

Reader's digest

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TRUST ♦
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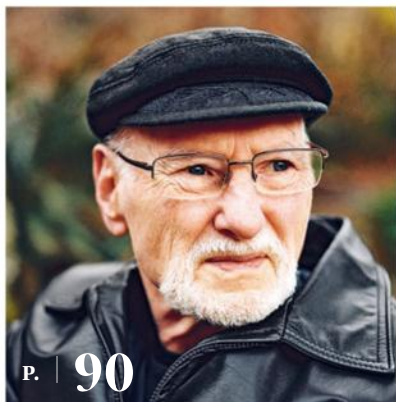
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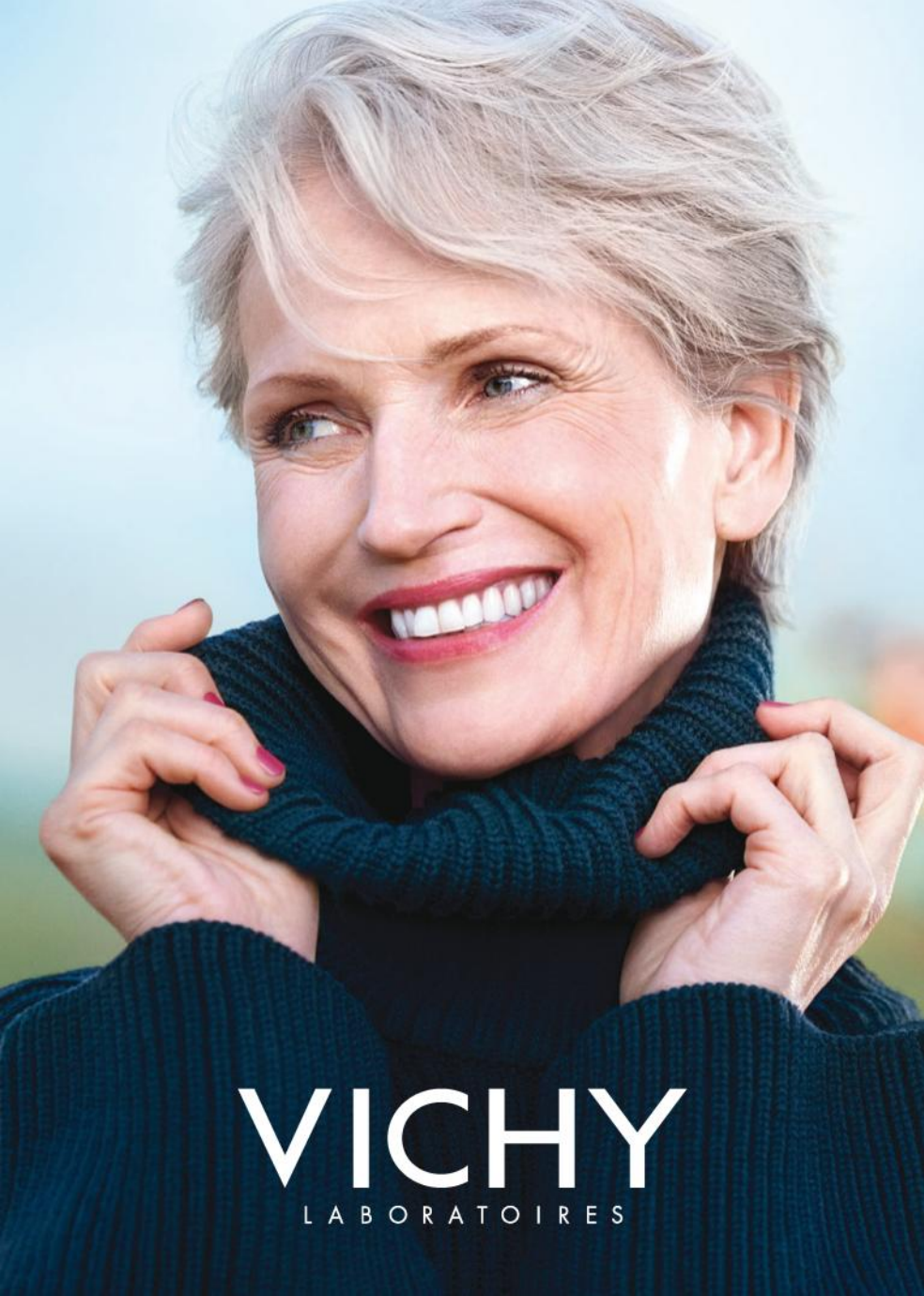
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Editor's Letter

The Benefits of Sleep



IF SLEEPING WERE AN OLYMPIC SPORT,

I would have been a contender. For most of my life, I have been able to stay unconscious for hours on end, on a regular basis, even under less-than-ideal circumstances. Screaming baby on an overseas flight? Might as well have been a lullaby. Vicious raccoon fight inside our tent? Never disturbed my sweet slumber.

I realize that this sounds rather smug. In truth, I was. I took my talent for granted. Sleep came easily to me—until it didn't. I was in my 40s when I found out what it feels like to be denied, night after night, the bliss of proper rest. Aging, of course, is one factor that contributes to poor sleep. There are other causes, too: stress, medical issues, small children, furry bed companions, a snoring spouse, a generally disruptive environment. Luckily, there are also a number of practical ways to tackle slumber's foes.

Because sleep is so critical to our health and well-being, it is the subject of vast and ongoing research. For this issue's cover story, "How to Hack Your Sleep" (page 28), contributing editor Samantha Rideout gathered the latest advice from a range of experts in order to help you create a perfect bedtime environment and get the rest you need.

R



Dominique

Send an email to
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ROGER AZIZ



Reader's digest

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Contributors



**KATHERINE
LAIDLAW**

(Writer, “Battling Bias,”
page 38)

Home base:

Toronto. **Previously published in** *Outside* and *Marie Claire*. **We have so many more prejudices** than we think we do. And the idea that bias can be implicit, and thus harder to confront, is scary. It’s important for us to face our prejudices. That’s the only way we can move toward anything resembling an equal society.



GEORGE MURRAY
(Writer, “Word Power,”
page 109)

Home base:

St. John’s. **Previously published in** *The Walrus* and *Granta*. **I go to the gym** three times a week (okay, sometimes two) to keep my body healthy, and I work on my vocabulary to do something similar for my brain. I’ve been enjoying reading lists of obscure words. “Cockalorum,” for instance, seems particularly useful these days. I’ll let you look that one up.



ROBERT CARTER

(Illustrator, “My
Neighbour, the
Mobster,” page 42)

Home base:

Waterloo, Ont. **Previously published in** *The New York Times* and *The Wall Street Journal*. **Had I been in the author’s shoes**, I definitely would have wanted to help take down a murderous mob boss. But that’s not to say it wouldn’t have scared the pudding out of me! This story made me question how much we can ever truly know a person.



KA YOUNG LEE
(Illustrator, “Battling
Bias,” page 38)

Home base:

Toronto. **Previously published in** *The Globe and Mail* and *Communication Arts*. **To me, creating an editorial illustration** is about communicating with a wide range of viewers. With this image, I used muted colours to capture solitude and personal reflection. I wanted to construct an atmosphere where the audience feels invited to meditate on their unconscious prejudices.



Letters

READERS COMMENT ON OUR RECENT ISSUES



RD'S FURRIEST FAN

This is our darling five-year-old cat, Leo. He was found in very poor condition on the street and rescued in 2016. We fostered him at first, but we fell in love and adopted him in 2017. With gentleness and patience, we taught him to trust, and these days he can often be found, as he is here, curled up on a lazy morning with a great magazine.

SHANA TRAIN, London, Ont.



STAYING ON THE SUNNY SIDE

Two different articles in the December issue (“Rise and Shine” and “Surviving Substandard Sleep”) offered similar advice: if you open the curtains first thing in the morning, the sunshine will help wake you up. I don’t know where the authors of these articles live, but here in the Edmonton area, in December, the sun doesn’t rise until two hours *after* I get to work. I’m surprised that a Canadian magazine didn’t at least make a joke about that!

DORIS RIDEOUT, *Sturgeon County, Alta.*

HOW READER'S DIGEST SAVED MY LIFE


In 1967, when I was 20 years old, the grandmother of one of my dearest

friends passed away. I had never been to a visitation and was shocked to see her body in an open casket. I was deeply shaken by the experience. That night, I couldn’t sleep, and I had the urge to self-harm. I walked into my living room and saw a copy of *Reader's Digest*. I had the choice between hurting myself and picking up that magazine. Thankfully, the magazine won. I told my husband about that difficult event after we were married in 1968. He subscribed, and I have been a faithful fan ever since. *Reader's Digest* literally saved my life.

KAREN CAPLAN, *St. Catharines*

BODY LANGUAGE

Your December 2017 issue features a firefighter on the cover with his arms crossed. This seems like a very defensive gesture. I would have preferred to see a more open, welcoming stance kicking off the magazine.

IRENE ATZELSBERGER-HAZELL,
Uxbridge, Ont. 

Published letters are edited for length and clarity.

WRITE TO US!



We want to hear from you! Have something to say about an article you read in *Reader's Digest*? Send your letters to letters@rd.ca. Please include your full name and address.

Contribute Send us your funny jokes and anecdotes, and if we publish one in a print edition of *Reader's Digest*, we'll send you \$50. To submit, visit rd.ca/joke.

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Major university hearing study seeks participants.

Connect Hearing, with hearing researcher Professor Kathy Pichora-Fuller at the University of Toronto, seeks participants who are over 50 years of age and have never worn hearing aids for a hearing study investigating factors that can influence better hearing. All participants will have a hearing test provided at no charge. Qualifying participants may also receive a demonstration of the latest hearing technology. The data collected from this study will be used to further our understanding of hearing loss and improve life-changing hearing healthcare across Canada.



Why participate in the hearing study?

Hearing problems typically result from damage to the ear and researchers have spent decades trying to understand the biology behind hearing loss. More importantly, researchers now realize the need to better understand how hearing loss affects your everyday life*. In this new hearing study, Professor Pichora-Fuller and her team are trying to find out how people learn to live with hearing loss and how new solutions could help these people take action sooner and live life more fully.

It is estimated that 46% of people aged 45 to 87 have some degree of hearing loss¹, but most do not seek treatment right away. In fact, the average person with hearing loss will wait ten years before seeking help². By studying people who have difficulty hearing in noise or with television, we hope to identify key factors impacting these difficulties and further understand their influence on the treatment process.

If you are over 50 years of age and have never worn hearing aids, you can register to be a part of this major new hearing study[†] by calling: 1.888.242.4892 or visiting connecthearing.ca/hearing-study.



* Pichora-Fuller, M. K. (2016). How social psychological factors may modulate auditory and cognitive functioning during listening. *Ear and Hearing*, 37, 925-1005.

[†] Study participants must be over 50 years of age and have never worn hearing aids. No fees and no purchase necessary. Registered under the College of Speech and Hearing Health Professionals of BC. VAC, WCB accepted. 1. Cruickshanks, K. L., Wiley, T. L., Tweed, T. S., Klein, B. E. K., Klein, R., Mares-Perlman, J. A., & Nondahl, D. M. (1998). Prevalence of Hearing Loss in Older Adults in Beaver Dam, Wisconsin: The Epidemiology of Hearing Loss Study. *Am. J. Epidemiol.* 148 (9), 879-886. 2. National Institutes of Health. (2010).



ART *of* LIVING

Ottawa teen Theland Kicknosway logs kilometres for missing and murdered Indigenous women, girls, and transgender and two-spirit people

The Long Run

BY ANDREW DUFFY

PHOTOGRAPH BY JESSICA DEEKS

• **WHEN HE WAS NINE** years old, Theland Kicknosway asked his mother a profoundly difficult question: “What happens to the children of the missing and murdered Indigenous women?”

His mother, Elaine, didn’t have a ready answer, so she reached out to a friend, Bridget Tolley. Hailing from the Kitigan Zibi Anishinabeg community, near Maniwaki, Que., Tolley is the founder of Families of Sisters in Spirit, a grassroots initiative that supports loved ones of missing and murdered Indigenous women, girls, and transgender and two-spirit people. (The number of missing women is reported to number approximately 1,200 across Canada, though activists

estimate the true total could in fact be much higher.)

Tolley explained to Theland that it wasn’t easy for the children left behind, many of whom were taken in by grandparents. “It’s tough knowing that people you love are gone,” she said.

That idea bothered Theland so much that he became determined to help—to be, in his own words, “a child looking out for another child.” After some thought, he knew what to do. He would run.

Since 2015, his annual marathon, Theland’s Journey, has raised more than \$5,000 for Families of Sisters in Spirit. The group, Tolley says, offers money and supplies to the children’s

*The land Kicknosway
leaning against a stick
his father found on the
inaugural run. A hole is
burned into the stick for
each kilometre travelled.*



caretakers and also organizes events, such as a free supper in Ottawa this past February, where Indigenous women could pick up clothing, toys and household goods.

Theland's run, she says, has become a key fundraiser for the organization, which has helped about 400 families so far.

This spring's 134-kilometre trek, which kicks off on March 29, travels from Kitigan Zibi to Gatineau Park, just north of Ottawa. Community members, local politicians and police officers have been invited to join Theland, now 14, at various points along the run.

The teen's chosen route has deep significance. Kitigan Zibi is home to the families of Maisy Odjick and Shannon Alexander, best friends who disappeared in September 2008 on their way to a high-school dance. Law enforcement officials have yet to clarify what happened to them.

Gatineau Park is the place where 27-year-old Kelly Morrisseau, a pregnant mother of three, was found in a pool of blood on the morning of December 10, 2006. She was taken to hospital with multiple stab wounds but died that same day. Her murder has never been solved.

Theland is a Grade 9 student at Merivale High School, in Ottawa's west end. He trains for his run, which amounts to more than three full marathons in as many days, mostly by

playing basketball, his favourite sport. But the challenge remains largely mental, not physical.

"It's always a tough journey, but we're doing this for something that has affected many lives," he says. "I've learned that it may seem hard, it may seem tough, but we have to persevere. We have to have that strength to keep moving forward."

Theland's father, Vince Kicknowsky, is filled with pride for his son. "This is something he came up with out of his own nature," he says.

Both Vince and Elaine are survivors of the Sixties Scoop, the 1960s to late '80s practice of taking First Nations children out of their homes and placing them in foster care or up for adoption.

Their son, on the other hand, is a member of the Walpole Island First Nation, in southwestern Ontario, and is an accomplished drummer, singer and hoop dancer. In November 2015, he led Prime Minister Justin Trudeau and the new Liberal cabinet into Rideau Hall for their swearing-in ceremony.

Theland was recently named a 2018 Indspire Award recipient for his contribution to Indigenous culture, heritage and spirituality. He is considering a career as a performer or actor—and he has no plans to stop running.

"I want to do something to help bring change," he says.



Life's Like That

BET THAT WAS AN AWKWARD RIDE



@decentbirthday

THERE IS A LOT OF competition for parking at the local dental office, hence the sign: “Dental office parking only. Violators will be extracted.”

HELEN McNAIR, *Ottawa*

NEED A PICK-ME-UP? Start a fight with somebody when they have the hiccups!

short-funny.com

KNOW YOUR LIMITS

You think you’re pretty okay at doing stuff, then you try to plug something into an outlet you’re not looking at directly.

🐦 @IANYARDIGAN

THE OTHER DAY, someone asked me if I knew what self-effacing meant.

Using my smartphone to demonstrate, I pointed out the camera and said “other people facing.” Then I turned it around and said “selfie-facing.”

DWAYNE CLIPPERTON, *Dunrobin, Ont.*

SUPPORT SYSTEM

SECURITY GUARD: You can’t bring that food in here.

ME: This is a service burrito.

🐦 @EDEN_EATS

SOME TOURISTS in the Museum of Natural History are marvelling at dinosaur bones. One of them asks the guard, “Can you tell me how old the bones are?”

The guard replies, “They’re 65,000,011 years old.”

“That’s an awfully exact number,” says the tourist. “How do you know their age so precisely?”

“Well,” the guard answers, “they were 65 million years old when I started working here, and that was 11 years ago.”

reddit.com

Send us your funny stories! They could be worth \$50. See page 10 or visit rd.ca/joke for more details.

Our top picks in books, movies and TV

RD Recommends

BY DANIELLE GROEN

1  **THE HANDMAID'S TALE**
 The Hulu show has burned through its dystopian source material—season one ends where the novel does, with a pregnant Offred hustled into a van heading to an undisclosed location—but Margaret Atwood did help build the expanded world of the second season. Remarkably, these 13 new episodes take an even darker look at power, piety, complicity and corruption, as the action follows Offred (Elisabeth Moss) out of Gilead and into the punishing Colonies. *April 25.*



DID YOU KNOW? In 2017—more than three decades after its publication—*The Handmaid's Tale* was Amazon's most-read novel of the year, beating out bestselling stalwarts from George R.R. Martin and J.K. Rowling.



2 **THE GIRL WHO SMILED BEADS** Clemantine Wamariya

In 1994, at the age of six, Clemantine Wamariya fled the Rwandan genocide on foot with her teenage sister. Twelve years later, she was reunited with her parents on *The Oprah Winfrey Show*. Her riveting memoir chronicles her extraordinary life—searching for safety in Africa, arriving in Chicago, being accepted to Yale—and shows the force of both Wamariya's tenacity and her imagination. *April 24.*

(THE HANDMAID'S TALE) TAKE FIVE;
 (WAMARIYA) JULIA ZAVE



3 RISE

If you've been yearning for the return of *Glee*, *Friday Night Lights* or Rosie Perez, the midseason NBC drama *Rise* is for you. Set in a small Pennsylvania town, this charming show follows the travails of a high school's staff and student body—including Perez and *Moana*'s Auli'i Cravalho—while they mount a production of the coming-of-age rock musical *Spring Awakening*. *March 13*.



4 A QUIET PLACE

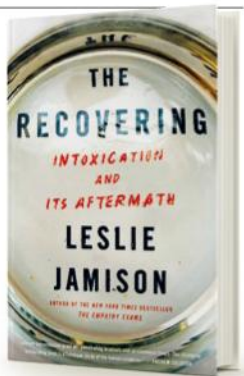
Director John Krasinski, co-starring alongside real-life spouse Emily Blunt, has found a truly original way to terrorize moviegoers. In his new thriller, a family of four lives simply in their cozy cabin, playing board games, communicating over dinner in sign language and existing in absolute silence—because they know that the moment they make a sound, an evil force in the woods is awakened and will come for them. *April 6*.



5 THE RECOVERING

Leslie Jamison

The American novelist and essayist Leslie Jamison is keen to craft an original narrative, but the recovering alcoholic Leslie Jamison knows “addiction is always a story that has already been told.” *The Recovering* lets her have it both ways. This intelligent and empathetic book weaves her personal struggle to stay sober with portraits of artists—Billie Holiday, Raymond Carver—whose lives were shaped by their own dependence. *April 3*.



Comedian Rick Mercer on his show's final season, today's absurd political landscape and the impact he's made

Last Rants

BY COURTNEY SHEA

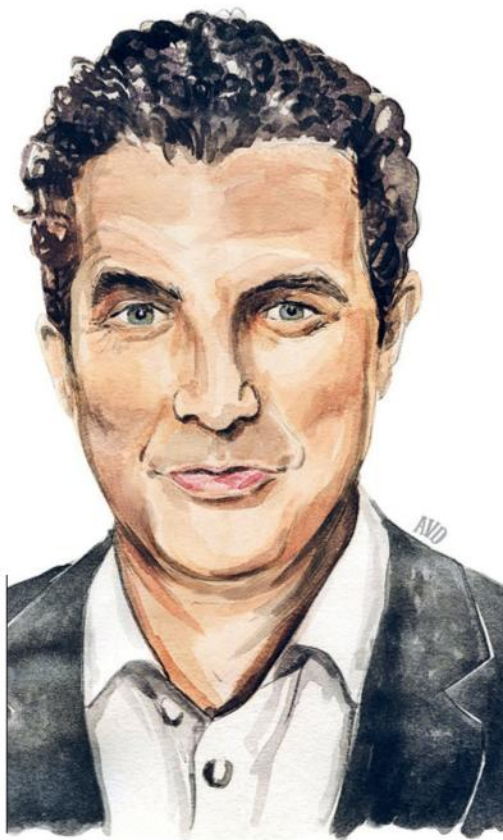
ILLUSTRATION BY AIMÉE VAN DRIMMELEN

You're 15 years in and still producing a great show every week. Are you sure you've made the right call in ending the Rick Mercer Report now?

