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Reader's Digest

CANADA
MOST-READ
MAGAZINE

DECEMBER 2023/JANUARY 2024



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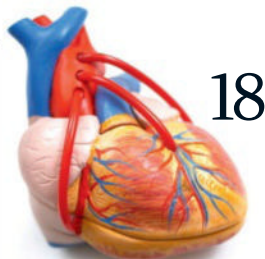
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LETTERS

SHARE YOUR STORY

What Lessons Have You Learned From *Reader's Digest*?

MANY YEARS AGO, I read a story in *Reader's Digest* about a man lost deep in the forest in wintertime. Night was falling and he had to build a fire, which he built under the large fir tree he was using as a shelter. Well, wind came in and snow that was on the fir tree slid off and put his fire out. Lesson learned? Never build a fire (or a shelter) under a tree laden with snow.

—SHARON JARDINE, *Upper Tantallon, N.S.*

MANY YEARS AGO, I read a short line in your magazine that I decided to make a family rule at my house. With work, school, activities and everything else that happens when life happens, we had a daily hour when we could reconnect, share our ups and downs—and especially share the best laughter of the day. I'm so happy I implemented this because very early on I realized that often it was the only quality time that we shared as a family. Some very happy

memories were formed at those times. Thank you, *Reader's Digest*!

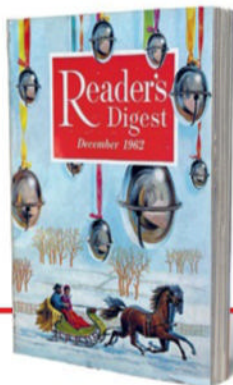
—LYNN SABOURIN, *Gatineau, Que.*

I BEGAN READING your magazine when I was 20, and after 65 years, it's hard to select just one lesson because there are many that educated me, from health to food to travel and so on. It would not be fair to all the other articles published over the years.

—LUCIEN CARON, *Trois-Rivières, Que.*

WHEN I FIRST came to Canada, my English vocabulary was very low. I had to bring a dictionary to a doctor's office for an appointment. One of my friends recommended that I read *Reader's Digest* to increase my vocabulary, so I did. It improved my vocabulary a lot and helped me to learn about the culture more quickly. I really enjoy the stories and health articles in your magazine.

—MAY ZHOU, *Edmonton, Alta.*



THE DARK SIDE OF POKER

I was interested in your article “Back to the Poker Table” (May 2023). I love playing card games with friends and family, but perhaps I don’t “get” poker. It’s a taboo word in our house. At just 16 years of age, my son started playing it. But what started as a friendly game with friends became an addiction. He’s now 33 and still thinks he can win online poker. He was very successful playing games with his friends, but online poker is a whole different thing. The players, many of whom are professionals, are more aggressive and more willing to put you in tough situations, and it’s hard to do well.

My son has lost more than \$42,000 playing poker online and that’s only what we know about. One night he won over \$8,000 and by morning he had lost it. It’s affected his job, his relationships, his whole life. It’s so sad. I’m glad the writer of this article plays with friends and doesn’t play online or at casinos.

—LUKE H., *United Kingdom*

DANGERS IN THE WILD

Sincere and committed people like Tony Fitzjohn (“Locked in the Lion’s Jaws,” April 2023) give their all to help ensure wild animals like Freddie can live their lives under proper care. But one can only imagine how dangerous it must be for humans to live in such places. Tony survived the attack with the help of not only his fellow human beings but also Freddie the lion, whom he raised from a cub. Had Freddie not



intervened, readers would probably not have had this incredible story to read.

—VASUDEVAN, *India*

A GRATEFUL READER

I have been a subscriber for many years now and the October 2023 issue is one of your best. “Lives in the Balance” left me crying at the end. I’ve never enjoyed one issue so much. Thank you. Keep up the good work.

—JOAN ESCHBACH, *Penticton, B.C.*

FOND MEMORIES OF THE DENTIST

I enjoyed “Fast and Reliable Facts About Trains” (13 Things) in the June 2023 issue! It brought back a childhood memory for me: my mother bringing me to the dentist train car when I was a child. It would have been in the mid-1960s, and we were living in Chapleau, Ont. I remember snow, so it must have been wintertime, and the big dentist chair (but when you are young, everything looks big). From what I recall, the dentist was friendly, and I believe he had to pull a rotten tooth. Ouch! It may sound strange but thanks for bringing back that memory for me.

—DOUGLAS WOODS, *Napanee, Ont.*



THE POWER OF MUSIC

Anicka Quin's article "When Music Is Medicine" in the June 2023 issue caught my attention.

I've been through three years of CT and MRI scans—all successful—and for the latter, it was suggested I bring a CD to play while in the scanner.

Also, I recall being told when my mother-in-law was in a care home in her 90s with Alzheimer's that she didn't know what to do with the carol sheet at Christmas. But when the music started, she sang every word.

It is well known that singing can be therapeutic. Even when you are healthy, it has many benefits, such as the regular breathing, the longer breaths needed for long phrases and extended notes, and the good posture you adopt when standing, especially when in concert mode. I'm a member of the Mendip Male Voice Choir, which meets once a week. We recently did a concert with a small choir from a charity that supports teenagers with learning difficulties. It did us all good!

In addition, the camaraderie and fun

that choir members have together, often with a social time afterwards, add to their general health and well-being. So, find a choir near you—and join.

