

I FORGAVE THE MAN WHO ALMOST KILLED ME

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Reader's Digest

CANADA'S
MOST-READ
MAGAZINE

SEPTEMBER 2021

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Grind Your
Teeth—and
How to Stop

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THAT MAKE US PROUD
TO BE CANADIAN

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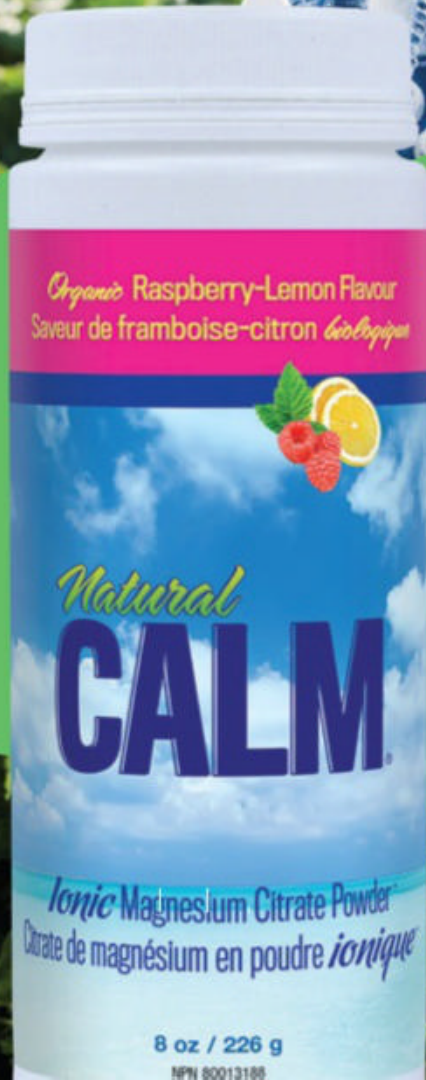
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EDITOR'S LETTER

All Heart

For the second year in a row, we're celebrating one of our favourite things: random acts of kindness. Starting on page 26, you'll read about people who donate kidneys, protect ancient trees, return childhood diaries and, in one nail-biting scene, grab a man who is leaping off an overpass. There's even a brave dog who stops traffic to save his unconscious owner.

This was a bumper season for kindness. Over the past few months, I've been especially impressed by my Toronto neighbours and their outspoken support of the city's homeless encampments. Since the start of the pandemic,



P.S. You can reach me at mark@rd.ca.

much of the homeless population has been living in makeshift dwellings in the city's parks and ravines, despite the threat of arrest and removal. But living in parks is far safer than being in a crowded shelter. Around the block from me, one man had built himself a plywood hut on a sidewalk corner. Neighbours brought him hot meals and supplies, such as PPE. Then, one day, the city carted away the hut and he disappeared.

According to Statistics Canada, some 235,000 Canadians experience homelessness in any given year. Although there aren't any reliable figures, the economic strain of the pandemic has likely only increased that number. That's the fate faced by Nina Hodder in "Eviction in the Time of COVID-19" (page 70), who was unable to make rent when the pandemic interrupted her work. For a year, she fought eviction by her landlord. It'll require more than random acts of kindness to help the tens of thousands like her keep their homes, too.

Reader's Digest

PUBLISHED BY THE READER'S DIGEST MAGAZINES CANADA LIMITED, MONTREAL, CANADA

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Print subscriptions, \$34.50 a year, plus \$8.99 postage, processing and handling. Please add applicable taxes. Outside Canada, \$53.96 yearly, including postage, processing and handling. (Prices and postage subject to change without notice.) ISSN 0034-0413. Indexed by the Canadian Periodical Index. Single issue: \$4.95.

 We acknowledge with gratitude the financial support of the Government of Canada. / Nous remercions le Gouvernement du Canada pour son appui financier.



Reader's Digest publishes 10 issues per year and may occasionally publish special issues (special issues count as two), subject to change without notice.

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“Talk It Out”

Lu is an artist and photographer whose work has appeared in *The Globe and Mail*, *Report on Business Magazine*, *Maclean's* and *The Walrus*. Her images highlight cultural identities, personal histories and human connection. Lu's work has been exhibited in galleries across Ontario, most notably the Ryerson Image Centre. Check out her photo on page 8.



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“Back to the Grind”

Baker is a fact checker, copy editor and writer, as well as a 2021 Michener-L. Richard O'Hagan fellow and a senior fellow at *The Walrus*. Since 2016, she has produced *Mi'kmaq Matters*, a podcast about the Mi'kmaq people, and the politics, land and water of Newfoundland. Read her latest story, about how the pandemic has caused more people to grind their teeth, on page 18.



TIFFANY DANG
Illustrator, Toronto

“The Spark”

Dang was born and raised in San Jose, California. Her award-winning illustrations have been featured in *Scientific American*, *The Washington Post* and on Politico Europe. Dang's brightly coloured work merges traditional and digital media to create dynamic and striking designs. You can find her contribution to this issue's Life Lesson on page 38.

LETTERS

FALSELY ADVERTISED

Thank you for “How to Outsmart a Scammer” (May 2021). The too-good-to-be-true scams are the ones that bother me the most. Last year, I fell for a company’s claims about a portable air conditioner. When it arrived and I plugged it in, it worked no better than the fan from my local store.

— CAROL OVERING, *Dundas, Ont.*

RISING NUMBERS

I appreciated the topical, balanced and helpful article, “A World of Worry” (May 2021). There was a distortion, however, in the following statement: “Arthur is one of the 44 million North Americans who experience an anxiety disorder.” A quick check indicated that you overlooked Mexico, where another 18 million people suffer from anxiety.

— RICK BELL, *Cowley, Alta.*

CONTRIBUTE

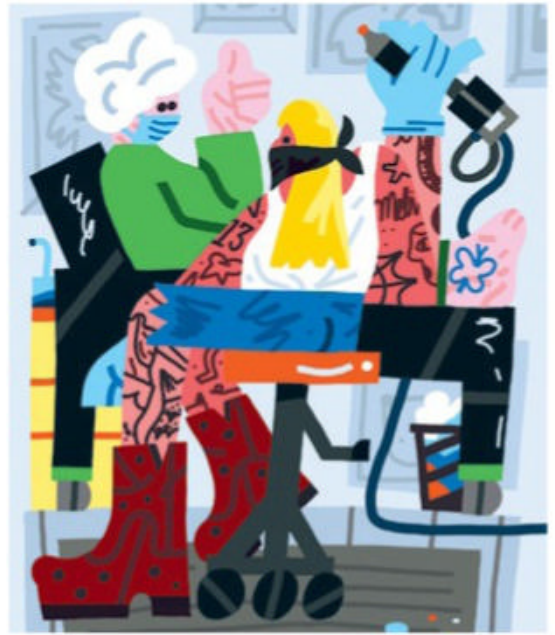
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CONTACT THE EDITORS Have something to say about an article in *Reader’s Digest*? Send your letters to editors_canada@rd.ca



FLOWER POWER

When I read “Golden Years” (June 2021), Mark Angus Hamlin’s story about his mother getting a tattoo to celebrate her birthday, I said “Wow, I did that too!” As my 80th birthday approached, I wondered what I could do to mark the occasion. Then it came to me: I’ll get a sunflower tattoo! I showed it to the grandkids, who asked two questions: “Grandma, is that real?” Yes. “Grandma, did it hurt?” Yes. I liked my tattoo so much that I got another one to celebrate my 81st.

— PHYLLIS CUNNINGHAM, *Speers, Sask.*

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*Why two Arab-Canadian youth created
a forum for difficult discussions*

Talk It Out

BY Ali Amad

PHOTOGRAPH BY LUCY LU

BACK IN 2017, Hani Al-Dajane was struggling to figure out where he fit in. Al-Dajane, then 25, was the only Arab at the Toronto law firm where he worked. Every time he scrolled online, he saw mainstream media stories filled with negative stereotypes about his culture—if they included Arab perspectives at all. And, within his own Arab community, he felt there weren't enough spaces for young people to talk about the issues that mattered to them, such as racism, gender equality or LGBTQ rights.

Finally, he confided in his friend Mays Alwash, a 24-year-old biology

student. Both Al-Dajane and Alwash had moved to Canada from other countries (he from Kuwait and she from Iraq), and hit it off in university. Alwash was similarly troubled by the dearth of Arab voices in Canadian society. She also had difficulty connecting with other Arabs about seemingly taboo topics, which made her feel even more unrepresented and isolated. “We realized we couldn't be the only ones feeling this way,” says Al-Dajane.

The solution, they decided, was to host events for like-minded young Arab adults. In May 2018, they launched Yalla Let's Talk! (*yalla* is Arabic for



**Hani Al-Dajane
and Mays Alwash
help Arabs find
community.**

“Come on!”) as an event series, spreading the word through Arab-Canadian youth leaders and social media influencers. Six months later, about 50 participants in their 20s met at a café in Mississauga for the first event. People sat in a circle with Al-Dajane and Alwash moderating. They opened with questions about “choice.” What choices are yours, and what choices are controlled by family pressures? One person likened the idea of community to a chain: there’s only so far you can move before the chain pulls you back. That resonated with others. Like Al-Dajane, the group wanted to loosen their chains without discarding their rich Arab heritage.

“THE MEETUPS ARE ABOUT ENCOURAGING CONVERSATIONS THAT ARE SWEEPED UNDER THE RUG.”

Soon, Al-Dajane and Alwash began holding monthly meetups across the GTA. Anyone who identified as Arab or with the immigrant experience could participate. YLT then expanded its volunteer-run events to London, Ont. and Montreal, as well as to cities in the United States and the United Kingdom. In its first year, YLT held 20 café meetups that hosted nearly 1,000 people.

“The meetups were all about encouraging conversations that are usually swept under the rug,” says Alwash. Muslim women who wear a hijab shared the challenges of using dating apps. Black Arabs spoke about the racism they encountered. Some participants shared stories about their experiences with trauma. Others came out as LGBTQ for the first time among other Arabs.

In 2020, with in-person events postponed because of the pandemic, the organization began hosting free YLT virtual cafés via Zoom every Saturday. More than 1,500 people from around the world have attended. Then, last fall, Al-Dajane and Alwash found a way to expand the conversation even further, turning YLT into a full-fledged media company that produces content both as an online magazine and through an Instagram account. Arab staff writers and guest columnists write about subjects as varied as divorce, masturbation, women’s rights and mental health.

Today, Al-Dajane is a lawyer at Emerge LLP, a firm that helps entrepreneurs, which he also co-founded, and Alwash is a PhD candidate in molecular biology at the University of Toronto. Neither feels isolated or anchorless anymore—they’ve built a new community and a meaningful Arab identity for themselves. “We all have different goals and values,” says Al-Dajane, “but the new generation of Arabs has one thing in common: a desire to make a positive difference.” **R**

GOOD NEWS

FIVE REASONS TO SMILE

BY Al Donato

The Belize Maya Forest is home to 200 species of trees.

A RAINFOREST FOR EVERYONE

BELIZE Rainforests are well known as habitat for extraordinary numbers of species of flora and fauna. They're also the Earth's lungs. But deforestation from development and farming is a constant threat: between 2010 and 2020, South America lost 2.6 million hectares of forest per year.

One section of rainforest now has a lifetime guarantee against that fate. This past April, a coalition of 16 conservation partners, including the Nature Conservancy, a global non-profit, bought about 95,000 hectares of land from the Forestland Group, a logging company. Named the Belize Maya Forest by its new guardians, the area is a

vital habitat for jaguars, spider monkeys and pumas.

"If that area had not been purchased, the likely future of it was going to be full clearcutting of the forest for large-scale mechanized agriculture for crops or for cattle ranching," says Elma Kay, science director at the University of Belize Environmental Research Institute.

Because of its rugged terrain, humans haven't lived in the area for 200 years. Kay, who leads the team that consults with local communities, hopes the region will soon attract tourists; among its most stunning features are cenotes, natural pools of water that were central to ancient Mayan culture.

The safeguarding of the Belize Maya Forest may also lead to programs that would make crop-growing in the surrounding area more sustainable.

Now rainforest conservationists will turn to another nearby project: protecting a corridor of 12,140 hectares of jungle that connects the Belize Maya Forest to pristine forested mountains on the Guatemalan border.

Endangered Cheetahs Make Historic Comeback

INDIA More than 70 years after India's cheetahs were hunted to extinction, the big cats are finally set to return. In a project spearheaded by India's Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change, upwards of 40 African cheetahs will be relocated from Africa to India. The first eight to 10 will arrive at Kuno National Park, a 74,800-hectare area with a healthy population of wild pig and cattle, by the end of the year.

There were 100,000 cheetahs worldwide at the turn of the 19th century—just 7,100 survive today. In 1947, the last three Asiatic Cheetahs in India were reportedly killed during a hunt by a local prince.

Ecologists hope that the cheetahs will play a pivotal role in preserving India's dwindling grasslands—regions



that, if maintained, may help the country reach the carbon-sinking goals it set out in the 2015 Paris Agreement.

Bunnies Dust Up a Prehistoric Win

WALES In March, Richard Brown and Giselle Eagle, wardens of the small island of Skokholm, spotted rabbits digging up pebbles and pottery shards. The couple, wondering if the items were of any significance, sent photos to archaeologists. They were surprised to learn the pebbles were, in fact, remnants of 9,000-year-old Stone Age tools, while the shards were from a 3,750-year-old cremation urn from the Bronze Age, making them the oldest known artifacts from the island.

“Thanks to the sharp eyes of the wardens, we have the first confirmed Mesolithic tools and first Bronze Age pottery from Skokholm,” said Toby Driver, an archaeologist at the Royal Commission, Wales. The discoveries are evidence of hunter-gatherer occupation on the island—prior studies went only as far back as the Iron Age, which extended in Great Britain from 800 BC to AD 100. Once COVID-19 travel restrictions are lifted, researchers are planning a trip to the island for further exploration.

A Solution to Gum Litter

DENMARK Our habit of chewing minty gum is not without its toll on the environment. Most of it is made from synthetic polymers, like plastic, which aren't biodegradable. That's why so much discarded gum seems to permanently stick to sidewalks. To help tackle this problem, entrepreneurs Peter Juul Regnersgaard and Morten Ebdrup created their own plastic-free alternative.

Launched in 2017, True Gum produces 400,000 pieces of plastic-free chewing gum a day at its Copenhagen factory. Each piece of True Gum has a chicle base, a resin that Mayan and Aztec peoples were chewing hundreds of years ago. Now people in such countries as the Netherlands, Germany and Belgium are True Gum chewers. If the eco-friendly candy catches on, it could spell the end of gum-spotted sidewalks the world over.

ACTS OF KINDNESS

An Albertan With a Big Heart

When COVID-19 arrived in Frog Lake First Nation, Jacob Faithful, a 42-year-old owner of a janitorial business, was inundated with requests from his friends and neighbours for personal protective equipment (PPE), including masks. The pandemic disproportionately affected Indigenous peoples in Western Canada, including Frog Lake, a community some 200 kilometres northeast of Edmonton, with an on-reserve population of 2,100.

But PPE supplies remained hard to come by, especially in remote towns. Last November, Faithful had an idea: why not make masks right there in Frog Lake?

Working out of the gym of the local health centre, his company became the

first mask-manufacturing business on a Canadian reserve that's fully owned and operated by Indigenous people. Young Spirit Supplies, named after Faithful's traditional music singing group, now employs 30 people and produces 100,000 face masks every day, to be shipped across Canada and globally. "I really feel we are making significant change," he says. "We're adding to much-needed protection for us and for people around the world."

The company also collaborates with Indigenous artists to design the masks' patterns and packaging. Faithful sees no shortage of demand for masks in the future, and plans to build his own facility in Frog Lake later this year.



ASK AN EXPERT

When Will We All Have Electric Cars?

We ask transportation researcher Josipa Petrunic

BY Courtney Shea

ILLUSTRATION BY LAUREN TAMAKI

The federal government has set some ambitious targets for electric vehicle use: 10 per cent of new cars purchased by 2025 must be EVs, and 30 per cent by 2030. How are we doing?

We are currently between three and four per cent. Our government targets are aggressive but not impossible—if we make some changes. Over the last few years, the focus has been on subsidies and other financial incentives: if you buy an EV you get a tax writeoff. That is one piece of the puzzle, but it's not enough. We have to start pricing roadway, which could be incredibly effective, but it's politically unsavoury.



Do you mean road tolls?

Exactly. You'd have to pay to enter any major city, and you would pay less or not at all if you have an EV. In the U.K., tolls for entering London have been extremely effective, both in cutting down congestion and in reducing car use and getting more people onto transit. If the overall goal of emissions reduction is hitting our Paris Agreement targets and saving the planet, only getting those who can afford it into an EV is not going to move the needle.

We know EVs are better for the planet, but how much better?

Using a zero-emissions vehicle or giving up a car altogether is the most effective thing a person can do to reduce their carbon footprint, other than having fewer children.

Along with expense, one common reason for EV hesitancy is the lack of charging stations.

We have enough stations to handle the number of EVs on the road today, but not enough if we were to see more mainstream adoption. But, also, the vast majority of charging happens at home: you plug in your car at night and in the morning you're good to go.

Good to go how far?

That depends on battery power, which varies from vehicle to vehicle. Overall energy capacity of batteries has improved, though. The 2015 Nissan Leaf, which is an entry-level EV, got about 200 kilometres on one charge. Now it's about 250 to 300 kilometres, so enough for day-to-day life but not enough for hopping on the highway and heading out of town.

That's no small issue, given our national enthusiasm for the great Canadian road trip.

Actually, 90 per cent of driving life is short-range trips—commuting to work, driving to Costco, going to a soccer game. We need to convince

Canadians to choose cars that suit those day-to-day needs. Then, for the other 10 per cent of their driving life—say, the rare drive to a cottage—they may consider car-rental or ride-sharing programs.

THIS IS THE MOST EFFECTIVE WAY TO REDUCE YOUR CARBON FOOTPRINT.

The Automotive Parts Manufacturers' Association is spearheading a new project backed by 335 companies to create an all-Canadian EV. Is that a promising sign?

It's exciting to see new projects getting attention and funding. But I also want to point out that we have been manufacturing electric buses in Canada for over half a decade. Maybe they're not as sexy as a Canadian Tesla, but if we want to talk about change, transit is the way forward. People buy cars one by one, but cities buy public transit vehicles in mass quantities. With public transit, we're not talking about a curve that goes up in tiny increments; we can see the line shoot up. 

Josipa Petronic is the executive director and CEO of the Canadian Urban Transit Research and Innovation Consortium.

POINTS TO PONDER

I liken it to a bell being rung, combined with a skeleton being rattled, combined with a nerve being touched.

—Professional storyteller **Ivan Coyote**, DESCRIBING THE APPEAL OF LETTER CORRESPONDENCE



These were 215 beautiful, trusting little spirits who believed in their hearts that it would all work out.

—Senator **Mary Jane McCallum**, IN A SPEECH AFTER UNMARKED CHILDREN'S GRAVES WERE FOUND AT THE KAMLOOPS RESIDENTIAL SCHOOL

I LOVED BEING MICHELLE DUBARRY, BUT MICHELLE ISN'T AROUND ANYMORE.

