her, to lull her to sleep, to sing to her, to sleep next to her, to push her in the buggy up and down the street, but nothing worked.

"Eventually, it was impossible to be outdoors, because our neighbours looked at me as if I'd slapped her. So, I locked us in the house. When Jonas and Oscar got home in the afternoon, I was on the verge of tears, so Oscar took over. But he couldn't calm her

down either. Elin's crying kept us awake all night. The next morning, I called the child health centre and asked for an appointment. 'Was she in pain?' they asked. 'Was her life in danger?' The way she was screaming, it could be just about anything."

Marie takes a deep breath. I nod encouragingly while I try to compare Marie's memories with the image of the vibrant Elin that I've just met.

"My childcare nurse visited the next day but she couldn't find anything wrong with little Elin, either, so we changed the formula she was on and bought some new dummies. But that didn't help either, so after another three days of constant crying and screaming, I called the children's clinic and told them that we needed help, because our baby was crying herself to death."

Marie gets a grim look. "The switchboard operator informed me that babies cry. Like I didn't know that! But I didn't give in, and I insisted on speaking to a doctor. I brought the phone with me to Elin's room so that the doctor could hear the screams that were enough to wake the dead. The female paediatrician told us to come in straight away.

"She said to us, 'Babies won't scream like that unless they're in pain.' We went back and forth to the hospital for two weeks, but they couldn't find anything wrong with her. I was a wreck."

All I can do is nod. My own children didn't cry that much, but if they did, I

would feel terrible if I was unable to immediately comfort them. Trying to console a baby for days on end must have been incredibly hard to bear.

"Eventually I couldn't take it any more," Marie tells me. "I felt useless as a mother. I called my husband at work and told him, 'I give up. I don't think we're cut out to take care of a severely handicapped baby, Jonas. We'll have to hand her back. She's been screaming non-stop for over three weeks now.'"

"And that's when my solid, loving husband said, 'Marie, calm down a bit.'"

"If he hadn't been at work, I would have killed him there and then. Me? Calm down! I had no strength left. I was a shadow of my former self. 'Something has got to give,' I said, 'or I give up. I don't think Elin is comfortable with us, Jonas.' 'Why don't you just ask her,' he said. 'Ask her? You know as well as I do that she can't see or hear anything. How am I supposed to talk to her?'"

"Jonas was quiet for a while, and then he continued. 'Just do as I say. Go and sit down with Elin on your lap. Explain to her that you want to help her, but that she has to tell you what's wrong. She knows. Just trust that.'"

Now a little smile is playing on Marie's lips.

"You know, I did what Jonas told me to do. I sat down in my favourite armchair in the sitting room with Elin in my arms. I looked into her empty eyes and said, 'Elin, you need to tell me what's wrong. I want to help you,

darling Elin, but I don't know what to do. Please help me understand.'

"And something happened. It was like she was talking straight into my brain. I looked at her and said out loud, 'Are you sure? Do you really mean it? Is that what you want?'"

"I looked around the empty room, afraid that someone might have seen me. They would most definitely think that I'd completely lost my marbles. There I was, talking away to a deaf, blind and severely handicapped infant!

"And that's when I did it – as she had told me, or so I thought. I stripped to the waist, and I stripped Elin down to the nappy. I gently lifted her up and held her against my naked breasts. It was like she was docking, like a tiny spaceship, and she became silent. She was still stiff as a rod, but she was quiet. I started to walk.

"I walked around with her, skin to skin, every day, day after day, my blouse hanging loosely and unbuttoned. When I put Elin down to change her nappy she immediately started crying again, but as soon as I put her back against my chest she calmed down again. At night she'd lie across my chest in bed.

"Let me tell you. I developed quite strong arm muscles and abs. She was like a whole new baby, after all those weeks of inconsolable crying. But I had to keep carrying her.

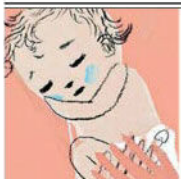
"Eventually, after about a month, Elin's body loosened up a bit, but her eyes were still vacant and dead.

The days went by, and Elin was still snuggled against my breast like a baby kangaroo. She was small for her age and looked more like a six-month-old baby than a nine-month-old. Her head would stick up between my breasts, firmly turned to the right at all times. The reason for this would become obvious when we heard her full background.