—MARTIN B. DYMOND, *Somerset, U.K.*

PROTECT YOURSELF

I read "The Subtle Signs of Skin Cancer" in July/August 2023 with interest, as I'm currently having this bad experience. In autumn 2022, a small boo-boo on my nose refused to heal. The dermatologist's verdict: basal cell carcinoma without malignancy. The doctor treated it with cryotherapy, but a few months later, the carcinoma reappeared. Surgery is now planned. I'm 64 years old.

Members of my generation didn't protect themselves much from the sun, and my life as a farmer in the open air, combined with a fair complexion, didn't help matters. Properly treated, this disease can be cured. So be vigilant, watch your skin, protect yourself with hats and sunscreen, and stay out of the sun between 12 and 4 p.m.

—DOMINIQUE BEAUCHAMP, *France*

GET MOVING

Thank you for your amusing article on cleaning ("Good News About Housework," June 2023). There's no doubt that cleaning one's home offers an economical workout. Fortunately, I'm lucky enough to have a husband who vacuums, which helps.

—MONIQUE MARTIN, *France*

Write to us: editors_canada@rd.ca

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Blank Canvas

RARELY HAS BRITISH artist Simon Beck come across a mountain covered in virgin snow and not thought, *I can improve on that*. For Beck, 65, an avid snowshoer, the fresh snow is a canvas and his snowshoes are the paintbrush. He uses them to create massive and intricate designs in winter landscapes around the world, like the geometric design shown here at Lac Marlou in the French Alps. With the help of some simple math and a compass, he maps out his path and then meticulously follows it, stomping out a design and logging thousands of steps in the process. Naturally, some of his snowscapes are more fleeting than others. But as he told Artnet News, "As long as the weather holds long enough for us to get pictures, I consider it a job well done."



COURTESY SIMON BECK





Timothy Letts, a U.S. Army veteran, has always believed in helping others.

A Ride for a Lifetime

An Uber trip took a detour when the driver offered his ailing passenger one of his kidneys

BY Sarah Chassé

Bill Sumiel was having a tough Friday. It was October 2020, and the 71-year-old, who was dealing with kidney failure and had been on dialysis for a few years, found himself at a vascular centre almost 50 kilometres from home for the second time in 24 hours. The day before, his brother had driven him to the Vascular Institute in Vineland, New Jersey, for a routine declotting of his dialysis access port, but it became clogged again that night.

Sumiel was no stranger to the struggles of kidney disease. He'd been diagnosed with diabetes more than 20 years before, which led to his kidney problems. He was on the transplant list, but no

CARSTEN BEHLER

matches had yet appeared. So he continued with his treatments, including the periodic port declotting that had inexplicably failed this time. Without a ride lined up for Friday's do-over, Sumiel took Ubers to and from his appointment.

Timothy Letts, 31, was driving north to visit a friend when his phone received the request for Sumiel's ride home. The trip was out of Letts's way. Still, he took the fare, figuring if the passenger was coming from a medical facility, he likely really needed a ride.

When Sumiel got into the car, Letts could see that the older man was lethargic but in good spirits. And as they set out on the 40-minute drive to Sumiel's home, the pair got to chatting.

"Bill really lit up the car with positive energy," says Letts, who shared with Sumiel that he was an Army veteran. Sumiel, who works in sales, mentioned that in the past he'd enjoyed volunteering at his church and in his community. But he was doing less these days, he explained, because the dialysis treatments left him exhausted.

Then Sumiel revealed that he was searching for a kidney donor. Letts joked that he'd be a good donor candidate, given that he didn't drink or smoke. Sumiel agreed, though he didn't think much of it as they kept driving. Letts, however, couldn't stop thinking about it.

As someone who believes in helping others, donating a kidney "was always on my mind," he says. Plus, even though they'd just met, he already liked and respected Sumiel. So, about 400 metres

away from Sumiel's house, Letts said: "I'd like to see if I could be a match to give you a kidney."

"I was shocked," Sumiel recalls. He was shaking so hard, he could barely write his name when they exchanged contact information. Once inside his home, he excitedly told his wife, "The Uber driver just offered me his kidney!"

After the initial excitement, Sumiel started feeling less optimistic. He was touched by Letts's offer, but he wondered if it had just been an emotional moment. Would he hear from him? And what was the likelihood of a match?

But Letts was true to his word. He got in touch with Sumiel just a few hours later, and by the next week, Letts had contacted the kidney transplant program. After a months-long screening process, including an interview, sharing medical records, meeting a living-donor advocate and testing, the results were in: Letts was an ideal donor, and he and Sumiel were a perfect match.

In December 2021, 14 months after their chance encounter, Sumiel and Letts had their surgeries. It was a success. Today Sumiel is doing well, working remotely and enjoying time with his family—and no more dialysis.

Letts has moved to Germany to work with the U.S. Army's Family and Morale, Welfare and Recreation department as a civilian. He and Sumiel keep in touch and look forward to the day they can reunite. Sumiel is especially excited. After all, he says, "Living donors are special people." 



GOOD NEWS

FROM AROUND THE WORLD

BY *Samantha Rideout*

The rich marine reserve around the Galapagos Islands.

FOUND: PRISTINE CORAL REEF

CONSERVATION An international expedition recently discovered a coral reef stretching roughly two kilometres in the famous marine reserve around the Galapagos Islands near Ecuador—and much of it is thriving. Not only are deep-sea reefs like this one, which is likely centuries old, typically far less healthy, but many reefs around the world have been devastated by rising ocean temperatures and damaging fishing practices. In the decade after 2009, the world lost about 14 percent of these beautiful ecosystems.