There have certainly been times at 4 a.m. when I've asked myself that question, but my motivation hasn't changed: I've always admired people in this business who have controlled their destiny. It's rarely done, quite frankly.

You often send up current affairs. Is it tough to leave during what is presumably a very fertile time?

You know, the *Rick Mercer Report* always existed as a Canadian show



speaking to Canadian politics and current events. It's getting harder and harder to do that because Donald Trump is sucking the oxygen out of every room on earth. If it was my job to cover American politics exclusively, I think this would actually be a very difficult time at work, because it's unhinged but it's not funny. I find it very grim.

Yes, and it's hard to satirize the already absurd.

If the world at this moment had been written five years ago as a screenplay or a novel, it would have failed because it would have been wholly unbelievable.

We've had a few of our own governmental regime shifts over the run of your show. How does your job change when that happens?

I always know that I'm doing well when the ruling party is upset with me. When the Conservatives were in power, they were convinced I was out to get them, and now the Liberals are aghast at the things I've said.

So you don't think about any one particular type of viewer when you create your material?

My audience is pretty unique in that it includes a wide spectrum. Television today is much more fractured than when I started; the goal used to be to make something that everyone

could watch. That barely exists anymore. I can't tell you how many times people have told me that my show is the only one they'll watch as a family. I'm very pleased with that.

Rick Mercer Report is largely about making people laugh, and yet you have also made a serious impact with some of your segments. Is there anything you're particularly proud of in that regard?

The show has been in a unique position to encourage young people to vote, and there are some rants—the part of each episode where I get to say what's on my mind—that I'm proud of. Quite often they're about politics, but other times they've been about things like the way people behave on escalators. In 2011, I did a rant about bullying after Jamie HUBLEY [the 15-year-old gay son of an Ottawa city councillor] took his own life. I don't know what impact it had, but it certainly was viewed a lot.

What are you going to do with yourself now?

I want to spend more time in Newfoundland, where my parents are. And I will still perform live, as I always have. Other than that, I have big plans—I just don't know what they are yet. **R**

The final episode of the *Rick Mercer Report* airs on April 10.

Points to Ponder

BY CHRISTINA PALASSIO

It's exceptionally beautiful to wake up in a new city every morning. You don't know where you are, what language they're speaking or what the weather's even like. If you relinquish control, embrace variability and mystery, it's amazing.

Canadian singer **JACOB HOGGARD**,
in *CAA Magazine*

I want Canada to win. To me, Canada is actually a start-up. I think now is the right time to figure out what is the country's role in the world.

TOBI LUTKE, CEO of Shopify,
in *The Globe and Mail*

You can find love anywhere. I have detailed stats on tons of things, but at the end of day, one person has to be malleable. If you have two people who are unrelenting or unyielding, love will never form.

Plenty of Fish founder **MARKUS FRIND**, in *The Globe and Mail*

Those who work in the ER burn out faster than any other type of physician. I'm not sure if it's the shifts or the long, steady glimpse of humans on their worst day.

ER physician and author **JAMES MASKALYK**, in *the Toronto Star*

We need to start acknowledging what an epidemic this is, and what a deep-seated problem this is. You have to get it all out in the open so we can really understand how pervasive this is.

Actress **RACHEL McADAMS** on the issue of sexual harassment, in *The Globe and Mail*



PHOTO: (McADAMS) CC GAGE SKIDMORE; QUOTES: (HOGGARD) JULY 26, 2016; (LUTKE) NOV. 10, 2017; (McADAMS) OCT. 26, 2017; (FRIND) OCT. 25, 2017; (MASKALYK) OCT. 12, 2017.



[The kids in my high school] would think you were Bruce Lee or that you knew kung fu, so they always made that Bruce Lee sound to me. I got that every day, and it did get old, but fortunately for me, it didn't get to the point where I had to defend myself.

Taiwanese-Canadian model and actor

GODFREY GAO on the racism he experienced when he was a high-school student in B.C.

If a law is resulting in the unnecessary loss of life, how can you blame people for breaking that law?

Toronto City Councillor

JOE CRESSY, to *Metro*, on the illegal pop-up safe-injection sites set up by activists in the city

By necessity, by design, by its own nature, all art fails. The exceptions to the rule (a hundred exceptions over all of human history?) only prove it.

2017 Giller Prize winner **MICHAEL**

REDHILL, on what he finds hardest about writing

As a proud gay man, being criticized for my “feyness” in *The Globe and Mail* struck me as offensive, irresponsible and homophobic.

DAN LEVY, on Twitter, in response to a review of *The Great Canadian Baking Show*

It's like winning the Stanley Cup. You've been dreaming about it all your life but you don't know how you're going to react until it happens.

Left-winger **DAVE ANDREYCHUK**,

to *The Globe and Mail*, upon being inducted into the Hockey Hall of Fame

For me, it was this epiphany where I went: “Oh my gosh, what happened to me?” Who I was is gone and who I am, I don't want to be.

Sports journalist **MICHAEL**

LANDSBERG, to *CBC News*, on the moment he realized he was suffering from depression

I am the-music-in-every-store-is-too-loud years old.

Writer **SHANNON PROUDFOOT**, on Twitter 

How to prevent
and treat an attack

The Trouble With Gallstones

BY SAMANTHA RIDEOUT



FOR A SMALL, inessential body part, the gallbladder can cause a lot of pain. Roughly the shape and size of a pear, the organ sits in the right side of your abdomen. Its job is storing bile, a liquid produced by the liver that helps you digest the fats in your diet. The gallbladder releases the liquid as needed into the small intestine.

When bile's delicate chemical balance gets thrown off—we don't fully know how or why—its components can crystallize. Over years, these crystals can combine to form gallstones (medical term: cholelithiasis), which can be as tiny as grains of sand or as large as golf balls. In at least 75 per cent of cases, gallstones don't cause symptoms or complications and therefore don't require treatment.

However, should a stone temporarily block one of the bile ducts leading

in and out of the gallbladder, the result is a sudden, short-lived bout of gripping or gnawing pain in the abdomen, rib cage area or shoulder. This won't cause lasting damage, but you might like to visit a GP to confirm that it is indeed gallstones and not another problem, such as an ulcer.

Longer-term or permanent duct blockage can lead to serious complications, like infections and inflammation. Therefore, you should see a doctor immediately if you experience symptoms that include jaundice, fever, chills or incessant pain.

Gallstones have a greater chance of developing in women, adults over the age of 40 and people with a family history of the condition. Beyond that, the major correctable risk factor is obesity, says Dr. Stephen Ryder, medical advisor to the British Liver Trust. But Ryder cautions against

shedding weight quickly: “Rapid weight loss or gain can cause stones to form and can trigger symptoms, so controlled weight loss is best.”

If you already suffer from symptomatic gallstones and the attacks are mild, you could manage their effects with painkillers; a low-fat diet may also make a modest difference. If your symptoms are severe and frequent, the only effective treatment is the surgical removal of the gallbladder.

You can live without the organ: your liver will still produce bile,

which will drip directly into the small intestine rather than collecting in the gallbladder first. Post-surgery, approximately one in 10 patients

experience occasional diarrhea as their digestive systems adapt to the continuous release of bile. The diarrhea might last anywhere from weeks to years, but medications called bile acid binders can help control this

unpleasant side effect.

For most people, though, the difference between having a gallbladder and not having one is unnoticeable. **R**

10%
to **15%**

of adults have gallstones, although only 1/4 of them will develop symptoms.



TEST YOUR MEDICAL IQ

The Framingham risk score is...

- A.** the probability of a mother passing an infection on to her child during birth.
- B.** a quantification of risky alcohol habits.
- C.** a measure of a patient's knowledge about preventing sexually transmitted infections.
- D.** a tool for assessing risk of cardiovascular disease.

Answer: D. The Framingham risk score estimates a patient's chances of developing cardiovascular disease within the next 10 years. It does so based on age, sex, cholesterol levels, diabetes status, blood pressure and smoking habits. Patients and doctors use the score to decide whether lifestyle changes or preventative treatments would be worthwhile.



NEWS FROM THE

World of Medicine

BY SAMANTHA RIDEOUT

Raw Flour Can Carry E. Coli

In unwelcome news for cookie-dough fans, flour was recently confirmed as the source of a serious E. coli outbreak in the United States in 2016. Certain strains of these bacteria can be toxic, causing stomach cramps, bloody diarrhea, vomiting and, in extreme cases, kidney failure. Scientists knew E. coli could thrive in undercooked meat, but they were surprised to find the bacteria in dry flour. To be safe, health authorities now recommend washing your hands thoroughly after handling flour and abstaining from eating raw or unpasteurized dough.

Back Pain Could Stem From Undetected Fractures

Tiny spinal fractures caused by osteoporosis often evade discovery but can nevertheless hurt, according to a study published recently in the *Journal of Bone and Mineral Research*. Nearly 4,400 older men were followed for over four years, during which time

28 were diagnosed with fractures in the spine. However, X-rays revealed that another 169 had breaks that had gone undetected. The majority of the men with fractures reported aching backs. Past studies have found an even higher spinal-fracture rate among older women. Most back pain is muscular and improves within six weeks, so if yours lasts longer, seek medical evaluation.

Vegetarianism Linked to Depression; B12 Might Help

In a U.S. National Institutes of Health study, vegan and vegetarian participants tended to score higher than meat eaters on a scale measuring depression. While the results don't prove causality, it wouldn't be surprising if nutritional shortfalls were to blame, the researchers said. In particular, vegetarians and vegans are often low in vitamin B12, and animal products are the only natural source of this nutrient. However, taking supplements or consuming foods such as fortified soy milk and breakfast cereal can help. **R**



ISTOCKPHOTO

 Pharmacists Answering Your Health Questions

A Dose of Advice

A Dose of Advice is a regular Q&A series that features trusted Guardian® and I.D.A.® pharmacists from communities all across Canada. This edition features Kareena Ivanis, pharmacist at Roulstons I.D.A.® Pharmacy in Port Dover, Ontario.




Dear Kareena:

I've been suffering from back pain for a few months. It's now starting to affect my day-to-day life, not to mention my weekly tennis game. Do you have any tips on managing chronic pain?

— ACHY, BREAKY BACK

Dear Achy, Breaky Back:

Many of my patients suffer from chronic pain — back pain, joint pain and migraines are common ailments — so you are not alone. The good news is that there are many ways to manage back pain, and your local Guardian® or I.D.A.® pharmacist can recommend solutions for temporary relief. For example, I recommend applying a cold compress to provide relief to a new injury, as it helps lower the initial inflammation and swelling, whereas for ongoing injuries, a warm compress is better in order to promote blood flow and faster healing.

 Whether you should stop physical activity depends on many factors. Every patient is unique, but in most cases,

it's important that you stay active, stretch and maintain good posture. I recommend trying swimming or yoga instead of high-impact activities such as running. Once your pain is under control, you can try resuming your weekly tennis matches — but go slowly and pay attention to how your body responds.



It's estimated that 19 per cent of Canadians adults live with chronic pain (pain which lasts for more than three months). That's quite a significant number! It can be difficult to diagnose and treat chronic pain properly because there are many types of pain and many potential causes. That's why I advise you to keep a pain journal as a way to help define your pain. In a journal, you can note down what triggers your pain, whether it's an activity, a specific movement or a particular situation, such as sitting in a car. Don't forget to take your journal with you when you visit your doctor or pharmacist.



Finally, it's important to consult your pharmacist if you're taking chronic pain medication for an existing condition, since over-the-counter drugs can interfere and overlap with your existing regimen.

Your pharmacist can help you manage your pain, no matter the source. We're here for you.

Get a dose of our pharmacists' advice at guardian-ida-pharmacies.ca

Guardian

I.D.A.

What's Wrong With Me?

BY SYDNEY LONEY

ILLUSTRATION BY VICTOR WONG



THE PATIENT: Victoria, 26, a social-work student at the University of California, Berkeley

THE SYMPTOMS: Severe headache and nausea

THE DOCTOR: Dr. Steven Hetts, chief of interventional neuroradiology at the UCSF Medical Center at Mission Bay in San Francisco

VICTORIA GREW UP having headaches but always attributed them to motion sickness (if she was in a car), lack of food (if she had skipped a meal) or stress. Based on that history, she wasn't surprised when, during her second day of undergraduate studies in August 2010, her head began to pound.

This headache, however, was unlike any she'd had before; the pain was of the "thunderclap" variety and, shortly after it first came on, the room started spinning. Victoria

stumbled across campus, concentrating on putting one foot in front of the other. "I was sweating and swaying and I was worried people would think I was drunk," she says.

Finally, she sat down on a curb and threw up. When she got home, she told her family that she was going to take a nap, which had been her headache strategy in the past. She then descended into a dreamlike fog and wouldn't clearly remember anything after that until three weeks later.

Initially, Victoria stayed in bed at home for three days. Her parents thought she had the flu. She was conscious, but her activity was limited to sleeping, eating toast and answering yes-or-no questions. On the third night, her mother insisted that she go to the hospital and dragged her to the car against her will.

In the ER at San Francisco General, nurses gave Victoria pain medication

and kept her for observation. Her mother asked several doctors for a diagnosis and insisted that her daughter's headache wasn't normal. When her pain didn't improve, she was sent for a CT scan. "The doctors showed my mom the image, which is supposed to be all dark, except there was a white spot about the size of a quarter," Victoria says. "They told her I had bleeding in my brain."

Victoria was rushed to the ICU, and Dr. Steven Hetts was called in. The imaging revealed that the bleed-
ing wasn't on the surface of her brain, as would occur with a common aneurism, but was deeper, which made Hetts suspect an arteriovenous malformation (AVM)—a knot of abnormal blood vessels that disrupts the flow of blood in the brain.

"We don't know what causes AVMs or what makes them bleed," Hetts says. "And symptoms, if there are any, can come out of the blue." It's a rare condition, affecting about one per cent of the population. Headaches are the most common sign, although some patients have seizures or difficulty speaking. More than half of people with AVMs will have an intracranial hemorrhage, which can lead to brain damage or, sometimes, death.

An angiogram identified the location of the bleed. Hetts decided that the best option was to insert a catheter as close to the ruptured artery as possible and seal it with a substance chemically identical to Krazy Glue. "Once the liquid 'glue' mixes with the ions in the blood, it seals off the vessel and prevents it from rupturing again," says Hetts.

Following the surgery, Victoria remained in the ICU for two weeks.

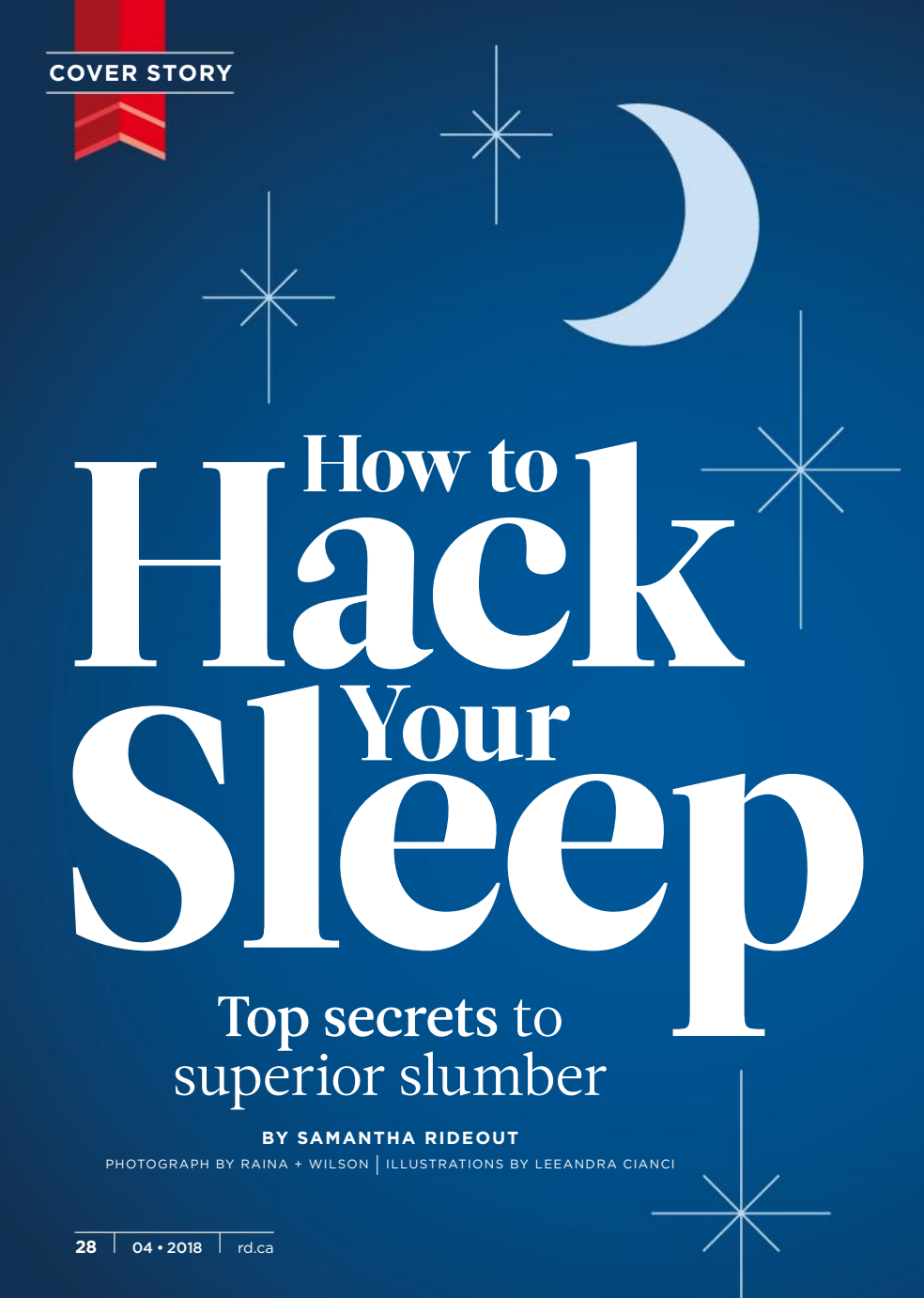
The bleed had damaged surrounding brain tissue, and it took three months of physiotherapy for her to recover the use of her left arm and leg. She struggled with both her long and short-term memory for three years. "I just had to be patient with myself and write everything down," she says.

Victoria returns for yearly checkups.

"I'm very grateful," she says. "In support groups, I've met people with family members who didn't make it to the ER, or people with AVMs who never fully regained all their senses or mobility."

Victoria is working on her master's degree and plans to become a medical social worker. "My experience has given me more empathy," she says. "I understand people with invisible illnesses, and I want to help them." **R**

“
**Victoria
struggled with
both her long
and short-term
memory for
three years.**



How to Hack Your Sleep

Top secrets to
superior slumber

BY SAMANTHA RIDEOUT

PHOTOGRAPH BY RAINA + WILSON | ILLUSTRATIONS BY LEEANDRA CIANCI





FEW THINGS ARE AS COVETED as good sleep: studies show that it adds years to your life and, over time, increases happiness as much as winning the lottery. Drawing upon recent scientific research, these tips will help guarantee you wakeful days and blissful nights.

How to Prescribe Yourself Sleep

Convenient or not, it's a biological fact: adults need to sleep between seven and nine hours each night. A colossal 66 per cent of us fail to do so on a regular basis. It's not just a matter of feeling tired the next day; over the long run, sleep deprivation can contribute to depression, obesity, diabetes, stroke, heart attacks, Alzheimer's and cancer.

"The silent sleep-loss epidemic is the greatest public health challenge we face in the 21st century in developed nations," argues Dr. Matthew Walker of the University of California, Berkeley, in his new book, *Why We Sleep*. "Scientists like me have even started lobbying doctors to start 'prescribing' sleep."