"Then one day, some three months later, she started to move her little head and have a look around. Her

down on the changing table and, as always, I larked about with her and made farting noises on her tummy with my mouth. I'd done it hundreds of times before. This time, though, she gave me a smile – her first – and then she laughed from her toes. I almost died, because my heart was ready to break.

"I lifted up her soft little body and ran to call Jonas. When he picked up the phone, I said, 'She's come back to life, Jonas. Elin has found her way back to life.' And then I just cried."



SHE GAVE ME HER FIRST SMILE AND
MY HEART WAS READY TO BREAK.
SHE'S COME BACK TO LIFE

gaze was *not* as empty. We were starting to hope – and believe – that Elin could find her way back to life."

As soon as Jonas and Marie had understood Elin's need for closeness, they agreed that she, Marie, would be the one to carry and nurse Elin all the time. Elin needed that security, of attaching to one person only.

"I was alone with Elin a lot during these months. It was a little bit like nursing a premature baby. As I carried her inside my open blouse I didn't go outside a lot either.

"One day, when I'd been holding Elin against my body for four months, I went to change her nappy. I put her

A Love of Life

There's a sparkle in Marie's eyes now as she continues Elin's story.

"Everything changed from that day. She no longer needed to be close to me day and night. She had filled up her tank. She was ready for life, and she was in a hurry. You've met her yourself.

"She's an energetic, happy and chatty little lady who will turn nine in about a month. This little girl who we thought was a lost case, with no chance of living her own life."

I'm sitting there in my comfortable chair, fighting back the tears. Then Marie says that she would like to tell me what Elin had gone through before

she came to live with them. It had been important for her to find out.

"I needed to know so that I can tell Elin one day, if she wants to know. I believe our story is important," Marie says. "And, in order for Elin to have a good life as an adult, to become a whole person.

"The early months of a child's life are incredibly important," Marie continues. "Elin is the fifth child by parents who both suffer from a mental disability. She survived thanks to her inner strength, and she didn't quit, even though her life was hanging by a thread many times."

At this point in Marie's story, I'm not sure if I want to know or if I can cope with the knowledge of what Elin had been subjected to. But then I consider that if Elin was able to experience it and survive, I should be able to listen to the story. Marie continues.

"The social worker started by telling us that they didn't know the mother was expecting her fifth child. They weren't even sure Elin's mother was aware of it. Then one day, she was just there; a baby that they named Elin. For many years, the social services had tried to make the family accept their

help. But it only worked out for short periods of time. There was no doubt that the children had been treated poorly, but the social services had no right to coerce the parents.

"Elin would be lying in a soiled nappy for days without anyone changing it. She had big sores on her bottom when she got to the emergency home. We also learnt that the mother would prepare four, five bottles of formula and just leave them there in Elin's cot, and Elin would have to feed herself. She basically never left her cot during the first seven months of her life."

Marie's serious face breaks into a smile.

"But she loved life. It was like she was lying there waiting for us."

Marie's smile grows bigger.

"So, no, Lisbeth. I never carried Elin in my stomach, but I held her as close as possible until she had filled up her needs of love, closeness and warmth. That's when she was born a second time." **R**

Elin continues to do well. She has completed senior high school in Sweden and is planning to attend university with the goal of becoming a social worker - to help children.

* *
* *

ZERO STARS

Some negative reviews are valid. Others are questionable...

"The animals at the zoo looked very sad and made our children cry.

Can't they train them to look happy?" TELEGRAPH.CO.UK

That's Outrageous!

HELP WANTED

NEEDED: SOMEONE WHO WILL ANSWER THE PHONE LIKE A NORMAL PERSON

New York's Department of Health may have a job opening soon if one of its employees doesn't stop messing around.

It seems that management does not care for the fact that the twice-suspended

helpline operator keeps answering IT calls by talking like a robot.

Source: *New York*

CAN YOU PASS A SIMPLE TEST?

An Egyptian bus driver had an ingenious plan to beat a mandatory drug test: he used his wife's urine.



Nevertheless, he failed the test. He found out when his boss handed him the results and reportedly said, "Congratulations, my friend, you're pregnant!"

Source: *BBC News*

LOOKING FOR A HOUSE SITTER, PREFER YOU NOT

BE A FLEDGLING ENTREPRENEUR

A San Francisco couple got quite the surprise when they returned home from a break last September – the house sitter they'd hired had rented out their apartment on Airbnb for a price of \$2000 for five days.