—**Richard Allread**, ON WHY, AFTER NEARLY 70 YEARS, HE MAY BE READY TO RETIRE HIS TRAILBLAZING DRAG PERSONA

NORMAL NEVER REALLY WORKED FOR ME.

—Disability advocate **Karin Hitselberger**, EXPLAINING WHY SHE HOPES VIRTUAL MEETINGS AND EVENTS WILL CONTINUE TO FLOURISH AFTER THE PANDEMIC



I'm making up for lost time.

—**Julian Taylor**, ON HIS FIRST JUNO NOMINATIONS, AFTER RECORDING FOR MORE THAN TWO DECADES

It's difficult to have conversations about how sad we are, or how we've gotten here, when we have politicians who've put forward legislation that says, "You're not welcome here."

–**Ginella Massa**, host of *Canada Tonight*,
SPEAKING ABOUT ISLAMOPHOBIA AFTER A LONDON, ONT. MAN
TARGETED A MUSLIM FAMILY OF FIVE, KILLING FOUR



**WE'RE USED
TO LEFTOVERS.
IT'S THE CURSE
OF BEING GEN X.**

–**Writer Douglas Coupland**,
COMMENTING ON HOW, BECAUSE OF
DISTRIBUTION TIMING, MANY PEOPLE HIS AGE
WERE GIVEN THE ASTRAZENECA VACCINE



**IT'S A LITTLE BIT OF
JUSTICE FOR INDIGENOUS
PEOPLE, BUT NOT
ENOUGH. IT'S JUST
THE BEGINNING.**

–**Student Dishanie Fernando**,
COMMENTING ON THE TOPPLING OF A STATUE OF
RYERSON UNIVERSITY NAMESAKE EGERTON
RYERSON, WHO HELPED CONCEIVE THE RESIDENTIAL
SCHOOL SYSTEM

*It turns out that even if the wine
is natural, the label is very
minimalist and there's all kinds
of bits floating at the bottom, if
you drink a million glasses you
still get a hangover. Rip off.*

–**Writer and comedian Monica Heisey**

When I was a teenager, I didn't appreciate the mountains and the orcas. But now, they're bringing me back.

–**Kim Cattrall**, DESCRIBING WHAT SHE LIKES ABOUT HER
VANCOUVER ISLAND, B.C. HOME





Back to the Grind

Teeth gnashing may be on the rise, but there are long-term solutions

BY Allison Baker

ILLUSTRATION BY VALÉRY GOULET

OVER THE LAST year and a half, Canadian dentists have reported an increase in tooth fractures, damaged fillings and jaw soreness among their patients. While it's too early to say for sure, some experts surmise that the stress of the pandemic has caused an uptick in the number of people who grind their teeth and clench their jaw—behaviours known as bruxism.

Bruxism is involuntary, can happen while a person is awake or asleep and can lead to pain and tightness in the jaw, neck or face, as well as tooth sensitivity. Because of this, bruxers are three times more likely than non-bruxers to experience headaches.

There's a strong link between high levels of stress or anxiety and bruxism—particularly when it comes to daytime clenching. While more research needs to be done to pinpoint the correlation, some studies suggest that tooth clenching while awake may be a coping mechanism, much like how some people bite their nails or find themselves tapping their feet.

Stress isn't the only cause. If you drink an excessive amount of caffeine (more than six cups a day) or alcohol—both of which trigger jaw muscles to hyperactivate—you're also more prone to bruxism. In fact, it's been found that heavy alcohol consumption (three or more drinks a day) doubles a patient's chance of grinding their teeth and clenching their jaw while sleeping.

One theory about bruxism is that humans first began to grind their teeth at night as part of our ancient fight-or-flight response, triggered by our sympathetic nervous system.

Gilles Lavigne, a professor in the faculty of dentistry at the University of Montreal, compares this system, which operates without our conscious awareness, to an internal cuckoo clock: every 20 to 40 seconds, the cuckoo pops out of the clock face (in this case, deep sleep) and scans the surroundings for signs of danger. If there are none, it goes back inside, and we continue to sleep. But if it senses a new smell or sound, for example, the cuckoo starts to chime, and our muscles, including those in our jaw, tense in preparation to face the threat or run.

To prevent tooth damage from nighttime bruxing, a dentist can prescribe a personalized mouthguard that protects against wear and tear. However, that doesn't address the root of the problem—whether it's stress or over-caffeinating—and it's possible for bruxing to lead to chronic pain or even cause the jaw to freeze into place, a condition known as lockjaw.

For this reason, if your bruxing becomes more frequent or painful, you should consider taking a holistic approach to treating it. A psychological counsellor can help you determine the source of your stress or anxiety, as well as assist with cutting down on caffeine and alcohol. Meanwhile, a

physiotherapist can alleviate pain by massaging the muscles of the head and face and by using a technique called dry needling, where needles are inserted into muscles in the jaw to release tension.

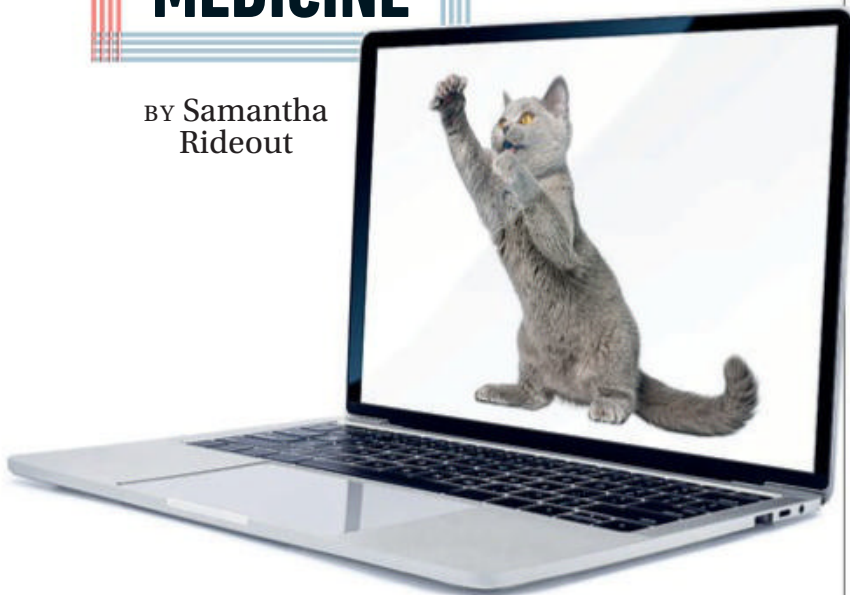
AROUND
13%
OF PEOPLE BRUX
IN THEIR SLEEP.

Karim Meghji, a physiotherapist in Calgary, adds that he'll also help people with their overall body posture, since leaning into a computer or spending a lot of time on the couch can lead to more bruxing. "When people's heads are sitting forward, their necks are getting stressed and they're basically sitting in a compressed posture," he says, explaining that this puts pressure on the neck and jaw muscles, causing them to stay activated—and clenched—when they should instead be relaxed.

While the pandemic has certainly increased bad posture behaviours, Meghji says there's been a silver lining: patients, with more time on their hands, have relied less on quick-fix treatments like mouthguards and are more open to the idea of investing in long-term changes to their lifestyles and mental health. **R**

NEWS FROM THE
**WORLD OF
MEDICINE**

BY Samantha
Rideout



FREQUENT INTERNET USE: NOT ALWAYS BAD

Spending chunks of your day on the Internet can be helpful or detrimental for your mental health, depending upon what you do there. A 2020 Canadian review linked social-media use to mental distress among teens, in part because it can bring on a feeling that others look or live better than you do. On the other hand, in a 2021 British study, seniors who went online at least once a day during a pandemic lockdown tended to feel less depressed compared to those who accessed the Internet only once a week or less. The benefits include communicating with family and friends, finding inspiration for fun offline activities and enjoying a quick, feel-good distraction on a rough day. (Cat video, anyone?)

Waist Size Is a Useful Heart-Health Metric

Since the 1970s, body mass index (BMI) has been widely used to estimate health risks related to excess body fat. However, many commentators argue that we've been overlooking its limitations. A group of worldwide experts released a statement in early 2020 suggesting doctors should also measure your waist, since BMI alone isn't always a good indicator of cardiovascular risk. An athletic, muscular person could have a high BMI and a healthy heart. Conversely, many people lose muscle with age, which could lower their BMI, despite high body-fat levels. So while BMI can be useful, adding waist circumference to the picture clarifies your risk profile. Fortunately, waist size tends to go down with exercise and a healthy diet—even if your weight doesn't.

(LAPTOP) ISTOCKPHOTO.COM/SETTHAPHAT DODCHAI; (CAT) ISTOCKPHOTO.COM/GLOBALP



Why You Shouldn't Cry Over Spilled Milk

Scientists have proven you're better off not sweating the small stuff. To simulate the emotional effects of daily setbacks—missing a bus, say, or knocking over your coffee—researchers showed people unpleasant images. Brain scans revealed that some participants' negative reactions lasted longer in a region called the amygdala than those of others. The subjects whose brain activity went back to normal more quickly were more likely to report that they were frequently in a good mood. These same people also rated their psychological well-being more highly seven years later.

A New Treatment for Arthritic Knee Pain

A knee replacement can help greatly with severe osteoarthritis, but not everyone is willing or able to undergo major surgery. There's now another option known as genicular artery embolization. For this procedure, a specialist cuts a pinhole in the patient's thigh and uses a thin tube to insert particles that diminish abnormal blood flow to the knee, thus reducing inflammation. The procedure takes one to two hours and doesn't require general anaesthesia nor an overnight hospital stay. Most patients see at least a 50 per cent drop in pain for at least 12 months.



Post-Pandemic, Handwashing Will Still Matter

COVID-19 inspired people to wash their hands frequently with soap to reduce the risk of virus transmission—at least at first. Staff at a Chicago hospital reported washing their hands on 75.5 per cent of the required occasions (for example, before entering a patient's room) at the height of the first wave in April 2020. By August of the same year, they were back to their pre-pandemic compliance levels of around 55 per cent. Outside of hospitals, it's likely that the rest of us are sliding back into subpar habits, as well. Even as COVID cases subside, there are still reasons to maintain high handwashing standards. These include preventing the spread of the common cold, diarrhea and especially the flu, which remains a major cause of death.

The Challenges of Going off Antidepressants

It's estimated that up to half of the people taking long-term antidepressants no longer have a medical reason to continue with them. The way to tell whether you still need these drugs is to stop taking them, under a doctor's supervision, and see what happens. Unfortunately, there's not much research about how to do that safely and successfully.

Many antidepressants cause physical dependence because the brain adjusts to their effects on neurotransmitter activity and stops functioning normally without them. To give the brain time to adjust back again, experts recommend gradually reducing the dose instead of doing it quickly, which can lead to withdrawal symptoms—including dizziness, nausea, tremors and spasms. Short-term users might be able to pull this off in as little as one month, but for long-term users, it can take many months or possibly even longer than a year.


A recent review notes that antidepressant-withdrawal symptoms aren't easy to distinguish from depression-relapse symptoms. Problems such as low mood, insomnia and appetite changes can be caused by either one. Because of this overlap, many people likely believe they're relapsing when they're actually not. One way to tell the difference is that you can often ease withdrawal by reducing the medication dosage more slowly, whereas this won't work for a relapse.



Fatty Liver Disease: A Silent, Deadly Threat

Due to increasing obesity levels and an aging population, fatty liver disease is on the rise. Around a quarter of adults have it, often unknowingly and without symptoms. Since it can progress to permanent liver scarring, cancer, or death, people with obesity and diabetes, who are at high risk, should get evaluated for this condition.

Proof That Gains Come From Pain

For a *JAMA* study, some patients with lower-extremity peripheral artery disease—which affects 250 million people around the world—walked slowly enough to avoid blood flow-related pain that comes with the condition, while others powered through it. After a year, the latter group could walk significantly faster and longer. 

MEDICAL MYSTERY

The Lump

His doctor thought he had a benign cyst—then it grew to the size of a baseball

BY LUC RINALDI

ILLUSTRATION BY VICTOR WONG

RICHARD DANZER FIRST cheated death in 1962. As a young American fighting in the Vietnam War, he was tasked with salvaging a ship that ran ashore on the island of Phú Quốc. Danzer and 10 fellow soldiers freed the vessel from the beach, but to save themselves, they needed to brave waves nearly four metres tall in a small rubber raft before North Vietnamese forces descended on them.

Danzer didn't think they'd survive, but against all odds, they reached the ship



and climbed aboard. “Every day since, I’ve thanked God,” he says. “And every day that I see sunshine is a good day.”

That attitude has helped Danzer navigate the choppy waters of aging. Now 79, he’s retired in Delray Beach, Florida, after a 50-year career working in sales and management in the paint industry. His wife has Parkinson’s disease and dementia, and he’s had plenty of health issues himself. In 2017, he was diagnosed with bladder cancer. While treating that illness, his doctors discovered and excised a squamous-cell carcinoma on his nose—a common but aggressive form of skin cancer that appears as a crust and can spread to other parts of the body if not treated.

Once he was declared cancer-free, he began attending regular appointments to make sure he stayed that way.

In the summer of 2018, Danzer noticed a small lump in the middle of his back. It wasn't painful, but over the course of a few weeks, it grew large enough that he could no longer comfortably sleep on his back. When he reported it to his general practitioner, the doctor said it was most likely a cyst, perhaps a benign pocket of fatty tissue or an inflamed hair follicle—in other words, something to keep an eye on but not a cause for panic.

The supposed cyst continued to grow for six months. By December, it was eight centimetres wide—about the size of a baseball cut in half. That wasn't all. A sizable dark red crust was also developing on Danzer's leg, like a scab but without any inciting scrape. He asked his daughter, Cheryl, who'd moved in with him a few years before, to take a look at his leg and back. "We both agreed that I'd better get to the doctor," he says.

Danzer's GP referred him to a dermatologist, Dr. Brittany Smirnov, who in turn sent him to a specialist in nearby West Palm Beach who could perform Mohs surgery, an exacting technique to remove cancerous cells from skin. Danzer also asked Smirnov to check out the growth on his back.

Immediately, Smirnov was certain it was not a cyst. There was no punctum, the small hole that's typical on a cyst

caused by a problematic follicle. And the growth was firm, like a rubber eraser, whereas cysts are usually soft and gelatinous, like pudding inside a water balloon. Nor did the lump have a foul smell, another telltale sign of a cyst that results from a buildup of hair-lubricating fluid under the skin. Plus, it had grown faster than most cysts would have.

WHEN DANZER SAID HE HAD SMOKED FOR 40 YEARS, IT FLICKED A SWITCH IN HIS DOCTOR'S BRAIN.

After dismissing that diagnosis, Smirnov thought it might be a lipoma, a common and benign buildup of fat. She pushed the lump around with her fingers—lipomas shift easily under the skin with slight pressure—but the bulge stayed put. It seemed affixed to the back of Danzer's rib cage.

Still puzzled, Smirnov asked Danzer about his general health. Had he lost weight? No, he said. Was he experiencing any new issues? Nothing new, he reported, but he did have a chronic dry cough he attributed to smoking a pack of cigarettes every day for more than 40 years. That discovery flicked a switch in Smirnov's brain. Skin abnormalities are occasionally a sign of lung cancer,

a plausible diagnosis for a long-time smoker like Danzer. “One of the areas where lung cancers love to metastasize is on the chest wall,” says Smirnov.

Smirnov ordered a spiral CT scan of Danzer’s lungs. The results proved her suspicions were correct: he had stage four lung cancer, and cancerous cells had spread from his lungs to the tumour on his back. In all likelihood, Danzer’s medical team concluded, he had 18 months to live.


“It was a shock. It didn’t immediately register,” he says. Then, when the news did start to sink in, he “put it in God’s hands.”

There was a slim chance that, with the right treatment, Danzer could cheat death again. He underwent chemotherapy and five rounds of CyberKnife treatments, in which a robotic arm zapped his tumour with targeted beams of radiation. Almost immediately, the lump on Danzer’s back started getting smaller.

“As the tumour on his back started shrinking, we knew his internal tumour

was shrinking, too,” says Smirnov. “It was a really good barometer to tell us how well the cancer was responding to the treatment.”

Within two months, the growth was gone, leaving only a skin wound; with a topical solution, that healed within a few days. The chemo lasted several months, during which time Danzer often felt sick to his stomach and depleted of energy. His daughter fed, comforted and took care of him. “I don’t know where I would have been without her,” he says.

About a year after Danzer first visited Smirnov’s office, he was declared cancer-free yet again. In the summer of 2020—the season he wasn’t supposed to live long enough to see—he was back to enjoying retirement and spending time with his daughter, relieved to be alive and grateful to Smirnov for saving his life. “I’ve exceeded my check-out date by a year and a half now,” he says. “I figured, after Vietnam, I was on borrowed time anyway. This just came as another blessing.” 



A Necessary Ingredient

All you need is love.

But a little chocolate now and then doesn’t hurt.

CHARLES M. SCHULZ

**You hand and your mouth agreed many years ago that,
as far as chocolate is concerned, there is
no need to involve your brain.**

DAVE BARRY



From donating a kidney to writing letters to seniors, these incredible Canadians made a difference

RANDOM ACTS OF KINDNESS

BY Sarah Liss AND
Christina Palassio

The Good Samaritans Who Found a Stolen Teddy Bear

VANCOUVER

When 29-year-old storyboard artist Mara Soriano thinks of her mother, Marilyn, she remembers her singing. “She loved karaoke and cheesy ’80s songs,” Soriano says. “She sang all the time.” In late 2017, before cancer

KARI MEDIG



“It was my
mom telling me,
‘The world is
okay, kid.’”

robbed Soriano's mom of her voice, she recorded a message in English and Tagalog and preserved it inside a Build-a-Bear: "You make Mommy so proud. No matter where you are, a part of me will always be with you. I love you to infinity and beyond."

After her mother's death in 2019 at age 53, that teddy bear became Soriano's most priceless possession. When it went missing during a move last July—tucked in a backpack that got stolen in the chaos of unloading the U-Haul van—Soriano was devastated. She spent that night frantically rifling through dumpsters and scouring alleys in downtown Vancouver. When her efforts proved fruitless, she took her hunt to the Internet, sharing photos of her lost Mamabear on Reddit and Instagram, and security footage on Twitter. A local CBC reporter picked up the story, and the news made it all the way to a high-profile Vancouverite: actor Ryan Reynolds, who encouraged his 17 million-plus Twitter followers to help Soriano, offering a \$5,000 reward for the keepsake's safe return.

Amazingly, Mamabear made it back to Soriano's arms four days later, ferried by some good Samaritans who recognized the thief from security footage Soriano had shared on social media. Soriano was ecstatic: "I feel like losing that bear and getting it back was just my mom telling me, 'The world is okay, kid. You're going to be fine. I will always be with you.'"

The Nature Lover Who Saved a 300-Year-Old Tree


TORONTO

In the residential neighbourhood of Humbermede, a massive 300-year-old red oak presides over the backyard of an unassuming bungalow. But three years ago, when the owner of the house decided to sell, the looming tree was judged a threat to the house's structural safety. A neighbour named Edith George, who's been the oak's advocate and protector for more than a decade, collected \$430,000 from more than 1,000 people. It was enough to convince the City of Toronto to match that money to buy the house and transform the property into a park. For George, the endeavour was simple: she refers to the tree as Zhelevo, a nod to her ancestral village in Macedonia, and calls it "my paradise." Her hope is to share that paradise with her fellow citizens.