Walker's top tip for a successful "prescription" is sticking to a schedule. The body naturally thrives on a regular sleep-wake rhythm, and a set bedtime will remove some of the temptation to spend your time in other ways.

He also recommends avoiding, if at all possible, medicines that could

"conflict" with the sleep prescription, such as certain heart, blood pressure or asthma medications, plus some remedies for colds, coughs and allergies. There are alternatives available for many of these drugs, so if they're costing you shut-eye, speak with your doctor or pharmacist.

How to Sleep Away From Home

If you've ever tossed and turned in a hotel room, you may have experience with "night-watch brain."

Cerebral imaging has revealed that, similarly to dolphins, pigeons and other animals, humans rest one half of the brain less than the other when we're in an unfamiliar setting. This adaptation would have been advantageous for our ancestors, who were at risk of predation in the wild, but it's far less useful for today's traveller. You can minimize it by staying at the same hotel for as long as you remain in a city and by booking similar rooms from the same chain wherever you go.

How to Foster Your Dreams

Scientists used to think that dreaming happened only during REM (rapid eye movement), the last stage of the sleep cycle. We now know that earlier stages can bring wisps of dreams, as well, but REM is the time of the most detailed, active and emotional ones.

Sleep deprivation is understood to be dangerous, but REM deprivation is also an issue, claims a 2017 review published in the *Annals of the New York Academy of Sciences*. People with fewer dreams are more subject to mood

dysregulation (recurrent temper outbursts or persistent extreme irritability), pain sensitivity, Parkinson's, anxiety, dementia and delusions; ironically, dreaming helps you maintain your sense of waking reality.

Dreams are threatened by alcohol, which helps you nod off faster but then disrupts REM. Benzodiazepines (used as sleeping pills or anti-anxiety medication) "significantly repress REM/dreaming," the review says. Another common culprit: alarm clocks. They are often necessary, but try to wake up naturally whenever possible in order to avoid interrupting sleep cycles.

How to Lie Down



Which sleeping position is best? Whatever you find comfortable at any given moment, because comfort promotes slumber. Ergonomically speaking, it's good to mix things up: over the long run, lying the same way every night could lead to aches and pains. If you suffer from...



Back or neck pain:

Experiment until you find a way to minimize your discomfort. You can use pillows for support.

Heartburn:

Elevate your head by approximately 15 centimetres to stop food from backing up into your esophagus.

Obstructive sleep

apnea: Avoid lying on your back, so gravity won't be working against your airways.



How to Accommodate a Furry Friend

Should you let Spot into your room at night? Mayo Clinic researchers tackled this question by putting accelerometers on volunteers and their dogs for one week. Most of the pooches spent some time playing or moving around while their owners dozed. Even so, they didn't affect the humans' sleep much—so long as they weren't allowed up on the bed. A blanket or a pet bed on the floor would be a good compromise if you'd like to enjoy a comforting canine presence without being disturbed.

How to Identify Obstructive Sleep Apnea

One of the most common sleep disorders is also a potentially serious one. In obstructive sleep apnea, the muscles in the back of the throat relax too much during slumber, blocking breathing. This causes drops in blood-oxygen levels that, if left untreated, can strain the cardiovascular system and raise the risk of heart problems over time.

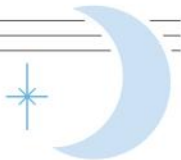
Sufferers will automatically wake up long enough to reopen their airways, but they don't usually remember their episodes come morning. It's often their partners who flag the disorder after noticing snoring, guttural sounds or gasping, says Dr. Michael Gelb, a New York-based specialist in breathing-related sleep disorders. People who sleep alone can use a mobile app, such as SnoreLab, to monitor noises. Otherwise, Gelb says, warning signs also include “waking unrefreshed, moodiness, difficulty concentrating, daytime sleepiness and memory problems.”

9+

HOURS

How to Know if You're Oversleeping

More isn't always better: regularly sleeping more than nine hours at a time is associated with headaches, back pain, obesity and diabetes. These risks may be due to underlying causes (depression, alcohol abuse and narcolepsy, for example) rather than oversleeping itself. But either way, it's worth telling your GP.



Sleep-deprivation symptoms aren't definitive proof that you have sleep apnea. Nor, for that matter, is snoring, but both are worth investigating. "The diagnosis is ultimately confirmed through a home sleep test or polysomnogram," says Gelb. "You can organize this through your medical practitioner."

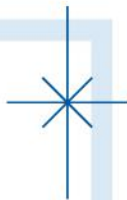
How to Share a Bed

When it comes to sleeping, there are pros and cons to having a bedmate. Given the common realities of snoring, rolling over and hogging the blankets, tucking in alone will generally garner better results when one's sleep quality is measured with objective criteria, such as the amount of slow-wave sleep, a non-REM stage that is key to memory consolidation.

On the other hand, people tend to be more subjectively satisfied with their shut-eye when they cuddle up next to a loving partner—it releases oxytocin, a feel-good hormone that reduces stress and promotes pair bonding. Here are two ways to reap the benefits while minimizing the downsides:

- Make sure your mattress is large enough for two, and if your partner's movements are an issue, opt for memory foam; you'll be less likely to feel every toss and turn.
- Work on your partnership. Bad sleep is linked with poor relationship satisfaction and vice versa. It's an equation that can be tackled from either side.

SURPRISING PERKS OF ADEQUATE SHUT-EYE



Getting enough sleep isn't only about avoiding negative consequences. Science has also uncovered loads of encouraging benefits to achieving the recommended average of eight hours per night. Recent evidence suggests that it leads to:

- Enhanced ability to read facial expressions
- Better immune-system functioning
- Fewer cravings for sweet treats
- Alleviated chronic pain
- More measured approach to risk-taking
- Less inflammation



How to See the Light (and Still Drift Off)

The blue part of the light spectrum boosts mood and energy during daytime but can throw off your circadian clock in the hours leading up to bedtime. Most of us are getting more blue-light exposure than ever because of smartphones, laptops and LED light bulbs, which are bluer than their less energy-efficient predecessors. You could cut down on late-day screen time, but if that's not realistic, try wearing amber-tinted glasses in the evening, as a recent Columbia University Medical Center study of insomnia sufferers suggests.

HOW TO ADAPT TO THE EFFECTS OF AGING

Dr. Julie Carrier is the director of the Canadian Sleep and Circadian Network.

How does aging affect our slumber?

You can't expect to sleep as well at 65 as you did at 20. You'll sleep for a shorter time and less deeply. And you'll become more sensitive to interference; for instance, stress or noise that wouldn't have roused you when you were younger. As such, you'll need to take better care of your rest.

Do these changes have an impact on people during their waking life?

Definitely. Just because something is normal doesn't mean it won't have consequences. The decline in sleep quality has the ability to affect memory and overall health.

Are scientists currently working on any treatments to help improve sleep in the elderly?

Yes, but they're all in the early stages.

For instance, to promote a deeper sleep, researchers are experimenting with transcranial stimulation. But we can't yet say for sure that it works.

What about sleeping pills? Could those help?

There aren't really any pharmaceuticals that can increase sleep—and especially not deep sleep—without having negative consequences the next day.

Is it okay for tired seniors to nap during the day?

Yes, so long as that doesn't lead to insomnia at night. And you need to keep in mind that with age comes an increased chance of various sleep disorders. If you're excessively tired all day, that's not among the normal, expected changes. It would certainly warrant a visit to the doctor.



How to Avoid Hidden Caffeine

Although it's one of the most famous sleep disruptors, caffeine can still sneak up on you. "It's tasteless, so you don't necessarily know how much you're getting," explains Dr. Neil Stanley, a member of the European Sleep Research Society. "And it can stick around in your body and affect you for hours if you're sensitive to it." Lesser-known caffeine sources include chocolate, soft drinks

(such as Mountain Dew, Dr. Pepper and some vitamin waters) and decaf coffee, which simply contains less of the stimulant than regular joe.

How to Tap Into the Power of Noise

White noise has been proven to mask environmental sounds that disturb slumber. Sleep scientists are now interested in pink noise, which resembles the white variety except that the lower frequencies are louder than the higher ones. There's evidence that it can enhance slow-wave sleep. In a 2017 study, seniors did better at a recall test after spending a night with pink noise synced up to their slow-wave brain activity. If you'd like to conduct your own experiment, you can download a pink-noise app.

How to Eat Yourself Sleepy

Popular belief has it that the amino acid tryptophan (of turkey fame) makes you drowsy. The body needs it to build serotonin, a relaxing neurotransmitter, and melatonin, a sleep-regulating hormone. However, it doesn't trigger changes on its own. To prod your body toward dreamland, fill up on carbohydrate-rich foods. Carbs help tryptophan cross the blood-brain barrier and induce sleepiness.



TRYPTOPHAN



CARBS



TIPS FOR WHEN YOU REALLY NEED TO FIGHT OFF SLEEP

There are ideals and then there's real life. In truth, you will at times find yourself tired but still obligated to stay alert. Here's how to make those moments as painless as possible.

■ **PLAY MUSIC.** This brain hack works best if you opt for something cheery, with a beat that's strong and fast but not exhausting (100 to 130 beats per minute).

■ **GO OUTSIDE OR PLACE YOURSELF NEAR A BRIGHT LIGHT.** Your body takes its sleep-wake cues from light. If it's not high noon on a sunny day, fool your system into thinking it is.

■ **DRINK WATER.** Dehydration increases sleepiness.

■ **EXERCISE.** Aerobic activity pumps oxygen through your system and releases hormones that give you energy.

■ **STIMULATE YOUR MIND.** Boredom promotes fatigue. Start a conversation or read an article about a topic that interests you.

How to Beat Chronic Insomnia for Good

There's a heap of different reasons why you might have trouble sleeping from time to time. But lasting insomnia often boils down to bad habits, mistaken beliefs or unhelpful thought patterns, all of which can be tackled by cognitive-behavioural therapy (CBT).

"For instance, people often think, 'I won't be able to function if I don't have a good night,' or 'My bad sleep results from a chemical problem in my brain, so I can't fix it,'" says Tanja van der Zweerde, a psychologist at Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam. Wakefulness-inducing worries like these can transform what otherwise would have been a rough night or two into a red-eyed vicious circle.

CBT for insomnia, or CBT-I for short, helps you identify and address the roots of your problem. Depending on what they are, it might involve relaxation training, tweaking your lifestyle or even, paradoxically, learning to let go and stop trying too hard to sleep.

Because CBT-I has proven itself to be highly successful—and because it doesn't bring the risks and side effects of pills—it's now recommended as the first-line treatment for people with chronic sleep difficulties. Van der Zweerde and her colleagues are currently testing iSleep, one of several online versions that are less costly than in-person therapist appointments. **R**

Laughter

THE BEST MEDICINE



THE BEST JOKE I EVER TOLD BY JENNY HAMILTON

I believe that mental health is as important as physical health. So whenever I see a jogger I yell at them, "What are you running from, honey?"

Jenny can be heard on CBC Radio's The Debaters, and seen on comedy stages from Alaska to Australia.



GARY BREMNER

SOME BABY ON THIS PLANE is singing the ABCs all out of order and a guy just shouted, "Yes, girl, remix!"

🐦 @SILENCE__KIT

ANIMAL INSTINCTS

BATMAN: I got you flowers.

CATWOMAN: Put them in this vase.

BATMAN: Okay.

CATWOMAN: *pushes vase off counter, maintaining eye contact*

🐦 @DAFLOYDSTA

SHARK WEEK IS ACTUALLY the safest time to go to the beach, because all the sharks are busy being on TV.

🐦 @ERICTHOMAS_311

HISTORY LESSON

A classmate and I were walking past a poster in our school hallway. It featured a photo of Einstein with the words "Even Einstein Read Books."

My friend was amazed: "I didn't know Einstein's first name was Evan."

reddit.com

Send us your original jokes! You could earn \$50 and be featured in the magazine. See page 10 or rd.ca/joke for details.

According to psychologists,
we are all prejudiced.
So what can we do about it?

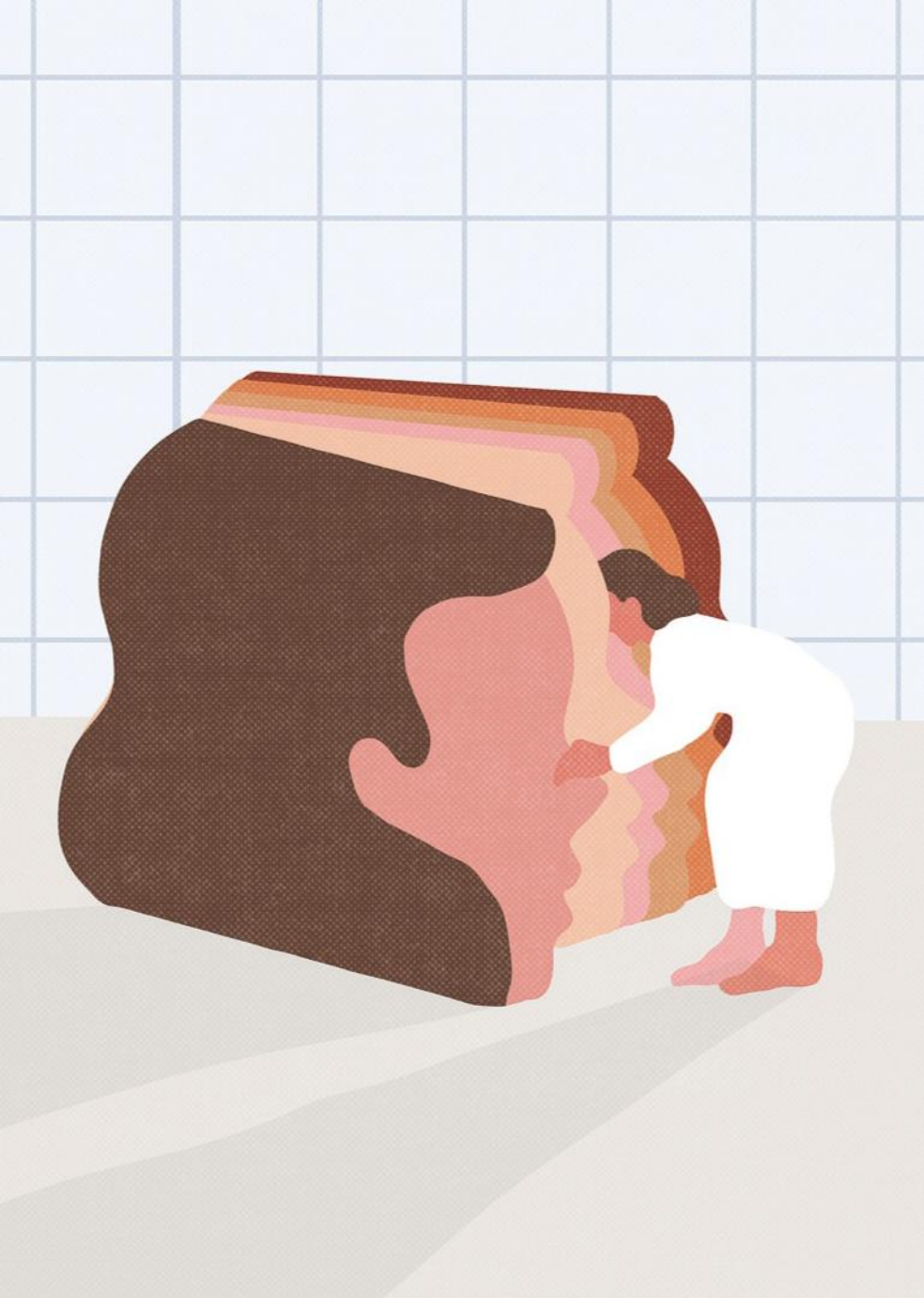
BATTLING BIAS

BY KATHERINE LAIDLAW ILLUSTRATION BY KA YOUNG LEE

SUSAN LUCAS WAS SURPRISED to realize she had so many racial biases. Two years ago, the Toronto-based registered psychotherapist was listening to an interview on the radio with a Black author and activist who posited that everybody is racist—even if they don't realize it. "When I started to think about it, I recognized that, deep down, I do have some fears of, and aversions to, people of colour," says the 63-year-old. Using the skills of her trade, Lucas got to work examining

why she felt that way and finding ways to address it.

Society is facing something like a reckoning recently, as the news cycle is dominated by harrowing accounts of racism, sexism and homophobia across the arts, politics and many other fields. According to one 2016 survey, more than a third of Canadians admit they've made a racist remark in front of other people; one in five has been a victim of such a remark. Ongoing discrimination against Indigenous people in Canada



has motivated the government to issue a formal apology and set up the Truth and Reconciliation Commission in an attempt to rectify wrongdoings.

But as the nation realizes it has work to do, every individual has an obligation to address the prejudices that live within them. Here are some tips for unravelling yours.

RECOGNIZE AND REDIRECT

Is everyone really racist, as the activist on the radio claims? According to myriad psychologists, the answer is yes. Thanks to something known as implicit bias, research has shown that it's possible for you to dislike the idea of prejudice and still act in prejudiced ways. Consider the neighbourhoods you choose to live or socialize in, where you send your kids to school or whom you befriend. You may dismiss these as simple preferences, but beneath those decisions are often conscious, or subconscious, negative associations about other groups—prejudices that, in the bigger picture, reinforce inequalities.

One way to counteract implicit bias is to increase your exposure to positive media focused on the group that you're making less-than-kind judgments about. A 2013 study run by UCLA's Social and Identity Lab revealed that watching a clip of *The Joy Luck Club*, a movie about Chinese immigrants to the United States, induced empathy in its viewers and made them less biased toward Asian-Americans.

And while some people may want to claim that they don't see stereotypes at all, a more realistic strategy is to accept that they exist but challenge them by coming up with examples of people within a specific group who defy these labels. Ultimately, implicit bias functions like a habit—once you become aware of it, you can take steps to break it.

ACCEPT, THEN PUSH AGAINST, YOUR LIMITATIONS

Confronting one's own prejudice at home is often more fraught than doing so anywhere else. Toronto-based social worker and family therapist Joe Rich says that neutralizing your feelings is more productive than beating yourself up about them. He poses the hypothetical, but common, scenario of a teenage son coming out to a mother who, due to ingrained stereotypes, is made uncomfortable by the admission. No matter how much she would like to, she can't overcome those negative feelings in order to genuinely celebrate his self-discovery. But as ideal as a complete value alignment between family members may be, Rich suggests it's not a parent's job to fully grasp their teen's choices. "In relationships, we think that understanding leads to change, but it's acceptance that leads to change," he says, adding that the attempt to live and let live is enough to begin the process of being more open-minded.

Changing any behavioural pattern is a gradual, difficult process, however, and some people will need encouragement. “It’s human nature to say, ‘Oh, that’s just how I work,’” Rich says. “Don’t do that. Challenge it. Ask where it came from and how it affects your life.”

Seeking support online, in chat rooms where others are grappling with, or are closer to overcoming, similar feelings can help. Many organizations offer online courses on bias. And Harvard University’s implicit association test can act as an assessment of what kinds of prejudice—including those related to race, sexual orientation, gender and mental illness—you need to confront.

SET UP SYSTEMS FOR CHANGE

Most of us know that limiting prejudice offers moral benefits, but research also shows that there’s a business case to be made for it. Three years ago, a report from consulting firm McKinsey and Co. found that ethnically diverse companies financially outperform more homogenous ones by 35 per cent. And a study conducted last year by *Forbes* suggests diverse teams make better business decisions up to 87 per cent of the time. As a result of surveys like these, many companies have expressed a desire to create such groups but aren’t quite sure where, or how, to start.

One way organizations can limit the influence of prejudice is by tweaking

hiring practices, says Elizabeth Hirsh, an associate professor of sociology at the University of British Columbia. Reviewing resumes with names omitted limits gender and racial bias, she suggests. And conducting interviews as a team—the most balanced group possible—is crucial. “One committee member could be tasked with watching for diversity and inclusion,” Hirsh suggests. She says this makes bringing up the topic less awkward.