Source: *seattletpi.com*

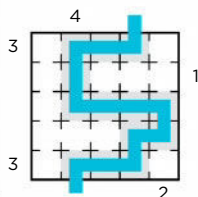
Puzzles

See page 118

HIGH POINT

4. The number at the apex (top) of each triangle, multiplied by the sum of the two numbers on either side of the base, produces the number in the triangle's centre. For example, $2 \times (8 + 3) = 22$. (Or, if you prefer, $2 \times 8 + 2 \times 3 = 22$.)

PATH PUZZLE



CUBISM

24

HIDDEN MEANING

- A. Worry over nothing
- B. Good intentions
- C. Search high and low
- D. Mixed emotions



Unbelievable

TRUE TALES TOLD TALL



Boys Living Dangerously



Nury Vittachi's inner brat is finally vindicated

POLICE OFFICERS are using catapults to fire balls of chilli powder as a crowd-control technique, the Indian media have reported recently.

Well that's funny, because I did the same thing when I was a kid and my teacher denounced me as a troublesome brat who would achieve nothing in life.

OK, so her prediction was on target, but I should STILL get royalties, right? I was feeling stung by that when a reader sent in a news item that pressed the same button. A guy in France is suing his boss for boring him. The plaintiff claims that the four years he spent working for the guy's perfume company were so mind-numbingly dull that they caused him physical harm.

ILLUSTRATION: ISTOCK

My mind raced back to my high school history teacher, Mr Mohan, who was so boring that you could actually feel your brain fossilising into limestone as he spoke. Once he scheduled a history double period and not even the brainy kids turned up for it. Death would almost certainly have been inevitable, but any miraculous survivors would not have been allowed to sue, oh no.

Now, FINALLY, this generation's adults are seeing childhood episodes as things to take seriously. Following the success of the Anger Room in Texas, several countries offer 'tantrum spaces' where you can scream and shout and smash up stuff. They quote psychologists saying that destroying property is a vital outlet for emotional release blah blah blah. Well thank you very much for realising this DECADES after I spent my childhood standing in the corner. At last modern kids have the terminology to argue their case.

TEACHER: You just burned down the school.

KID: Destruction is a vital outlet for emotional release blah blah blah.

TEACHER: Good point: here, have this gold merit star.

Bottling it up is dangerous. I refer to a news item from the US about an incident in Colorado when police

used pepper spray to subdue an out-of-control kid aged eight. His mother said they should have just reasoned with him, but that only makes sense to people who've never had to deal with eight year olds. Pepper spray is the MINIMUM force necessary. A preferable option would be to run to a safe distance and then approach

the kid with a bomb disposal robot fitted with a speaker.

"Put down the axe and we will send an adult in a hazmat suit to read a Winnie-the-Pooh book with you."

It seems to be boys who grow up with the trickiest challenges these days. A Chinese folk tradition called Fu-Ji

requires children to use a Chinese Ouija board to summon an evil female spirit. But Chinese law says males have to wait until they are at least 22 to get married.

So calling up a she-devil is fine, but marrying an actual woman – *whoa*, guys, this might be dangerous, let's wait ten years. (Not sure if that is bizarre or actually very smart.)

Whatever. Now excuse me while I go dig up my catapult. My kids are running amok and I need to do some crowd control.

Nury Vittachi is a Hong Kong-based author. Read his blog at Mrjam.org

“

***So calling up a
she-devil is fine,
but marrying an
actual woman –
whoa, guys, this
might be
dangerous***

out & about

NEWS

BOOKS

FILMS

DVDS



POMPOMANIA

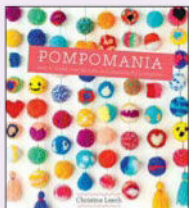
How to make over 20 cute and characterful pompoms

Christine Leech

Quadrille
Publishing

Are you tired of the colouring-in book craze, and looking for a different hobby to help you zone out and relax? Here's a cheerful solution. With a keen eye for all things fun and quirky, crafter Christine Leech has gone overboard on ... pompoms. Remember how you used to cut out circles of cardboard and wind remnants of wool into plump, shaggy pompoms when you were a child? It's time to reawaken that child! Check out the bright, bold extravaganzas in this book, such as cacti, liquorice allsorts, ice-cream cones, love hearts and macapoms (aka macarons), every one a woolly masterpiece. The cares of the day and all things digital (though there are emoji pompoms, too) are sure to take a back seat.