Teeming with fish, pink octopus, sharks and other marine life, these reefs could help scientists monitor how

climate change affects habitats otherwise untouched by humans.

Lessons in Kindness

EDUCATION Schoolchildren in Chilliwack, B.C., are discovering firsthand that they can foster joy within their community—and themselves—simply through thoughtful gestures.

Grade 3 students at Watson Elementary have been raising money through holding bake sales or doing chores, then spending it on acts of kindness. These include assembling care packages for homeless youth, offering tokens of appreciation to teachers and giving cof-

MICHELE WESTMORLAND/GETTY IMAGES

fee or flowers to people in a local park.

Their teacher, Jen Thiessen, started the project in 2018. It has since become an annual tradition. Thiessen says she wanted to fill what she felt were gaps in the curriculum. "What about how to interact with other people? What about social responsibility?" she says.

Thiessen's lessons on goodwill start with books and writing about kindness. But her favourite day of each school year is when her students put theory into practice.

"Once, a woman burst into tears while they were giving her flowers," she recalls. "She said, 'You guys don't realize what a bad day I've been having. This is exactly what I needed.'"

Thiessen says she hopes interactions like that will stay with the kids. "There are some things you just can't teach inside a classroom."

A New Vaccine for Malaria

HEALTH After years of research, the R21 malaria vaccine is finally on the horizon. Currently, only one vaccine (called RTS,S) is widely approved for use against malaria. But R21 promises to be more effective: It reduced the risk of illness by more than 75 percent in clinical trials, while RTS,S is up to 60 percent effective in the real world.

R21 will likely be more widely available than RTS,S, as an India-based manufacturer plans to sell hundreds of millions of doses each year for just two or three dollars per shot.

Two countries with high malaria rates, Ghana and Nigeria, have approved R21, and others are expected to follow. Alongside other tools, this new weapon could save thousands of lives.

Purging Plastic Pollution

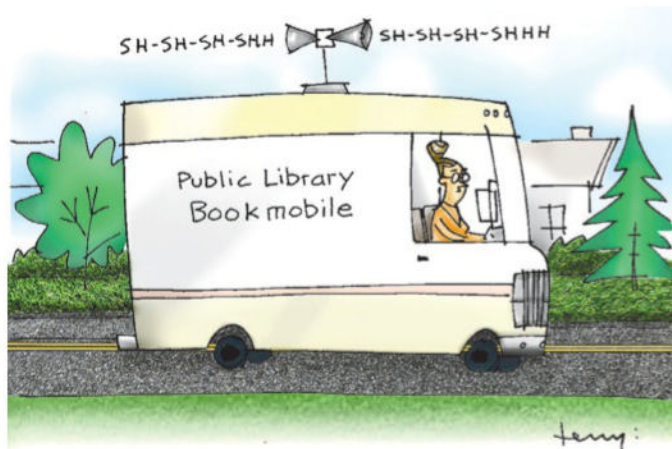
ENVIRONMENT Humanity could reduce up to four-fifths of new plastic pollution as early as 2040, concludes a recent report from the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP). Reaching this goal would require action from governments and companies, but it would be economically viable, UNEP says—meaning the costs won't outweigh the economic benefits.

It could be done in part with existing strategies such as use of large dispensers and refillable bottles. Countries could also ban single-use plastics (e.g., disposable cups and shopping bags); versions of these policies are already in place in Canada, the United Kingdom, the European Union and elsewhere.

Other strategies include making recycling more competitive by taxing new plastic and compelling manufacturers to replace some plastics with environmentally friendly alternatives. **R**



LIFE'S LIKE THAT



Not This Again

After spending six weeks abroad, cooking for myself on a single burner kerosene stove and living off macaroni and cheese, I returned to Toronto. My girlfriend invited me for dinner to welcome me back. When I arrived, she planted a kiss on me and said, "I made a special dish just for you." I asked, "What?" She exclaimed, "Baked macaroni and cheese!"
—MISIR DOOBAY, Scarborough, Ont.

Word Whiz

Our dog knows many phrases now, so my husband and I have started talking like Victorian nobility to get anything

by him. "Have you taken the dog on a brisk adventure recently?" "Would you escort the canine to the backyard forthwith?" "Has he supped yet?"

—@AWRITESINGER on X

Aging Gracefully

Me in my 20s at a concert: "Woohoo!"

Me in my 40s at a concert: "I'm surprised there's grass on this field at all. All this beer spillage can't be good for the turf."

—@BENBOVEN1 on X

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HEALTH

Digest

WELLNESS FOR BODY & MIND

A Mental Workout

Regular exercise releases “hope molecules” into the bloodstream, which may help alleviate depression

BY Karen Robock

I’VE JOGGED THROUGH postpartum depression (twice), relied on Pilates classes to help me stretch during stressful times and I often go for a walk to shake off a bad day. So it’s no surprise to me that there’s a link between exercise and mental health. But scientists have now made it official: Research has pinpointed a direct connection between movement and mood.

Each time you work up a sweat, your body releases feel-good neurotransmitters, or “happy hormones,” including

endorphins, dopamine and endocannabinoids, the latter being responsible for the so-called runner's high. Now researchers are also pointing to myokines—which experts have dubbed “hope molecules”—as an important contributor to the mental health benefits of exercise.