Applying similar strategies to other institutions—schools, private clubs and neighbourhood associations—can go a long way to developing a more equal society. One youth-focused program in the U.S., called Anytown, demonstrates the impact of discrimination by letting teenage students see what it’s like to have a physical disability for a day—navigating the world with a blindfold or wearing mittens to limit the use of their hands. More broadly, school boards can incorporate a variety of cultural activities into their curriculum and ensure the parents’ committee has an ethnic makeup that reflects the students it serves.

“People in workplaces are now recognizing that bias is a systemic, embedded problem,” Hirsh says. “That’s where there’s some hope for the future.” Although she’s right that the problem of prejudice isn’t necessarily the struggle of an individual alone, each of us can nonetheless play a part by addressing it in ourselves. **R**

For years,
I knew him
only as the
friendly old
man who lived
next door—
until the FBI
came knocking

My Neighbour, the Mobster

BY JOSH BOND FROM *ALL THESE WONDERS*

ILLUSTRATION BY ROBERT CARTER

303



I MANAGED A HOTEL in Santa Monica for about six years in the 2000s, as well as the apartment building where I lived, which was across the street. It was a super-easy commute, which is particularly great when you live in Los Angeles.

You meet a lot of interesting people when you manage a building. For example, there was a retired couple living in the unit next to mine—the Gaskos. The first time I met the husband, in 2007, I was playing guitar in my apartment.

There was a knock on the door, and I opened it to find a man in his 70s holding a black case. He told me that he heard me playing music, and he liked it. He thought I could use a black stetson cowboy hat.

I thanked him for the really nice gesture, and he said his name was Charlie.

FAST-FORWARD FOUR YEARS, and I'm taking a nap on my couch. I'd been working for two weeks straight, on call every night. But this particular Wednesday, I was taking off early to see a band in Hollywood. I was meeting a friend. It had been all planned out.

At 2 p.m., the phone wakes me, and it's my co-worker calling from the office—with the FBI. Before I know it, I'm speaking with an agent, and he says, "I need to talk to you about a tenant in your apartment building."

I'm on my couch, so I ask, "Can we do this tomorrow?"

He says no. "Where are you? Come here now."

I get to my office, where I'm greeted by a large man wearing a dark T-shirt and jeans. I take a seat. He closes the door and throws a manila folder onto the desk. He opens it and points to a sheet of paper. Across the top is "WANTED" and underneath is a photo of a man and a woman, with the names James J. "Whitey" Bulger and Catherine Greig.

The officer asks if these people live in the apartment next to mine. At first glance, I know the woman is my neighbour, Carol Gasko. "Yes, I know these guys," I say. "These are my neighbours."

And while I've never heard the name Catherine Greig, the name Whitey Bulger is familiar. I'd heard it many times when I was at Boston University. But I didn't really know anything about him. He was a Jimmy Hoffa-type guy to me, like, "Oh, this guy's missing. He's never gonna be found."

So I'm standing there, and the FBI agent says, "What do you think?"

I say, "What does my face tell you?"

He says, "I need percentages."

I say, "Ninety-nine point five, 100 per cent."

So he gets on his cellphone, and while this is happening, it feels like I'm in a movie in which there's an explosion and then the sound just disappears and you're trying to process what just occurred.

My neighbour is an old man who bought me a bike light because he was worried about me riding at night

FBI agents finally lured Bulger to the garage of his apartment building after he'd evaded capture for 16 years.



without one. And now I'm discovering he's a notorious fugitive.

Another agent, this one in a Hawaiian shirt, appears. The first agent says, "We need the spare keys to his apartment. I don't want to have to bust the door down."

"Okay, here are the keys," I reply.

The agent in the Hawaiian shirt leaves, then the other agent says, "Look, this guy's pretty high on the most-wanted list. We could use your help apprehending him."

My first response is, "I just gave you the keys to his apartment and told you he lives there. So I'm not really sure what else I can do."

He says, "Well, we can't just go to his apartment. We have to make sure he's

home. If it's just her, it doesn't really work for us. So why don't you go knock on the door and see if he's there?"

In the previous months, Carol had been telling people in the building that Charlie has dementia and heart problems. They'd put notes on their door during the day saying not to knock. I knew from talking to Charlie over the years that he slept during the day.

I explain this to the agent, and without skipping a beat, he says, "Well, what are you doing tonight?"

"I'm going to a concert," I answer.

He says, "You might want to cancel those plans."

So I call my buddy: "Look, I don't think I'm going to make the show tonight, and I can't tell you why."

I BEGIN TO REALIZE THAT I'M going to be with these guys until they have Charlie in cuffs. Then things really kick in. One agent places himself at a window across the street that has a good view of the Gaskos' balcony. The other agent wants to go over to my apartment. I tell him to take an alley so he doesn't walk in front of the apartment building in clear view. I enter through the front and let him in from the back.

The FBI agent says, "They just closed their blinds. Did you tip 'em off?"

"I've been with you the whole time," I reply. "No, of course not."

involves breaking into the Gaskos' storage locker in the garage.

The FBI agent goes to his car; he has some bolt cutters in there.

I'm pumped up. I'm having fun, almost, at this point. The adrenalin is helping me forget about my relationship with my neighbours. I mean, this is the same man who, every year, bought me a Christmas present.

Once the lock is broken, we go back to my apartment, and the agent's telling me, "Okay, this is what's going to happen. I'll go down, we'll get everything



On Wikipedia I read that Bulger was quoted as saying, "When I go down, I'm going out with guns blazing."

At my place, the agent starts throwing ideas around about how to get this guy out of his apartment. My living room happens to share a wall with Charlie's bedroom, so I say, "Uh, you know, this guy can hear everything we're saying. Like, he's repeated conversations I've had at night with my friends, asking me why we don't curse or fight as much as he and his friends did in their younger days."

We go into my bedroom and he comes up with an idea, one that

set, I'll call you and then you knock on his door and bring him down."

And I say, "No. I'm going to go across to my office to call him, and I'm going to tell him to meet me there. Then you guys take care of your business."

I'm in my office and I'm thinking about this guy, my neighbour, who looked after an old woman on the first floor—who, when I didn't write a thank-you note for a present one year, gave me a box of stationery. I'm thinking, What did this guy actually do?

So I head to Wikipedia and read about murders and extortion and gambling. I get to the bottom and see that in one of his last public sightings with a Mafia buddy, he's quoted as saying, "When I go down, I'm going out with guns blazing."

I start to rethink my involvement in the day's events.

Conveniently, my phone rings, and it's one of the FBI guys. "Make the call," he says.

I start to waver: "Look, man, I just read something about this guy...and I don't know about this."

He says, "Just be like, 'Hey, man, what's going on?'"

I'm thinking to myself, He will shoot me before I finish that sentence.

I tell him I'm not going to do that. But while we're talking, Carol calls back. I explain to her that the storage unit's been broken into. Either I can call the police or Charlie can meet me there and we'll look at it.

She discusses this with him and says, "He'll be down in five minutes."

"All right, great." I hang up the phone and call the FBI. "He's on his way. Do your thing."



Carol is on her balcony. She sees me, then looks to the garage. I can't tell if she knows, but she seems worried.

He says, "No, no, no—he'll never know. He'll never know." Which is obviously not true. But I am this close to getting to my concert, so I say, "All right, I'll make the call."

I phone the Gaskos and there's no answer. I'm relieved. I call the agent back and I say, "Hey, man, sorry. They didn't answer."

He says, "Are you sure you don't want to knock on the door?"

And I'm like, "What if he comes to the door with a gun?"

Then I walk outside, and Carol is on her balcony directly across the street. She sees me, then quickly looks down to the garage, then back at me. I can't tell if she knows, but she seems worried.

She walks back in, then I get a call from the FBI. "We got him," they say. "Go to your concert."

So I go back to my apartment, change clothes and head downstairs. As soon as I open the door to the garage, it's like a slow-motion shot—two SUVs and a half-dozen FBI agents. My neighbour,

Charlie Gasko, is in cuffs, surrounded by agents, laughing and telling stories. He almost looks relieved.

Carol is standing a few metres away, also in cuffs. She looks at me and says, "Hi, Josh," and I can't speak. I just meekly wave, walk to my car and get on the highway. I call my brother and say, "You'll never guess what happened to me today."

"What?"

"I helped the FBI arrest the most wanted man in the country."

A COUPLE MONTHS LATER, my family is worried about me, and my friends are taking bets on how much longer I have to live. One day, I get a letter in the mail from the Plymouth County Correctional Facility in Massachusetts. I open it and see familiar cursive writing and the same "shoot the breeze" tone I had come to associate with

Charlie Gasko. But in this letter, he's reintroducing himself as Jim Bulger.

I write him back and say, "Look, you're aware I had something to do with the day of the arrest, and my family's a little worried. So, you know, just a little note of 'everything's good' would be nice."

He writes back and says, "They had me with or without your help. No worries."

And that definitely made my mom feel better.

New neighbours eventually moved in, and they seemed like nice people. But what do I know? **R**

After his capture in 2011, Bulger was tried in Boston and convicted on charges related to 11 murders and other crimes. He was sentenced to two consecutive life terms and is currently in federal prison in Florida.

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ZOO-LOL-OGY

Do storks carry anything else or are they just, like, obsessed with babies?

 @AUDIPENNY

That time my father pronounced "hors d'oeuvres" as "horse divorce" in front of other humans.

 @JULIADAVIDOVICH

Like my parents
and their parents
before them, I am both
handy and frugal. When
my family's washing
machine broke down,
however, it almost
broke me.

Mr. Fix-It Meets His Match

BY DANIEL BENSON

FROM THE GLOBE AND MAIL

CLEAN UNDERWEAR or honouring family traditions? Determining which is more important is no simple matter. I stare again at the pile of dirty laundry and the lifeless bulk of the washing machine. Having tried numerous times to get the contraption to start, a dilemma looms over me.

For most people, the solution is a quick trip to the nearest appliance store: one swipe of the credit card and happiness will be promptly restored. But for members of my family, this is easier said than done.

I come from a long line of thrifty fixers—a deadly combination. There was nothing Dad couldn't repair and save from the landfill. There wasn't a dollar Mom couldn't stretch until it squeaked. Economy and ecology went hand in hand to keep old things like new, or at least in some semblance of usability.

Our cars lasted way beyond any vestiges of respectability as rust nibbled away at the fenders. We watched *Hockey Night in Canada* in glorious black and white on our 1954 Motorola well into the 1970s (babysitting jobs were a chance to see *Mission: Impossible* in colour). Clothes were mended and then passed down. Lawn mower engines were carefully rebuilt. But the truest icon of the family's obsession with making things last was without a doubt the toaster.

Mom and Dad had received the Sunbeam Radiant Control Toaster when

they got married in 1950. A high-tech marvel of its age, the Sunbeam lowered the bread silently and automatically, grilled it to perfection and then raised it back into view. It must have toasted thousands of slices over the years, and maybe as many cigarettes.



WHEN THE TOASTER
SUFFERED ILL HEALTH,
DAD WOULD SIMPLY
TAKE IT APART AND
RESTORE IT TO
WORKING ORDER.

Whenever matches couldn't be found, the Sunbeam was pressed into service as a makeshift lighter. I can still picture Dad leaning over the toaster, one end of the cigarette dangling in his lips, the other igniting in a puff of smoke as it touched the red-hot element.

But the real miracle of the toaster is that when it occasionally suffered ill health (too many cigarettes?), Dad would carefully take it apart and restore it to perfect working order. This

happened so often that each one of us four kids had a chance to assist in the repairs with such vital tasks as holding the flashlight or fetching a beer. Some 68 years later, the Sunbeam continues to make excellent toast.



“THE WASHER IS
OVER 30 YEARS OLD,”
MY DAD REASONED.
“MAYBE IT’S TIME FOR
YOU TO GET YOURSELF
A NEW ONE.”

THAT TOASTER AND my father throw long shadows over my laundry room as I stare at the uncooperative washing machine. After all, it’s only about 30 years old, a German-made AEG Lavamat 539 front-loader, that we bought second-hand when front-loaders were almost unheard of in Canada. Up until now, the Lavamat had performed flawlessly.

Being my father’s son meant I had to at least take a stab at fixing it. And being my father’s son, I’ve got the skills, tools and vocabulary necessary for such repairs. The cautionary label on the back of the machine—“Do not open! Refer repairs to a qualified service centre!”—only steels my resolve.

Eight screws and I’m inside. Nothing looks wrong: no broken wires, no smell of burnt motor windings. The Internet offers nothing helpful, so after a few frustrating hours, I’m compelled to appeal to a higher authority.

Dad, at 90, is still keen on making things work. I explained the symptoms and he suggested possible problems: check the brushes on the motor or the micro-switches on the timing cams. And then he paused and said, “It’s over 30 years old. It doesn’t owe you much. Maybe it’s time to get a new one.”

In an instant, the cosmic order was turned upside down and a liberating light burst from the heavens. Although it wasn’t the advice I’d expected, it was undoubtedly the wisdom I needed. I really didn’t have time to repair this thing—and the pile of laundry was growing. Maybe it *was* the right moment to make a change, both to the washing machine and the family tradition of mending things well past their prime.

A few days later, I went shopping. Our new washer is a beauty of German engineering and purrs contentedly in the corner where the AEG once stood guard. Clean shirts, towels and underwear have all been nicely tucked away. Despite my straying from the path, the family honour remains relatively unscathed; the legendary Sunbeam upstairs in the kitchen (still toasting) is our loyal witness. **R**



I want to help my kids explore religion—but I'm not exactly a picture of piousness myself

Keeping the Faith

BY ALI HASSAN

ILLUSTRATION BY HARTLEY LIN

I WASN'T EXPOSED to religion very much growing up. Or so I thought. Compared to my four children, I could be the esteemed leader of a sizable congregation. You can't blame the

kids, who range in age from three to 14—they're far too young to drive themselves to the nearest place of worship. And even if they weren't, they wouldn't know which religious edifice

to walk into, or what to do once they got there.

My wife, Madiha, is a Muslim who went to Catholic school for most of her life. I was a student in the public board but attended Muslim Sunday school every single week until the age of 15. Sadly, an award for “Best Attendance, Poorest Performance” could have been mine for the taking. I had no retention for religion. By the end of my tenure, my peers had all graduated, and my class consisted of me—miserable and the size of an adult male—and a bunch of perky 10-year-olds. That set-up wasn’t great for my self-esteem or my relationship with my faith.

Fast forward to today: I’m content to be a “cultural Muslim”—which is to say, Islam is a part of my social and creative life, but I don’t practise the religion.

I’m also the father of two step-daughters and two sons. I first met my girls when they were three and five years old—beautiful products of my wife’s first marriage. When Madiha and I wed, and she brought up the possibility of giving the girls a religious education, I said I’d look into it. But hockey was on, and I got distracted. For eight years.

When my son Maaz started junior kindergarten two years ago, he became curious about religion. Here’s one of our early conversations:

MAAZ: Papa, are we Muslim?

ME: Of course we are.

MAAZ: Do we go to the mosque?

ME: No, son. You’d have noticed if we went to the mosque.

MAAZ: Papa, why don’t we go to the mosque?

ME: Honey! Your son has some questions for you!

I know. Not exactly helpful. But the truth is, I don’t know what I believe myself. I take comfort in the spiritual elements of religion, but how can I instill a faith in my kids that I don’t really have? My Muslim identity was forged following years of introspection, deliberation, discrimination... and that time I first tried pepperoni. It’s difficult to pass these kinds of things on to a six-year-old.

But I’m trying. These days, I’ve been asking Maaz what he understands. I started with the basics: “What do Muslims believe in?” I asked one afternoon.

He replied “In Jesus.” Then, about 10 seconds later, “Oh, and the prophet Muhammad.”

We’re getting somewhere! Here’s a more recent exchange:

MAAZ: So, Papa, if someone is bad, then they go to hell, right?

ME: Who the hell knows.

MADIHA: Ali!

ME: Sorry! Yes, son. Bad people go to hell.

It’s a small step. But at least I’m directly answering his questions now. **R**



Inside the ruthless
and quick-witted world
of pun competitions

Bad Puns Are How Eye Roll

BY PETER RUBIN FROM *WIRED*

LAPINA/SHUTTERSTOCK

ON THE SURFACE, my opponent wasn't particularly fearsome—pudgy, in his late 30s, wearing a polo shirt, plaid shorts and a baseball cap. He looked completely at ease, one hand in his pocket, the other holding the microphone loosely, like a torch singer doing crowd work. And when he

finally began talking, it was with an assurance that belied the fact that he was basically spewing nonsense.

"I hate all people named John," he said with bravado. "Yeah, that's right, that was a John dis!" The crowd roared. John dis. Jaundice. A glorious, groan-inducing precision strike of a pun.

If you're an NBA rookie, you really don't want to go up against LeBron James. Seeing *Jeopardy!* superstar Ken Jennings on a competing team would ruin anyone's trivia night. And if you find yourself at the world's biggest pun competition, the last person you want to face is defending champion Ben Ziek. Yet that's exactly where I was, on an outdoor stage in Austin, Texas, committing unspeakable atrocities upon the English language in front of a few hundred onlookers.



THERE WE STOOD:
ME, A FIRST-TIMER,
SQUARING OFF
AGAINST THE FLOYD
MAYWEATHER OF
THE PUN WORLD.

The rules of the 39th annual O. Henry Pun-Off World Championships "Punslingers" competition are simple: two people take turns punning on a theme in head-to-head rounds. Failure to make a pun in five seconds gets you eliminated; make a non-pun or reuse a word three times and you've reached the banishing point. Round by round and pair by pair, a field of 32 dwindles until the last of the halved-nots finally gets to claim the mantle of best punster in the world.

My first-round opponent had frozen when his turn came to pun on waterborne vehicles. Seriously, yacht a word came out. Canoe believe it?

After several rounds, there we stood, two among the final eight: me, a first-timer, squaring off against the Floyd Mayweather of the pun world. I'd been a little jittery in my first couple of rounds, sure, but now I was sparring above my weight, and I knew it. Once the judges announced that we'd be punning on diseases, we began.

"Mumps the word!" I said, hoping my voice wasn't shaking.

Ziek fired back: "That was a measle-y pun." Not only was he confident, with a voice that was equal parts game show host and morning radio DJ, he was nimble enough to turn your own pun against you.

"Well, I had a croup-on for it," I said. Whoa. Where'd that come from?

"There was a guy out here earlier painted light red," Ziek said. "Did you see the pink guy?"

"I didn't," I responded. "Cold you see him?"

Again and again we pun-upped each other. Almost five minutes later, we'd gone through 32 puns between us, and I was running dry.

Ziek, though, had a seemingly endless stockpile and tossed off a quick alopecia pun; I could have bald right then and there. As far as my brain was concerned, there wasn't a medical textbook in existence that contained something



The author (top left) alongside his fellow San Francisco Bay Area punslingers.

we had failed to use. As I stood, silently sweating, the judge counted down, and I slunk offstage to watch the remainder of the competition—which Ziek handily won for the fifth time.

Knowing I'd lost to the best cushioned the blow, but some mild semantic depression lingered. When I was growing up, in the 1980s, my father's favourite (printable) joke was: "Where do cantaloupes go in the summertime? Johnny Cougar's Melon Camp."

This is proof that—well, that I grew up in Indiana. But it's also proof that I was raised to speak two languages, both of them English. See, there's the actual words-working-together-and-making-sense part, then there's the fun part—the pliant, recombinant part, the

part that lets you harness linguistic irregularities, judo-style, to make words into other words. It's not conscious, exactly, and whether this is nature or nurture, the result is that I'm playing with language all the time.

"I CAN'T LISTEN PASSIVELY to someone speaking without the possibility of puns echoing around in my head," says Gary Hallock, who has been producing and hosting the O. Henry Pun-Off for 28 years. He's seen the annual competition grow into a national event.

It's almost surprising that it took so long. Verbal puns may date back to at least 700 BC, when a Babylonian clay tablet included a play on the word for wheat. Humour theorists

generally agree that comedy hinges on incongruity: when a situation subverts expectations, that's funny. And of the many kinds of wordplay—hyperbole, metaphor, even letter-level foolery such as anagrams—nothing takes advantage of incongruity like puns.