"Some of the weirder and more wonderful yarns with sequins and fluffy bits make incredible pompoms, so do have fun and try lots of types."





HORSES WHO HEAL

Sue Spence

Pan Macmillan
Australia

Plagued by bullying at school, Sue Spence took comfort in horse riding. Her empathy with horses resulted in her setting up Horses Helping Humans. Using the natural horsemanship principles of trust, respect and patience, she helps people in need to gain in confidence and face their problems. In this engaging book, Spence describes how her relationship with horses has transformed lives.

"When you are around horses, a part of you connects with an energy that is almost mystical. There is a stillness within their majestic energy that seems to project wisdom and dignity. They have such strength, but within that strength is softness ... playfulness ... and peace."

Safe Sleeps



Modern cities can leave the homeless vulnerable and unprotected. Australian entrepreneur Simon Rowe's chance encounter with a homeless man who was just trying to get a good sleep led him to design Sleepbus: a repurposed bus providing sleep pods for individuals and families, even pets. Each Sleepbus is designed to have 18-22 sleeping pods and eight kennels, plus recharging stations for phones, climate control and a television that will provide information on local services as well as normal programmes. Sheets will be washed daily, the pods will be lockable and families will have intercoms between their pods. As we went to print, the first Sleepbus was under construction and Rowe's GoFundMe page had nearly reached its \$100,000 target.



JASON BOURNE Action/Thriller



Matt Damon returns as Jason Bourne in the next chapter of the Bourne franchise. Written, directed and produced by Paul Greengrass (*The Bourne Supremacy* and *The Bourne Ultimatum*), the story picks up several years after Bourne disappeared in *The Bourne Ultimatum*. This time, the world faces unprecedented instability following the collapse of financial markets, a global recession and outbreak of international cyberwarfare. It's a lot for Bourne to manage when, as the CIA's most lethal former operative, he unexpectedly resurfaces and once again tries to uncover the mysteries of his past.





OUR LITTLE SISTER *Drama/World Cinema*

This touching drama is set in the beautiful seaside city of Kamakura and follows a theme for which Japanese director Hirokazu Koreeda (*Like Father, Like Son*) is renowned: how being abandoned by a parent affects children. The Koda sisters, Sachi, Yoshino and Chika, have not seen their father since he walked out 15 years earlier. Then, they receive news that he has died. Out of duty, they travel to the north of the country to a small town to attend his funeral. There, they meet Suzu, their shy teenage half-sister, who until then they knew nothing about. The four siblings form a close bond and since her mother is not fit to care for her, the sisters invite Suzu to live with them in Kamakura in the rambling house that once belonged to their grandmother. While highlighting family life in contemporary Japan, the film focuses on their new lives, their relationships with one another and the way each adapts to their new situation.



Brigit the Burglar

Sarah Nathan knew her six-year-old Tonkinese cat was a bit of a kleptomaniac. Over the years sundry items had turned up unexpectedly, but when the New Zealander moved with kitty Brigit to a new home in Hamilton, things quickly deteriorated.

Over ten weeks, Brigit brought home 11 pairs of men's underpants and more than 50 socks –

mostly matching – “One will be at the front door and one will be at the back – so she’s obviously gone back to get it,” Nathan said. The items seem to be stolen from washing lines.

Nathan has letterboxed her area in a bid to find the owners. “I feel so bad about it,” she said. “Someone is spending a fortune on underwear.”

She and Brigit are now moving – to the country, far from temptation.



OUR VIETNAM NURSES

Compelling Australian stories of heroism, friendship and lives changed forever

Annabelle Brayley

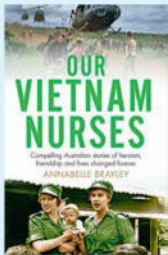
Penguin/Michael Joseph



If there were a job description for the Australian nurses and medics involved in the Vietnam War, it would include words such as courage, compassion, resilience, commitment, resourcefulness and good humour ... and the ability to keep them under fire.

With her characteristic sensitivity and economy of words, Brayley, bestselling author of *Nurses of the Outback* and *Outback Vets*, conveys the chaos and pain of war through stories told to her by those who risked their lives to care for thousands of military personnel and South Vietnamese people. It is a remarkable tribute – confronting, touching and gently amusing in equal measure.