When our muscles contract, chains of amino acids called myokines are released into the bloodstream and dispersed throughout the body, where they facilitate communication between your muscles and your organs. Researchers are particularly interested in the effect of myokines on the brain, called muscle-brain cross-talk, which is believed to increase resilience to stress, reduce symptoms of trauma and anxiety and

have a direct effect on depression. A 2021 review published in *Neuropharmacology* established evidence that myokines help boost brain function, such as improving mental processes, memory and mood.

“Myokines reduce systemic inflammation, which is especially beneficial for people with drug-resistant depression whose low mood is linked to high levels of inflammation,” explains Dr. Jennifer Heisz, an expert in brain health and associate professor in the department of kinesiology at McMaster University in Hamilton, Ont.

There's also a growing body of research proving that exercise helps build key connections between the networks *within* the brain, too, improving



overall cognitive performance. Studies have shown that physical activity stimulates creativity, sharpens judgment skills and improves mental energy.

It can also help slow age-related cognitive decline, possibly even stalling the onset of conditions like Alzheimer's disease. A new study published in the *Journal for Alzheimer's Disease Reports* found that walking regularly (30 minutes a day four times a week) was enough to measurably improve memory, even in people who have already been diagnosed with mild cognitive impairment.

A recent study published in the *British Journal of Sports Medicine* showed that treatment for depression can be one and a half times more effective when physical activity is added to the usual care. Participants in the study found benefits after 12 weeks of exercising for 30 to 60 minutes per day.

"While exercise is not a substitute for professional mental health treatment, physical activity can complement and enhance the effects of the treatment," says lead researcher Ben Singh, a research fellow at the University of South Australia.

Regular exercise can also boost self-esteem and decrease feelings of isolation and loneliness, if you're working out in a group setting, says Singh.

Whether you're cycling, swimming, walking around your neighbourhood or hitting up a hot-yoga studio, getting sweaty is good for your body and mind. But how much activity is enough to maintain brain health? Experts suggest that you aim for a minimum of 10 to 30

minutes, three to five days each week.

"When it comes to aerobic exercises for reducing depression, the research suggests that it's less about how intense the exercise is and more about duration," says Heisz.

Just 10 minutes of light movement, like gentle laps in the pool or walking your dog, are enough to boost your mood, and the effects increase for every 10 extra minutes that you move, for up to an hour. Exercising beyond 60 minutes didn't provide extra mental health benefits, according to Singh's study.

TO GET THE MOST OVERALL BENEFITS, FOCUS ON DOING THE ACTIVITIES YOU LIKE BEST.

Attending a Pilates class and lifting weights also count toward your daily exercise goals (and this strength training is essential for strong bones), but for an added brain boost, you'll need to take it up a notch. Research shows that increasing the intensity of your resistance workout by just 10 percent will yield a greater antidepressant effect.

"It is amazing to consider how moving our bodies can heal our minds," says Heisz. To get the biggest overall health boost, the key is to zero in on sports and activities you enjoy, so you'll keep going back to them. 



A HEALTHY WINTER BOOST

Plenty of studies show that green spaces like city parks and “blue spaces” such as beaches boost psychological well-being. But what if your nearby landscapes are covered with snow? These “white spaces” offer perks, too: In a recent Polish experiment involving 87 women from ages 19 to 55, a 40-minute walk in a snowy woodland improved body image, an important aspect of mental health.

The researchers think trudging through snow might have shifted participants’ thoughts about their body, from insecurities about its appearance

to an appreciation of its abilities. And soaking in the beauty of winter probably helped them relax and feel more positive about the world in general.

Know the Signs of Colorectal Cancer

Unlike people over age 50, younger adults aren’t screened regularly for colorectal cancer (CRC). But their CRC rate has risen steadily since the 1990s, possibly because of unhealthy diets.

A study led by Washington University School of Medicine revealed four red flags that should prompt untested people to see their doctors: abdominal pain, rectal bleeding, diarrhea and iron-deficiency anemia.

Study participants with even one of these ailments were twice as likely to have CRC, compared to those without them. With three or more, risk went up by more than six times. The symptoms shouldn’t be dismissed, the researchers warned, in someone young.

A New Depression Therapy

People living with depression struggle to find pleasure, even in situations they’d normally enjoy. It’s as if their low mood colours their perceptions.

By analyzing neural activity, Stanford Medicine scientists found something that may explain the phenomenon. In a healthy brain, a processing region called the anterior insula sends signals to the anterior cingulate cortex,

a region involved with emotions. But in three-quarters of depressed subjects, this pattern was reversed.

The scientists showed that a therapy called Stanford neuromodulation therapy (SNT) helps shift neural activity back to the “normal” direction. Administered via 50 short sessions over five days, SNT involves placing a powerful electromagnetic coil on the scalp to stimulate specific brain regions. After trials showed it can help many sufferers in the large, hard-to-treat group that doesn’t respond to antidepressants, it was approved in the U.S. in 2022.

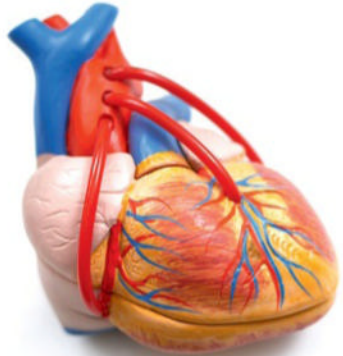
Dementia and the Digital Factor

Spending time online may prevent or delay cognitive issues, suggests research from New York University. In a study that followed people over age 50 for an average of nearly eight years, those who spent six minutes to two hours on the internet daily had the lowest risk of developing dementia. The group who rarely or never logged on was around twice as susceptible.