The Teacher Who Returned Lost Diaries

HAVELOCK, NEW BRUNSWICK

In 1988, 11-year-old Austin Hutton scrawled a message on his stapled, handwritten diary: "MY DIARY. Top secret. KEEP OUT!" The diary was an assignment from his Grade 6 teacher, Hugh Brittain, at Havelock Elementary School. While most students took their diaries home at the end of the school

A photograph of a woman standing next to a massive, ancient-looking oak tree trunk. The tree's bark is deeply textured and grey. The woman is wearing a blue jumpsuit and a white cardigan, looking up at the tree. The background is filled with lush green foliage and a wooden lattice fence. A teal heart-shaped graphic is overlaid on the right side of the image, containing text.

Edith George has
protected the
massive oak for
more than a
decade.

year, some forgot, and Brittain held on to them—just in case.

Hutton's diary was one of the 26 that Brittain still had when he retired in 1995. Earlier this year, he posted a message to a local Facebook group hoping to reunite the notebooks with their owners. And slowly, with the help of a few friendly sleuths, he did.

Hutton, now 45 and living in Fort St. John, B.C., has four children of his own. His hands shook when he opened the package from Brittain. He had no memory of what he had written but was delighted to rediscover the stuff of childhood. Hutton says having his diary back gave him a chance not only to reconnect with his former self, but to show his kids a side of their dad they'd never seen before—a young boy dreaming of buying a bike, gaga over his school crush and just trying to figure out life.

The Dog Who Rescued Her Owner

STITTSVILLE, ONTARIO

There are good dogs, and then there's Clover. This past March, the floofy white Maremma mix was out for her daily walk with her 25-year-old owner, Haley Moore, when, as the two were about to cross the street, Moore had a seizure and collapsed.

While untrained for the situation, Clover nevertheless switched into

protection mode. First, she walked in a circle, sussing out the situation; next, she flipped Moore onto her back and freed the leash. Then, Clover tried to alert passing drivers. "This dog doesn't like cars," says Diane Moore, Haley's mother. "She gets car-sick. But there she was, trying to make eye contact with people driving by. She moved right into the centre of the road."

Dryden Oatway, a 22-year-old tow-truck driver, spotted the dog, parked his vehicle and rushed to Moore; he and a neighbour promptly called the paramedics. Clover then started to return to their nearby home, looking back often to ensure Haley was in good hands. Once she was at her door, Clover started barking and wouldn't stop until Haley's father, Randall, and 21-year-old sister, Reilly, followed her. By the time they reached Haley, paramedics had arrived.

"All I really remember is waking up in an ambulance and being really confused," says Moore. "It was scary! Thank God for Clover."

The Moore family doesn't know what caused Haley's seizure, but thankfully, it has not happened again. And Clover is just happy that her family is safe and sound. "As an animal lover, I've always sensed that animals were just as extraordinary as humans," says Diane. "We feel very blessed to have her in our lives, and I truly hope she feels the same way."



“It was scary!
Thank God
for Clover.”

The Sanitation Workers Who Pulled Off a Birthday Surprise

TORONTO

On Friday mornings, three-year-old Wolfgang Reader sits on his front porch and waits for the truck to come. Like a lot of kids his age, Wolfgang is a big fan of garbage trucks. He plays with his toy garbage trucks, draws garbage trucks, and wants to be a sanitation worker when he grows up. And the workers who pass his home on their route couldn't help but notice his enthusiasm.

"I began to blow the truck's horn. You would hear it all the way down the road," says 32-year-old Feranza Fullwood, who goes by D.J. When they could, the

men would stop to play with the boy and chat with the family—at a safe distance, of course. They even started calling themselves the Wolfpack.

Last September, as Wolfgang's third birthday approached, his family knew they wouldn't be able to throw a party because of the pandemic. Wolfgang's grandmother crossed her fingers and asked the City of Toronto if a garbage truck could do a special off-schedule visit on his birthday. The family was surprised and delighted when not one but four trucks came clanging down the street.

"Wolfgang was speechless," says the boy's mom, Julia Wehkamp. The crew brought gifts: hats, colouring books and specially made Wolfpack T-shirts.



Wolfgang and one of his Wolfpack play together on the boy's third birthday.

COURTESY OF JULIA WEHKAMP

Wolfgang even got to honk the horn of a truck. Wehkamp says he still talks about it to anyone who'll listen.

"I have a kid who's the same age as Wolfy," says Fullwood. "When I see a kid who's really interested in my job, I do my best to ensure he's happy and make his day." Close to a year later, Wolfgang is still obsessed with garbage trucks—and Fullwood still honks the horn for him every Friday.

The Cashier Who Inspired a Teacher to Pay It Forward

KAMLOOPS, BRITISH COLUMBIA

Dee-Anna Irwin, a single mom who has worked at a dollar store for eight years, always keeps spare change to pay for customers' small costs. She didn't think twice about covering the bill this past March when Dina Chase, a high-school teacher, arrived to buy snacks for her students. "If she's going to make this much of an effort to look out for those kids, it's the least I can do," says Irwin.

Moved, Chase went on Facebook to ask for suggestions on how to thank Irwin. Ideas—and donations—poured in. When Chase returned to the store, she took nearly \$200 in gift cards, three pages of kind words, a potted plant and a heartfelt card. "What I learned," says Chase, "is that we need to slow down, notice others, value people, take the time." True to form, Irwin has

saved the gift cards to pass along to others in need.

The Hockey Mom Who Donated a Kidney

SEAFORTH, ONTARIO

To many families in town, Graham Nesbitt is a hero. For years, Nesbitt managed Seaforth's arena. He'd arrive at the crack of dawn every day so kids could lace up and get on the ice before school. He was even out there on snow days.

Two of those kids were Ryan and Cal O'Reilly, who both went on to play hockey professionally: Cal is now in the American Hockey League, and Ryan is the captain of the St. Louis Blues. When the O'Reilly family heard Nesbitt was in need of a kidney transplant, they wanted to help.

The brothers put out a call for donors. Their mom, Bonnie, took things further. She offered to be the donor. "My kids have been lucky to have good fortune and good people in their lives," says O'Reilly. "Graham was one of those people."

The successful operation took place in March 2021, and today both parties are doing well. No longer tied to a dialysis machine, Nesbitt has been able to take up golf again. Bonnie and Nesbitt keep in touch, and she's glad her kidney gave him a chance to see his grandkids grow up. "It feels really good to give your good health to someone."

Allison Young
didn't want
seniors to be
lonely during
lockdown.



The Teen Who Became a Pen Pal to Seniors

CUPIDS, NEWFOUNDLAND

When 13-year-old Allison Young was given a “good deed” assignment at school this past March, she immediately thought of the seniors living in the long-term care facility where her mom, Rebecca, works as a nurse. She worried many were feeling lonely during the lockdown, and she wanted to cheer them up. “My grandmother lives in another retirement home, and I like writing her letters,” says Young. “I know she likes getting them, and I thought other people would, too.”

So she started writing to each of the home’s 124 residents. Her letters were simple and cheery: she introduced herself, shared who her mom was, and told recipients she hoped to brighten their day. She doesn’t remember how long it took, but she remembers being determined to finish.

In the end, Young even gained a few new pen pals. Several residents wrote back to share their life stories and ask her about school and her hobbies. She told them that she loves to sew and dance. One of the letters she received stretched to four pages, telling her about the letter writer’s former career as a doctor and experiences travelling the world. Young loved reading the responses. “Older people,” she says, “have the best stories and advice.”

The Facebook Group That Brightens People’s Days With Rocks

HOPE, BRITISH COLUMBIA

For France Legere, it was two cats on a fence. For Melissa Stevenson, it was a Mother’s Day message. Stevenson and Legere discovered their Kindness Rocks—brightly decorated stones inscribed with thoughtful words, sealed against the weather and left at random spots for strangers to find—in spring 2019. Their curiosity soon led them to join the Facebook page of their local Kindness Rocks chapter.

In pre-COVID times, the group gathered to chat, decorate and hide their stones. While they no longer hide the rocks as a group, the practice (and its online home) has remained an essential point of connection. One of Stevenson’s proudest moments, she says, came in January, after the community in nearby Mission, B.C., rallied to support a transgender youth who’d been bullied at school.

“I did a big set of rocks in the colours of the trans flag,” she says, noting that the group has also produced talismans to reflect the Black Lives Matter movement and LGBTQ pride—small gifts to be stumbled upon by people who can benefit from the message of support. “It pulls people out of their shell,” says Legere. “It finds people when they really need to be found, or heard, or seen.”

The Driver Who Prevented a Suicide

MONTREAL

At 8:30 a.m. on the morning of September 23, 2020, Rodrick Rodney, then 46, was driving home after a night shift at a warehouse. He was stopped at a red light at an overpass when he saw a man in a car ahead of him exit the passenger side door and run towards a railing, which overlooks a busy expressway below. Rodney realized the man was going to jump. He didn't think, just moved, shouting one word over and over: No, no, no!

Today, Rodney doesn't remember how he made it from his truck to the man, but an onlooker told him he moved so fast she couldn't tell if he was running or flying. The man was sitting on the railing, and just as he began to let himself go, Rodney grabbed his shirt collar. "His shirt started tearing off," remembers Rodney. "While I'm pulling up, it's leaving my hand. So I leap up and grab his pants. Now I am dangling over the highway, trying to pull him up."

Luckily, two quick-acting bystanders rushed to help Rodney, and he was able to pull the other man to safety. "That man could've lost his life," says

Rodney. "I could've lost my life, too." The man and his family have since been in touch with Rodney to thank him for his courage. "I just know I was in the right place at the right time," says Rodney. "And I just did it."

The Family Who Spread Cheer with Birdhouses

GEORGETOWN, ONTARIO

This past February, hundreds of charming candy-coloured birdhouses appeared in parks, schoolyards and outside the windows of long-term care homes. The surprise was the masterwork of the aptly named Champ family: after seeing how his wife, Carol, was buoyed by the birdhouses he gave her for Christmas, Jamie Champ decided he should do the same for his neighbours, too.

Along with their daughter, Madison, the couple spent the next few weeks building the small wonders, each one decorated with inspirational words ("smile," "go for a walk" and "we're in this together"). The Champs then set out around 10:30 p.m. to surreptitiously install all 201 houses around town. Anything to help lift spirits during a hard year. R



New Perspective

A half-knitted shawl left on the coffee table isn't a mess; it's an object of art.

STEPHANIE PEARL-McPHEE

MODERN ROMANCE



“Honey, if you don’t mind, I’d prefer to keep the details of our marriage more analog than digital.”

I once gave my husband the silent treatment for an entire week, at the end of which he declared, “Hey, we’re getting along pretty great lately.”

— BONNIE MACFARLANE,
comedian

My wife just got mad at me for fast-forwarding through a commercial

because she wanted to use that time to look at her phone.

— [@THECATWHISPRER](#)

Her: Are you going to walk around all day without a shirt on?

Me: Just giving you a show.

Her: Can I change the channel?

— [@XPLODINGUNICORN](#)

If you like getting angry at the way someone turns a doorknob, marriage may be right for you.

— [@BOOMBOOMBETTY](#)

Labourers of Love

I’ve come across so many of the same people on dating apps over the years that I’ve started to see them as co-workers.

— ANNE SUNDELL, *writer*

It’s crazy to think that my boyfriend existed and had a life before we met. How did he live without me for all those years?

— [@ISABELASERAFFIM](#)

Financial Savvy

I moved in with my girlfriend after one year of dating. People say we’re rushing in, but we’re both so in love with saving \$900 per month.

— [@MONDAYPUNDAY](#)

Send us your original jokes! You could earn \$50 and be featured in the magazine. See page 7 or rd.ca/joke for details.

How to keep
the flame
burning in
your intimate
relationships

The Spark



BY Courtney Shea

ILLUSTRATION BY TIFFANY DANG

UNTIL THE PANDEMIC HIT, travel was a big part of Briony and Ben's relationship. Exploring new places is a shared passion for the Toronto couple, who are in their 30s and have been together for nearly six years. They've taken road trips across the U.S., explored the wilds of Northern Ontario and spent two weeks trekking across Japan.

Before the world went into lockdown, they were about to book a dream getaway, and were deciding between Egypt and Turkey. "For us, trips have always been a way to break out of our everyday routine and deepen our connection," says Briony. "We're having a great time, but we're also stockpiling happy times to look back on, almost like treasured objects."

This collection of fond memories served them well when, instead of embarking on their latest adventure,



they became one of the many Canadian couples who rode out the pandemic from their couch. "Of course, I'm grateful for the companionship and the fact that we were able to stay safe and work from home," says Briony. Still, being holed up in their downtown apartment and in each other's space 24/7 is not exactly the stuff of romance novels. They had to make an extra effort to make sure their relationship didn't suffer.

While the last year put added strain on many couples, keeping the spark going has long been the holy grail of relationships. There are benefits to waking up beside the same person year in and year out, but such comforts can come at the cost of excitement and intensity. After more than a year of perpetual Groundhog Day, it's understandable if your partnership needs a little romantic resuscitation. Here are some tips on how to keep the passion alive—even after the pandemic.

New Is the New Hot

In the early months of COVID-19, many couples experienced something akin to a honeymoon period, says Rebecca Cobb, a psychology professor at Simon Fraser University who has been studying the pandemic's effects on romantic relationships. The unknowns and heightened stakes may have wreaked havoc on our nervous systems, but for some people it also facilitated more intimacy—hence those early (and

since-disproven) predictions of a post-pandemic baby boom and condoms being almost as hard to come by as toilet paper.

More than a year later, though, and the honeymoon appears to be over, with many couples complaining of monotony and disinterest. "It's a response to the pandemic," says Cobb, "but it's also the same thing we hear from couples experiencing that classic relationship rut."

To get back on the road to romance, she suggests disrupting your routines. Last fall, for example, Briony and Ben decided to recreate the joys of jet-setting by booking a staycation at a hotel in the city. "It wasn't far from where we live, but it felt totally different," says Briony. "We played board games, watched movies together, slept in and didn't worry about work."

A romantic mini-getaway is an appealing option, but your new activity could just as easily be birdwatching or basket weaving. Science tells us that dopamine levels—our brain's reward system—increase dramatically when we engage in new experiences. "The point is not to do something explicitly sexy or romantic," says Cobb. "It just has to be unfamiliar."

Just Do It

A close bond may translate into physical intimacy, but it isn't a given, and that's nothing to stress over. Vancouver-based sex therapist Erin Davidson says

that desire—either a lack thereof or a significant desire gap between two partners (meaning one person wants more sex than the other)—is the most common complaint she hears from her clients. “People think desire is something they should feel spontaneously—your partner comes through the door and you’re supposed to want to rip their clothes off.”

In fact, a lot of us (up to 85 per cent of women and 25 per cent of men) experience a more responsive type of sexual interest, meaning “the mood”—i.e., the desire to be intimate—often only comes along after intimacy has already been initiated. “These people may feel like, oh, I never want to have sex—there must be something wrong with me, or something wrong with my relationship,” says Davidson. The good news: that is likely not the case. The bad news: you’ll have to work at it.

A study conducted by the University of British Columbia shows that many Canadians have come to view sex as a “chore” during the pandemic. Davidson herself has assured plenty of clients that it’s okay if sex hasn’t been their top priority. (And, she adds, nobody should ever feel like they’re forcing themselves to have sex.)

For those who do want to want it, it may be helpful to think of getting it on the same way you think of going to the gym or playing an instrument. “You may not be feeling very keen about it in the lead-up,” says Davidson, “but it’s

something you care about devoting time to, and once you’re there it’s a lot of fun.”

To Improve “We,” Work on “Me”

In the same UBC study, too much time together was a frequently cited reason for a lack of lust. Turns out, absence really does make the heart grow fonder—and the loins grow hotter. “Relationships build intimacy from the time you spend together,” says Cobb, “but also from the time you spend out in the world, having enriching experiences and then bringing that energy back into the partnership.”

Before the pandemic, Briony had several social engagements a week—regular board-game nights, movie dates with friends and cocktails with colleagues. Instead of redirecting the pressure of her reduced social options toward Ben, she has focused on self-enrichment—to the benefit of them both. Effective “spark maintenance,” explains Cobb, involves nurturing yourself, as well as your relationship. People must look for fulfillment outside the primary bond with their partner.

Briony and Ben recently did just that by adopting a two-year-old Corgi named Peach. The new puppy parents believe she has given them something fun to focus on—both as a couple and as individuals. Next year, they hope to take that dream trip. For now, they’re happy taking Peach for a walk around the block. **R**

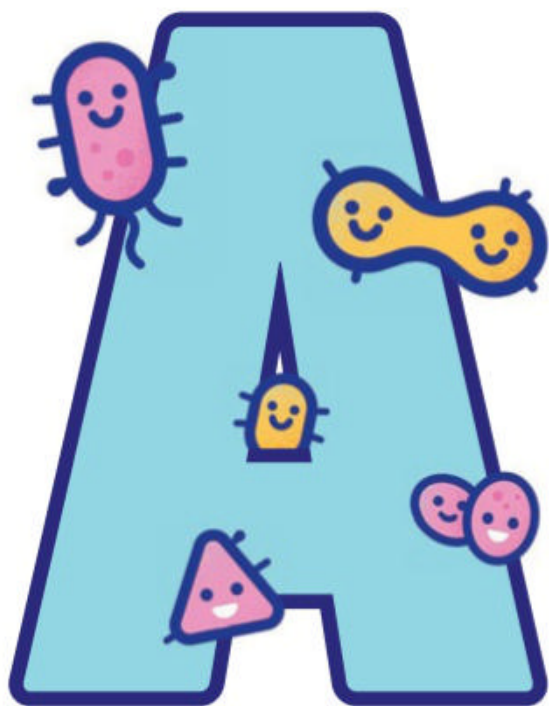


THE ULTIMATE GUIDE TO YOUR GUT

The bacteria in your intestines affects whether you'll have allergies, your risk of depression and even how well your medication works. Here's what you should know about your gut microbiome.

BY Vanessa Milne

ILLUSTRATIONS BY KEVIN MORAN



A DECADE AGO, Kaitlyn, a 28-year-old support worker living in Ontario, had become very ill. She had painful constipation and was contracting fevers and losing weight. “If I ate too much, I would vomit,” she says.

After tests ruled out Crohn’s disease and colitis, Kaitlyn’s family doctor diagnosed her with irritable bowel syndrome, a chronic disorder that causes cramping, pain and bloating along with constipation or diarrhea.

IBS isn’t something that can be cured but, rather, managed through lifestyle changes. A dietitian suggested to Kaitlyn that the bacteria that lived in her intestines—collectively known as the gut microbiome—might be out of balance, contributing to her condition. She recommended Kaitlyn take probiotics—pills that contain specific strains of bacteria—to help put things in order.

After only a few days of taking the probiotics, Kaitlyn felt a lot better. “The pain and fevers went away, and I was able to eat without getting sick,” she says. Although she still needed to avoid specific foods that trigger her condition, she gained back some of the weight she had lost.

But probiotics don’t work for everyone, and we don’t really know why. Although the state of our gut microbiome impacts many facets of our physical and mental health, scientists have had the technology to study it for only the last 15 years. That said, discoveries are being made every year. Here’s what we know about the gut, how to tell if it’s out of balance, and how to make it as healthy as possible.