“They know that no-one else can truly understand what it was really like, just as none of them really understands the war that took them to Vietnam in the first place. And yet, if they had their time over, all of them would go again ...”



LA LA LAND

*Comedy/Drama/
Musical*



Set in modern-day Los Angeles but with a ‘Golden Age of Hollywood’ feel, this contemporary musical sees the romantic pairing of Emma Stone and Ryan Gosling for a third time (*Crazy, Stupid Love*, *Gangster Squad*). Stone plays Mia, an aspiring actress to Gosling’s Sebastian, a struggling jazz pianist. Mia and Sebastian fall in love, but as their professional success grows, they discover that their greatest challenge is balancing their passion for their arts with their love for each other.

Filled with song and dance, *La La Land* hits all the right notes.



Ryan Gosling tickles the ivories as a jazz star

BURNT*Drama*

After earning two Michelin stars as a chef in Paris, Adam Jones (Bradley Cooper) lost everything thanks to drugs, alcohol and a bad attitude. After a self-imposed penance of shucking one million oysters in a bar in New Orleans, Adam returns to London to try and resurrect his reputation and gain the elusive third star. He recruits a team of chefs, including the nervous but highly talented David (Sam Keeley), Helene (Sienna Miller), a strong-willed chef de partie, and ex-con Max (Ricardo Scamarcio), whose angry, over-the-top perfectionism rivals Adam's own. However, Adam's quest isn't as straightforward as he'd hoped.

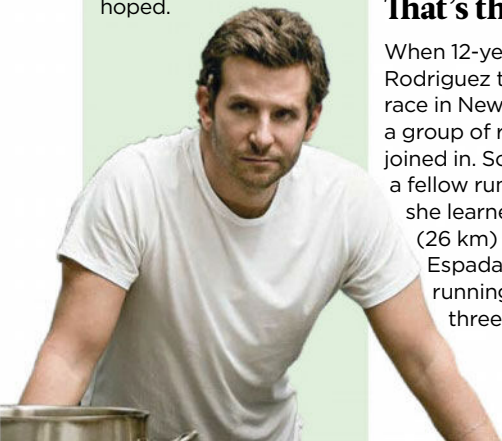
**LOVE AND FRIENDSHIP***Drama / Romance / Comedy*

Based on Jane Austen's novella *Lady Susan*, *Love and Friendship* is a comedy drama set in 18th-century England. It focuses on Lady Susan Vernon (Kate Beckinsale), who is beautiful, intelligent, manipulative and recently widowed. While waiting for gossip surrounding a personal indiscretion to pass, she takes residence at her in-laws' estate and plots to find wealthy husbands for herself and her daughter Frederica, aided and abetted by her friend Alicia (Chloë Sevigny).

Written and directed by Whit Stillman (*The Last Days of Disco*), this comedy of manners finds fresh humour amid the corsets and carriages. Austen fans won't be disappointed.

That's the Spirit!

When 12-year-old LeeAdianeze (Lee) Rodriguez turned up for her 5 km race in New York State, she saw a group of runners setting off and joined in. Some 10 km later, Lee asked a fellow runner what was happening. It was then she learned she'd joined the half-marathon (26 km) course instead. Her mother, Brendalee Espada, told reporters, "She decided to keep running and not give up." Lee finished in under three hours, taking home a finisher's medal.



SPOTLESS PETS

Green solutions to stains and smells and cleaning up after your pets

Shannon Lush and Jennifer Fleming

ABC Books



Much as we love them, pets can make almighty messes, be it fur balls on the carpet, poo on the lawn, algae in the fish tank or saliva on the couch. Then there are all those little nasties that congregate on their accessories and bedding. And let's not forget smells.

But, thanks to the low-toxic solutions the queens of clean, Shannon Lush and Jennifer Fleming, have devised, tried and tested, you'll have things sparkling and smelling sweet in no time. This handy little book includes cleaning remedies for dogs, cats, birds, fish, horses and 'other pets' such as guinea pigs and rabbits and creatures who are of no fixed abode but rather fancy ours (possums and flying foxes). Dishwashing liquid, pantyhose, glycerine, soap, vinegar and a host of other inexpensive materials are the 'weapons' needed to right the wrongs. And remember – pets really do help lower our blood pressure, despite their occasional lapses in good manners.