Being online offers mind stimulation, from staying socially connected to finding interesting things to read.



Still, beware: Though there was no proof of cause and effect, subjects who were online for more than six hours a day had the highest dementia risk.



Women and Clogged Arteries

Thanks in part to estrogen’s protective effects, women who get atherosclerosis tend to get it later than men: between ages 64 and 68 (for men, it’s 52 to 56). But once a woman does have clogged arteries, concluded a study published in *European Heart Journal - Cardiovascular Imaging*, she may need stronger treatments to avoid a heart attack.

Women’s arteries tend to be slightly smaller than men’s, and that could explain why the same amount of plaque is a greater threat to their blood flow. That’s worth considering when a patient and her doctor are choosing a treatment plan, along with other factors such as age, severity of the atherosclerosis and the presence (or absence) of other cardiovascular risks such as high cholesterol. 



Marriage can be difficult but rewarding. Like this morning, when I told my husband, "I love you." And he looked deep into my eyes and said, "Do you know where my keys are?"

—@TRACIEBREAUX on X

Natural Talent

When I was young, I wanted to play the guitar really badly. After years of hard work and practice, I now play the guitar really badly.

—REDDIT

Happily Ever After

My wife just came out of nowhere and said, "You weren't even listening, were you?" Like, that's a really weird way to start a conversation.

—@LEWISRAINDROP11 on X

"What's a couple?" I asked my mom. She said, "Two or three." This probably explains why her marriage collapsed.

—JOSIE LONG, comedian

Get It Right

My friend said to me, "Don't sweat the little things." I corrected him: "small stuff."

—CALVIN VICK, *High Prairie, Alta.*

National Pride

During a bus tour in Canada, our guide pointed out all the places of interest. "And over there," he said, indicating the golden arches of the local McDonald's, "is the American embassy."

—PATRICIA WOOD

With Interest

A banker and his friend are fishing when their boat hits a rock and sinks. The banker panics, screaming, "I can't swim!" His friend begins pulling him toward shore, but after a few minutes, he becomes weary and asks, "Do you think you could float alone?" The banker shouts, "This is no time for that!"

—JEFF ACKLES

Send us your original jokes! You could earn \$50 and be featured in the magazine. See page 3 or rd.ca/joke for details.

Art of
LIVING
FOOD, FACTS & FUN

A Cup of Comfort

*Hot chocolate has gone from ancient treat
to modern tradition*

BY Leila El Shennawy

AFTER A DAY of skating, skiing or shovelling snow, what's better than a cup of hot chocolate? This comforting elixir—maybe topped with whipped cream, soft marshmallows or crushed peppermint candy—is widely loved. But did you know the drink was enjoyed thousands of years ago in what is now Mexico, and more recently by the Aztec emperor Montezuma himself?

Long before chocolate bars and instant mix, chocolate was first consumed in

PHOTOGRAPHS BY K. Synold

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liquid form by the Olmecs of north-western Central America around 1500 B.C. By A.D. 1400, it was part of Aztec culture; *xocōlātl*, pronounced “shoh-kwah-tul,” evolved into “chocolate.”

That stuff was a far cry from the sweet, warming drink we know. For one, it wasn't served hot. The Aztecs made it with crushed roasted cacao beans mixed with water and cornmeal. Since sugar had not yet arrived from Europe, it was often flavoured with hot peppers and spices, perhaps to offset cacao's bitterness. The Aztecs believed chocolate had healing properties and was a gift from the gods.

After the Spanish arrived in the 1500s, the drink made its way to Europe, where the wealthy drank it warm and added sugar, a luxury. In *Chocolate: History, Culture and Heritage*, American historian Bertram Gordon says hot chocolate became “the beverage of the aristocracy.” (Marie Antoinette had a servant with the title Chocolate Maker to the Queen.)

Physicians also used it to mask the taste of medicine—a trick some doctors still suggest to parents.

“Chocolate houses” popped up around Europe in the 17th century. In these lively places for the elite, hot chocolate was poured from gilded pots into elegant, two-handled cups. But by the end of the 18th century, chocolate houses were dying off as cafés became popular.

Around this time, hot chocolate caught on in colonial North America.

George Washington is said to have enjoyed a breakfast of cornmeal pancakes with a warm cup of chocolate cream (a version thickened with grated chocolate); rumour has it that it was spiked with brandy.

In the same century, merchants from the Basque region of France brought chocolate to Canada. Some settled in the Fortress of Louisbourg on Cape Breton, and it was there that “French hot chocolate” was born; it was enhanced with spices such as cinnamon, nutmeg and cloves. Sometimes an egg yolk was added for creaminess.

Marshmallows came into the picture in 1917, when Angelus Marshmallows in the U.S. published a recipe for hot chocolate topped with their product. Then the powdered instant stuff came in the late 1950s, when an American dairy company combined powdered coffee creamer with sugar and cocoa powder—and Swiss Miss was born.

Since the early days of *xocōlātl*, the drink has become a tradition in dozens of cultures. At Angelina café in Paris, for instance, you can indulge in *chocolat chaud* served in a delicate cup alongside a bowl of whipped cream that you swirl in. And in Italy you'll find *cioccolata calda*, a pudding-like version thick enough to coat your biscotti.

Here are some other ways to jazz up your own cup: a dribble of maple syrup; a dash of cinnamon; a little vanilla.

However you take your hot chocolate, you'll understand why the Aztecs called it a gift from the gods. 