How does a gut microbiome form?

Imagine a jar of fermented food, like sauerkraut, which is full of bacteria. In the case of the cabbage that transforms into this dish, the bacteria that already live on the cabbage flourish when you cover it in brine and put it into a sealed

container. Inside that oxygen-deprived space, those bacteria break down the components of the food—like carbohydrates—and release acid, which gives sauerkraut its tangy flavour. A similar process happens inside your intestines every time you eat: bacteria break the food down, transforming it into crucial vitamins, amino acids, chemicals and, yes, gas.

All those bacteria start colonizing you the minute you're born. Babies who are born vaginally have different microbiomes than those who are born by C-section, because the former are exposed to more of their mother's bacteria. After that, you pick up more bacterial strains from breast milk, your house, the environment outside, contact with other people, the food you eat and even the family dog.

By the age of three, your microbiome has pretty much settled into how it will look when you're an adult. The different types of bacteria that live in your gut help you digest food, but they also impact other aspects of your body, as well, including your immune system, your brain and your cardiovascular health.

What bacteria are in my gut?

"Your gut is like its own ecosystem," says Sean Gibbons, a microbiome researcher and assistant professor at the Institute for Systems Biology in Seattle. "It's warm, humid and wet—like a rainforest." And, he explains,

like any thriving ecosystem, your gut is healthy when it's diverse, with hundreds of different types of bacteria flourishing.

Two of the most important types of bacteria in a gut system are *Firmicutes* and *Bacteroidetes*, which feast on dietary fibre and break down complex carbohydrates. Both of them also churn out short-chain fatty acids, microscopic compounds that help maintain the integrity of the gut wall. (That barrier is supposed to be porous in order to let nutrients through, but if it's too porous, that can lead to inflammation.) They also have anti-inflammatory properties and can promote brain health.

LIKE ANY THRIVING
ECOSYSTEM, YOUR GUT
IS HEALTHY WHEN IT
CONTAINS A DIVERSITY
OF BACTERIA.



You want to feed those two types well, because if there's not enough food in your system, they'll turn to their secondary source: you. "They will actually start to eat your gut mucus," explains Gibbons. If that happens, many bacteria in your gut that wouldn't bother you with an undisturbed gut surface will suddenly be seen as outside agents from your immune system, setting off a response

that can lead to inflammatory bowel disease and other gut problems.

SIGNS YOUR GUT IS OUT OF BALANCE



You have a stubborn bowel condition

Crohn's disease and ulcerative colitis—known together as inflammatory bowel disease—cause inflammation and breaks in the lining of the intestines, leading to pain, diarrhea and weight loss. About one in 150 Canadians has IBD, and according to Dr. Eugene Chang, director of the Microbiome Medicine Program at the University of Chicago, its exact cause is still unknown. He says, however, that researchers think affected people are genetically predisposed to have an overactive immune system, and that their microbiome changes in subtle ways to prefer bacteria that thrive in that inflammatory environment. “Those bacteria further activate the immune system, and it's a vicious cycle that eventually triggers IBD,” explains Chang.

IBS, which is much more common and affects up to 11 per cent of people worldwide, shares many of the same symptoms as IBD but without the inflammation and ulcerations. Like IBD, the exact cause of IBS isn't clear, but studies have shown differences in the microbiome of IBS patients—and there are anecdotal

reports that probiotics can help some of them feel better.

Your medications aren't working

The medicines doctors prescribe don't always work, and in some cases, the gut microbiome may be to blame. Just like microbes break down the fibre and starches in our food, they can also break down pharmaceuticals, making them act unpredictably.

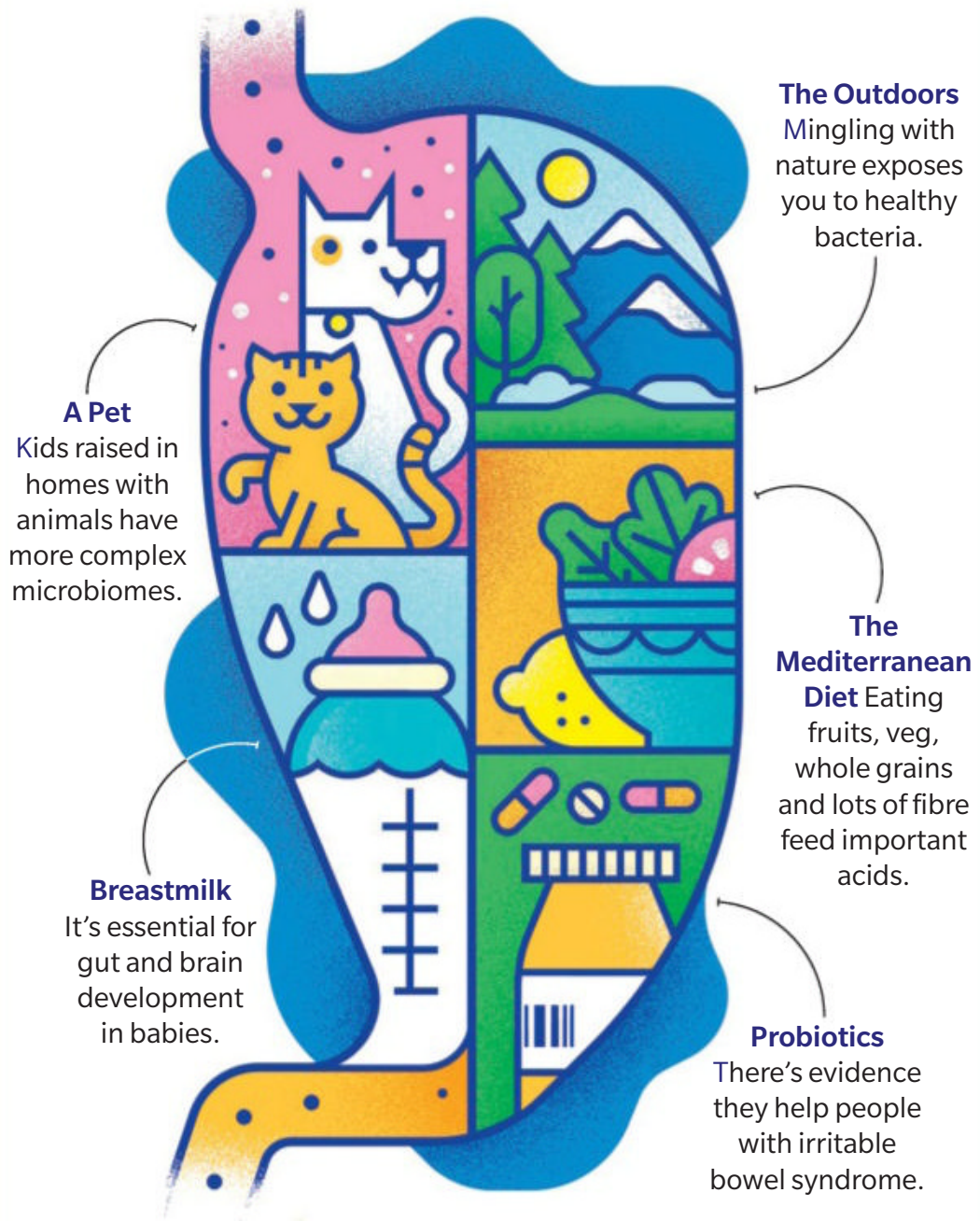
RESEARCHERS HAVE FOUND THAT THE GUT MICROBIOME CAN AFFECT THE PROGRESS OF SOME CANCERS.



In fact, a 2019 study from researchers at the Yale University School of Medicine looked at 271 drugs taken orally and found that the gut microbiome affected two thirds of them, with the bacteria consuming about 20 per cent of their active ingredients. That means, for example, that if you have too much *Eggerthella lenta*—a bacterium found in about a third of us—the commonly prescribed digoxin might not help your heart disease symptoms.

This effect on medicine has even larger implications for cancer treatment. Recently, researchers found that the gut microbiome can affect the progression

INGREDIENTS OF A HAPPY GUT



of some types of cancer, and that it also affects who responds to immunotherapy and bone marrow transplants.

All of the above has given birth to a new field: pharmacomicrobiomics, the study of how your gut microbiome affects a drug's actions. In 10 to 15 years, your doctor may be able to test your microbiome through a stool sample and then modulate the dose—or possibly prescribe a probiotic—to make your pills work better. And clinical trials are currently investigating whether cancer patients are more likely to survive if they're given tailored probiotics, a special diet or a fecal transplant—a small bit of poop from someone else that could reset your gut microbiome.

You struggle with your weight

“Two decades ago, we all thought that obesity and metabolic disorders were just how much you ate,” says Chang. “But it turns out that the gut microbiome seems to play a really important role.”

The connection is clearest in mice: when researchers from the Washington University School of Medicine transplanted stool samples from obese and thin people into the rodents, the animals who received fecal transplants from the obese participants gained more weight and put on more fat than the ones who received them from the healthier participants, even when the mice all ate the same low-fat diet.

There's some evidence from humans, too: for a study two years ago, Belgian researchers gave people who had insulin resistance and were overweight or obese a bacterium that's found to be more common in the guts of lean men. Similar to the mice experiment, the new bacteria lowered participants' insulin resistance, and they lost more weight and fat than a placebo group.

MICE WHO RECEIVE
STOOL TRANSPLANTS
FROM DEPRESSED
HUMANS GET
DEPRESSED, TOO.



You're depressed

We think of mood disorders as originating in the brain, but it appears your gut can be a source of them, as well. A 2019 study found that people with depression had fewer *Coprococcus* and *Dialister* than most people, and other research has found that mice who receive stool transplants from depressed humans get depressed, too.

So could changing someone's gut microbiome improve their mental health? The research is still emerging, but a 2017 Australian study found promising results. It looked at people with major depression who were on medication or therapy. Half of the participants kept their treatment regimes

while also switching to a Mediterranean diet, which is rich in microbiome-enhancing whole grains, vegetables, fruits and lean protein. That group had a much greater reduction in their depression than the others.

You have allergies

A diverse microbiome can help regulate your immune system, especially early in life. So if your immune system is hypersensitive because your microbiome isn't up to the job, it increases your chances of having allergies, asthma and eczema.

That's why exposure to a variety of bacteria, starting right when you're born, is so important. Kids who are born vaginally are less likely to have allergies than those born by C-section—and so are people who are raised on farms, have pets or grow up with germier older siblings in the house. The thing is, all this needs to happen really early in life. "After one year, it's too late. The immune system has already made up its mind," says B. Brett Finlay, a microbiology professor at the University of British Columbia and author of *Let Them Eat Dirt*.

According to Finlay, antibiotic use can also have a big impact: as it wipes out the bacteria making you sick, it will also indiscriminately wipe out bacteria that keep your gut diverse and healthy. That raises the risk your gut microbiome will be inadequate for warding off the conditions that cause allergies,

asthma and eczema. In fact, Finlay and other UBC researchers found that people who had been prescribed antibiotics before age one were twice as likely to develop asthma by age five—and the risk increased with every course of the medication.

The impact of a less diverse gut persist into adulthood. When researchers with the American Gut Project analyzed the gut microbiomes of more than 1,800 people with allergies, they found that those with seasonal allergies and nut allergies had less diversity in their gut.

HOW YOU CAN IMPROVE YOUR GUT MICROBIOME



There isn't a magic all-purpose prescription that will improve everyone's gut health, though researchers are hopeful that within five years, microbiome tests will be detailed enough to prescribe personalized probiotics or make other patient-specific recommendations. But there are some changes experts recommend that can help right now.

1. Eat more fibre

One of the most well proven connections between lifestyle and gut health is that eating more fibre creates a better microbiome. Fibre is the main food source for the most important gut bacteria, so not getting enough starves them, and many of them die off. That means they may produce fewer of those short-chain fatty acids and other

important components of your diet, and they'll begin consuming the mucus that lines and protects your gut.

Unfortunately, most people across Western countries don't get enough fibre. For example, according to Julie Thompson, information manager at the charity Guts UK, even though U.K. government guidelines recommend eating 30 grams of fibre each day, and the average person eats only 19 grams.

To get your 30 grams, focus on eating five servings of fruits and vegetables each day, as well as a whole-grain carbohydrate at every meal.

WHEN ANTIBIOTICS
DO THEIR JOB OF
DESTRUCTION, BAD
BACTERIA HAVE A
CHANCE TO TAKE OVER.



2. Diversify your diet

Your overall goal for gut health is to create a diverse microbiome. And it's not just fibre that provides sustenance for good bacteria—other things in our meals do, too. If you eat a large variety of foods, including many different types and colours of fruits and vegetables, that variety will promote a healthy gut.

Not all food is helpful: high-fat processed foods deplete healthy bacterial strains and make your gut less diverse in general, says Chang. In fact, if you

were to suddenly swear off eating your salad in favour of fries, he adds, "Your microbiome would change within 24 hours, with a decrease in the healthy microbes that plant fibre promotes."

3. Avoid unnecessary antibiotics

Antibiotics are a literal lifesaver when needed, but they do tend to throw our gut microbiome off balance by killing even the bacteria you want to be in there, like the gut-wall maintaining *Firmicutes* and *Bacteroidetes*. Usually, a plentiful amount of those two can crowd out bacteria that can make you sick, just as it's harder for weeds to establish themselves in a lush lawn than in unplanted dirt. But when antibiotics do their job of destruction, bad bacteria can take over before the good have a chance to re-establish themselves. That usually comes with a telltale result that something is off: diarrhea. While most healthy gut microbiomes can bounce back from that, if yours is already unbalanced, Gibbons says antibiotics could lead to issues like IBS.

To help prevent antibiotic-caused diarrhea, you can take a probiotic the same day as you start your antibiotics. A 2017 University of Copenhagen review found that only 8 per cent of people who took probiotics developed diarrhea when they took antibiotics, compared with 18 per cent of those who took placebos.


Most importantly, make sure you really need an antibiotic before you take it. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, at least 30 per cent of antibiotic prescriptions are unnecessary.

4. Talk to your doctor about probiotics

As mentioned, probiotics have been proven to prevent diarrhea while taking antibiotics. They may also protect people when they're travelling to a country where the bacteria in the food and water are different from those back home. Most usefully, though, they may help people who have IBS, although their effectiveness has yet to be confirmed in studies. Anecdotally, however, experts say they can work for some people and continue to encourage patients to try them for gut-related issues. It's best to try them only at the direction of a health care provider, who can suggest

specific brands so you're not wasting your money on random products. In the meantime, scientists are working to understand them better. "Within the next five to 10 years, I believe we'll start to see medical grade probiotics hitting the consumer market," says Gibbons.

5. Fit in a workout

Regular exercise changes your gut microbiome for the better—at least according to some early research on the topic. A 2016 University of British Columbia study found that athletes with the best cardiorespiratory fitness levels—a marker that measures how well your body can move oxygen to where it's needed—also had more diversity in their gut health. Another study, from Spain, found that women who did three hours of exercise a week—even just brisk walking—improved the composition of their gut microbiome. 



Odes to Autumn

**I would rather sit on a pumpkin,
and have it all to myself,
than be crowded on a velvet cushion.**

HENRY DAVID THOREAU

**Autumn is second spring,
when every leaf is a flower.**

ALBERT CAMUS

**When all the lives we ever lived
and all the lives to be are full of trees and changing leaves.**

VIRGINIA WOOLF



DRAMA IN REAL LIFE

A SPEEDING BOAT NEARLY KILLED **CARTER VISS**.
HE VOWED TO WORK WITH THE DRIVER TO MAKE SURE
IT NEVER HAPPENS AGAIN.

FORGIVENESS COMES FROM THE HEART

BY Gary Stephen Ross

PHOTOGRAPH BY ERIKA LARSEN



Carter Viss, near where he was snorkelling on the day of the accident.

BENEATH THE OCEAN'S SURFACE

waits a different world—quiet, full of wonder, shimmering with life. Carter Viss loved that world. It's why he left Colorado to study marine biology at Palm Beach Atlantic University. It's why he got a job at the Loggerhead Marinelife Center, just up Highway 1 on Florida's east coast. And it's why he spent so much free time snorkelling in the reef system just a couple hundred metres from the famous Breakers resort in Palm Beach.

This particular Thursday morning—November 28, 2019—was especially nice. It was Thanksgiving. Tourists and locals alike hit the beaches. The water was flat, the sky blue and the underwater visibility spectacular. Twenty-five-year-old Viss and his 32-year-old co-worker, Andy Earl, spent a couple of hours among the sharks, eels, turtles, octopus, lionfish and angelfish. They netted some small specimens

for Viss's personal collection. Finally, around noon, they headed for shore.

To a diver underwater, outboard engines have a clear, unmistakable sound. On the surface, however, swimming the crawl, Viss didn't hear the powerboat until it was almost on top of him. When he saw it, he knew he had just an instant. He pulled desperately to one side, getting his head and upper torso out of the boat's path before it ran him over.

He braced and tumbled. The seawater around him turned crimson. A severed limb was sinking to the bottom—a human arm, the hand enclosed in a black diver's glove.

This couldn't be happening, he thought. It was too bizarre.

Inhaling blood and seawater, Viss realized he would drown if he didn't swim. But he couldn't swim. His right arm was gone. Both his legs were

smashed, dangling uselessly beneath him, and his remaining hand was damaged. Screaming for his life, he slipped beneath the surface.

Andy Earl heard his friend's mortal terror. So did Christine Raininger, an expat Canadian who was sitting on a paddleboard nearby and had yelled at the boat to slow down. They reached Viss at about the same time. While Andy kept Viss's face out of the water, Christine squeezed his upper arm to stem the blood flow, then fashioned a tourniquet from the cord on her paddleboard.

Meanwhile, the 11-metre speedboat, named *Talley Girl*, was reversing

urgently. It was powered by three massive 400-horsepower Mercury outboard engines with five-blade propellers. On board were retired Goldman Sachs executive Daniel Stanton Sr., his 30-year-old son, Daniel Jr., his son-in-law and two grandchildren. Daniel Jr. was at the wheel. Horrified, in shock, he helped Earl and Raininger load Viss onto the dive platform at the boat's stern.

I'm not going to make it, Viss thought, pain searing through the adrenalin. *No way I'm gonna make it.*

Earl, too, feared his friend's wounds were not survivable. "God is with us," he reassured Viss, over and over, holding

After striking Viss, the driver of the *Talley Girl* delivered him to the beach.



his hand as *Talley Girl* made for shore. "God is with us."

Viss, a devout Christian, felt his fear and panic melt away. In its place came total surrender, a kind of blissful acceptance. Dying felt like diving down into another beautifully peaceful realm.

AS IT TURNED OUT, the worst day of Viss's life was not without things to be thankful for. Earl and Rainerger being so close, for one. The speedboat reversing so quickly. The first responders who waded into the ocean to meet *Talley Girl*. The ambulance that raced to St. Mary's Medical Center. The 12-person critical-care team, already briefed and suited up, that received Viss in the trauma bay barely 20 minutes after the boat strike.

VISS HAD LOST NEARLY HALF HIS BLOOD VOLUME AND WAS ON THE VERGE OF MULTI-ORGAN FAILURE.