It's Kosher

The first Jewish tartan has been designed by Mendel Jacobs, a Scottish-born rabbi from Glasgow. The main colours are blue and white, which appear on both the Scottish and Israeli flags, and he has registered the design with the Scottish Tartans Authority. Jacobs has said that a kosher tartan is a natural fit. "The Jewish people have been an integral part of Scottish culture for more than 300 years. In Scotland, the Jews were never persecuted and there were no pogroms, no Holocaust, no national or state-sponsored anti-Semitic laws ... Scotland provided a safe haven."

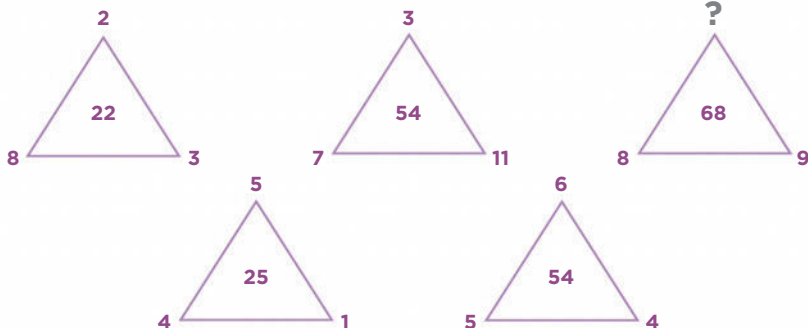
Puzzles

Challenge yourself by solving these puzzles and mind stretchers, then check your answers on page 109.

BY MARCEL DANESI

HIGH POINT

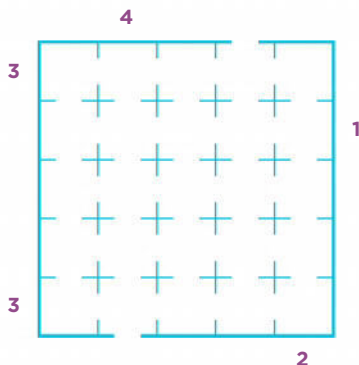
What's the missing number?



PATH PUZZLE

Draw a path that goes from the opening at the top of the grid to the opening at the bottom. As the path winds from one cell to the next, it can move up, down, left or right, but not diagonally. It cannot pass through any cell more than once.

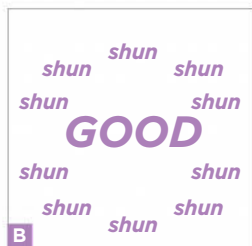
The numbers around the grid tell how many cells the path must pass through in the corresponding row or column. If a row or column has no number, then the path may pass through as many or as few cells as you like.

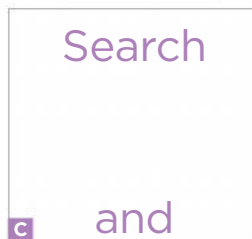


HIDDEN MEANING

Identify the common words or phrases below.



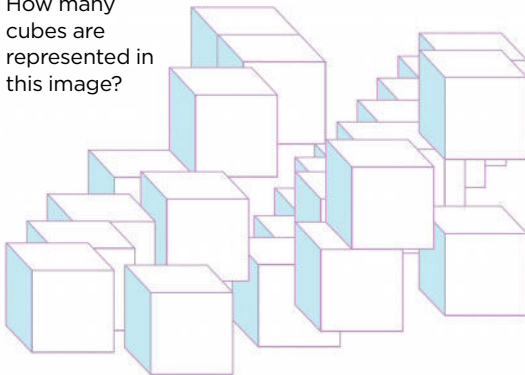






CUBISM

How many cubes are represented in this image?