AS KIDS SEE IT



“‘Snowman’ is so old school. I’m going for a more contemporary public art piece.”

My six-year-old grandson, Finn, to his

mom: “Have you noticed that Dad comes here every evening?”

His mom: “That’s because he lives here.”

Finn: “Are you okay with that?”

—ANNA MILLER, *Hamilton, Ont.*

We have always had an artificial Christmas tree during the holidays. One year, I took my four-year-old with me to the bank. While standing in

line, my son pointed to the real Christmas tree standing in the corner of the office and said loudly, “Look, Mommy, they don’t have a real tree.”

—APRIL DE MARCO, *Nanose Bay, B.C.*

Following my divorce, I started dating again. A man I had been seeing for a while came over and met my five-year-old daughter for the first time. When I introduced them, the first

One time I was on lunch supervision at my school and a young teacher was wearing a very nice black-and-white dress. Suddenly I heard one of the kids say, “You look like a cow!” It was not meant to be mean, but it sure was funny.

—MARION, *Edmonton*

thing she said was, “Nice to meet you, and I hope you know you aren’t here for a sleepover.”

—JUDITH McLENNAN, *Guelph, Ont.*

I overheard my five-year-old granddaughter saying this in her bedtime prayers one Christmas Day: “Thank you, Jesus. Your birthday rocked!”

—PAM CIVILS

While playing a guessing game with my three kids:

Seven-year-old: “It’s an animal.”

Five-year-old: “Does it have three legs?”

Nine-year-old: “Well, that was a waste of a question.”

—LORNA WINGROVE, *Maple Ridge, B.C.*

At the start of Grade 4, my nine-year-old declared to me that he intended to be the class clown this year. Not quite happy with his decision—but still trying to be the cool parent—I got him some joke books, googled some cool kid stand-up videos and had him practise some jokes so he

could “perform well” as the class comedian. With the pressure of it all, he totally forgot about wanting to be funny.

—RUMMANA A., *Windsor, Ont.*

There was a kindergarten boy who kept forgetting the teacher’s name, which was Mackney. So the teacher explained, “It’s ‘Mac,’ as in ‘McDonald’s,’ and ‘knee,’ like your knee.” The boy said, “Okay, Ms. Big Mac-knee!”

—CONNIE, *Derwent, Alta.*

One day, a toddler put her shoes on by herself. Her mother noticed the right shoe was on the left foot, and vice versa. She said, “Honey, your shoes are on the wrong feet.”

The little girl looked up at her with a raised eyebrow and said, “Don’t kid me, Mom. I know they’re my feet.”

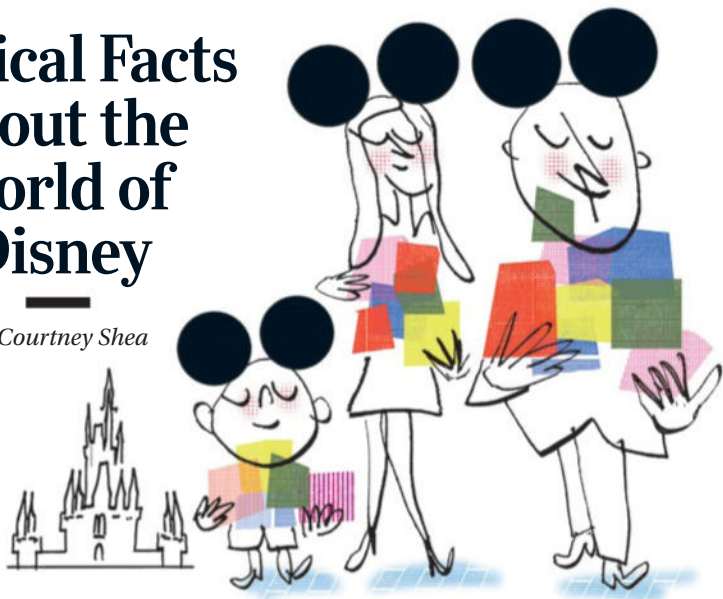
—BARTHELEMY PETRO, *Portland, Ont.*

Send us your funny stories! You could earn \$50 and be featured in the magazine. See page 3 or rd.ca/joke for details.

13 THINGS

Magical Facts About the World of Disney

BY Courtney Shea



1 DISNEY TURNED 100 this year, and it looks a lot different from the tiny animation studio it once was. Walter Elias Disney and his brother Roy originally launched the Disney Brothers Cartoon Studio with a series of short films about a girl and her cat. Today, the Walt Disney Company is, after Apple, the world's second-largest multinational mass-media and entertainment conglomerate. In the century that it's been making films, Disney has earned 135 Oscars. Walt Disney

himself holds the record for the most Academy Awards earned by an individual (22).

2 MICKEY MOUSE, created in 1928, was not the first Disney character (that distinction belongs to Oswald the Lucky Rabbit), but he is certainly the most popular: Mickey was the first animated character to earn a star on Hollywood's Walk of Fame, in 1978 (his 50th birthday), and according to market researchers, he is more famous among children

globally than Santa Claus. The iconic “mouse ears” remain Disney’s most popular piece of merchandise, with annual sales of US\$3 million.

3 IN A case of life imitating art, the voice actors behind Mickey and Minnie met and fell in love while on the job. Wayne Allwine voiced Mickey from 1977 to 2009—a record 32 years in the role. He met Russi Taylor, the voice behind Minnie, in 1988, and the two were married from 1991 until Allwine’s death in 2009.