Also fortunate was the fact that Dr. Robert Borrego, a critical-care surgeon and the medical director of trauma at St. Mary's, was in the middle of his shift. The son of a Cuban fisherman, Borrego had come to America at age nine. Thirty years at St. Mary's and a stint at a field hospital in Iraq had acclimatized him to dealing with massive trauma.

Many soldiers he'd worked on had been devastated by improvised explosive devices. Borrego did a quick assessment. Major open wounds in the ocean are doubly perilous because the victim's bleeding is not slowed by clotting and infection is very likely. Viss was clearly in Stage 4 shock, meaning he'd lost at least 40 per cent of his blood volume and was on the verge of multi-organ failure. His right arm had been retrieved by a diver, but there was no hope of reattaching it.

Borrego noted the damaged left hand and wrist. The right knee was dislocated and deeply lacerated, the kneecap was nearly severed and the femur had a fracture. The lower left leg and ankle were smashed, with deep gashes in the flesh. The left foot was turning blue.

It was a miracle Viss had gotten to the hospital alive, but every moment counted. One option was to amputate both legs. Amputation could be done quickly and would lower the risk of infection. Because Viss was young and otherwise healthy, Borrego and his team decided it was worth trying to save them.

Three surgeons and two residents set to work together. First came a guillotine amputation of the mangled stump of his arm. That wound would need to be regularly trimmed and washed with antibiotics to ensure it was infection-free before being closed. Next, each leg was reset and encased in a fixator, a sort of exoskeleton that maintains

proper alignment as the bones begin their slow process of repair. Fractures in the left hand and wrist were also set and soft-tissue damage repaired. Three and a half hours later, liberally infused with saline and eight units each of red blood cells, plasma and platelets, Viss was moved to the ICU.

The next 48 to 72 hours would be critical. The human body can only fight so many battles at once before shutting down. All anyone could do now was wait, and hope, and see if he'd pull through.

IN CENTENNIAL, a town outside Denver, Chuck and Leila Viss were taking a chilly, snowy walk after Thanksgiving Day church service when Leila's cell-phone rang. The call display showed a Florida number. She assumed it was a telemarketing robocall.

Back in the car, heading home to start dinner, she saw there were two voicemail messages. She put the phone on speaker so Chuck could listen, as well. It was a sheriff in Palm Beach County. As the mother of three active boys—Carter was her middle son—Leila wondered: what's Carter done?

"Boating accident... lost one arm... trying to save his legs."

Panicked, weeping, they pulled into a parking lot. "We took turns losing it and comforting each other," said Leila. The day became a desperate, blurry scramble—cancelling dinner, urgent calls, sobbing helplessly, work plans,

trying to book flights on a holiday. Chuck's persistence paid off when he found two seats out of Denver that evening, with a layover in Boston.

If there's such a place as purgatory, it just might resemble Logan Airport at 4 a.m. when you're so emotionally spent that you've run out of tears, unsure whether your son would be alive when you reached him. And daring to contemplate whether, if he ended up with just one limb, it might be better if he passed—this young man who lived to snorkel and fish and play guitar and piano.

THE NEXT HOURS WOULD BE CRITICAL. VISS'S PARENTS TOOK UP A VIGIL BESIDE HIS HOSPITAL BED.

IF LOGAN AIRPORT IS PURGATORY, a hospital's ICU could be the high-stakes room in a casino. You can't tell whether it's day or night. People move with purposeful efficiency. The atmosphere is generally calm but intense. The difference, of course, is that what's at stake in a hospital is not just money but life itself.

Frayed and exhausted, Leila and Chuck Viss reached St. Mary's around 10 a.m. The sight of their son in the ICU, swollen and bandaged, right arm missing, fixators on his legs and tubes

down his throat, was overwhelming. Leila and Chuck had to be helped out to compose themselves.

So began their vigil. The Visses took turns by his bedside, where Carter was hooked up to a ventilator. He was tormented by hallucinations—"ICU psychosis," doctors call it. He knew his family was there, tearful and comforting, but so were strange, gruesome creatures that were crawling all over him.

"Get them off me," he begged.

HEADING INTO ANOTHER SURGERY, HE TOLD HIS PARENTS, "I CAN MAKE A BIGGER DIFFERENCE NOW."

Viss didn't know he'd already had four operations. Infected flesh had been excised, a titanium rod inserted in his shattered tibia and hardware installed in his left wrist and right knee. Nor did he recall the many emotional visits he'd had from church friends and Loggerhead colleagues.

Chuck, as an employee of Oracle, the software company, was able to work remotely. Leila, a church organist and piano teacher, needed to be back in Centennial. So Chuck took up residence in a nearby condo and Leila commuted.

One morning, after Viss had been extubated, Borrego told him the battle

was 90 per cent won. *I've got a long road ahead of me*, Viss realized, *but I'm gonna make it*.

He decided he would use his spared life to educate others about ocean safety and conservation. Heading into yet another surgery, he told his parents, "I can make a bigger difference now than I ever could before."

Over the 68 days Viss spent in hospital, his recovery felt agonizingly slow. Actually, says Borrego, it was remarkably fast. His parents noted each milestone. The first day he sat up. Being moved out of ICU to a "step-down" room. The first time, after surgery on the nerves in his right knee, that he wiggled his toes. The first time he sat in a wheelchair. The first day he ate the hospital Jell-o and chicken broth Chuck had brought him. The morning he wore his own clothes. And then, a week later, Viss standing unaided, and a few days after that his first shaky, excruciatingly painful steps.

But another battle had just begun. Heavy doses of morphine, oxycodone and fentanyl had eased his pain. Now, as Borrego explained to the Visses, a successful outcome depended on Carter getting off opioids: "I've seen many lives ruined when patients can't break free."

The Visses have friends who've lost family members to overdoses. Carter, too, understood the gravity of the issue. He gradually reduced his dosages until, determined to use nothing more than Advil and medical marijuana, he tore off his fentanyl patch. Withdrawal made



Viss with his mother, Leila, and during his rehabilitation.

for a harrowing few days, but then Viss, as Borrego puts it, “has incredible mental strength, just extraordinary.”

VISS WAS DISCHARGED from St. Mary’s in February 2020. By June, just seven months after the accident, he returned to work. His duties aptly include helping with the rehabilitation of loggerhead sea turtles that have been injured in boat strikes.

Today he can bend his right knee only 90 degrees. For a while, residual infections had him on and off antibiotics. He’s been fitted with a prosthetic arm but finds it cumbersome. All in all, says Borrego, his recovery has been almost miraculous.

Physical healing is one thing. The emotional legacy is less obvious, more nuanced. “The accident itself,” Viss says, “I try not to remember how real it was, the panic and horror. It feels more like

remembering a dream now, or a nightmare. And I try not to think of what I can’t do and focus on ways to work around things.”

An investigation by Florida Fish and Wildlife found that *Talley Girl* had been going at least 80 kilometres per hour when it struck Carter. The agency faulted Stanton Jr. for operating a vessel within 90 metres of diver-down warnings; reckless operation of a vessel; failing to maintain a safe speed; and failing to maintain a proper lookout.

Last September, Stanton was charged with wilful and reckless operation of a vessel, a first-degree misdemeanour punishable by up to a year in jail. “The prosecutor gave us several options,” says Chuck Viss. “Carter insisted he did not want Stanton to face incarceration. He said, ‘I’d rather have him working with me on ocean safety than sitting in a jail cell.’”

A civil suit was settled out of court, and last November the terms of Stanton's criminal plea agreement were made official. The court hearing marked the first time Carter and Daniel Stanton Jr. had seen each other since the day both their lives changed.

Leila and Chuck Viss had flown in from Denver. Stanton's mother, Mary, was there with her son. Stanton Sr. attended via Zoom. Everyone wore protective masks because of the COVID-19 pandemic. The two families avoided eye contact.


Viss read a victim-impact statement and then Daniel Stanton Jr. addressed him directly. Viss knew that the remorse was genuine and profound. "There was no doubt how he felt," his father agreed. "You could see the pain in his eyes."

Judge Robert Panse confirmed the plea deal. Stanton Jr. was sentenced to 75 hours of community service, a year's probation, a US\$1,000 fine and a mandate to work with Viss on legislation to enhance ocean safety and

conservation. Afterward, Viss went to Stanton Jr. and shook his hand. Tears flowed and the wall of silence between the families came down. As the two men embraced, Viss said quietly, "Let's make a difference."

One of their ideas is a better "diver down" marker. The current design is a red flag with a diagonal white stripe. Depending on wind direction, however, a boater may not see it. Viss favours a bigger, three-dimensional buoy, visible in any weather, with reflective strips.

In addition, Viss wants to see strict speed enforcement. Most boat-strike victims are simply people swimming off the beach. Close to shore, at a popular spot, a speedboat planing at high speed makes no sense.

Has the legal resolution led to forgiveness? "Forgiveness comes from the heart," says Carter. "I feel like I'm going in the right direction. If I were him and had to live with the guilt and remorse, I'd almost prefer to be in my shoes. It's a complex thing emotionally, but if I can ease someone else's pain, I will." 



Childish Things

Ah babies! They're more than just adorable little creatures on whom you can blame your farts.

TINA FEY

You cannot let your parents anywhere near your real humiliations.

ALICE MUNRO

Never lend your car to anyone to whom you have given birth.

ERMA BOMBECK

LIFE'S LIKE THAT

Pet Owners, Beware



If you hear me telling the same story twice, just let it go. I only have six memories—and they all take turns.

—[@JZUX](#)

Workout De-Motivation

I need a special playlist for when I deeply consider exercising but then don't.

—[@AKILAHOBVIOUSLY](#)

Humidity is just a fancy way of saying even the air is sweating.

—[@DARLAINKY](#)

“Yeah, but that was only one or two years ago.” —Me, talking about anything that happened between 1991 and late 2019

—ANNE T. DONAHUE,
author

Statement Piece

The people in my Zoom room deserve better than the same three hoodies I keep wearing over and over, but that's all I have to give.

—AKILAH GREEN,
television writer

Either I'm losing vocabulary or creating a new language, but here are some things I temporarily forgot how to say during the pandemic, and what I said instead:

♦ “Long sleeves for legs” (pants)

♦ “Rinsing thing” (faucet)

♦ “Anxiety tax” (insurance)

—DEANNE SMITH, *comedian*

“Maybe he lived somehow.” (Me, reacting to a character on a TV show who has very obviously died.)

—SOPHIA BENOIT, *journalist*

Send us your original jokes! You could earn \$50 and be featured in the magazine. See page 7 or rd.ca/joke for details.

Embrace the Curl

How I learned
to accept the
hair that made
me an outsider

BY Veronica Antipolo

PHOTOGRAPH BY MCKENZIE JAMES

THE HAIRDRESSER TOLD ME I looked like Liza Minnelli. It was 1982 and I was nine. It wasn't cool at my school, in the Don Mills neighbourhood of Toronto, to look like Liza Minnelli. It definitely wasn't going to get me invited to sleepovers and parties. And besides, I didn't even look like her. My skin was too brown and my hair didn't fall down and stay close to my head. Instead, it stuck up everywhere, and there was so much of it.



**"I saw how I was
different from
other Filipinos,"
says Antipolo.**

"Comb your *buhok*," my grandparents would always say. "How come you don't comb it?"

But I did comb my hair! It just didn't stay.

I know it's only hair, but it kept me outside of my culture. I saw how I was different from other Filipinos. Their hair was straighter. Their skin was lighter.

My immigrant paternal grandparents, who raised me until I was 12, were deeply rooted in Filipino culture. My grandfather had formed a small community of Filipino Second World War veterans; though we lived in a mostly white neighbourhood, all their friends were Filipino. Because my childhood was filled with Filipino celebrations and events, I expected the community would be my default home in Toronto, my place of grounding.

Instead, it was like I was a visitor. Other Filipinos were always questioning my being there, like I wasn't Filipino enough to be part of their crew. I felt like a failure for not being the person I was supposed to be—at least in their eyes.

Filipinos I had just met would always ask me things like:

"Are you full Filipina?"

"What's your last name?"

"*Mukha kang Pilipino, pero...*" You look Filipino, but...

But...my hair. This questioning was constant. It happened so often the encounters blurred.

By my early teens, I was tired of floating alone and decided to land on

the fringes. My circle of friends became more racially diverse, mostly made up of kids who, like me, felt like outsiders in their own communities. I also said goodbye to my inadvisable method of hair-straightening: on an ironing board, with a piping hot iron. So I decided to rebel with my hair, wearing it as big as I could.

HER HAIR WAS LONG AND CURLY. FOR THE FIRST TIME IN MY LIFE, I SAW A REFLECTION OF MYSELF.

For the next 30 years of my life, I was a curly lone wolf. On some occasions, though, my unease got the best of me—I straightened my hair for Christmas parties and my own wedding, thinking my curls were beneath such significant moments. I gritted my teeth when I received backhanded compliments from my aunts. The worst was, "Finally, you look decent!"

Then, two years ago, I saw her.

By that time I was 45. It was a night in April. The woman in question was sitting at the bar during a comedy show in Toronto. I recognized her lidded, almond-shaped eyes, her short-bridged nose and the brown of her skin as features like my own. Her hair, however, was long, curly and very much

unlike other Filipinos. For the first time in my life, I saw a reflection of myself.

I thought, “Is she another one?”

After the show, I sat at the bar with a friend. Guess who sat beside me? Curly, ethnicity-yet-to-be-confirmed girl! She had barely landed on her seat when I pounced.

“Excuse me, what’s your background?” I asked, holding my breath. In my excitement, I didn’t even bother asking her name.

“I’m Filipina,” she said.

“Yes!” I yelled, then gave her a high five. But there was one more crucial question, and I knew my heart would break if it was the wrong answer.

“Are those your natural curls?” Again, I held my breath.

“Yes,” she said, smiling.

“Cool,” I said casually. But in my mind, I was running wildly around the bar, ripping off my clothes and pumping my fist in the air.

Then she told me about a Facebook group for curly Filipinas. My jaw went slack. There are more of us? Of me? I don’t have to be a lone wolf anymore. My unruly hair and my heritage will finally align.

I’d never been so excited to join a Facebook group. I went home, opened my laptop and found it. I was surprised by how large it was: thousands of members from around the world, mostly residing in the Philippines. I saw post after post of Filipinas sharing haircare tips, words of encouragement and

personal stories about feeling less than pretty, less than Filipina.

Immediately, I posted “I love this group” and uploaded a photo of my curliest look. The replies were all positive. “Beautiful curls!” “You look lovely!” “Love your hair!” For the first time, these words weren’t condescending. Now they felt like a welcome-home hug: accepting, genuine and ready to let me in.

My hair required no disclaimer in this space—I had been disconnected from my Filipino community for so many years and this, finally, was my homecoming. I wrote one more post after a few days of poring over the group’s pages. “I always deliberately wear my hair curly and I let everyone know I am Filipina ... I do this because I am proud of my heritage and I am proud of my hair.” I used to say this as an act of rebellion. Now, I mean it in a way I never did before.

I don’t ever intend to leave this group. I’m content knowing that we curly Filipinas, with our life stories and, yes, selfies, have finally found a space where we can fully exist.

For my last job interview, I kept my hair curly. It was the first time I’d done so.

People still compliment my curls.

“Did you do something to your hair? Is that natural?” they ask.

“This is natural. It’s all me,” I reply.

“You’re so lucky.”

Yes, I am.





HIT THE ROAD

My family's first RV trip was also our last

BY Megan Murphy

ILLUSTRATION BY GRAHAM ROUMIEU

IN THE SUMMER OF 1989, at the age of 10, I broke my elbow in my hometown of Peterborough, Ont., during a rousing game of street broomball. It was Neil's fault. He was my 11-year-old, olive-skinned Adonis neighbour who took me out at the ankles with a sneaky cross-check. The worst part about it, other than my elbow surgery and failed relationship with Neil, was the subsequent cancellation of our 14-day family trip to the Maritimes.

Dad, eternal optimist and champion of whimsy, came up with a Plan B: renting an RV. I was ecstatic. So were my

sisters: 11-year-old Kate and seven-year-old Kerry. Mom, who was not consulted, was not. For her, the prospect of spending a few weeks inside a 12-metre chunk of metal with her beloved offspring sounded less like a holiday and more like spiritual penance.

Our rented RV was the motorhome equivalent of the tree from *A Charlie Brown Christmas*. In other words, she was the last one on the lot. We loaded our belongings into our new ramshackle abode on wheels and set off on an eastern Ontario adventure.

First stop, the booming metropolis of...Gananoque? It was all so novel. We played cards at the kitchen table—which doubled as a fold-down bed—while my parents navigated the 401. Safety be damned!

On the way, we visited Fort Henry and reluctantly abandoned the beast in a parking lot to enjoy an hour-long boat cruise through the Thousand Islands. Back aboard our moveable home, we made meals and showered, and read *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer* by candlelight. It was an idyllic picture of a 1980s family vacation, until...

“Mom, is there supposed to be this much water on the floor?”

On the fifth day of our trip, we learned about “grey water.” A grey water tank holds refuse from the shower or sink—water with bits of old food and dirt in it. As neophyte campers, we had no idea that not disposing of this water regularly leads to it backing up and

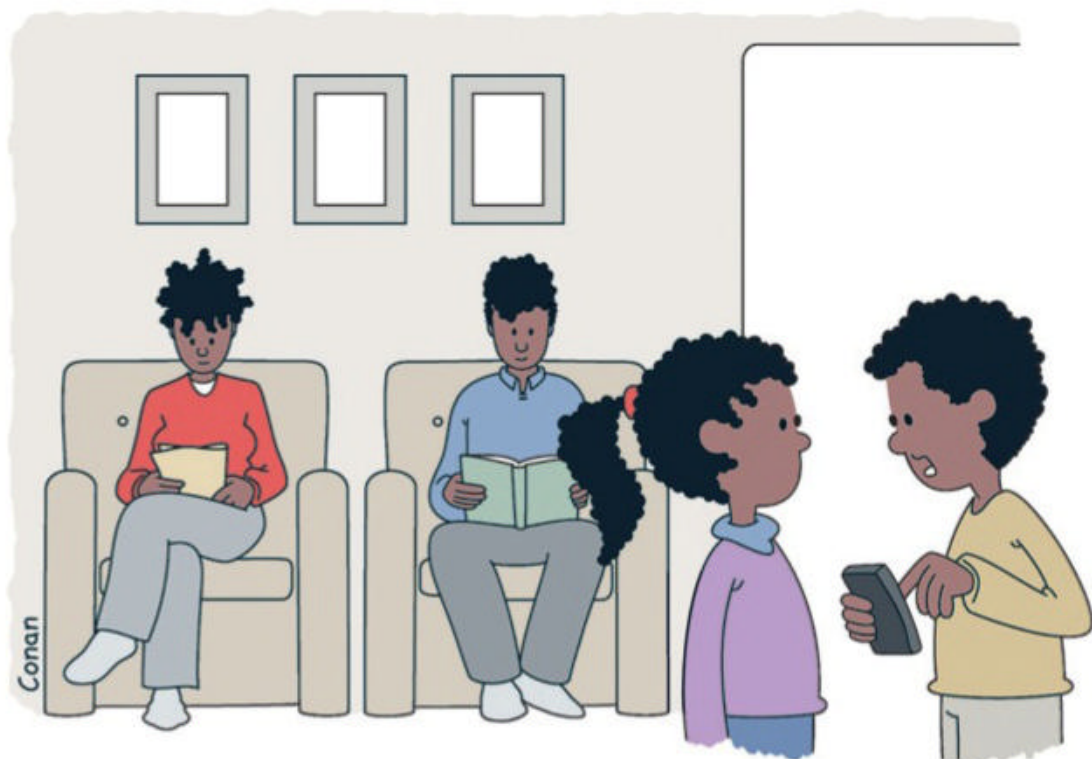
flooding your entire living space. Somewhere around Perth, we checked into a campground. While my sisters and I tried to stow our belongings on high ground in the RV, my parents were sloshing through water, trying to pump the tank and not get divorced at the same time.