BRAIN POWER
brought to you by



FRIXION ERASABLE PEN



Trivia

1. Which planet in our solar system is not named for an ancient Greek or Roman god? **1 point**

2. Which nation shares the island of Hispaniola with Haiti? **1 point**

3. Who interpreted the writing on the wall that appeared at Belshazzar's feast? **1 point**

4. What is the zodiac symbol for Sagittarius? **1 point**

5. On what day of the week is the Jewish Sabbath? **1 point**

6. Who was the highest-paid male actor in 2015? **1 point**

7. The full name for the piano, the 'pianoforte', means what in Italian? **2 points**

8. What blood-thinning medication is chemically related to rat poison? **1 point**



9. Which of the following countries did Elvis never tour: Australia, Britain, France, Japan? **2 points**

10. Five of the world's oldest dog breeds are native to one country. Which country? **2 points**

11. What company, named after a river, made its first profit of one cent per share in its seventh year of trading? **1 point**

12. Which European city stunned the fashion world in 2006 by banning from its runways models with a BMI of less than 18? **1 point**

13. What make of car uses a trident as its logo? **1 point**

14. What is the Swedish word for a table laden with festive food? **1 point**

15. The largest flower in the world smells of rotting flesh. What is its name? **2 points**

16. Which country celebrates its New Year with a pounded rice cake called *mochi*? **1 point**

16-20 Gold medal 11-15 Silver medal 6-10 Bronze medal 0-5 Wooden spoon

ANSWERS: 1. Earth; 2. Dominican Republic; 3. Daniel; 4. The archer; a bow and arrow; 5. Saturday; 6. Robert Downey Jr.; 7. Soft and loud; 8. Warfarin; 9. All of them; 10. China (the Shih Tzu, Pekinese, Chow Chow, Shar Pei and Chongqing Dog); 11. Amazon.com; 12. Madrid; 13. Maserati; 14. Smorgasbord; 15. *Rafflesia arnoldii*; 16. Japan

IT PAYS TO INCREASE YOUR

Word Power

Nice Weather We Are Having

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

BY EMILY COX & HENRY RATHVON

1. inclement *adj.* – A: comfortably warm. B: unpleasantly cold or wet. C: ever-changing.

2. temperate *adj.* – A: moderate of temperature. B: steamy. C: frigid.

3. aridity *n.* – A: harshness. B: blazing sunshine. C: dry, parched conditions.

4. nimbus *n.* – A: frostbite. B: rain cloud. C: weather vane.

5. doldrums *n.* – A: sounds of booming thunder. B: stagnation, inactivity. C: weather map lines.

6. inundate *v.* – A: overheat or melt. B: form icicles. C: flood.

7. abate *v.* – A: reduce in amount, intensity, as rain. B: increase, as wind. C: pile up, as snow.

8. convection *n.* – A: cyclonic

movement. B: hot air rising. C: meeting of weather experts.

9. striated *adj.* – A: jagged, as hail. B: banded, as clouds. C: patchy, as fog.

10. hoary *adj.* – A: hazy. B: white with frost or age. C: lightly sprinkling.

11. leeward *adj.* – A: by the shore. B: unbalanced. C: not facing the wind.

12. graupel *n.* – A: soft hail. B: warm-water current. C: mudslide.

13. insolation *n.* – A: Exposure to solar radiation. B: shade. C: winter clothing.

14. permafrost *n.* – A: powdery snow. B: stalled front. C: frozen subsoil.

15. prognosticate *v.* – A: forecast. B: chill. C: take shelter.

Answers

1. inclement – [B] unpleasantly cold or wet. Today's kite festival has been cancelled due to inclement weather.

2. temperate – [A] moderate in respect of temperature. After that cold snap, we could really use some temperate conditions.

3. aridity – [C] dry, parched conditions. If this aridity continues, I swear I'll do my rain dance.

4. nimbus – [B] rain cloud. The school group took one glance at the looming nimbus and headed straight for shelter.

5. doldrums – [B] stagnation, inactivity. Life in the busy little sawmill town had again sagged into the doldrums.

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

7. abate – [A] reduce in amount, intensity, as rain. "I do believe," announced Noah, "that the downpour is about to abate."

8. convection – [B] hot air rising. Cooling sea breezes blowing towards shore are a common weather effect of convection.

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

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

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

12. graupel – [A] soft hail. Touching graupel can cause it to melt and fall apart, unlike hail that is more solid.

13. insolation – [A] Exposure to solar radiation. Insolation or sunstroke can occur in sweltering heat.

14. permafrost – [C] frozen subsoil. Excavating the permafrost in Siberia often requires a jackhammer.

15. prognosticate – [A] forecast. Heavy clouds may prognosticate a rain shower.

WEATHER-WISE

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

VOCABULARY RATINGS

4 & below: Light drizzle.

6-9: Normal rain.

10-14: Thunderstorm.

15: Word Power Wizard.

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