They come in four varieties. In order of increasing complexity, you've got homonyms: words that sound alike but differ in meaning ("Led Zeppelin's guitarist was interrogated, but detectives weren't able to turn the Page"); homophones, which are spelled differently but sound the same ("I hate raisins! Apologies if you're not into curranty vents"); homographs, which sound different but look similar ("If you're asking me to believe that a Loire Cabernet is that different from a Napa Cabernet, then the terroir-ists have won"); and paronyms, which are words from different languages that sound similar and often come from the same Latin root ("I ate so much cucumber chutney at the Indian restaurant that I have raita's block").

Simply put, a good pun is a joke that hinges on wordplay. A truly formidable punner knows that and frames a sentence to make the pun the punchline. But was I a truly formidable punner? I'd thought so—my lifelong dream is to see Flavor Flav and Ellen Burstyn co-host a talk show so it can be called Burstyn with Flavor. But after Austin, I had my doubts. I'd cracked under pressure; until I tried again, I'd never know fissure.

THE BAY AREA PUN-OFF is just one of a handful of competitive punning events popping up across the United States, such as Punderdome in New York City, Pundamonium in Seattle and the Great Durham Pun Championship in Durham, N.C. (No experience is necessary—you just sign up and hope your number gets picked.)

On a Saturday night, a week after O. Henry, I am in a high-ceilinged performance space in San Francisco's Mission District, looking for redemption. We commence with a marathon on tree puns designed to winnow the field of 12 down to eight.

"I'm just hoping to win the poplar vote," one woman says.

"Sounds like a birch of contract to me," says someone else.

A lanky British guy I'll call Chet rambles through a shaggy-dog story involving a French woman and three Jamaican guys to get to a tortured "le mon t'ree" punchline. The crowd eats it up.

After someone delivers a good line, I admit that I end up being pretty frond of it. Things go oak-ay, and I'm on to the next round.

After a muggleful of Harry Potter puns, I find myself in the semifinals against an engineer named Asa. The host scribbles the mystery topic on a chalkboard hidden from sight, then turns it around. It says...diseases. It was the same category that knocked me out in Austin; the category I dwelled on for the entire flight home, thinking of all

the one-liners that had eluded me.

This time there's no running dry. Not only do I remember all the puns I used against Ben Ziek ("Did you see that Italian opera singer run through the door? In flew Enzo!"), but I also remember all the puns he made against me. So when Asa says, "I'm really taking my mumps," I can shoot back with, "That's kinda measle-y, if you ask me."

Asa fights gamely, but I have innumerable disease puns at my fingertips, and it's not much longer before the round is over.

And then there are two: me and Chet. And I'm locked in. No nerves, no self-consciousness, just getting out of my brain's way and letting the connections happen. When the host announces the theme—living world leaders—I don't even try to stockpile puns. I just wait, and they come.

Chet opens the round: "Ohhh, BAMA. I don't know anything about world leaders."

Hearing Obama conjures up a mental image of Justin Trudeau. Before the laughter even dies down, I nod my head encouragingly. "True, though—that was a decent pun!"

It's Austin all over again, just in reverse. Now I'm the quick one and Chet's the one who has to scramble. My turn? No problem: "I am Bushed."

Chet has used three U.S. presidents and two British prime ministers; meanwhile, I've been from South Korea to Germany, by way of Canada.

Even better, I've got another continent in my pocket. "Have you guys been to Chet's farm?" I ask the audience. "He has this group of cows that won't stop talking." I wait a beat before taking the audience to Africa with a nod to Zimbabwe's president. "They are seriously moo-gabby."

What happens next is a blur. I can't even tell you what comes out of Chet's mouth, but it's either nothing or it's the name of someone dead. Either way, the Bay Area Pun-Off is over.

This may be my only taste of victory in the world of competitive paronomasiacs (a fancy word for pun addicts), and I may never know the secret to crafting the perfect pun. But as long as I've got the words to try, one thing's for sure: I'll keep using them to create incongruity. Or maybe I'll just plead raita's block. **R**

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RISE AND WHINE

I love waking up to the sound of birds arguing with their spouses.

@CONANOBRIEN

It's red, unsightly,
uncomfortable and a mystery.
Here's how to tell a patch of
psoriasis from a bout of eczema.

What's That **RASH?**

BY VANESSA MILNE
ILLUSTRATION BY PETE RYAN



SHAM DHANJI HAS SENSITIVE SKIN.

So when the 34-year-old developed a small, painful rash on her thigh, she didn't think too much about it. The busy mother of two was focused instead on the fact that she'd been feeling more exhausted than usual.

A few weeks later, while getting some much-needed rest on the couch, Dhanji noticed a gumball-sized bump in her groin, near the hip. She panicked. "I was emotional, feeling run down, had this random rash and now this lump. I looked at my husband and just burst into tears," she says. "I thought I had ovarian cancer."

At the hospital the next day, a nurse immediately diagnosed Dhanji with something she never would have guessed: shingles. "You *had* shingles," the nurse clarified. "This is the end of it." The bump, she explained, was an inflamed lymph node, which often follows the condition's telltale blistering rash.

Luckily, Dhanji's outbreak cleared up without complications. But the next time you find yourself facing your own mystery rash, you can check this run-down of six common ones, including how to treat them and when they might be a sign of something more serious.

PSORIASIS

WHAT IT'S LIKE: Psoriasis is made of red, scaly plaques that can be itchy and painful. It can show up anywhere but is most commonly found on the scalp, as

well as the outside of the elbows and knees. It usually starts between age 10 and 30 and tends to be a chronic condition. "It's a stubborn disease that waxes and wanes, so people have it for their whole lives," says Paul Cohen, a dermatologist in Toronto.

WHAT CAUSES IT: This rash is the result of your immune system attacking the skin's cells, and creating new ones too quickly, which then build up into the plaques. There's no one single cause, but the condition runs in families. Stress, obesity, smoking and having many infections (particularly strep throat) increase your risk.

HOW TO TREAT IT: The first step is generally topical steroids, which can be used for a week or two at a time to clear up the plaques. For ongoing treatment, people use a synthetic form of vitamin D (which slows skin growth), medicated shampoos and retinoids (a topical version of vitamin A). Daily exposure to sunlight also seems to help, as does moisturizing well. For more serious cases, options include oral medications that suppress the immune system and phototherapy done in a doctor's office with a special light.

POSSIBLE RED FLAG: Serious cases can involve the joints, a condition called psoriatic arthritis. Also, psoriasis increases your chances of having some other diseases, including type 2

diabetes, cardiovascular disease and autoimmune conditions such as Crohn's—all of which are, like psoriasis, linked to inflammation.

HIVES

WHAT IT'S LIKE: Hives are itchy, raised welts that often have a red ring around them. Their most salient characteristic is that they disappear after about a day, only to show up later in a different location. They come in two forms: acute, which lasts six weeks or less, and chronic.

WHAT CAUSES IT: Hives are often the result of the body releasing histamine as part of an allergic reaction to drugs, food or some other irritant. They also commonly appear after a viral illness, as a side effect of your immune system revving up to battle the disease. "There are a number of potential triggers," says Katie Belezny, a dermatologist in Vancouver. In most cases, she adds, the specific origin is never determined.

HOW TO TREAT IT: Since hives are a histamine reaction, over-the-counter antihistamines are the first line of defence. If that doesn't clear them up, ask a doctor if you should use a stronger antihistamine or oral prednisone, an anti-inflammatory medication.

POSSIBLE RED FLAG: Rarely, people suffer from ongoing outbreaks of hives almost daily for six weeks or more, a

condition called chronic idiopathic urticaria (CIU). The treatment for CIU is the same as for regular hives, but in some cases, it can also be a sign of an underlying thyroid disease or cancer.

ECZEMA

WHAT IT'S LIKE: Eczema presents as patches of red, scaly skin that are extremely itchy, especially at night. These rashes often appear on the inside of your elbows and knees. If it's more serious, the skin might blister or look thickened and white in those areas.

WHAT CAUSES IT: Eczema is the result of having a weakened skin barrier, which can lead to inflammation and an overreaction from your immune system. Most people are born with it, and your genes are partly to blame. "You're more predisposed to eczema if you have a family history of asthma, hay fever or the condition itself," says Lisa Kellett, a dermatologist in Toronto. Some research also suggests that it might be a reaction to pollution, or to not being exposed to enough germs in childhood. (Kids who have dogs, for example, are less likely to have eczema).

HOW TO TREAT IT: For general maintenance, apply a thick, hypoallergenic moisturizer to affected areas immediately after a bath or shower and at night. More serious flares will need topical prescription steroid creams or non-steroid immunosuppressant

creams. People with stubborn eczema might also try phototherapy, which uses UVB light to help calm your immune system and reduce itchiness.

POSSIBLE RED FLAG: Rarely, what looks like eczema is actually skin cancer, as both can appear red and scaly. “The difference with skin cancer is that it doesn’t go away if you use a steroid,” says Kellett.

CONTACT DERMATITIS

WHAT IT’S LIKE: Contact dermatitis is a variation of eczema, and it looks similar—red, itchy patches on your skin. But unlike that chronic condition, this rash is a reaction to something specific and appears only where the offending object has made contact. “Poison ivy, for instance, will show up as a streak where the branch touched the skin,” says Beleznyay.

WHAT CAUSES IT: Besides poison ivy, other common culprits that can cause the immune system to go into overdrive are face cream, jewellery or fragrances. You can also develop a new intolerance to something you’ve used for a long time, such as Polysporin. If it’s not clear what caused it, your dermatologist can do a patch test, putting small amounts of suspected substances on your skin to see if you react.

HOW TO TREAT IT: Contact dermatitis is treated with topical steroids, or a

stronger oral one, to calm down your immune system and stop the reaction.

POSSIBLE RED FLAG: Like eczema, the red and scaly presentation of contact dermatitis could be confused for skin cancer, which is another reason to visit your doctor if you’re not sure what caused it.

ROSACEA

WHAT IT’S LIKE: As rosacea is a dilation of the blood vessels in your cheeks and nose, it often presents as red, sensitive skin in those places. Another form of the condition also includes bumps that resemble acne. For some people, the skin on their nose thickens, making it appear larger.

WHAT CAUSES IT: We don’t know what brings rosacea on, but, as with eczema, you’re more likely to have it if others in your family do, too. You’re also prone to acquire the condition if you have sun-damaged skin. “Rosacea usually begins around the age of 35 and gets worse with time,” says Kellett. People often find their flare-ups come after eating or drinking specific things.

HOW TO TREAT IT: For many, preventing activation of their rosacea is as simple as avoiding triggers—but that’s easier than it sounds and can be a serious test of a sufferer’s willpower. “Those are often the good things in

life,” says Beleznavy, citing coffee, spicy foods and alcohol as common aggravators. Some women find that everyday makeup is enough to cover up the cosmetic impact of the condition, while others use prescription creams or laser or light therapy to constrict the blood vessels in the cheeks and reduce redness. For those whose rosacea includes bumps, topical creams or oral antibiotics often get rid of them.

POSSIBLE RED FLAG: Rarely, what looks like rosacea can be confused for the butterfly rash that’s a symptom of lupus, a serious autoimmune disease. The butterfly rash is named as such because of the shape it makes on the nose and both cheeks.

SHINGLES

WHAT IT’S LIKE: Shingles normally starts out as a tingly, numb or bruised feeling in a small area, most commonly a patch on the abdomen. A few days later, a painful rash with blisters appears over those places. As the condition follows the path of a nerve, the rash eventually presents as a stripe that lasts from two to six weeks.

WHAT CAUSES IT: This one’s easy: chicken pox. Even once you have fully recovered from that virus, your body never totally beats it; it simply retreats and lies dormant in your nerve cells, where, decades later, it can re-erupt as

shingles. You’re more likely to get them if you’re immunocompromised or over 50. Although some people choose to get the vaccine for shingles at that age, the Public Health Agency of Canada only recommends Canadians get it at 60, so it will remain effective when the body becomes more vulnerable overall.

HOW TO TREAT IT: If you suspect you have shingles, see your doctor immediately. “You have to go right away because studies show that people do much better if the antiviral pills are started within 72 hours of the rash onset,” says Cohen. Additionally, sufferers are often given medication, like a local anaesthetic or codeine, to help control the pain.

POSSIBLE RED FLAG: The real worry with shingles is that for some people, if it is not contained quickly, the virus can lead to longer-term pain lasting over three months and in some cases over a year. If the rash appears on the face, it can even cause blindness.

ALTHOUGH DHANJI WAS one of the fortunate ones who didn’t end up suffering any complications from her untreated shingles, she still learned an important lesson: “Even if you’re super busy, sometimes you have to take that break to get checked out,” she says. “It’s so important to know what you’re dealing with.” **R**

As Kids See It



“They must be grown-up ducks, because they’re eating the crusts, too.”

WHENEVER MY FIVE-YEAR-OLD, Daniel, finds seeds, he wants to plant them. We’ve planted apple seeds, watermelon seeds and many others. One day, I explained to him that if a seed has been roasted, it won’t grow in the ground. Soon after, we were eating sesame bagels, and Daniel asked if the seeds on the bread had been cooked. When I said they had, he replied, “Aw, man! I really wanted to grow a bagel tree.”

MARJORIE MURPHY, *Toronto*

“DADDY, I LOVE YOU...sometimes,” says my three-year-old son.

🐦 @BASEMBOSHRA

WE INSTALLED A POOL in our backyard when my daughter, Katie, was two years old. The next summer, we visited my parents at their cottage. As we were entering the lake, Katie stopped, confused, and asked my dad, “Grampie, who cleans your pool?”

DEBBIE MADDOCK, *Kentville, N.S.*

A BIT ANNOYED WITH the state of our upstairs bathroom, my husband told our daughters that he wanted them to keep the space tidy. To illustrate that he always kept our other washroom clean, he asked the girls, “What kind of shape is my bathroom in?”

Without missing a beat, our six-year-old, Lucy, yelled, “Square!”

MICHELLE STEIGER, *Penticton, B.C.*

MY NIECE WAS THREE years old when she first saw a woman with her nose pierced. Turning to her mother, she exclaimed, “That lady has her ear pierced in her nose!”

LENA WURTZ, *Oak River, Man.*

WHILE SUPERVISING STUDENTS on the playground during recess, I asked a six-year-old boy to stop climbing a fence overlooking the school’s parking lot. Reluctantly, the boy made his way back down to the ground. His friend walked by and told him, “You can’t escape from school.”

LENA DESJARDINS, *Oakville, Ont.*

ONE TIME LAST YEAR, my six-year-old great-granddaughter, Annabelle, looked up at her great uncle, who was holding a camera with a big lens. Confused, she inquired, “How come you have such a big telephone?”

MIRA GATES, *Windsor, Ont.*



AND ONE FOR THE KIDS

Q: Where does a tree store its stuff?

A: In its trunk!

jokes4us.com

SERENITY, MY THREE-YEAR-OLD granddaughter, takes martial arts classes. My wife asked her, “How many other kids are in your group?” Serenity held up five fingers. “So, there are six of you, right?” my wife followed up.

Looking incredulous, my granddaughter responded, “No, Grandma, there’s just one of me!”

GREG WILMOT, *Pitt Meadows, B.C.*

ON A TRIP TO SPAIN with our two sons, my wife and I took the family to see Basilica Santa Maria del Mar. As we walked around the building, my 10-year-old, Lucas, told me he had a question.

“Sure,” I said. “What’s up?”

My son paused as he turned to look at the large crucifix at the front of the church.

“Do you think Jesus really had a six-pack?”

JONATHON DUECK, *Calgary*

Are the children you know fluent in funny? Tell us about them! A story could earn you \$50. For details on how to submit an anecdote, see page 10 or visit rd.ca/joke.





Collisions with buildings kill as many as one billion birds in North America every year. Here's how we can improve the odds.

FLIGHT HAZARDS



BY MOIRA FARR FROM *THE WALRUS*



At 7 a.m. on Good Friday, I was alone outside a mid-rise office building in the west end of Ottawa, hoping not to find what I was looking for. The property was a known bird killer—custodial staff and employees had mentioned to me that they'd noticed feathered visitors ramming into its windows in the past. "Lots of yellow ones," the maintenance manager had told me. In fact, I was greeted that day by the remains of a hairy woodpecker beside the shrubbery near the front entrance. With a Georgia O'Keeffe skull exposed, the bird's dark wings were disintegrating into the earth.

As I walked along the south side of the building, I noticed something else lying motionless beside tufts of grass in snowmelt. I moved closer and saw that it was a song sparrow, the kind of small, forgettable bird that you might not remark on when it flies by—what birders refer to as a "little brown job." Up close, it was beautiful, with subtle tawny-and-white streaking on its head, throat and breast. The bird was limp when I picked it up, and still warm. It must have, just moments before, flown hard at what it perceived to be open

space but was, in reality, an unforgiving window. The sparrow probably died instantly.

I snapped a picture and sent it to Anouk Hoedeman, the head of Safe Wings Ottawa, a volunteer organization founded in 2014 that rescues and retrieves birds. It's one of the dozens of groups that have sprung up across North America in the wake of the Fatal Light Awareness Program (FLAP), a project started in Toronto to save birds by preventing them from colliding with buildings. Today, volunteers like me rise before dawn and gather up nets, bags, boxes and towels, and set out to patrol their cities for injured and dead birds.

An army is needed because collisions kill up to one billion birds across the continent during the spring and fall migrations. FLAP estimates that Toronto alone, in the middle of a major north-south continental migration route, could see up to nine million deaths annually. Crashes are recorded on FLAP's online "mapper," and patterns emerge. Volunteers can then hone in on buildings, and even particularly lethal windows, where the most corpses pile up.

As a species, humans are selfish, short-sighted brutes. In the past century, we've deforested and divided up migratory birds' ancestral nurseries and feeding grounds. We've sprayed farm fields with lethal pesticides and poisoned oceans, lakes and wetlands. We've allowed pet cats to roam freely

and hunt birds with abandon. We've altered climate patterns, thereby robbing birds of sustainable habitats and forcing them into unfamiliar territories. And we've designed all of our buildings with shiny, transparent or mirrored surfaces that kill legions of birds day after day.

THE DEAD ARE A by-product of our expanding cities. Migrating birds fly at night and become exhausted—they are, after all, travelling thousands of kilometres. They are drawn to the lights of our urban jungles and mistake cities

Crows, gulls and vultures are quick to scavenge the victims.

Changes in human behaviour could make a significant difference in saving avian lives. We can prevent crashes by turning off lights at night. We can keep indoor plants away from windows so birds don't mistake the greenery for a friendly forest. We can close curtains at peak migration times. By far the most effective method is to modify windows using patterned treatments, like lines or dots, which break up the illusion of a wide-open space. Most strategies are extremely simple, so



BIRD STRIKES ARE CAUSED NOT ONLY BY SKYSCRAPERS, BUT BY ALL BUILDINGS, INCLUDING SINGLE-FAMILY HOMES.

for good places to touch down and rest. But come daylight, these creatures find themselves surrounded by expanses of clear and reflective glass that they can't perceive or understand. Many of them then crash.

The problem is caused not only by our skyscrapers but by all buildings, including single-family homes. According to FLAP's observations in Toronto, most bird strikes occur below five storeys. Still, these crashes are rarely witnessed. The only evidence may be a muffled thump, a smudge on the glass.

advocates' biggest challenge becomes getting people to care enough to act.

Much of what we know of bird collisions is thanks to Michael Measure, who has made it his life's work to save birds and educate others on how to do the same. His mission started in 1989, when Measure, then a 28-year-old art gallery owner living in Erin, Ont., witnessed numerous bird crashes while visiting Toronto. One in particular changed him: an injured common yellowthroat he'd found at the base of a Bay Street office tower died in his lap

as he was driving it to a rescue centre. He swears that the bird was staring at him, as though asking him to do something. Mesure began rescuing birds and, in 1993, created FLAP.

For the first few years, the organization was a small-scale crusade, one that Mesure says regularly left him on the edge of burnout. He knew that to prevent crashes, he needed to educate the public and lobby developers, city planners, architects and building managers to turn off their lights at night and cover their big windows—or to avoid building them in the first place.

managers who had adopted bird-friendly measures. And then there are the dead bird showcases. Since the early 2000s, FLAP has confronted audiences with thousands of crash victims, from the largest of owls to the tiniest of songbirds, to illustrate the scope of the problem. The displays are now held every year at the Royal Ontario Museum. In 2015, Safe Wings followed suit with its first display, at the Canadian Museum of Nature in Ottawa.