Despite our soggy state, the next day we forged onward to our nation’s capital. We arrived in Ottawa just as the sun was setting, and Dad wanted to drive us by Parliament Hill to see her lit up in all her glory. As we drove past, oohing and aahing, something else went wrong. Every time Dad took his foot off the gas, the RV’s head and taillights would go out. We had to keep the speedometer at 20 kilometres per hour just to keep the lights on—like a mash-up of *National Lampoon’s Vacation* and *Speed*. After countless loops around the eternal flame, we took a sharp right and coasted into a parking lot a few blocks away, where our damp and dark home on wheels sputtered to a stop.

The next day, our MP, who was a family friend, introduced us to Brian Mulroney. We may have smelled a little bit musty, but we still got to have lunch in the MP’s cafeteria. I told Mr. Mulroney that I hoped to one day be the first female prime minister. I can’t remember how he responded, but I like to think I can still count on his vote.

It wasn’t a luxurious vacation, but it was certainly a memorable one—and our last on wheels. **R**

AS KIDS SEE IT



“I downloaded the parental control app, but they’re still not doing what I want them to do.”

A first grader told me that she doesn’t need school because she wants to be a pineapple when she grows up.

—[@TEACHERONTOPIC](#)

Me: Every morning, I pick up this action figure and stand it up on the shelf, and every night it’s on the floor again.

My kid: That’s how life works, mom.

—ASHLEY ASHFIELD,
Hampton, N.B.

My four-year-old: Can we get a cat?

Me: No, they make me sneeze.

My four-year-old: Can you go away then?

—[@THEDADVOCATE01](#)

No one runs faster than a toddler holding something they shouldn’t.

—[@TOTALLY_NOT_ANG](#)

When I was a kid, I thought everyone had their own individual birthday, as if there were only 365 people on earth.

—[@EAJB98](#)

As my mother, seven-year-old niece and I were leaving church one day, my niece noticed parishioners putting money in a collection box near the exit. My niece turned to my mother and I and asked, “Do we have to pay to get out?”

— KERRY HAGAN,
Corunna, Ont.

My two-year-old is yelling at me for taking too big of a bite from her pretend sandwich. Now she can’t make another one because we’re out of pretend bread.

— [@HENPECKEDHAL](#)

I bought my son a book about bats and halfway through it he shouted, “What? Bats are real?” All this time he thought they were made-up things in ghost stories.

— [@TRAGICALLYHERE](#)

I asked my five-year-old granddaughter what she wanted to be when she grew up. She replied, “A cashier.” When I inquired further, she

My toddler is walking around the house saying “Oh no” over and over again. At first it was cute, but now I’m afraid she knows something I don’t.

— JAMES BREAKWELL, *writer*

said, “Because I get to take people’s money.”

— GAYDEN WARMALD,
Victoria, B.C.

Me to the three-year-old: Want a cheese tortilla for lunch?

Her: No, that’s gross!

Me: How about a quesadilla?

Her: Yes!

— MARTIN AUSTERMUHLE,
journalist

My two-year-old stormed past me in pyjamas while holding a pop-up book. When I asked him where he was going, he said in an exasperated tone, “I’m going to a meeting!”

— [@PAPANEEDSCOFFEE](#)

Recently, I was complaining that we have too much stuff in our house and need to get rid of some of it. My four-year-old looked

me dead in the eye and said, “You should probably burn it in the oven like our food, Mommy.”

— [@MUMINBITS](#)

My four-year-old was trying to tell us a scary story the other night and she ended it with, “And they were dead...for the rest of their lives!”

— AUDRA McDONALD, *actor*

My two-year-old loves to play in the dirt so much that he’s begun telling us that he wants to eat dirt for supper. Now, we have to sprinkle ground pepper on all of his food.

— EMILY STEELE,
Kelowna, B.C.

Send us your original jokes! You could earn \$50 and be featured in the magazine. See page 7 or rd.ca/joke for details.

Nina Hodder, like many parents living paycheque to paycheque, lost work because of the pandemic. The story of her fight to keep her home.

EVICITION IN THE TIME OF COVID-19

BY Raizel Robin

PHOTOGRAPHS BY IAN WILLMS



SOCIETY

**Hodder and her family
live in a six-storey low-rise
in Toronto's east end.**

AT THE END

of 2019, Nina Hodder felt like her life had finally become more settled. At 31 years old, she had three children, aged 13, three and six months. She'd found a two-bedroom, \$1,900 a month apartment on the east side of Toronto, in the same building her parents lived in. She had steady work cleaning the production trailers on film sets for \$16 an hour. Her fiancé, Glynn Broughton—who is also the father of her youngest—moved in with her, bringing along his three-year-old son from a previous relationship. Home was crowded, but Hodder was happy.

Broughton, a tool and die operator, stayed home and cared for the kids so Hodder could work. Hodder's parents pitched in with child care, too. But money was still tight. Hodder, who made around \$1,500 a month, was the main breadwinner. The family received \$1,623 a month in federal support for low-income parents. That meant more

than half of Hodder's income went to rent. Although she was eligible for subsidized housing and had applied for it, there was an 11-year wait for a family of their size.

She'd only been in the apartment a month when she decided to withhold at least part of her rent because the building's landlord had yet to install a promised radiator in her living room. Where it should have been a scalding metal pipe stuck out of the floor. Hodder was terrified her kids would get burned and did her best to block the pipe with the living room sofa.

Hodder's building is owned by a numbered corporation that is marketed, along with other buildings in Ontario and Quebec, using the trade name Golden Equity Properties. When I asked, the landlord's spokesperson wouldn't comment on maintenance issues.

In the middle of February 2020, Hodder's landlord served her with a notice of eviction for missed rent payments. Their dispute may have been resolved one way or the other within a matter of months, but then everything changed, and not just for Hodder.

AT THE BEGINNING OF MARCH, Hodder was at work cleaning a trailer when a news report on the radio made her realize that the "novel coronavirus" she'd been hearing about was now closing in on her and her family. As a working mother, she didn't have much time to think about it, but then, on March 17,

Ontario declared a state of emergency—and ordered its first lockdown.

Not long after that, Hodder got a call from her boss. Since all film productions in the city were shut down, they had to lay her off. Then, in April, the company pivoted to providing hospital workers with a place to quarantine after shifts in the COVID-19 wards.

Hodder didn't feel she had a choice but to take the work. But during that first shift, as she donned an N-95 mask and pulled on rubber gloves, her anxiety began to rise. By then, everyone knew the COVID-19 virus caused dangerous respiratory symptoms. Hodder had had asthma since she was a kid. She used an inhaler to keep the worst of it at bay, but she didn't know if she would survive an infection. Was she at high risk, she wondered?

One day, while Hodder was at work, Broughton heard a knock at the door. He opened it to find the building's superintendent, who was holding his phone in front of him. The property manager shouted through the speaker "You're NSF! You're NSF!"—shorthand for "non-sufficient funds," meaning that Hodder's bank account didn't have enough money in it to cover her rent. When Hodder returned home and heard what happened, she felt humiliated. The exchange must have been heard by all her neighbours in the shared hallway.

Each morning she commuted to work, she worried about contracting COVID-19 and transmitting it to the

kids—not much was yet known about how the virus could affect children. If her parents needed any help, she was the one they'd call on, and they were at high risk, too, due to their age.

She called her boss and quit.

COVID-19 WAS A CRISIS MOMENT FOR PEOPLE WHO ALREADY STRUGGLED TO PAY UNAFFORDABLE RENT.

ONE MILLION CANADIANS lost their job at the beginning of the pandemic, and large numbers had to leave their employment to care for family members. Immediately, it became clear that younger, lower-earning women were disproportionately affected, as they're overrepresented in the kind of service jobs affected by COVID—a list that includes cleaners.

It was a crisis moment for the 10 per cent of Canadians living in poverty, who already struggled to meet increasingly unaffordable rent. That fact wasn't lost on elected officials. As the economy shuddered to a halt, many provinces and territories enacted eviction bans to save tenants from being kicked out of their homes.

Ontario placed a moratorium on evictions as of March 19, 2020. Hodder felt relief—especially since leaving her

job meant she wasn't able to collect the then newly offered Canadian Emergency Response Benefit. But whenever she left her building for groceries, she'd pass notices that had been posted by her landlord. Next to several that listed federal and provincial assistance programs tenants could apply for, there was one that informed them that, despite the moratorium, they were still expected to pay their rent. After all, the bulletin added, no government relief was being offered to landlords.

To Hodder, the eviction ban was her permission from the government to ignore her landlord. She'd seen Premier Doug Ford speaking about the moratorium on TV and remembered him saying, "[P]ay if you can, but if you're down and out and just don't have the money, food is more important to put on the table than paying rent."

"So I thought, well, I'll feed my family," says Hodder.

Similar scenarios played out across the country. According to a survey conducted by the Association of Community Organizations for Reform Now—a union of anti-poverty activists—an estimated 35 per cent of Canada's 4.6 million renter households wouldn't be able to afford their rent come May 1, 2020. Yet only 42 per cent of them would qualify for CERB. The rest, like Hodder, faced eviction.

LIFE REMAINED in a stressful holding pattern for Hodder into late spring

and early summer. She spent her days juggling child care, her eldest's online schooling and helping to care for a relative in recovery from a major surgery. She longed for the days when it was safe to go to work, which used to be her only moments of relative calm and solitude from all the people who needed her. Despite the upheaval, she decided to do the online coursework to complete her GED, with the hopes of starting a new career as a personal support worker.

Then, as if one plague weren't enough to deal with, Hodder's apartment became infested with bedbugs. She can't remember when she started seeing the first bite marks on her feet, legs and back, but it wasn't long before they got to her kids, as well. The landlord sent in an exterminator, but Hodder says by the time that had happened, she'd thrown out her couch, bunk beds, three dressers and her toddler's beloved Thomas the Tank Engine bed. "I had no other choice," she says. "The building didn't act on it quick enough."

Even after her apartment was treated, the bugs returned. Hodder believes this is because none of the surrounding units had been treated, which would be the only way to stop the bugs from continuing to migrate to hers. Although a spokesperson for Hodder's landlord confirmed they do not always spray neighbouring units, he told me regular treatments are scheduled for all apartments in the

building. (As for Hodder's bedbug complaints specifically, the spokesperson did not wish to comment).

Hodder scraped together enough money to buy replacement furniture. In all, she estimates she spent \$2,500, including the price of a hotel stay during the first extermination. After several complaints to the building manager, the landlord agreed to book the pest removal company a second time. According to Hodder, it was several months before they paid a visit.

Meanwhile, Hodder says the amount she owed in rent had grown to around \$8,000. What little money she did have

from government supports was quickly eaten up by groceries and her phone and Internet bills. Some more financial help did come, though. Hodder used her tax return to pay half the debt, and her parents covered the rest.

The sense of relief from a clean slate didn't last long. A month later, she couldn't pay rent again.

IN AUGUST 2020, as Ontario's new COVID-19 cases decreased and the province began relaxing emergency restrictions, the province lifted its eviction moratorium. The process of evicting Hodder that had begun back in



February during the radiator dispute would now move forward to the Landlord Tenant Board. In the first stage of that process, tenant and landlord go before the LTB for a case management hearing, where they attempt to come to a settlement that works for both. If they can't agree, an eviction hearing is scheduled, which is when both parties can state their case to an adjudicator. Fortunately for Hodder, the pandemic had caused a significant backlog of about 7,000 cases in Ontario alone. Her case management hearing was scheduled for November.

Meanwhile, Hodder had grown furious with what she saw as the landlord's neglect of basic maintenance. She and her family could barely sleep because of the stress caused by the bedbugs. There was also black mould in the bathroom, and the pipes under the kitchen sink leaked. And all this was happening during a pandemic, when she and her family were stuck at home. For their part, her landlord's spokesperson said that, during the pandemic, many contractors were shut down, which caused delays. But Hodder expected better. Even if she could've paid some small portion of her rent each month, she put her foot down. "I didn't care what I owed them. They owed me more," she says. She hoped continuing to withhold rent would prompt her landlord to properly rid her unit of bedbugs and take care of all the other issues.

ONTARIO'S HOUSING CRISIS, BY THE NUMBERS

40 per cent of Ontario renters pay more than 30 per cent of their income in rent.

Since 1991, the average income of renter households has increased by less than 50 per cent; in that time period, **the cost of rent nearly doubled.**

10.2 per cent of Ontario renter households were in arrears as of October 2020; in total, they owed approximately \$87 million.

The Toronto Rent Bank, a public program that offers loans to residents who are behind on rent, provided **\$3.53 million** to approximately 1,000 tenants in 2020.

13,000 renters faced eviction hearings between November 2020 and January 2021.

The law required Hodder to pay her rent, of course, but she wasn't alone in refusing to. In Ontario, housing activists coordinated their efforts to coach tenants on their right to an eviction hearing and how to fight an eviction. Similar movements sprang up across the country during the pandemic. In one notable instance in Toronto, in a high-rise not far from where Hodder lives, a group of tenants calling themselves

the East York 50 began sharing information and standing together to shout at sheriffs coming to execute evictions. That union, which grew to hundreds of tenants, even found collective representation. After they did that, and as of June 2021, not one had been evicted.

“In cities like Toronto, all legislation, process procedures, the court systems, all are in favour of the corporate landlords,” says Sam Nithiananthan, a member of People’s Defence Toronto, an activist group that fights for tenants’ rights. The job and income loss that resulted from the pandemic, he says, allowed tenants time to sit still and wonder, “Why am I paying this much money for a shoebox that’s filled with pests?”

WHEN HODDER’S LTB case management hearing arrived on November 12, it didn’t last long. To speed up negotiations, the Ontario government had passed a new bill that allowed landlords and tenants to make repayment arrangements without any assistance from LTB officials. At Hodder’s hearing, the adjudicator asked if she would want to try this, and she agreed to give it a go.

What happened on a call between Hodder and her landlord, which took place the same day, depends on whom you ask. Hodder says she proposed a repayment plan for all rent owed in exchange for the repairs, as well as reimbursement for the furniture and hotel costs related to the bedbugs. A spokesperson for her landlord says

that while Hodder did offer to use funds from the Toronto Rent Bank—a city-run loan program for people behind on rent—to pay half of what she owed, she didn’t commit to a repayment plan. What they both agree on is that it was a stalemate, which meant they’d move on to an eviction hearing, set for May 2021.

By the end of November, more than eight months into the pandemic, Hodder was distraught and unsure what to do next. She’d long struggled with bipolar disorder (she’d been diagnosed at age 16), a condition that can cause extreme shifts in mood. At times, the disorder created problems at work and in her relationships. Normally, she got through it, but the stress of the pandemic was too much. “I asked Glynn to watch the kids so I could go get help, because I was hitting rock bottom,” she says. “I was about to end my life.”

She waited in a hospital emergency room until she saw a psychiatrist, then returned home at one in the morning with a prescription that would ease her symptoms.

IN THE SIX MONTHS that followed her first LTB hearing, Hodder completed her GED and enrolled in online courses to become a personal support worker. She had hope for her future, but she now owed around \$17,000 in rent. The experience with the bedbugs and the maintenance issues convinced her it was time to move. Unfortunately, no


landlord she approached seemed willing to accept her family as tenants. In one instance, she says, she was told her family was too big for the unit she could afford.

This past May 5, the date of Hodder's second online hearing at the LTB, it seemed likely that her eviction would be finalized. By that point, Hodder wanted to leave Toronto altogether—rent was too expensive, and the COVID lockdowns were more restrictive in the city. But with her credit history in tatters, she'd likely be forced to move her entire family into her parents' three-bedroom apartment.

In the end, though, Hodder and a representative from her building's landlord agreed to accept one last option for working it out, which was to negotiate with the help of an LTB mediator. In a private room of the online hearing, the two came to a resolution. The landlord promised to complete repairs on her apartment and deduct \$2,688 from

the amount she owed. And Hodder agreed to begin paying her rent again each month, with an \$846 monthly top-up until the debt was gone.

To keep her apartment, Hodder would need to find a job at which she could earn enough to pay the additional amount each month. When she returned from mediation to speak to the LTB's main hearing room, the adjudicator read out the agreement and asked Hodder if she understood Section 78 of the Residential Tenancies Act.

"Yes," she replied. The adjudicator had to use this legal jargon, but Hodder knew what was at stake. According to Section 78, if she's late or short on rent again, the eviction can proceed without another hearing. Although she'd still have ways to appeal the order, the odds of her winning the fight grow slimmer at each step—and 11 days after a family receives an order, sheriffs begin planning a time to remove them from their home. 



Desk Graffiti Fodder

**He who opens a school door
closes a prison door.**

VICTOR HUGO

**You can never be overdressed
or overeducated.**

OSCAR WILDE

**Education is what remains after one has forgotten
what one has learned in school.**

ALBERT EINSTEIN

LAUGHTER

THE BEST MEDICINE

Master of Illusion

A Spanish magician told everyone he would disappear. He said, “Uno, dos...”

Then he vanished without a *très*.

—REDDIT.COM

A lawyer dies and goes to heaven.

“There must be some mistake,” the lawyer argues. “I’m too young to die. I’m only 45.”

“Forty-five?” says St. Peter. “No, according to our calculations, you’re 135.”

“How’d you get that?” the lawyer asks.

St. Peter replies: “We do it by billable hours now.”

—LAUGHFACTORY.COM

I would never give my quarantine pets away, but every time they attempt to destroy my house, I like to remind them that some people actually do.

—KATE WILLETT, *writer*

Safety Risk

Hot-air balloons are terrifying. It’s a tiny

wicker basket in the sky attached to a flamethrower. I have to take off my shoes to board a flight, but I can fly around on patio furniture?

—RYAN HAMILTON, *comedian*

I once worked with someone who told customers “Sorry, it’s my first day” any time she messed up. She did it for two years straight.

—[@MAKAYLATHINKS](#)

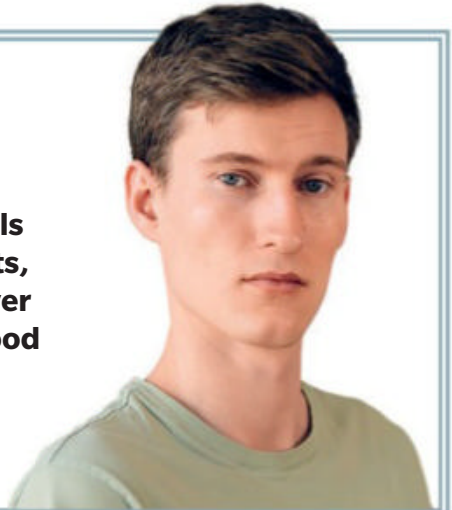
Send us your original jokes! You could earn \$50 and be featured in the magazine. See page 7 or rd.ca/joke for details.