4 *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs*, which hit theatres in 1937, was Disney’s first full-length film and the first ever animated feature made in full colour and with sound. It took three years to produce and was three times over budget, for a total cost of US\$1.5 million. Insiders even nicknamed the project “Disney’s Folly.” But it paid off: The film earned more than US\$8 million during its initial release.

5 FRESH OFF this success at age 37, Walt purchased a new home for his parents in 1938, but tragically, faulty wiring led to the death of his mother, Flora, from carbon monoxide poisoning. One popular fan theory is that this intense loss is the reason for the “dead mother phenomenon” in films such as *Bambi*, *The Jungle Book*, *The Little Mermaid*, *Beauty and the Beast* and many others.

6 ACCORDING TO suitably cinematic lore, the body of Walt Disney was cryogenically frozen following his death in 1966 at the age of 65. The rumour, first reported in a tabloid called *The National Spotlite*, even spawned a related conspiracy theory that the 2013 hit *Frozen* was so named to redirect internet searches about the founder’s final resting place. Plenty of people, including Disney’s daughter, have confirmed that Walt was cremated, but the internet just won’t “Let It Go.”

7 THE MARVEL UNIVERSE is one of Disney’s highest-profile acquisitions, purchased in 2009 for US\$4 billion and now worth more than US\$59 billion. Surprisingly, studio entertainment (movies) account for just 11 percent of Disney’s total revenue. Television and media networks (Disney owns ABC, ESPN, FX and National Geographic, among others) are the biggest money-makers at 35 percent, followed by theme parks and merchandise at 33 percent. Streaming services (Disney+) account for 21 percent.

8 THE IDEA for a theme park was originally conceived as “Mickey Mouse Park” on a 3.2 hectare lot, but when Disneyland opened in 1955 it stretched over 64 hectares. Within the first 10 weeks, the California-based park had welcomed one million visitors. Collectively, Disney

theme parks—with international locations in Tokyo, Paris, Hong Kong and Shanghai—welcome more than 115 million visitors each year.

9 BENEATH MANY Disney parks is a network of interconnected tunnels for the transportation of staff and merchandise—a brainwave of Walt himself, who was irked after spotting costumed characters in the wrong themed areas while making their way to their intended location. The original and largest system of these tunnels exists at the Magic Kingdom in Orlando, extending across 3.6 hectares and costing more to build than the theme park itself.

10 DISNEYLAND's Space Mountain in California, which was constructed in 1975, was designed in consultation with a NASA astronaut and cost US\$18 million to build (more than the cost to construct the entire park just 20 years earlier). And if you were among the first visitors to ride Pirates of the Caribbean in 1967, those skeletons and skulls weren't just props but real human remains acquired from the UCLA Medical Center. Once fake skeleton technology improved, the remains were replaced (and given a proper burial).

11 WORKING AT Disneyland in California has been a launch-pad for many celebrities.

Steve Martin honed his sleight-of-hand skills at Merlin's Magic Shop in Fantasyland, Kevin Costner worked as a skipper on the Jungle Cruise and Robin Williams performed as a mime on Main Street.

12 THE SUCCESS of 2003's *Finding Nemo* produced a less than picture-perfect side effect when kids started “freeing” their pet fish by flushing them down the toilet, leading to an uptick in emergency plumbing calls across the U.S. Other “don't try this at home” trends included a rash of amphibian kissing (and a spike in child salmonella cases) following 2009's *The Princess and the Frog*, and the *Guardians of the Galaxy* TikTok challenge that encouraged riders of the Mission: Breakout ride at Disney California Adventure Park to improperly adjust their seatbelts to increase airtime.

13 DISNEY CHARACTERS have often been inspired by real people: Jessica Rabbit was a tribute to '60s pin-up Rita Hayworth. Illustrators looked at photos of then-teenaged actress Alyssa Milano to create Ariel in *The Little Mermaid*. The vultures in *The Jungle Book* were inspired by another fab four: the Beatles. Aladdin's toothy grin comes direct from Tom Cruise. And the titular trash compactor in *Wall-E* is rumoured to be named in honour of none other than Walter Elias Disney. 

QUOTABLE QUOTES

A random series of events led to your position in life. It's a reminder that we ought to have some humility about what we've accomplished.

—Malcolm Gladwell, AUTHOR AND JOURNALIST, ON CBC RADIO



THE JOY IS IN BEING ABLE TO DO SOMETHING THAT, MAYBE A DAY PRIOR, YOU WEREN'T.

—Sarah-Ève Pelletier, CANADA'S SPORTS INTEGRITY COMMISSIONER AND RETIRED ATHLETE, IN MACLEAN'S

Things don't always have to be grand gestures to be change-making.

—Winnie Truong, ARTIST, IN THE KIT

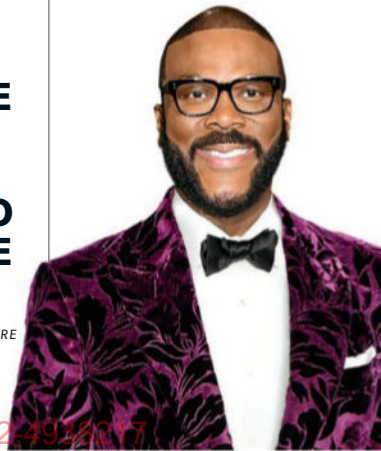


THE MORE YOU ENGAGE, THE MORE YOU LEARN ABOUT DIFFERENT WAYS THAT PEOPLE BELIEVE AND WORSHIP, THE MORE YOU CAN SIT NEXT TO ANYONE AND BE A NEIGHBOUR.