Mesure's persistence paid off: FLAP helped Toronto city staff develop bird-friendly building guidelines, which



SAVING BIRDS HAS BEEN “A LONG, UPHILL BATTLE,” MICHAEL MESURE SAYS. “NO ONE WANTED TO LISTEN.”

But architects love designing with glass because it brings in light and offers panoramic views, and developers like building with it because it's cheap. Bird safety was often an afterthought to many, if it was considered at all. “It's been a long, uphill battle,” Mesure says. “No one wanted to listen.”

But Mesure has a knack for promotion. In 1995, he partnered with the World Wildlife Fund and one year later arranged for Prince Philip, who was visiting Toronto as a patron of the WWE, to hand out an award to property

were published in 2007. Developers now must meet minimum requirements in their materials, designs and lighting practices. “No one wants to kill migratory birds,” says Kelly Snow, an environmental policy planner with the city. He acknowledges that there is more to be done—for example, older buildings don't need to meet the guidelines unless they're being rebuilt or retrofitted—but points out how far the city has come within a few years. “We went from this being a fringe issue to the beginnings of mandating all new

buildings follow bird-friendly guidelines,” says Snow.

ON A CLEAR, FRIGID morning in February 2017, Mesure and I set off from Nathan Phillips Square for a short tour of downtown Toronto. Mesure—clean-cut, trim and nimble in his 50s—showed me the various buildings that now feature window treatments. We stopped at the east facade of 33 Yonge Street, which backs onto a small park. Mesure said the property used to be a death magnet. He then pointed out the horizontal white lines on the windows. Those little details are all that’s needed to prevent collisions.

There are other ways to mitigate the sprawling hazards that humans have created. Building consultants can now use a FLAP online assessment tool to determine which facades of their clients’ properties are most likely to kill birds. Glass manufacturers are working on designing products with minute patterns that birds can see baked right into the material.

But, Mesure explains, “there is a lot of green-washing out there.” Some property owners and managers balk at the prices that come with becoming bird friendly. He says that one owner, eschewing the proven strategy of applying bird-friendly window film, had

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maintenance staff put up huge, inflatable figures that waved in the wind outside his sleek building—a sort of modern scarecrow. Birds continued to bash into the windows. “They finally did admit that it looked ridiculous and didn’t do much to solve the problem,” Mesure says.

Toronto is now considered the gold standard in North America for bird-friendly building design, according to Mesure. But bylaws, standards and guidelines across Canada remain a confusing hodgepodge and are usually voluntary. There are no provincial building guidelines, no federal regulations. Mesure notes that these kinds of legislation are essential if FLAP is to meet its objective of a “24-hour collision-free environment for migratory birds.”

Until then, Mesure continues to change minds city by city, building by building and person by person. It’s slow but effective. Take, for example, Consilium Place, a large glass office complex in Scarborough, Ont. FLAP volunteers were once a regular sight outside the building. Of one morning in the early 2000s, Mesure says, “We stopped counting at 500 dead birds in five hours.”

Then, in 2012, new owners bought the complex and invested more than \$100,000 in window treatments. They also have a freezer in the basement to store dead birds found on the property until FLAP volunteers can gather and

catalogue them for research purposes. The freezer isn’t used much, though; dead birds are now a rarity.

ONE SUNNY AFTERNOON in April 2017, I received a text from Hoedeman asking if I could pick up a brown creeper from her home. The bird had been found stunned at the base of a downtown Ottawa office building on Laurier Avenue and had spent the day recovering with her. It was now ready to be released in a forest in the city’s west end.

An hour later, I was in heavy traffic on Highway 417, glancing over at the small brown paper bag jumping around on the seat beside me. The 14-gram creeper was alert and impatient to get on with its life.

It’s easy to despair about environmental devastation, to think that there’s nothing a single person can do. We can’t prevent mass extinctions overnight. But as I ferried my unlikely passenger along, I felt like I was at least doing something—making a statement, a gesture, a step in the right direction. If nothing else, it was my personal act of penance for human indifference to any species’ survival but our own.

Eventually, I arrived with the brown creeper at Britannia Conservation Area. Situated along the Ottawa River, the park is an urban wonder—a northern nursery and breeding ground for boreal

bird species and a hub for birdwatchers. I walked along a path, surrounded by bluets, and found a tall deciduous tree onto which I thought a creeper might like to creep. I set the bag down on its side and slowly opened it.

A man with a backpack, camera and tripod strode by, and I tried not to look weird. When he left, I shifted the bag slightly, and the creeper fluttered out

onto the ground, clutching the tissue provided for its feet to have purchase during transport.

It was a beauty, with flecked bark-camouflage feathers, a downy, white front, longish tail and slim, curved bill. Seconds later, the bird was on its way up the nearby trunk. Creeping! Then it flew over to a white pine to creep some more, and soon it was out of sight. **R**



SELF-REFLECTION

Alex Trebek: (into a mirror) "Who is Alex Trebek?"

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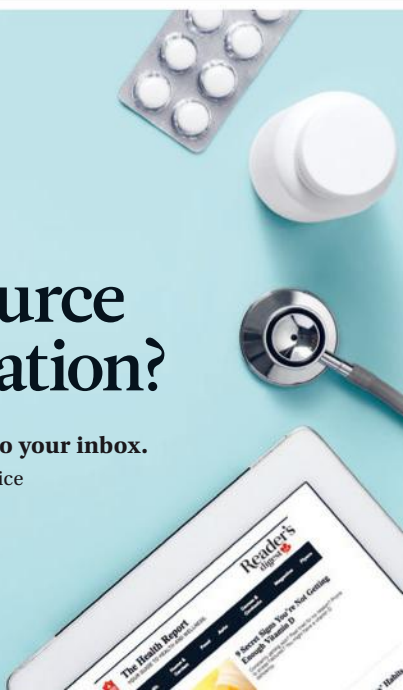
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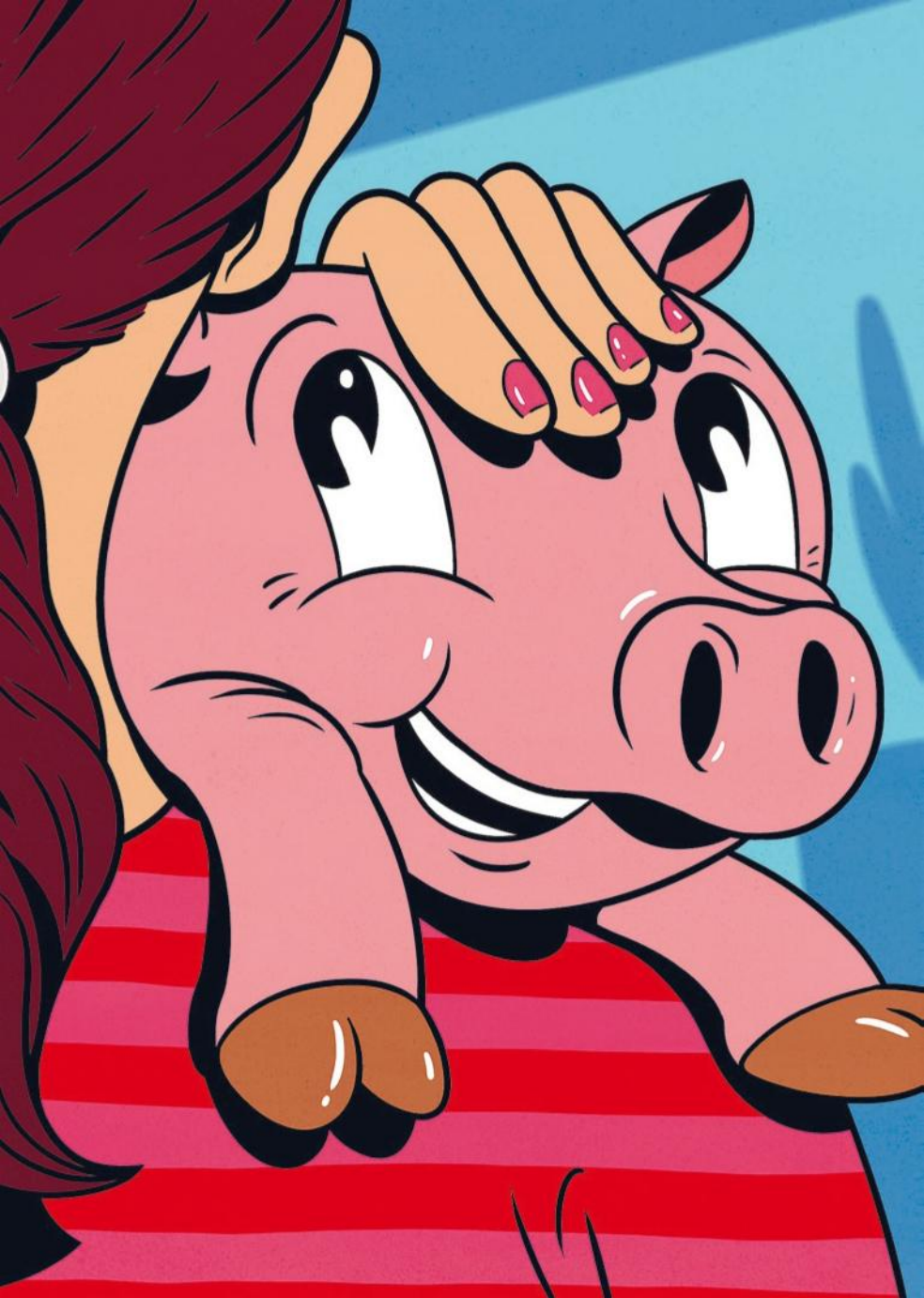
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Along Came Pigger

An unexpected pet brings
unforeseen comfort

BY JO COUDERT FROM *READER'S DIGEST*, 1992

ILLUSTRATION BY RYAN SNOOK

One day in 1989, the phone rang at Bette and Don Atty's house in Johnstown, N.Y. It was a friend calling to ask if they'd like a pig.

"His name is Lord Bacon. He's four months old and he's smarter than any dog," the friend said to Don. "He adores people, and with Bette working from home now, I thought she might like the company."

For the past year, Don had stood by helplessly as his wife suffered from agoraphobia, a fear of open spaces and crowds, which had been triggered by stress at the office. Even after she had left her job to work from home, she could suffer an anxiety attack just by going to the local mall. Bette couldn't leave the house without Don.

She was standing nearby, overhearing the conversation. She shook her head no. "Think about it," Don urged

after he hung up. "It would be good for you to have a pet."

Bette recalled reading in one of the many psychology books she had consulted about her condition that caring for another creature strengthens a person's inner being. But could a pig help my nerves? she wondered.

"All right," she said reluctantly. "I suppose some farmer will take him if we have to get rid of him."

TWO HOURS LATER, the owner delivered Lord Bacon in a wire cage. The pig was a small variety—35 centimetres high and 60 centimetres long. Shaped like a root-beer keg on stilts, he weighed 20 kilograms.

Don laughed when he saw him: “That snout looks like he ran into a wall doing 90!”

Bette joined in: “I’ve got an old hairbrush with better-looking bristles than these.”

When they opened the cage door, Lord Bacon trotted out wagging his tail, looked around and headed straight for Bette. She knelt to greet him. He heaved himself up on his hind legs, laid his head on her shoulder and kissed her on the cheek with his leathery snout. She looked at the

stroked him. “It’s all right. We’ll be here in the morning,” she told him.

The next day, Bette went downstairs eager to see her new pet. Lord Bacon scrambled to greet her and rubbed against her leg. It was like being massaged with an affectionate Brillo pad.

AFTER BREAKFAST, the pig followed Bette into the small home office, where he settled down beside her desk as she prepared tax returns. Bette found that when she grew edgy, reaching down and petting him made her feel calmer.



IF THE PHONE WASN'T ANSWERED IMMEDIATELY, THE PIG YANKED THE RECEIVER OFF ITS HOOK AND GRUNTED.

pig and, for the first time in a long time, smiled.

For the rest of the day, Bette and Don watched as the pig bustled about, exploring the house. He sat up on his bottom and begged for a treat. He gently chewed on Don’s beard when Don put the pig on his lap. And when the couple whistled, Lord Bacon came to them.

That night the pig tried to follow Bette and Don upstairs, but with his pot-belly, he couldn’t negotiate the steps. Bette made up a bed for him in the kitchen, then sat on the floor and

Very soon, the pig was a member of the household and was happy to make his imprint. When Don brought home a doggy bed to put next to Bette’s desk, the animal looked it over and decided that, with some alterations, it would do nicely. He planted his hoofs, ripped open the tartan pillow, pulled out the stuffing and then crawled inside the cover, content.

One evening, when Bette and Don drew up their recliners to watch television, the pig pushed a chair over with his snout and sat up in front of it, as if to say, “Hey, I want to be part of

this, too." His head bobbed from side to side as he watched the people on the screen.

LORD BACON DISLIKED loud noises. Bette's phone hung on a post beside her desk, and the pig figured out that it stopped ringing when she picked it up. If Bette wasn't there to answer it immediately, he yanked the receiver off the hook, stood over it and grunted into the mouthpiece.

What must my clients think? Bette asked herself.

"It's fun coming home from work now," Don told Bette. "The first thing you say is, 'Guess what Pigger did today? He pulled the blankets off the bed,' or whatever, and we get to laughing. It feels like when we were first married."

"You laugh," Bette said, "but it wasn't so funny when he locked me out this morning."

Pigger had previously followed Bette out and back into the house and had watched her close the door behind her. That morning, as he went inside,



IN PIGGER'S COMPANY, BETTE WAS BEGINNING TO BE MORE LIKE HER OLD SELF.

One day, a client came to see her about his tax return and was so charmed by her pet that he returned later with his children. Soon other neighbours were stopping by to meet Lord Bacon. Finding this to be too formidable a name for such a friendly, small pig, the kids called him Pigger, and Pigger he became from then on.

Once, when a small group had gathered, Bette felt herself growing tense from the attention. Then, realizing they were all too fascinated by the pig to look at her, she began to enjoy the company.

he took the initiative himself—except that the door was on a latch and his mistress was still outside. Luckily, she found a spare key.

MORE AND MORE, Bette realized that Pigger was a superb mimic and would imitate whatever she and Don did. If Bette shook her head, the pig would, too. If she twirled, Pigger would twirl. Soon she was teaching tricks to her pet that few dogs would learn. His reward was dog biscuits.

In the animal's company, Bette was beginning to be more like her old

self—so much so that her father tried to persuade her to bring Pigger to a senior citizens' meeting. His daughter demurred. "Pigger can run like the wind and feint like a soccer player," she said, "but he hates a leash. He plants his feet and won't walk. I'd look pretty silly, wouldn't I, a grown lady dragging a pig?"

The next night, Don came home with a baby stroller.

"What's that?" Bette demanded.

"It's a pig-mobile, so you can take Pigger to the seniors' meeting."

The seniors were intrigued. "What is that?" they asked.

Bette placed Pigger on the floor. He immediately singled out the oldest woman and trotted over to nuzzle her cheek. The others broke into laughter and crowded around to pet him.

Bette found herself answering questions, at first haltingly, then with enthusiasm. She told the seniors that pigs are smarter than dogs and twice as clean. "Pigger loves it when I put him into the bathtub once a week for a good scrub," she said.



WORD GOT AROUND, AND SOON BETTE AND PIGGER SET OUT ON WHAT DON REFERRED TO AS "PIG GIGS."

Pigger loved the stroller. He sat up in it, blanket around his shoulders, green visor on his head, as Don pushed him about.

Bette finally agreed to take Pigger to the meeting. Her nerves tightened as she drove up. She turned off the motor and sat in the car, trembling. She stroked the animal, belted into the seat beside her, and felt calmer. I've got to conquer this, she told herself. I can't spend the rest of my life being afraid. She got out, settled Pigger in the pig-mobile and wheeled him into the building.

To show off how smart he was, she called to Pigger and told him he was a handsome hog. The creature strutted about proudly. Then she scolded him. Pigger lowered his head in shame and let his tongue hang out. His audience cheered.

WORD GOT AROUND, and soon Bette and Pigger set out on what Don referred to as "pig gigs." At a nearby nursing home, she wheeled her pet from room to room to visit with the patients. In one, an old woman sat staring at her hands in her lap. Suddenly her

head came up and her face cracked in the beginning of a smile. She held out her hands, then wrapped her arms around herself.

"What is it?" Bette asked her. "Do you want to hug him?" An aide whispered to Bette that the woman had not smiled, spoken or taken an interest in anything since her husband died years before.

Bette picked up Pigger and let the old woman pet him. He stayed as quiet as could be, with his ears cocked and his mouth drawn up in a grin.

ONE DAY IT occurred to Bette that Pigger might carry a message to schoolchildren. Soon she faced an audience of youngsters and invited them to ask the animal if he'd suggest staying in school and studying hard. Pigger bowed low and nodded his head.

The children were curious about what Pigger liked to eat. "Dog biscuits, of course. Also beans, corn, carrots, apples and Cheerios," Bette explained. "But the two things Pigger loves best are popcorn and ice cream. At the Dairy Queen, he gets his own



THE KIDS' COMMENTS ABOUT PIGGER RANGED FROM "HE HAS CUTE EARS" TO "HE LOOKS LIKE MY UNCLE."

On later visits, when Bette would bring her pet through the front door in his pig-mobile, the call would go out: "Pigger's here!" A commotion would start in the halls—the squeak of wheelchairs, the tap-tap of walkers, the shuffle of slippered feet—as the residents gathered around to greet their guest.

The more Bette saw of sick and helpless people, the more thoughts of her own illness faded away. "I used to hate myself," she told Don, "but now I'm beginning to thank God every day that I can be me."

dish of ice cream, which he eats neatly from a spoon."

The kids' comments about Pigger ranged from "He feels like a pot scrubber" to "He has cute ears" to "He looks like my uncle." One little boy, hugging the pig, said wistfully, "I wish you could come home with me. I know you'd love me." Bette had to hold the leash firmly to keep Pigger from following the boy.

Sometimes Bette and Don would be shopping in the supermarket, and from the next aisle a child's voice would ring out: "There's the pig's mother and

father!” An embarrassed parent would be dragged over to be introduced to “the pig’s family.”

When strangers stopped, stared and asked what Pigger was, Don explained, “To us, he’s a pig, but to him, he’s people.” Sometimes Don quoted Winston Churchill: “Dogs look up to us. Cats look down on us. Pigs treat us as equals.” Pigger would confirm this by grunting.

IN ONE YEAR, Bette and Pigger made 95 public appearances together, mostly in front of old people and children. Bette handled each occasion with poise.

In July, Pigger was invited to attend the 1990 senior citizens’ annual picnic in Fulton County, N.Y. The day before, Bette opened the back door. “Why don’t you go out and cool off in your pool, Pigger?” she suggested.

Pigger trotted into the yard and Bette went back to work. Half an hour later, something made her decide to check on him. He was lying in his favourite napping spot, in the shade of a barberry bush. He wasn’t breathing.

Bette felt panic coming on. She began to wail—then she remembered that Pigger had never liked loud noises. She phoned the police to come take away his body and called two friends to keep her company until Don got home.

It was determined that their beloved pet had succumbed to a pulmonary aneurysm, but Bette had her own theory on why he died. “I think Pigger had a heart so big, it just burst with all that love,” she said. “He helped me regain my old self and he brightened so many other lives. There will never be another Pigger.” **R**



I SCREEN, YOU SCREEN

Haven’t felt superior lately. Guess I’ll hang out at the movie theatre and ask everyone in line if they’ve read the book.


 @SCBCHBUM

I just want to be as happy as the characters
in the first half hour of a horror movie.

 @MEGANAMRAM

My Netflix viewing history is just a list of
movies I’ve fallen asleep to.

 @BOURGEOISALIEN



AIR SHOW

In 1928, a dirigible flying in the name of Fascist Italy reached the summit of the world. Two days into its return journey, disaster struck.