THE BEST JOKE I EVER TOLD

By Alistair Ogden

The municipal transit service where I live sells merch on their website—hoodies, shirts, hats, the works. Which is bizarre because I’ve never taken a bus and thought, “Wow, this is so good I need to add it to my wardrobe.”

Alistair Ogden is a Vancouver-based comedian and writer.







In Dogs We Trust

What I learned from my constant companions

BY Jennifer Finney Boylan FROM *GOOD BOY: MY LIFE IN SEVEN DOGS*

ILLUSTRATIONS BY KENDRA HUSPASKA

Indigo



It seemed like it had only been a few years ago that Indigo, our black Lab, had first barged through our door. Her underbelly showed the signs of the litter she'd recently delivered, and between the wise, droopy face and the swinging dog teats, she was a sight to behold.

She had a nose for trouble. On one occasion, I came home to find that she'd eaten a five-pound bag of flour. She was covered in white powder, and flour paw prints were everywhere, including, incredibly, on the countertops. I asked the dog what the hell had happened, and Indy just looked at me with a glance that said, I cannot imagine to what you are referring.

Time raced by. Our children grew up and went off to college. The mirror, which had reflected a young mom when Indigo first arrived, now showed a woman in late middle age. I had surgery for cataracts. I began to lose my hearing. We all turned grey: me, my spouse, the dog.

In August 2017, I took Indigo for one last walk. She was slow and unsteady on her paws. She looked up at me mournfully. You did say you'd take care of me when the time came, she said. You promised, Jenny.

She died that month, a tennis ball by her side.

Not long after, I got a call from the

Bed 'n' Biscuit, our dog daycare. One of their customers was dying, and her dog, Chloe, needed a home. Given our recent loss, they asked, might our family be interested in adopting her?

I told the Bed 'n' Biscuit we were sorry but we wouldn't be adopting any more dogs.

I'd owned a succession of dogs since 1964, each one of them a witness to a particular phase of my life. But with the loss of Indigo, all that was over. The days of my dogs, I now understood, were done at last.

Then one morning, as I was passing the Bed 'n' Biscuit in my car, I pulled over. I could at least lay eyes upon this Chloe. What harm could it do?

She had a soft face.

When Chloe entered our house, she was cautious, uncertain. She spent hours that first day going to every corner, sniffing things out. Finally she sat down by the fireplace and gave me a look. If you wanted, she said, I would stay with you.

Playboy



Everything I know about love I've learned from dogs. But everything I know about loss I've learned from them, too.

They fill our hearts. They leave floury paw prints all over the house. They lick the tears from our faces. And then, in what seems like no time at all, they're gone.

It reminds me a little bit of what people say about childbirth: If you really remembered how difficult it was, you'd never go through it more than once. And yet, year after year, dog after dog, I've forgotten the grief of losing them—right up until the moment they give me that look with their grey faces: Jenny, you promised.

IT'S IN OUR LOVE FOR DOGS THAT WE CAN MOST EXPRESS HOW HARD IT IS TO BE HUMAN.

The pain of their loss doesn't seem to be lessened one bit by the fact that many of the dogs I've owned have been kind of terrible. My first dog, for instance, was a bad-tempered dalmatian named Playboy, a resentful hoodlum who loved no one but my father.

We lived in the farm country of eastern Pennsylvania then, and Playboy had no qualms about chasing donkeys, cows and even, on one occasion, a leather-jacketed Hell's Angel racing by on a Harley. That dog once stole the Thanksgiving turkey right off the table. He bit people. There were times when my sister and I hated his guts. We were fairly sure the feeling was mutual.

And yet he was devoted to my father, a soft-spoken man who had always

wanted to be a medieval-history professor but who wound up working at a bank instead. At the end of the day, Dad would come through the door with the *Evening Bulletin* and tug off his tie, often with an air of grim exhaustion. Then he'd sit down in a leather chair and Playboy would lie down at his side and roll around until his paws were in the air. My father would rub the dog's belly. "Who's a good boy?" he'd ask. "Who's a good boy?"

It was a good question.

What did I learn about love from Playboy? That it is perfectly fine if everyone hates you, as long as you are deeply loved by one person.

Sausage



In adolescence, I had another dalmatian—a sad, overweight blob named Sausage. I got her for my 11th birthday, and for several years I adored her, carrying that dog around like a Raggedy Ann doll. Some nights she slept in my bed, her head upon the pillow next to mine.

"I'll always love you," I told the dog. "We'll always be best friends."

But the promise I made as a child was hard to keep once I became a surly teenager and Sausage developed some obscure condition that caused her to lose the hair on her tail. An unsettling brown goo oozed out of her eyes. Friends who came over to my house

made fun of Sausage. They said my dog was gross, and they were not wrong.

More unforgivably, though, my dog was uncool, a reminder of the nerd I myself had been not so long ago.

So I turned my back on her. I made other friends, some of them boys who owned hot rods with T-tops.

It was from Sausage that I learned this awful truth: sometimes love fades, and as you age, it can be hard to keep a promise you made when you were young.

Matt the Mutt



At the end of her freshman year, my sister brought home a terrible dog named Matt the Mutt, who'd been raised in her dormitory. She handed him over to my parents—he's yours!—and headed west. Just like that, the reign of Matt the Mutt began.

For the next eight years, the dog bounced around the house, lifting his leg pretty much wherever he pleased, knocking people over, barking incessantly. Anyone coming through the door—including my tired father with his briefcase and his newspaper—would be instantly assailed by the bouncing, howling creature.

Matt the Mutt was a love machine, a regular Pepé Le Pew. He would copulate with pretty much anything: ottomans, the mailbox, even the now-geriatric Sausage. Above all, he lived to make

love to my grandmother's leg. Which was fine, I guess; my grandmother thought it was funny. "He's got more spunk than your grandpa!" said she.

From Matt the Mutt I learned this: sometimes the happiest people are the ones who make everyone else's lives impossible.

Brown



When I was in my 20s, my parents got a Labrador named Brown. This time we swore—just once!—we'd own a dog that was not completely insane. In this our hopes proved nugatory.

Brown developed a strange addiction to running water. She would move a kitchen chair to the sink with her snout and open the tap with her teeth. Then she'd stand on the chair, biting the running water. Later, the dog became obsessed with chewing her own paws, something the vet described as a lick granuloma.

We'd hoped that this time we'd have a normal dog. But from Brown I learned, instead, that sometimes people who seem the most normal turn out to be the craziest.

Still, it was Brown who provided me consolation when my father died of melanoma. As I sat in a chair in my mother's house, weeping, the dog came over and put her head in my lap. Do not be dismayed, for I am thy Dog, she

said. Whoever lives in love, lives in Dog, and Dog in him.

Brown looked at me with steadfastness and adoration, and her tail thumped against the floor. There had been scars on her legs. Maybe, with time, they could be healed.

Lucy



I got married just after I turned 30, and we moved to a farmhouse in central Maine, where I got a job teaching English at Colby College. There we were joined by a yellow dog I bought from a pig farmer. We called Lucy a Kennebec Valley flycatcher, on account of her fondness for biting flies right out of the air. Sometimes she'd look at me as if to say, They might be flies to you, but to me they are sky-raisins.

Lucy would give me other looks, usually in shades of disdain. When my daughter was in third grade, she wrote an essay for school: "Our Dog Hates Us." It was true, too. Everything about our family seemed to annoy Lucy. For a while, this made me feel a little puny, until at last I realized that Lucy was just lonesome for the place she had loved first: our neighbor's pigsty.

And so from Lucy I learned this: sometimes all people want is the thing they had when they were young.

Each of these dogs had taught me something about the perilous nature

of devotion. Some people will tell you that the magic of dogs is that their love for us is unconditional, but I've never found this to be the case. What's unconditional is the love we have for them.

At 60, I'm pretty sure that if there is any reason why we are here on this planet, it is to love one another. It is, as the saying goes, all ye know on earth, and all ye need to know.

And yet, as it turns out, nothing is harder than loving human beings.

That's where dogs come in. It's in our love for dogs that we can most express how hard it is to be human, how glorious and how sad.

Chloe




After Chloe joined us, I had hopes of having a conversation with her previous owner, the woman who'd been laid low by cancer. I wanted her to know that her dog had found a good home and that we'd take care of her.

When I finally got through, though, I learned that Chloe's owner had died.

It snowed that night, and I woke up in a room made mysterious by light and stillness. In the morning, I sat up and found that Chloe had climbed into bed with us as we slept.

Well? she asked. I touched her soft ears in the bright, quiet room and thought about the gift of grace.

"If you wanted," I said, "I would stay with you, too." 



EDITORS' CHOICE

THE CHAIR THAT
HELPED ONE MAN
SLOW DOWN,
FIND THE LOVE
OF HIS LIFE AND
APPRECIATE
THE JOYS OF QUIET
CONTEMPLATION

HOW TO SIT STILL

BY Philip Preville FROM *COTTAGE LIFE*
PHOTOGRAPHS BY DANIEL EHRENWORTH



FROM THE TIME HE WAS FOUR YEARS OLD,

Woodie Stevens has spent every summer of his life at his family cottage in the Thousand Islands, a 10-minute boat ride from Gananoque, Ont. But it wasn't until his 20th summer at the cottage, when he thought he had that part of the province all figured out, that the islands and the river reached out and spoke to him—and changed the course of his life.

Woodie, born Ford Woods Stevens, is now 79 years old. He's a career dentist in the Philadelphia area, a gentle soul who can spin a good yarn. His cottage, which has been in the family for more than a century, sits atop the highest point on Wyoming Island, some 18 metres above the St. Lawrence River. It features an impressively level stone patio just outside the door, a perfect

plateau of Canadian Shield granite, courtesy of Mother Nature. The patio faces downriver to the east but also offers a clear view south toward Grindstone Island, just across the invisible line in the water that marks the Canada-U.S. border.

The Thousand Islands were Woodie's summer playground as a kid, the place where he learned how to swim and paddle and fish, and how to get into and out of trouble. At age 15, he and his pal Gordie once found a giant anchor stone at the bottom of the river and decided to haul it out of the water and up to the patio. It took them five days.

By the time he'd reached his 20s, Woodie was living a carefree and care-less life. "I was full of beans as a young man," he says. "Always running around, always talking."

Then, one beautiful morning in the mid-'60s, he woke up early and saw his father, Ford Stevens Sr., out on the patio.

His dad (also a dentist, and one of the founders of the Academy of General Dentistry) was sitting in one of the family's homemade chairs, which they call "island rock chairs." They look like a pre-historic prototype of a Muskoka chair, the kind of thing an archaeologist might unearth. They have the same sloped seat, wide armrests and tall backrest. But they are less rounded than Muskoka chairs, more angular and boxlike. The backrest is made of only two wide slats of wood. The armrests are untapered. The chair's rudimentary appearance is



Woodie Stevens, a Philadelphia dentist, has been spending summers at his Canadian cottage since he was a kid.



key to its charm.

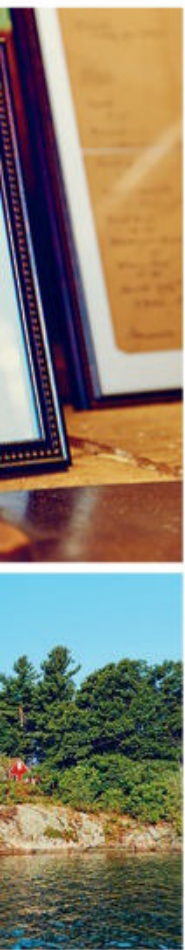
“He was having a coffee and watching the sunrise, so I got up, got some coffee and went out. Of course, I was full of bubbles and that stuff, and he just went, ‘Shh,’” Woodie recalls. “He said, ‘Quiet. Sit down. Sit down and listen.’”

Woodie sat in the island rock chair his dad had made for him when he was just a kid. Woodie obviously wasn’t inclined toward quiet serenity at this point in his life, but the chairs, with their reclined seats and backrests, have a way of encouraging people to settle.

He gently lowered himself into the seat and the chair took hold of him, and he tried listening for a change.

The problem was that Woodie truly had no idea what he was supposed to listen for. Voices? Motorboats? A malfunctioning septic system? “I said, ‘Listen to what?’ And Dad said, ‘Sit and listen.’ I thought I was in trouble again so I kept quiet.” Moments passed. Then his dad said, “Listen to the river.”

Woodie listened. He was sitting on an island with the mighty St. Lawrence rushing past him on all sides, but to



At the Stevens' cottage, they used a door as a logbook and framed the original plans for their island chair.

him the river had become inaudible. It took him a while to locate the sound of its churn beneath the loon calls. You have to listen past the wind to hear the water. Finally, he heard it and isolated the sound in his mind. Then he looked at the river anew. "My dad said, 'This river has passed by this island for millions of years at six miles an hour. You've got to design your life like that.'"

It was an epiphany to him: those words, spoken in this place at that moment, suddenly gave him a new perspective on his life, his family, adulthood, the world. The lesson he took

from the moment wasn't that he needed to slow down to six miles an hour, and it wasn't just that he needed to find a more sustainable pace for his life. He also understood that he needed to learn to halt life's perpetual rush, fast or slow, and be still—and that his grandfather, as it happened, had designed the perfect chair for this very purpose. Even when you've got an island cottage like Woodie's—as literal a metaphor as you'll ever find for stepping outside the fray—it's not an easy thing to do.

THE STEVENS CLAN HAS, through generations, been characterized by its combination of hospitality and contemplation, which helps explain how the family ended up with this cottage in the first place. Wyoming Island got its name from its initial purchasers, two Methodist ministers from Pennsylvania's Wyoming Valley. They quickly decided the island was big enough for four families and, recognizing they had a rare opportunity to choose their neighbours, in 1910 invited two of their friends, young family men both, to come visit, and to buy in.

THE CHAIRS WOODIE'S GRANDFATHER BUILT A CENTURY AGO STILL SIT UNDER HIS FAVOURITE PINE TREE.

One of those friends was Woodie's grandfather, Junius Stevens. He purchased the island's southeast corner, which happened to be its least accessible area from the water, yet its most majestic once scaled (funny how those things go together, adversity always leading to reward). Junius then contracted a Grindstone Island farmer, Hiram Russell, to build a one-room camp and to complete it in time for the following summer.

Back then, it was arguably easier for Hiram Russell to build that camp than

it was for Junius Stevens to go and enjoy it. The Stevens family's voyage to their summer retreat was an annual crucible, and it is a testament to their destination's beauty that they endured it. At 420-odd kilometres, the trip from Kingston, Penn., to Gananoque, Ont., which is roughly the same distance as Ottawa to Toronto or Edmonton to Banff, lasted three whole days. Junius owned a motor car and drove it—with his wife, Fannie, and their two children—on unpaved and badly potholed roads, stopping repeatedly to fix flat tires and to push through muddy ruts.

**“IF YOU THINK
YOU LIKE A GIRL,”
SAID WOODIE’S
DAD, “BRING
HER HERE.”**

There were no hotels or motels along the way; just roadside tent camping and campfire cooking. The trip was capped by a ferry ride from Clayton, N.Y., to Gananoque, and then 90 minutes of toil in a rowboat to Wyoming Island.

Nor was life any easier once they arrived. There were regular rowboat outings to Grindstone for milk and other necessities, and all the cooking took place outside on that stone patio. All this in order to spend the summer in a one-room cabin with an outhouse.

Junius designed and built his original island rock chairs out in the open here, as well. The original chairs he built for himself and Fannie are still there on Wyoming Island, beneath their favourite pine tree.

Skip forward a century or so, and that one-room camp is now a three-bedroom cottage with a full kitchen, plus a second building that features its own miniature suite and, around back, a giant workshop with every tool you could possibly need. The second suite is for Woodie's brother, Jim, and his wife, Darlene; as the family has grown, so has the family compound. As their kids have become adults, they all share in the cottage's operating expenses, with everyone paying annual dues for taxes, repairs and maintenance. It's an unsentimental way to organize the business end of the family cottage, but it works. Once everyone pays up, they are free to indulge in relaxation and nostalgia.

These days, Junius's 72-hour excursion has become, for Woodie, a six-hour drive from Philadelphia to the Gananoque marina and a 10-minute ride in *Chips*, the family's vintage mahogany motorboat.

“IF YOU THINK YOU really like a girl,” Ford Stevens Sr. told his restless son back in



Woodie and Lini Stevens met 50 summers ago.



the '60s, “bring her here.” This was the sagest piece of advice Woodie’s dad gave his sons about choosing a partner. Island cottaging isn’t for everyone: even when you’re not alone you remain symbolically surrounded by a void, outside life’s currents, cut off from the rest of the world. Some people—the Stevenses, for example—find that liberating. Others find it suffocating. If your steady likes it here, explained Ford, the relationship has potential. If not, it’s doomed.

This is precisely what Woodie did when he met young Lini Westland on a nearby Howe Island dock in 1971.

Woodie, 29 at the time, was out on the water with two friends, zipping around in one of his buddies’ motorboats, when they spotted three girls sunbathing at Bishops Point one summer afternoon. Lini, then 21, was sharing a cottage rental with two friends. The boys offered them a boat ride, and Lini’s friends said yes. Lini thought the whole thing was sketchy, but she wasn’t about to leave her friends or be left alone on Bishops Point.

Woodie and Lini hit it off immediately. Woodie told her he was planning to go back to school and become a

dentist. "When he told me that, I realized he had a dream and some ambition," she says.

Woodie was deeply enamoured, too. Their conversation turned easy and intimate while Woodie's buddies were still trying hard to impress the other girls. Later that afternoon, the group split up, and Woodie, though he'd known Lini for no more than a couple of hours at this point, didn't see any point in wasting time. He brought Lini to Wyoming Island for the litmus test.

She liked it from the outset. "I thought this whole place was really beautiful. And his father liked me right away because I paid attention to the stuff on the walls." She also got her first taste of the Stevens' unique, homemade family cottage chairs on the stone deck and made a point of saying how comfortable they were. "I asked about everything and told him how wonderful it all was, and I meant it."

Lini and Woodie spent a week at the cottage alone later that summer. Within five months, Woodie had achieved the following milestones: he proposed, he and Lini were engaged and then married, and Woodie built Lini her own rock chair.

WHEN LINI GUSHED to her future father-in-law about the family cottage, it was no small compliment. The walls of the Stevens family cottage are replete with built-in shelves, hooks, mantels and plate rails, the better to festoon them

with tchotchkes and quirky artifacts. It's a living family archive that puts their values on display.

And it's a display so rich that it's actually hard to see the walls themselves. Toby jugs. Commemorative plates. Family photographs. Model boats. Muskie mounts. Busts of ship captains. Two American flags in triangle fold—tributes to relations killed in war. A ship's wheel. Regatta silverware galore, from medals to banners to plaques. Beer steins. Family sayings and poems.

THEY TRACED THE OUTLINES OF THEIR KIDS' FEET ON THE DOOR, TO SHOW HOW THEY'D GROWN.




What Lini noticed in particular—what everyone notices—was the bedroom door off the dining area that doubles as a logbook. It's a beautiful old door, solid wood with four recessed interior panels. Every inch of that door—the panels, the borders, top to bottom—has a log entry inscribed into it. One side of the door, unpainted, covers the period ranging from the interwar years to the 1960s. The other side of the door, painted blue and white some 50 years ago and never to be repainted, contains entries running from 1971 to the 1990s, when they ran out of room.