H I P

BY EVA HOLLAND
FROM MUSSOLINI'S
ARCTIC AIRSHIP

W W N

IN THE ARCTIC SUMMER, the sun even shines at midnight. So it was bright as the airship *Italia* approached the geographic North Pole, motoring at 800 metres above the endless pack ice. Below the ship, fog obscured the frozen Arctic Ocean, but up here the sky was cloudless. Officers used a sextant and the sun to measure the *Italia's* position as they covered the final distance. When they'd reached 90 degrees north, the helmsman began a slow circle around their destination. The 43-year-old commander, General Umberto Nobile, flying under the flag of Fascist Italy, gave the order to dive below the fog. They had made it.

Nobile radioed back to his base ship, the *Città di Milano*, more than 1,200 kilometres away in Kings Bay, in the Svalbard archipelago of northern Norway: “The flag of Italy again flies above the ice at the Pole.”

It was 1:20 a.m. on May 24, 1928. The *Italia* was just the second vessel to reach the North Pole; an Italian-built, Norwegian-owned airship, the *Norge*, had made the trip two years earlier, also under Nobile's care. But famous polar explorer Roald Amundsen had led that particular expedition. This time, the glory of reaching the Pole would be Italy's alone.



WHEN UMBERTO
NOBILE REGAINED
CONSCIOUSNESS,
HE WAS LYING ON THE
ICE, HIS RIGHT ARM
AND LEG BROKEN.

The airship's crew—14 Italians, one Czech and one Swede, plus Nobile's small dog, Titina—prepared for a simple ceremony. Nobile had hoped to land at the Pole, but the winds were too strong, so he settled for marking his presence from the air. First, he dropped an Italian flag from the window of the cabin. Next, the flag of Milan fluttered down, then a medal depicting the Virgin of the Fire. Last

went an oak cross, entrusted to the crew by Pope Pius XI, “to consecrate the summit of the world.”

When their victory had been sufficiently savoured, the crew turned the airship south. They still had to make the return trip over hundreds of kilometres of frozen ocean, back to their Svalbard base. They had already been afloat for 22 hours.

Mountaineers often say that the descent from a mountain summit is the most dangerous part of the journey, when exhaustion and elation can lead to deadly errors. That's no less true on a voyage to the summit of the world.

For the next 24 hours, the *Italia* sailed through fog and flurries, fighting a vicious headwind. The airship's engines churned; its ground speed slowed. Nobile began to worry about their fuel supply and the strain on the ship.

By 10 a.m. on Friday, May 25, more than 32 hours after they'd left the Pole, the crew of the *Italia* still saw no sight of the mountains of Spitsbergen, their island destination. Then, at 10:30 a.m., the airship began a sudden and steep plunge out of the sky.

When Nobile came to, he was lying on the ice, his right arm and leg broken. Half his men were scattered nearby, with the debris of the airship cabin around them. The others were still trapped in the doomed airship as the balloon, freed from the weight of its cabin, receded in the distance, adrift on the wind.



The Italian general, flyer and Arctic explorer Umberto Nobile (third from right) with part of his expedition team after their return from the North Pole.

ROALD AMUNDSEN was at a banquet in Oslo on Saturday, May 26, when a message arrived from Spitsbergen: the crew of the *Italia* was in distress.

A second message soon followed. The Norwegian government was appealing to 55-year-old Amundsen to lead a rescue expedition—despite the fact that he'd written a scathing memoir about his partnership with Nobile.

"Tell them at once," Amundsen said, "that I am ready to start."

AS THE *ITALIA* drifted away, the nine men left on the ice made two lifesaving finds: that the portable wireless transmitter they'd carried in case of emergency was still intact, and one of the survival bags Nobile had prepared had landed nearby.

The bag was stocked with essentials: a tent, a sleeping bag, a Colt pistol and cartridges. There were smoke signals, fuel and matches and a supply of

pemmican, malted milk, chocolate, butter and sugar. Within two days, they managed to collect a total of 125 kilograms of food from the wreckage scattered on the ice. It was enough to keep them alive for 45 days.

Meanwhile, Giuseppe Biagi, the wireless operator, hovered over his instrument, sending out a distress call on the 55th minute of each odd hour—the pre-arranged time to call the *Città di Milano*. Biagi continued his SOS calls for days, unheard. The *Città di Milano's* wireless transmitter just blared out a blanket reassurance, over and over: "We imagine you are near the north coast of the Svalbard, between the 15th and 20th meridians east of Greenwich. Trust in us. We are organizing help."

ON JUNE 6, the group finally got good news. A 9 p.m. news bulletin from Rome reported that a Soviet outpost had heard their distress call three

evenings earlier and was in contact with the Italian government.

Over the next two days, Biagi kept broadcasting his message, hoping to make direct contact. By the morning of June 9, success: they were in touch with their base ship. It seemed all they had to do was wait—but it wasn't that simple.

Airplanes could be used to locate survivors and to drop supplies, but there were challenges in landing and taking off again with the *Italia's* crew. A Russian icebreaking ship was on its way to the region, but it would take time for it to force its way through. Could dog teams get there faster, or was the ice too uncertain?

ON JUNE 19, a plane soared by, circling northwest of the men before turning south. Then another plane flew into sight, zigging and zagging low over the ice in an attempted search grid, before moving away.

Early on the morning of June 20, finally, the men were able to catch an Italian pilot's attention with smoke signals, mirror flashes and wireless transmissions. One of the plane's airmen leaned out of the cockpit and dropped care packages.

Nobile messaged the *Città* that night and asked that they put themselves in Amundsen's hands. What the general didn't know was that his rival turned rescuer was gone.

IN MY LIFE AS AN EXPLORER, Roald Amundsen wrote: "Only the most careful planning, sound judgment and infinite patience in working out minute details of equipment and of precaution can assure the success of an undertaking in the Arctic."

But an urgent rescue mission pre-empted both planning and patience, and might have compromised Amundsen's normally sound judgment.

Amundsen's biplane took off from Tromsø, in northern Norway, under blue skies on June 18, but it never arrived in Kings Bay. No one could believe the Latham prototype, which was equipped with pontoons on the ends of its lower wings to assist in water landings, might have crashed en route. Amundsen had escaped so many times before.

On June 23, Nobile and Titina were lifted off the ice by a Swedish pilot ordered to retrieve the general first and to come back for the others. However, upon his return to the group, the pilot crashed and was stranded with Biagi and the rest.

On July 12, the Russian icebreaker plucked the remaining survivors of the expedition off the ice.

A few weeks later, on August 31, the crew of a sloop found a single airplane pontoon floating off the northern coast of Norway: the last trace of the Latham. **R**

Not getting the sleep you need?

How Well Did You Sleep Last Night?

Did you toss and turn all night? Did you wake up with a sore neck, headache, or was your arm asleep? Do you often feel like you need a nap? Just like you, I would wake up in the morning with all of those problems and I couldn't figure out why. Like many people who have trouble getting a good night's sleep, my lack of sleep was affecting the quality of my life. I wanted to do something about my sleep problems, but nothing that I tried worked. After trying every pillow on the market that promised to give me a better night's sleep, with no success, I finally decided to invent one myself.

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Flash forward thirteen years and MyPillow, Mike Lindell's revolutionary pillow design, has sold over 32 million pillows, helping people all over the world improve the quality of their sleep. MyPillow has received thousands of testimonials from customers about how MyPillow has changed their lives.



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Inventor & CEO
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PILLOWS
SOLD

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DAY
MONEY BACK
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*John Shields in
Victoria, B.C.,
shortly before
his death.*

The Love in Letting Go

John Shields couldn't control his disease, but he could have a say in its end. Dying openly and sharing that story was his way of saying goodbye.

BY CATHERINE PORTER FROM *THE NEW YORK TIMES*

PHOTOGRAPHS BY LESLYE DAVIS

TWO DAYS BEFORE he was scheduled to die, John Shields of Victoria, B.C., roused in his hospice bed with an unusual idea. He wanted to organize an Irish wake for himself. It would be old-fashioned with music and booze, except for one notable detail—he would be present.

The party, he decided, should take up a big section of the Swiss Chalet on the road out of town. Shields wanted his last supper to be one he so often enjoyed on Friday nights when he was a young Catholic priest—roisserie chicken legs with gravy.

Then, his family would take him home and he would die there in the morning, preferably in the garden. It was his favourite spot, rocky and wild. Before he got sick, Shields meditated there twice a day, among the towering Douglas firs.

Shields intended to die swiftly and peacefully by lethal injection, administered by his doctor. In June 2016, the federal government legalized what it termed “medical assistance in dying” for competent adult patients who are near death and suffering intolerably from irremediable illnesses. When his doctor, Stefanie Green, informed him that he qualified, Shields felt the first hope since learning more than a year

before that he had a rare and incurable disease called amyloidosis, which caused proteins to build up in his heart and painfully damage the nerves in his arms and legs.

Having control over the terms of his death made him feel empowered over the disease rather than crippled by it, a common response among Green’s patients. Shields believed that dying openly and sharing his story could be his most meaningful legacy—which was saying something. The man had been a civil rights activist, a social worker for children, the head of British Columbia’s biggest union and, most recently, the saviour of a floundering land trust that included thousands of acres of protected wilderness and historic properties.

His plan for how he would spend his last moments, though, worried his wife, Robin June Hood. Her husband hadn’t left his bed once since he arrived at Victoria’s only hospice on a

stretcher, 17 days earlier. His 78-year-old body had thinned. He lasted only 15 minutes in conversation before his eyes fluttered closed. Just leaving the room would exhaust him. She knew he could not make it to the restaurant, and there was no way she could tend to his needs at home, even for one night—especially his last.

Happily, Green had become adept at brokering family discussions. She had presided over 35 deaths since the law passed, each intimately different

his wife and stepdaughter would take his body home and lay it out in his beloved garden for two days.

The plan, Shields said that afternoon, was “absolutely terrific.”

A YEAR AND A HALF earlier, Shields was driving down the highway, with Hood asleep in the back seat, when he blacked out. His SUV crossed the centre line, plunged into a ditch and hit a tree. The fact that they had not been killed seemed a sign to Shields.



JOHN SHIELDS HAD SEEN A FRIEND DIE FROM A DISABLING DISEASE. HE WAS TERRIFIED OF FACING A SIMILAR FATE.

from the next. Most of her patients died surrounded by loved ones. Many were too sick to devise elaborate rituals, but others had chosen the location, attendees, readings and music as if planning a wedding. Green called them something she picked up at a conference on euthanasia in the Netherlands: “choreographed deaths.”

The couple held hands as Green helped them stitch a compromise. On March 23, 2017, the last night of Shields’s life, they would host a party in the hospice solarium with Swiss Chalet takeout for all. The next morning, he would die in his hospice room. Then,

He believed every person played a part in the continuing evolution of the universe. Clearly, he thought, he had more to do.

But just a few months later, in the fall of 2015, a doctor broke the news. A biopsy of his heart, taken after the car accident, revealed that Shields had a hereditary form of amyloidosis. The disease had caused his heart to stop temporarily—hence the blacking out behind the wheel.

Amyloidosis would likely cause him to lose all feeling and basic use of his arms and legs before eventually shutting down his heart.

Shields had seen a friend die from a painful and disabling disease. He was terrified of facing a similar fate. "One quality of life that's important to me is my dignity," he said. Becoming debilitated and being tube-fed was unacceptable to him. "All of those painful and demeaning things," he said, "I considered beyond the threshold of how I would like to live."

IF SERVICE WAS the biggest theme of Shields's life, the other was freedom—

Shields was transferred from his first parish, in Vancouver, and then barred from preaching and teaching at his second posting, in Austin, Texas, after he challenged the pope's opposition to birth control.

Four years after his ordainment, he walked away from the priesthood. The decision cost him his faith, his purpose and his livelihood. Still, from that difficult time emerged two loves. One was Madeleine Longo, who worked with him at the Vancouver Catholic



SHIELDS'S POST-CHURCH WORK LIFE SURGED WITH PURPOSE, BUT HIS SEARCH FOR EXISTENTIAL ANSWERS WAS SLOW.

intellectual, spiritual, personal. He loved rituals, which began with the Catholic Masses of his childhood in New York City. He was the only child of a steamfitter and a teacher, both Irish.

At 17, he enrolled in seminary. By the time he was ordained, the Second Vatican Council had convened. Shields came to embrace the changes the council was recommending, especially the use of modern historical criticism in interpreting Scripture. In his mind, this changed Christ's message from one of sin's redemption to love. However, his was a minority view, and it set him at odds with his bosses.

Centre and then became his wife. The second was the rugged landscapes of British Columbia.

In 1969, the couple moved to B.C. and Shields found a job as a social worker. His first clients were unwed pregnant women, many of whom wanted illegal abortions. He put aside any vestiges of Catholic doctrine after he heard their anguished stories.

Eventually, Shields grew dissatisfied treating problems at what he called the "discharge end of the social injustice pipe." He wanted transformational change. He became president of the British Columbia Government

Employees' Union. There he was known as “the skipper”—a calm captain who was open-minded but also tough. He was most proud of securing equal pay for women in the union.

While his post-church professional life surged with purpose, Shields's ongoing search for existential answers was slow and meandering. Finally, he became a spiritual cosmologist, believing that the universe was conscious and that everything in it was inextricably connected.

Hood's then-19-year-old daughter, Nikki Sanchez, joined them and soon developed a close bond with Shields. Later, he would refer to her simply as his daughter. Hood had warned him that marrying her also meant inheriting a tribe of female friends. One persuaded Shields to come out of his semi-retirement and help steer The Land Conservancy, which was heavily in debt. He was driving home from a conservancy meeting the day he crashed his car.



FOR DR. STEFANIE GREEN, THE MEDICAL ASSISTANCE IN DYING LAW IS A MATTER OF PRINCIPLE AND OF CHOICE.

“We come out of the universe to play a role in the unfolding of the universe,” Shields wrote in his 2011 memoir. “This perspective riveted me. This is the opposite of meaningless.”

In 1999, when Longo became ill with lymphoma, Shields decided to care for her full time.

He was still grieving her death, in 2005, when he met Hood, who had a Ph.D. in education and had worked on human rights in Central America. They married, and she moved into his house in Victoria. Deer grazed on bushes nearby. Orcas could be seen in the ocean, a short distance away.

THREE WALLS OF Stefanie Green's office are collaged with the faces of hundreds of newborns she delivered over her 22-year career.

Until recently, Green specialized in maternity and newborn care, and she currently has a side practice in circumcisions—which started not because of her Jewish upbringing but because few local doctors were willing to perform them.

To her, it was a matter of principle. “It's about choice—the same as MAID,” said Green, a 49-year-old mother of two, referring to the medical assistance in dying law. “Give people good

information and let them do what they think is best.”

For family reasons, Green decided she needed a better life-work balance than the erratic schedule of delivering babies allowed. A month before the new law came into effect, she travelled to the Netherlands for a conference on euthanasia. “Birth and death, deliveries in and out—I find it very transferable,” she explained. “Both are really intense and really important.”

time, in 2015, the Supreme Court struck down the criminal sanctions against medical professionals who assist in suicide in prescribed circumstances.

Participants must be adults who are in an advanced state of a “grievous and irremediable medical condition.” Their suffering must be intolerable and their natural death “reasonably foreseeable,” meaning people with long-term disabilities aren’t eligible unless they are near death. Patients must also be



PARTICIPANTS MUST BE ADULTS WHO ARE IN AN ADVANCED STATE OF A “GRIEVOUS AND IRREMEDIBLE MEDICAL CONDITION.”

Many of her colleagues on Vancouver Island agree. It has been ground zero for assisted suicide in Canada. It was here that Sue Rodriguez, a 42-year-old suffering from amyotrophic lateral sclerosis (ALS), began her battle to die with dignity in the 1990s, going all the way to the Supreme Court.

The court sided against her in 1993, ruling that the state’s interest was protecting life’s sanctity. Less than five months later, Rodriguez died from what the police called a “doctor-assisted suicide,” although they never pressed charges. Seventeen years later, other patients and lawyers in British Columbia picked up Rodriguez’s case. This

deemed mentally capable of consenting to the procedure moments before it happens. This stipulation automatically bars people with dementia, even if they give advance consent.

Doctors aren’t legally bound to participate, but in most provinces they are expected to directly refer patients to colleagues who do. Many doctors believe the law goes against their Hippocratic oath. Christian doctors in Ontario are taking their professional college to court, arguing that the requirement to refer patients infringes on their religious freedoms. On the other side, the lawyers who won the Supreme Court case have filed suit on

*Dr. Stefanie Green, on
her way to administer
drugs for a medically
assisted suicide, in
Victoria, B.C., on
March 24, 2017.*



behalf of people suffering intolerably from illnesses that aren't terminal.

Green has never understood doctors who say offering lethal medicine goes against their training. For some patients, the knowledge that they can control their exit translates into more peaceful final days. "I think people go into medicine because they want to help people," she said. "This is on the continuum of care of helping people."

ONE MORNING IN March 2017, it took three women—Shields's wife and two

she worried about Shields's mental capacity. That morning, he asked if she had brought his sleeping bag. He was going on a voyage, he said.

She wasn't sure if his confusion stemmed from the disease's progression or his cocktail of pain medication. Either way, she worried that his lucidity would slip even further and that Green wouldn't be able to perform the procedure after all. This is the fine edge patients must balance—stretching out the last moments of their lives before the option to control their deaths



IF SHIELDS WANTED TO PROCEED WITH HIS DEATH, HE HAD TO SCHEDULE IT FOR THE VERY NEXT DAY OR IN TWO WEEKS.

friends—20 minutes to guide him a dozen paces to the washroom. One lifted each foot with her hands. They realized they could no longer care for him at home.

Later that morning, he was settled into a room in the hospice. Three days later, Green came to check in on Shields and tell him she was going on vacation with her husband. If Shields wanted to proceed with his death, he had two options: schedule it for the very next day or in two weeks, on March 24.

The couple rejected the next day. It was too sudden for Hood, although

disappears. It's a bit like playing a game of chicken.

Two weeks after Shields was admitted, doctors tried lidocaine—a powerful local anaesthetic. For the first time in months, Shields slept through the night. His thoughts became clearer.

March 24 bore down like a speeding train. Buoyed by his improvement, his wife hoped in vain that he might push off the date. But Shields didn't want to suffer anymore.

He also felt like a pioneer. Recently, he'd dreamed that he was sweeping up large shards of glass from a hallway,

making it safe for others who would pass that way after him.

The idea for a final party with fixings from Swiss Chalet came to him because of the kindness he'd received at the hospice from friends and strangers alike. He wanted to spread some of that "loving energy" around.

"Besides," he said, "I like chicken."

Hood felt like escaping to the woods to cry. But this was one last token of love she could give him. She sent out an email invitation to select friends. It was titled "John's Farewell Party."

presented with his plate of chicken. Laughter erupted around him. His stepdaughter pulled his favourite skipper's hat down over his brow.

Once he finished his meal, Allport began the farewell ceremony. She held up a white khata—a Buddhist prayer scarf—and instructed each of the 33 guests to place a verbal blessing in it for Shields.

"I bring the blessing of community, of justice, of peace and of having been the partner of a wise and beautiful loving man," said Hood.



SHIELDS THANKED EACH SPEAKER AND DOLED OUT SOME TAILOR-MADE INSIGHT OR JOKE TO LIGHTEN THE MOOD.

ON MARCH 23 at 6 p.m., a heavy atmosphere hung over the small hospice room. No one knew what to expect from a living wake, not even Penny Allport, the life-cycle celebrant Shields had asked to help guide the party and preside over his death the next morning. She was trained for funerals and weddings, but nothing like this.

At 6:12, two nurses wheeled Shields into the solarium. He was sitting up in his airbed. It was as if a switch had been flipped. The room's heaviness lifted. "You think I'm only going to have one portion?" Shields said when

"I thank you for the gift you are giving us tonight," said Heather Fox, a grief counsellor and one of Shields's long-time close friends.

Shields thanked each speaker and doled out some tailor-made insight or joke to lighten the mood. Hood saw the priest her husband once was, offering blessings and benedictions to his congregation. Union friends remembered his speaking before crowds at rallies in the 1980s. "He has never met an audience he didn't love," said Preben Skovgaard, his former chief of staff and his best friend.

As the party wound down, Fox handed out lyrics to the folk song "The Parting Glass." They serenaded him.

*But since it falls, unto my lot,
That I should rise and you should not,
I'll gently rise and I'll softly call,
Good night and joy be with you all.*

Shields was waning. He closed his eyes. Eighteen seconds passed, until it seemed perhaps he had drifted off to sleep. "When we blossom forth into

beach before driving to the hospital pharmacy to pick up the drugs required for the procedure.

There were four, drawn up into syringes. First, an anti-anxiety medication called midazolam that puts most people to sleep quickly. Then a small amount of lidocaine to numb the vein, followed by a large dose of propofol, which would put Shields into a coma. The final drug was a paralyzer called rocuronium. That's the one that stops all movement.



IF GREEN FELT JITTERY THAT MORNING, IT WAS ONLY BECAUSE SHE WAS TRIPLE-CHECKING THE PROCEDURE IN HER MIND.

the night," he said finally, "what do we hear? We hear the silence of the bees. We hear the brushing of the wind in the trees. We hear the whisper of wind to branch and branch to wind. And we know that we are close to the end of the journey."

He thanked his assembled friends, one more time.

At 7:40, the nurses arrived. Shields waved to the group as his bed was wheeled out of the solarium. "I will see you later," he said.

THE MORNING OF Shields's death, Green took her dog for a walk on the

One doctor on Vancouver Island admits she has trouble sleeping the night before a procedure. Another has her partner drive her home afterward because she is so emotionally drained.

Green has neither of those problems. If she felt jittery that morning, it was only because she was double- and triple-checking the procedure in her mind.

She walked to Shields's room, where they talked intimately for a few minutes. She asked if he still wanted to go ahead. He did. She was convinced he was of sound enough mind to make this decision. He signed the last page

of paperwork, confirming that he'd been given the opportunity to change his mind.

Shields had asked five people to be there: his wife, his stepdaughter, Skovgaard, Fox and Allport. The group formed a circle around him, and Allport began the ceremony she had designed with input from Shields.

At one point, she said that Shields would need ancestors to help guide his journey. If the names of ancestors came to the participants' minds, they

*Where there is hatred, let me sow love;
Where there is injury, pardon;
Where there is doubt, faith;
Where there is despair, hope.*

"I think I've learned that lesson," he said when she finished.

Green leaned over and quietly asked him if he was ready.

His eyes were closed. He opened them and slowly scanned the faces around him, taking in each one. "Are we ready, friends?" he asked. He turned



HIS WIFE, ROBIN JUNE HOOD, LEANED OVER SHIELDS AND TOLD HIM HIS LOVE HAD BEEN RADIANT.

should call them out. Hood whispered the names of Shields's father, mother and former wife. She leaned over and told him his love had been radiant.

The day before, when Allport asked Shields if there was a poem he would like read, he asked for a Catholic one: The Prayer of St. Francis of Assisi.

Standing at his feet, Fox unfolded a copy. "Lord, make me an instrument of thy peace," she began. Shields mouthed the words silently. He'd left Catholicism decades before, but Catholicism hadn't entirely left him. It was as if the disparate strands of his life were being woven into this final moment.

his head to look at the doctor. "Yes, Stefanie," he said. "I am ready."

She took the first syringe and pressed its plunger down.

Shields closed his eyes once more. His face relaxed. He appeared to go into a deep sleep. The only sound in the room was his stepdaughter's crying.

Green went through the syringes until none were left on the table. Shields's body remained still. The only change was a yellowing of his face.

Green listened to his heart. It was still beating.

A few minutes later, she did it again. And then, a third time.

Finally, 13 minutes after she had administered the first medication, she nodded to Hood. Shields was gone.

THAT EVENING, Shields's body lay on a gurney bed in his backyard. A sheet

So someone was always in the garden—reading poetry, telling stories, playing music or just sitting silently, keeping him company until the crematorium.

Those two days, the weather was fickle—the rain gave way to sun, the



THAT EVENING, SHIELDS'S BODY LAY IN HIS BACKYARD, A CANVAS SHELTER PROTECTING HIM FROM THE RAIN.

was draped over him, followed by a blanket. His favourite hat had been again pulled over his brow. A canvas shelter protected him from the rain.

Hood believed Shields's spirit would stay with his body before journeying on.

wind to calm, and then it rained again. Flocks of birds arrived. Deer and raccoons visited.

The majestic Douglas firs swayed above Shields. His garden was wild and beautiful, just as he had loved it. **R**

FROM THE NEW YORK TIMES (MAY 28, 2017). © NEW YORK TIMES CO., NYTIMES.COM



CLASSIC POEMS AS INTERNET HEADLINES

- "This Man Stops by Woods on a Snowy Eve... You Won't BELIEVE What Happens Next!" by Robert Frost
- "I Wandered Lonely As a Cloud—Until This Dog's Instagram Gave My Life Meaning!" by William Wordsworth
- "First I Was Like, 'Who Cares About a Grecian Urn?' but by the End, I Was in TEARS" by John Keats

GRAHAM BARNHART AND PAIGE QUINONES

From mcsweeneys.net

@ Work



"Don't mind me, I'm just a little under the weather today."

THEY SHOULD LET EVERYONE on hold with customer service talk to one another.

Singer **JOHN MAYER**

I'M STARTING A BLOG that's just reviews of the food I steal out of the fridge at work.

@UNDERCHILDE

IT'S BLEAK HOW JOB HUNTING is a job in itself and the only reward is an actual job.

@WINNINGPROTOCOL

AFTER PHOTOGRAPHING my client for a few minutes, I felt compelled to stop shooting and say, "I've got to tell you, that's a great smile you have."

Beaming, he said, "Thanks, I got it for my birthday."

BEVERLY GUHL

Are you in need of some professional motivation? Send us a work anecdote, and you could receive \$50. To submit your stories, visit rd.ca/joke.

GET SMART!

13 Things All-Inclusive Resorts Won't Tell You

BY ANNA-KAISA WALKER



1 To find out if a price is fair, compare the all-inclusive fee to the standard room rate without the package. Some resorts budget \$150 a day per person—or more—for food and drinks under the all-inclusive deal. Ask yourself if you'll really consume that much.

2 Resorts are rarely *all-inclusive*. Depending on the destination and package, you might get dinged for airport transportation and Wi-Fi access or have to pay for premium menu items like steak or choice liquor.

3 Renovation plans aren't usually mentioned in resorts' marketing

materials, so confirm with your travel agent (or risk dealing with noise and dust). "We'll usually get a notification about construction upon booking," says Flight Centre travel agent Megan Vonhonne. If you aren't using an agent, contact the resort directly.

4 Beware of photo editing. Scrolling through the endless images of pristine beaches and plush rooms online, you'd be forgiven for thinking every resort offers five-star accommodations at one-star prices. "Travel agents often have personal experience with these properties, so we can give you the lowdown," says Vonhonne.

NICOMENIJES/ISTOCKPHOTO

Check sites like TripAdvisor for untouched photos from real guests.

5 International corporations manage most all-inclusives, meaning they rarely benefit the host country economically. Find resorts with Green Globe certification, which requires a commitment to social, economic and environmental responsibility.

6 When it comes to discounts for travelling at “off-peak” times, remember that there’s a reason why rates are much lower during, say, hurricane season. Insurance can cover the cost of a trip cancellation or interruption caused by a natural disaster, but in cases where your vacation is simply rained out, you can forget about getting a refund.

7 Tip well, even if your package says gratuities are included. Resort employees usually depend on tips to make ends meet; unless the hotel forbids it, carry a roll of \$1 American bills (budget roughly USD\$150 per week) and hand them out to staff who keep you feeling pampered.

8 Keep food-borne illness at bay by avoiding drinks with ice cubes and steering clear of lukewarm offerings that have been left out for hours at buffets. Traveller’s diarrhea strikes one in four sun-seekers, so it’s best to keep anti-diarrheal medication on hand.

9 Like cruise ships, resorts can be a petri dish for germs. Outbreaks of hand, foot and mouth disease and legionnaires’ disease have made headlines recently. Check online reviews for information about the resort’s cleanliness.

10 Buy some health care peace of mind by opting for enhanced 24-hour medical coverage such as StandbyMD, which arranges doctor’s visits to your hotel room. Some resorts have in-house physicians, but beware of overcharging—the Canadian government has warned of aggressive sales tactics from private doctors in the Dominican Republic.

11 Make sure you bring all necessities, especially sunscreen—you’ll need lots, and prices at the hotel shop can be double or triple what you’d pay at home.

12 You might be tempted to save a few bucks by researching and booking day excursions privately ahead of time, but it’s best to wait until you arrive, and rely on the concierge’s local knowledge.

13 Luxury resorts and cheaper resorts often share the same stretch of beach. If you’re mainly visiting for the sun and sand and don’t care for fancy amenities, you’ll find better value with the budget option. **R**

Brain teasers

Challenge yourself by solving these puzzles and mind stretchers, then check your answers on page 111.

METEOR SHOWERS BRING SPRING FLOWERS (Moderately difficult)

Space dust has landed on earth, carrying with it seeds for exotic new alien flowers. One of them still lacks a name. If the xenobotanists follow the same rules they used to create the other terms, what should they call the last flower?



ASPERFILUM
NEPTUGORII



ASPERCHRYST
JUPICALTAE



COSMODENDRA
URANOGORII



BELSACHRYST
MARBRISTO



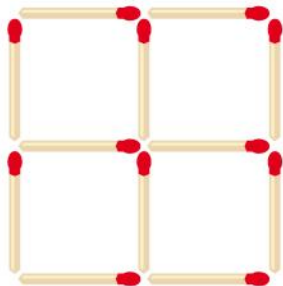
BELSAFILUM
URANOCALTAE



?

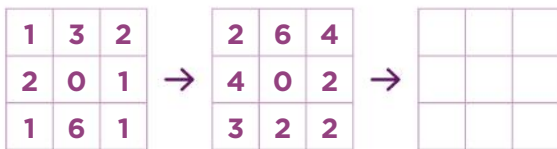
MATCH GAME (Easy)

There are five squares in the figure to the right: the large external one and four smaller internal ones. What's the lowest number of matchsticks you could remove to leave two squares, with no leftover matchsticks that don't form part of a square?



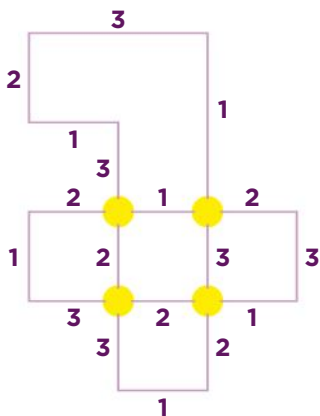
NUMBER GENERATOR *(Moderately difficult)*

The numbers in the second grid have a specific relationship to those in the first one. What numbers would you place in the third grid in order to continue the pattern?

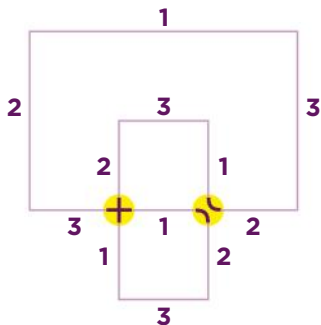


1-2-3 GO *(Moderately difficult)*

In the diagram below, fill in the missing junctions to draw a single, continuous loop that follows each line segment once and only once. As you move along, every corner and every junction you pass is the beginning of a new segment. The loop must trace segments in numerical order; that is, “1, 2, 3, 1, 2, 3...” Each junction can be filled in one of three ways:



Here's an example of a completed loop:



Trivia Quiz

BY PAUL PAQUET

1. In 2012, Nicola Adams became the first woman to win an Olympic gold medal in which sport?
2. What Danish explorer has both a strait and a sea named for him?
3. Former British PM Tony Blair and author Ernest Hemingway both converted to what religion?
4. What country's rapid economic growth in the later 20th century was dubbed the Miracle on the Han River?
5. Who was, according to his *New York Times* obituary, one of the few writers "embraced both by critics and a mass audience"?
6. The Scandinavian region of Lapland is home to what distinctive ethnic group?
7. Which national capital's international airport is named for two of its country's founders: John A. Macdonald and George-Étienne Cartier?
8. How many whole tones between pitches are in the musical octave?
9. Named for a notable suffragist, the "Matilda effect" refers to how women have been robbed of credit in what field?
10. Their capital at Tenochtitlán (now Mexico City) was founded in 1325. Who were they?
11. When you don't include the surrounding boroughs and regions, which of England's 51 cities has the smallest official population?
12. In Genesis chapter 22, what does God command Abraham to do to his son, Isaac?
13. What actress played actresses in *King Kong* (2005), *Mulholland Dr.* and *Birdman*?
14. What kind of "battle" was held each year at West Point, the United States' oldest military academy, until participants got hurt in 2015?
15. **Roald Dahl** changed the title of his children's novel **James and the Giant Cherry**, opting for what fuzzier fruit instead?



ANSWERS: 1. Boxing. 2. Vitus Bering. 3. Roman Catholicism. 4. South Korea. 5. Gabriel García Márquez. 6. The Sami. 7. Ottawa, Canada. 8. Six. 9. Science. 10. The Aztecs. 11. London. 12. Kill him. 13. Naomi Watts. 14. A pillow fight. 15. A peach.



Word Power

Firefighters have their own lingo for the dangers they face, the equipment they use and the services they provide. How fast can you burn through this list, hot stuff?

BY GEORGE MURRAY

- 1. accelerant**—A: fire-engine fuel. B: substance that aids the spread of fire. C: flashing emergency light.
- 2. crowning**—A: awards ceremony for bravery. B: reaching a building's top floor. C: spreading through treetops.
- 3. aramid**—A: flame-resistant fabric. B: chemical in fire extinguishers. C: dry, forested area.
- 4. conflagration**—A: annual gathering of firefighters. B: flagpole outside a fire station. C: large, destructive blaze.
- 5. dispatch**—A: emblem on a uniform. B: handle calls and send out help. C: smoke-related mortality.
- 6. extrication**—A: removal of a trapped victim. B: firefighter retirement. C: backdraft.
- 7. flashpoint**—A: explosion used to extinguish flames. B: material's lowest ignition temperature in air. C: area with many fires.
- 8. Halligan**—A: extendable ladder. B: helmet visor. C: multi-purpose tool often used for prying.
- 9. handline**—A: rope to hold on to in smoky conditions. B: durable walkie-talkie. C: narrow hose used indoors.
- 10. helitack**—A: helicopter-assisted firefighting. B: blocked hydrant. C: rehydration station.
- 11. oxidation**—A: getting covered in soot. B: breathing through an apparatus. C: combining chemically with oxygen.
- 12. reflash**—A: rekindle. B: traumatic memory. C: post-fire debriefing.
- 13. tender**—A: care arrangements for victims. B: truck carrying water. C: inexperienced firefighter.
- 14. haz-mat**—A: hot arid zone, monitor all terrain. B: hazardous materials. C: hazy skies caused by smoke.
- 15. triage**—A: three-alarm blaze. B: escape plan. C: assignment of treatment priority.

Answers

1. accelerant—B: substance that aids the spread of fire; as, The arsonist doused the floor with kerosene, an *accelerant*.

2. crowning—C: spreading through treetops; as, Abir and his unit were horrified to see the forest fire *crowning* in the canopy above them.

3. aramid—A: flame-resistant fabric; as, Tina's personal protective equipment was lined with *aramid*.

4. conflagration—C: large, destructive blaze; as, By the time the trucks arrived, the whole block was engulfed in a *conflagration*.

5. dispatch—B: handle calls and send out help; as, Walter's ability to stay calm made him efficient at *dispatching* fire services.

6. extrication—A: removal of a trapped victim; as, Donning her breathing apparatus, Chiyo led the *extrication* of the family from the smoke-filled house.

7. flashpoint—B: material's lowest ignition temperature in air; as, Tim steered clear of the spilled gasoline, knowing that it had a dangerously low *flashpoint*.

8. Halligan—C: multi-purpose tool often used for prying; as, Irma inserted her *Halligan* into the water-swollen door frame to force it open.

9. handline—C: narrow hose used indoors; as, Tonio advanced cautiously into the kitchen, *handline* spraying ahead.

10. helitack—A: helicopter-assisted firefighting; as, Winds resulting from the rising heat made for a rocky ride as the *helitack* crew flew directly over the inferno.

11. oxidation—C: combining chemically with oxygen; as, Fire involves the *oxidation* of fuel, which is why cutting off its air supply can kill it.

12. reflash—A: rekindle; as, The forensics team believed the blaze had been fully extinguished, so the *reflash* caught them by surprise.

13. tender—B: truck carrying water; as, The stadium fire was so stubborn that a third *tender* was called in from a neighbouring county.

14. haz-mat—B: hazardous materials; as, *Haz-mat* training helped the new recruits make safer decisions on the job.

15. triage—C: assignment of treatment priority; as, Evacuees were sent to a mobile unit for *triage* by paramedics.

VOCABULARY RATINGS

7-10: fair

11-12: good

13-15: excellent

Sudoku

BY IAN RIENSCHÉ

Brain teasers:

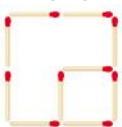
Answers

(from page 106)

METEOR SHOWERS BRING SPRING FLOWERS COSMOFILUM JUPI-

BRISTO. The first half of the top term tells the colour of the flower's centre; the last half is the petal colour. The first half of the bottom term tells the shape of the flower's centre; the last half is the shape of the petals.

MATCH GAME



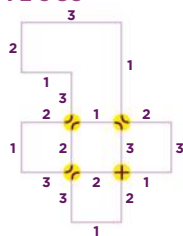
TWO. The remaining internal square could be placed as shown or in any of the other three positions.

NUMBER GENERATOR

5	2	8
8	0	4
6	4	4

Consider the three numbers in each row to be a single three-digit number. Doubling that number generates the three-digit number that goes into the corresponding row of the next grid.

1-2-3 GO



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

TO SOLVE THIS PUZZLE...

You have to put a number from 1 to 9 in each square so that:

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

SOLUTION

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



Quotes

BY CHRISTINA PALASSIO



Every school has bullies, but there's not just one main bully. Everyone can be rude and everyone can be kind.

JACOB TREMBLAY

MAKING SOMEONE FEEL ASHAMED OF WHO THEY ARE IS A CRUEL MANIPULATION, DESIGNED TO OPPRESS AND REPRESS. ELLEN PAGE



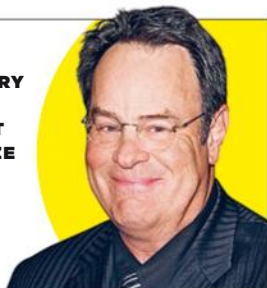
THE BEST POETRY JOLTS AND SHOCKS; IT MINES LANGUAGE FOR WHAT WE HAVE NOT SEEN, HAVE NOT HEARD.

DIONNE BRAND

A simple way to get some high-quality “me time”: lay your phone face down in a puddle of water on the kitchen counter. LAURA CALDER

I'M SORRY I LIVE IN THE GREATEST COUNTRY IN THE WORLD. I'M SORRY! I'M SORRY, BUT CANADIANS APOLOGIZE SO MUCH BECAUSE WE KNOW WE'RE THE GREATEST. SORRY!

DAN AYKROYD



We shouldn't forget to be happy about celebrating who we are and what we'd like to become.

JULIE PAYETTE



“Does your bladder leak
underwear fit this beautifully?”

NEW



Depend Silhouette



Always Discreet Boutique

Always Discreet Boutique. Fits closer. Keeps you drier, too.*

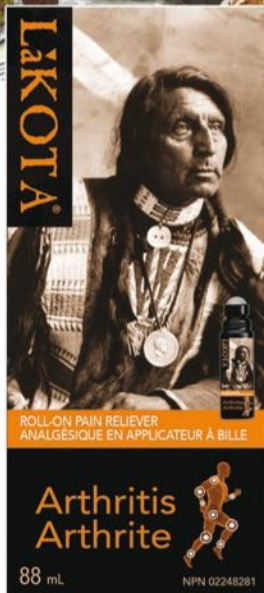
*vs. Depend Silhouette Small/Medium. Depend Silhouette is a trademark of Kimberly-Clark Worldwide.

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