The door looks better than it reads—if you parse the Stevens’ door log, you’ll learn that they got a new dishwasher and electric range in 1972; you’ll read about water levels and first swims and first paddles; you’ll find the names of dinner guests; and you’ll see the outlines of their kids’ feet, showing how they’ve grown over the years. But cottage logbooks aren’t meant to be great literature. They are meant to mark the passage of time in a place where time stands still. No one bothers keeping a logbook of their city home; we buy and sell urban dwellings like the commodities they are, and whatever traces of ourselves we leave behind will be forgotten with the next reno. But our cottages are truly ours, and we make our mark indelible upon them.

WHEN WOODIE’S DAD first told him to be quiet and listen to the river, it felt to Woodie as though his dad was passing on a piece of wisdom he’d always known, a lesson he always knew his son had to learn and that he had just been waiting to impart to him when

the time was right. But of course, that’s not true: his father was also a restless young man once, and he also had needed to learn to be still, as did his father, Junius. This is surely why Junius invented his own cottage chair.

Despite its rough appearance, the Stevens cottage chair is the most comfortable version of the Muskoka-Adirondack chair I’ve ever sat on. The angle of the seat is not as steep as in a true Muskoka chair, making it easier to get in and out. And your spine fits neatly into the space between the two backrest boards, allowing your shoulder blades to press flat against the backrest.

In the Stevens chair, you also sit a little taller, making it easier to converse with others, read or write in a notebook on the armrest. Or to simply look out over the horizon and listen for the river, and to feel its power, even when you’re not immersed in it. Island cottaging teaches you to step outside the current, watch its flow and not react, nor respond, nor go with the flow or against it. The only way to be still is to sit still. 

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Start Your Engines

The best safety device is a rear-view mirror with a cop in it.

DUDLEY MOORE

If G.M. kept up with technology like the computer industry, we’d all be driving \$25 cars that got 1,000 miles per gallon.

BILL GATES

IF YOU THINK YOU OR A DECEASED LOVED ONE WAS HARMED BY OPIOIDS LIKE HYDROCODONE, OXYCODONE, CODEINE OR ROXICODONE, OR IF YOU CARE FOR A CHILD EXPOSED TO THESE OPIOIDS IN THE WOMB, YOU CAN VOTE ON THE MALLINCKRODT BANKRUPTCY PLAN.



VOTING IS IMPORTANT. IT HELPS DETERMINE HOW OPIOID CLAIMS ARE TREATED. VOTE BY SEPTEMBER 3, 2021. SPECIFIC DETAILS ABOUT VOTING ARE SET FORTH BELOW IN THIS NOTICE AND AT [MNKVOTE.COM](https://mnkvote.com).

VISIT [MNKVOTE.COM](https://mnkvote.com) FOR MORE INFORMATION

► WHAT IS THIS ABOUT?

Mallinckrodt is a manufacturer of opioid pain medication that filed for chapter 11 bankruptcy in October 2020. On June 17, 2021, Mallinckrodt plc and its affiliates (the “Debtors”) filed their Plan of Reorganization (the “Plan”) in the United States Bankruptcy Court for the District of Delaware and their related Disclosure Statement. You may have the right to vote on the Plan of Reorganization.

► WHAT DOES THE PLAN PROVIDE?

Mallinckrodt’s Plan channels claims based on harm or injury related to the Debtors’ manufacturing of opioids and related activities to one or more opioid trusts. These opioid trusts will be established for the purpose of distributing money to individuals and corporate entities holding Opioid Claims and for abatement of the opioid crisis. If the Plan is approved by the Bankruptcy Court and you have an Opioid Claim, you will be entitled to assert your claim directly against the applicable opioid trust at a later time. **There is nothing you need to do right now to assert your Opioid Claim. Information regarding how to assert your Opioid Claim against an opioid trust will be made available at a later date.** The Plan, if approved, will forever prohibit any opioid claimants from asserting any Opioid Claim or seeking any money on account of any Opioid Claim against the Debtors, their officers and directors, or certain other parties specified in the Plan as the “Protected Parties.”

► WHERE CAN YOU GET MORE INFORMATION ABOUT THE PLAN?

Copies of the Plan and related documents, including the Disclosure Statement and a letter from the Official Committee of Opioid Related Claimants (a representative of Opioid Claimants in the Debtors’ bankruptcy cases appointed by the Office of the United States Trustee) setting forth its position regarding the Plan can be obtained free of charge at **[MNKVote.com](https://mnkvote.com)**.

► WHAT ARE YOUR OPTIONS?

Vote on the Plan:

If you are eligible to submit a vote, your vote must be submitted so it is received on or before September 3, 2021, at 4:00 p.m., Eastern Time. Detailed instructions on how to vote are available at **MNKvote.com** or by calling **877.467.1570 (Toll-Free)** or **347.817.4093 (International)**. If you do not follow the detailed instructions, your vote may be disqualified.

Object to the Plan:

If you disagree with the Plan, you can object to it in writing so it is received on or before September 3, 2021, at 4:00 p.m., Eastern Time. Objections not filed and served properly may not be considered by the Bankruptcy Court. Detailed instructions on how to file an objection are available at **MNKvote.com** or by calling **877.467.1570 (Toll-Free)** or **347.817.4093 (International)**.

If the Plan is confirmed, everyone with a Claim against or Interest in Mallinckrodt plc and its affiliates will be bound by the terms of the Plan regardless of whether or not they vote on the Plan or file a claim against the opioid trust.

► WHEN IS THE HEARING?

The Bankruptcy Court has scheduled the hearing to consider confirmation of the Plan to be held on **September 21, 2021, at 10:00 a.m. Eastern Time** (the "Confirmation Hearing"). The Confirmation Hearing will take place before the Honorable John T. Dorsey, United States Bankruptcy Judge, in the Bankruptcy Court, located at 824 Market Street, 5th Floor, Courtroom 5, Wilmington, Delaware 19801.

**THIS IS ONLY A SUMMARY OF THE MALLINCKRODT PLAN OF REORGANIZATION.
IF YOU HAVE ANY QUESTIONS OR IF YOU WOULD LIKE TO OBTAIN ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:**

Call: 877.467.1570 (Toll-Free) or 347.817.4093 (International)

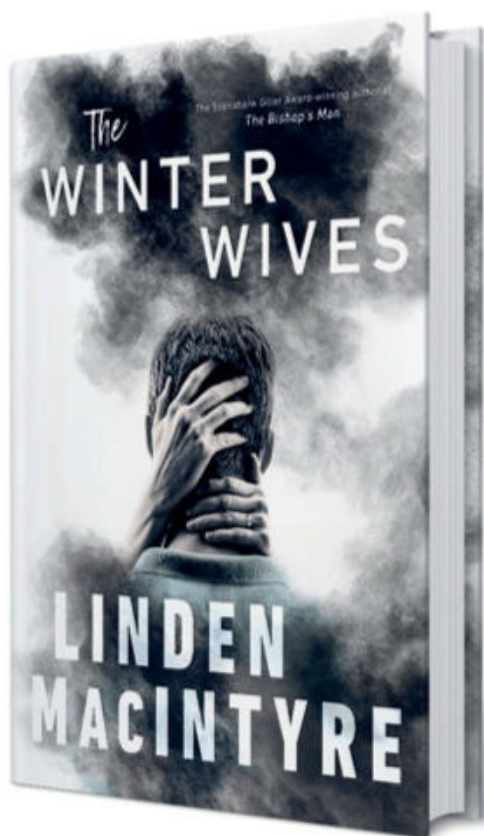
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READER'S DIGEST
BOOK CLUB



*Every month,
we recommend a new
must-read book. Here's
what you need to know.*

BY Emily Landau

THE WINTER WIVES

by Linden MacIntyre

\$35, PENGUIN RANDOM HOUSE CANADA

WHO WROTE IT: MacIntyre has established himself in the Canadian zeitgeist twice over. First he spent nearly 25 years holding corporations and politicians to account as co-host of CBC's *The Fifth Estate*. Then, in his 50s, he started writing hard-hitting novels. *The Bishop's Man*, his moody bestseller about corruption and pedophilia in a Nova Scotia Catholic diocese, won the Scotiabank Giller Prize in 2009.

WHAT IT'S ABOUT: MacIntyre's latest book, *The Winter Wives*, is set in Ontario, Florida, and (once again) Nova Scotia, and follows a tangled quartet of baby boomers over some 40-odd years. There's Byron, who overcame his hardscrabble childhood in a lobster-fishing family to become a small-town lawyer in his Maritime hometown, and his best friend, the handsome, athletic Allan Chase, who grew up rich and gets even richer when he drops out of university to become a real estate magnate.

When Allan weds Peggy Winter, the beautiful, unknowable woman Byron has always loved, Byron opts for the next best thing and marries her quiet, reliable, long-suffering sister, Annie. One day, when the couples are in their 60s, Allan suffers a stroke during a round of golf. While Allan lies in a

hospital bed, the cops start poking around—and Byron discovers that he didn't know his friend as well as he thought he did. Soon he finds himself chasing a trail of deception, double lives and missing millions. At the same time, Byron realizes he's losing chunks of his own memory and must contend with the legacy of dementia in his family.

WHY YOU'LL LOVE IT: From the start, the novel reads like a modern-day Canadian twist on *The Great Gatsby*. Allan is the gold-dusted-yet-secretive hero against whom Byron measures his masculinity, while Peggy is the dreamy cipher on whom he projects his desires.

Byron seems detached from his life, desperately aloof, trapped under the paralyzing weight of his inferiority complex. Even his name reflects his insecurity—his real name is Angus, but a childhood accident left him with a limp, so Peggy started calling him Byron as a nod to the Romantic poet, who had a club foot.

It's only as Byron begins to reckon with his memories—and the prospect of losing them—that he begins to discover who he is and how he's been shaped by buried traumas. MacIntyre specializes in literary mysteries, and *The Winter Wives* threads that needle perfectly: the mystery part is Byron's quest to uncover Allan's secrets, and the literary part is his desperate need to unravel his own. **R**

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BY Samantha Rideout

1. Which fast-food franchise is the largest in the world?

2. What fictional character famous in Japan is also key to tourism in Prince Edward Island?

3. If having no religious affiliation were to be counted as a religion, it would be the second largest in the world. True or false?

4. Is it possible for a human to get scared to death, literally?

5. The 17th-century artisan Antonio Stradivari made musical instruments that now sell for very high prices. What kind of instruments did he make?

6. Last year, what was born from an embryo that had been frozen for 27 years?

7. Which country has the European Union's longest bridge?

8. Which Egyptian pharaoh was entombed with a dagger made from meteorite iron?

9. Which are more numerous: birds, humans or cattle?

10. In which European country could you attend La Tomatina, a tomato-throwing festival?

11. How would you write the decimal number 8 as a binary number?

12. Which one of these foods is *not* a rich source of potassium: lentils, radishes, bananas or avocados?

13. Did Neanderthals know how to make fire?

14. Which major European city has a wall covered in the words "I love you" in 250 languages?



15. How do emperor penguins tell each other apart?

Answers: 1. Subway. 2. Anne of Green Gables. 3. False. It would be the third largest, after Christianity and Islam. 4. Yes, but it is very rare. 5. Stringed instruments, particularly violins. 6. A baby girl. 7. Portugal. It's called the Vasco da Gama Bridge and stretches over 17 kilometres. 8. King Tutankhamun. 9. Birds. There are 400 billion birds, 7.7 billion humans, and 1.5 billion cattle. 10. Spain. 11. 1000. 12. Radishes. 13. Yes. 14. Paris. 15. By listening to each other's unique calls.

WORD POWER

Many expressions are joined by a hyphen.
Which ones can you define?

BY Beth Shillibeer

1. A-line—A: vertical axis on a graph. **B:** roof with steep angles. **C:** garment flaring slightly from top to bottom.

2. also-ran—A: short film that plays before the main show. **B:** unlikely to win or succeed. **C:** printing press run for discount sellers.

3. by-bidder—A: auction that restricts bidders to certain criteria. **B:** municipal-project bidder. **C:** one who bids on behalf of another to inflate prices.

4. catch-22—A: dilemma due to conflicting conditions. **B:** desirable outcome achieved by unethical means. **C:** legal clause allowing withdrawal from contract.

5. coat-trailing—A: provocative writing, speech or behaviour. **B:** following close behind. **C:** using another's success to bolster your own.

6. derring-do—A: avant-garde fashion. **B:** action displaying courage. **C:** alcohol-induced state of bravado.

7. glad-hand—A: greet or welcome warmly. **B:** treat gently due to misfortune. **C:** give a grade higher than deserved.

8. vis-à-vis—A: side by side. **B:** in relation to. **C:** divided from.

9. mealy-mouthed—A: stingy with compliments. **B:** mean-spirited gossip. **C:** avoiding straightforward speech.

10. pell-mell—A: disorderly or rushed manner. **B:** exhibiting incompatible attributes. **C:** meal preparation from leftovers.

11. pied-à-terre—A: small space kept for occasional use. **B:** ballet step with rapid foot movement. **C:** pilgrimage route.

12. ro-ro—A: military-tank-division acronym for "received order, rolling out." **B:** industrial conveyor belt. **C:** transport ship allowing vehicles to drive on and off.

13. will-o'-the-wisp—A: plant found in Eastern Canada. **B:** elusive goal or object. **C:** unreliable person.

14. yarn-bomb—A: imperfections in yarn showing handmade origin. **B:** street art using knitted or crocheted material. **C:** public performance that backfires.

15. zero-sum—situation where A: both sides lose equally. **B:** both sides have an equal chance. **C:** one side's gain is the other side's loss.

WORD POWER ANSWERS

1. A-line—C: garment flaring slightly from top to bottom; as, *A-line* dresses are versatile and typically flattering.

2. also-ran—B: unlikely to win or succeed; as, Zamira planned to pass the *also-ran* contestants and take an early lead.

3. by-bidder—C: one who bids on behalf of another to inflate prices; as, Use of a *by-bidder* is illegal in Canada.

4. catch-22—A: dilemma due to conflicting conditions; as, Joshua faced the *catch-22* of needing a job to get experience and needing experience to get a job.

5. coat-trailing—A: provocative writing, speech or behaviour; as, Bob was known for his *coat-trailing* during town council meetings.

6. derring-do—B: action displaying courage; as,

Robin Hood tales feature many feats of *derring-do*.

7. glad-hand—A: greet or welcome warmly; as, Candidates were *glad-handing* voters after the debate.

8. vis-à-vis—B: in relation to; as, Marie's income *vis-à-vis* her expenditures was very healthy, qualifying her for a bank loan.

9. mealy-mouthed—C: avoiding straightforward speech; as, Afraid of getting fired, Joe was *mealy-mouthed* during the staff meeting.

10. pell-mell—A: disorderly or rushed manner; as, The children rushed *pell-mell* into the playground, despite calls to slow down.

11. pied-à-terre—A: small space kept for occasional use; as, An avid skier, Rosa dreamed of buying a *pied-à-terre* at the slopes.

12. ro-ro—C: transport ship allowing vehicles to drive on and off; as,

Ro-Ro ships are ideal for transporting cars to and from Europe.

13. will-o'-the-wisp—B: elusive goal or object; as, Chaya had little patience for *will-o'-the-wisp* ideas and preferred to work on achievable goals.

14. yarn-bomb—B: street art using knitted or crocheted material; as, Lampposts are common *yarn-bomb* targets.

15. zero-sum—C: situation where one side's gain is the other side's loss; as, Poker is a *zero-sum* game where the winnings equal the bets of the losers.

CROSSWORD ANSWERS

FROM PAGE 104

D	A	T	U	M		T	I	T	H	E
E	L	O	R	A		O	N	E	O	R
R	I	T	E	S		F	I	R	M	A
E	G	O		C	A	F		R	E	S
K	N	E	W		D	E	G	A	S	
				A	S	H	E	S		
	C	A	S	I	O		T	A	M	P
P	O	L		P	C	S		V	I	A
A	L	I	A	S		T	O	O	L	S
P	A	B	L	O		E	L	I	O	T
A	S	I	A	N		P	E	R	S	E



BY Jeff Widderich

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

To Solve This Puzzle

Put a number from 1 to 9 in each empty square so that:

- ◆ every horizontal row and vertical column contains all nine numbers (1-9) without repeating any of them;
- ◆ each of the outlined 3 x 3 boxes has all nine numbers, none repeated.

SOLUTION

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



Pardon My Latin

BY Barbara Olson

1	2	3	4	5		6	7	8	9	10
11						12				
13						14				
15				16	17			18		
19			20		21		22			
			23	24						
	25	26					27	28	29	30
31				32		33		34		
35			36			37	38			
39						40				
41						42				

ACROSS

- 1 Bit of survey output
- 6 Church member's contribution
- 11 Ontario home of a famous gorge
- 12 ___ the other
- 13 Ceremonies "of passage"
- 14 See 8-Down
- 15 Self-ish psyche part?
- 16 Half-___ (joe with

- less jolt)
- 18 Almost obsolete ph. line
- 19 Didn't just think
- 21 Renowned painter of dancers
- 23 Part of the phoenix's life cycle
- 25 Timex competitor
- 27 Do a pressing task at Starbucks
- 31 Worker on the Hill,

- for short
- 32 Windows opener?
- 34 Canadian passenger rail line
- 35 Something after a.k.a.
- 37 ___ of the trade
- 39 Picasso or Neruda
- 40 Writer George who was a woman
- 41 From the world's largest continent
- 42 Taken on its own

DOWN

- 1 Comedian Seguin
- 2 Adjust, as wheels
- 3 From head ___
- 4 Suffix with script or text
- 5 Like Fr. nouns with "le"
- 6 Skor-bar centre
- 7 Pasta ending, often
- 8 With 14-Across, what landlubbers love
- 9 Mnemonic for the Great Lakes
- 10 Jazz and big band, for two
- 17 For one purpose, as a committee
- 20 "What ___ I thinking?!"
- 22 Buyer's five per cent add-on
- 24 Nurses, as a nightcap
- 25 Coke and Pepsi, for two
- 26 Cover story?
- 28 To have, in Le Havre
- 29 Raonic with a racket
- 30 Edit function with cut or copy
- 31 Bear with a too-hard bed
- 33 Dance-class topic
- 36 Carte start
- 38 Castanet clacker's cry

For answers, turn to PAGE 102



The 2021 Reader's Digest Trusted Brand™ Awards!

For the past 13 years, Reader's Digest Canada has conducted an annual Trusted Brand™ Study to uncover which brands Canadians trust most. In 2021, more than 4,000 votes were tallied to identify the winning brands across 33 product categories such as consumer packaged goods, insurance companies and Canadian retailers

We are pleased to showcase the following 2021 Trusted Brand™ winners!



Food Delivery Service



Your Pet, Our Passion.
Pet Food



Sensitive/Dry Skin Lotion



Arthritis Pain Reliever
Cold Symptom Reliever
Headache Pain Reliever
Pediatric Fever & Pain Reliever



Interior Paint
Exterior Paint
Exterior Stain

Curious to find out what other brands came out on top? Visit trustedbrands.rd.ca for the full list of winners.



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