—Jennifer Garner, ACTOR, IN ALLURE

WHEN YOU'VE BEEN GIVEN A LOT, YOU HAVE TO DO A LOT.

—Tyler Perry, ACTOR, FILMMAKER AND PLAYWRIGHT, IN AARP THE MAGAZINE





The Best Gift I Ever Received



Sometimes the simplest presents are the most meaningful. Here, *RD* readers from around the world reflect on the gifts they have never forgotten.

PHOTOGRAPH BY KAILIE MANDEL



MY BROTHER GIFTED ME a beautiful heart-shaped pendant for my 16th birthday. It became a prized possession, and over the years, I wore it only on special occasions. One day, 30 years later, it went missing. I was devastated. I looked high and low, but it was nowhere to be found.

The following Christmas, my husband and children were unusually anxious for me to open one particular gift. It turns out my husband had found my beloved necklace. I cried when I opened it. Now each time I wear it, I make sure to put it safely back in my treasure box.

Julie Oliver, St. Catharines, Ont.

THE BEST GIFT I ever received was learning, as a young adult, about my family history: I discovered that my father's side of the family was Métis. From that point on, I vowed to learn more and became involved with my Métis community, and my husband supported my commitment to be part of a world rich in history. I am a strong, proud Métis woman. I wear a small silver feather close to my heart. It was given to me by my husband.

Teen Boschma, Victoria, B.C.

AS A CHILD, I loved to write. One Christmas I asked for a typewriter, but instead of a gift to unwrap, I was given a "voucher" for a typewriter that never materialized. When I grew up, I considered whether to go into journalism or psychology. I finally opted for the latter—and I love my profession. Perhaps not getting that typewriter was the real

gift: a sign that I should forget about writing and pursue psychology instead.

Amira Bueno, Madrid, Spain

MY SISTER REUNITED ME with a man to whom I was once married. She understood the reasons for our divorce and knew that we had separated not because we didn't love each other but because of life circumstances.

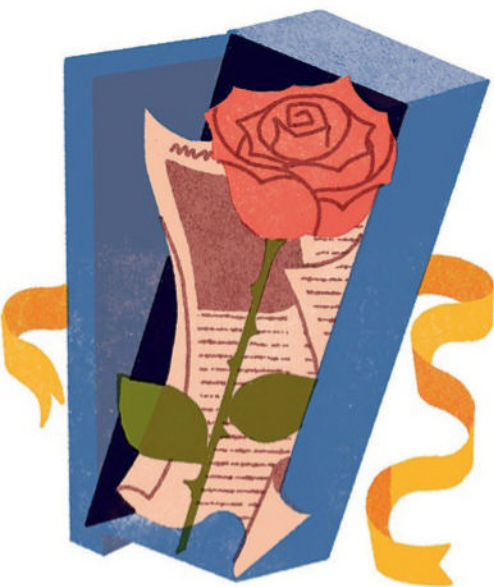
After our divorce, we had both gone on to have rewarding relationships with other people, but after 30 years, he was widowed and I was divorced for a second time. I hadn't kept in touch with him, but my sister had, so she decided to play Cupid.

To make a long story short, we fell in love again. We've been married for nine years now, and he—and our relationship—is the best thing that could have come my way. It is probably one of the few instances that I am happy and grateful for someone meddling in my life, even though I was skeptical and a little peeved at the time!

Debbie Browne, Spruce Grove, Alta.

WHEN MY SON, ROBERT, was 12 years old, he got his first job, delivering newspapers. He was awake by 5:30 every morning and went out the door before the rest of us even managed to stir.

The weekend before Mother's Day, he asked me if he could go shopping by himself. I thought he had shown a sense of responsibility by managing his first job so well, and I knew he wanted to shop for a Mother's Day gift for me, so I agreed.



A couple of hours later, he came home empty-handed. "Do you know how expensive a dozen roses are?" he said, and went to his room. My first thought was that he was learning the value of money. My second was that I would not be getting roses for Mother's Day.

A week later, there was a knock on the door. It was a florist who, with a twinkle in his eye, handed me a long, slender box. I opened it, thinking it was from my husband. Nestled among mounds of white tissue paper was a single long-stemmed red rose. The card read, "Happy Mother's Day. Love, Robert."

Many years have passed, and Robert is now married with a family of his own. He lives far away from me but still remembers to send me a gift on special

occasions. I always treasure his gifts and have kept them all, but none is as precious to me as that rose. Although long gone, it is nestled close to my heart.

Marilyn Doyle, Dartmouth, N.S.

MY MOST MEMORABLE GIFT wasn't necessarily the best one I ever received. I grew up in the small village of Frontier, Saskatchewan, and attended Bethel Lutheran Church with my family. Each year, the church held a gift exchange. In 1959, when I was 13 years old, an oddly shaped gift was left under the tree by Mr. and Mrs. Rude.

The package was about 30 centimetres wide, a metre long and completely flat with rounded corners. Pant stretchers! There could be no question! But surely the Rudes wouldn't give pant stretchers as a Christmas gift? This must be a gift for one of the older folks in the congregation, I thought.

My mother used pant stretchers, as did many other homemakers in that era. A wonderful invention before the age of perma-pressed clothes, the device was inserted into the legs of trousers that were still wet from the laundry, ensuring that the pants would dry without a wrinkle *and* that they'd have a built-in crease at the front and back of each leg. The Rudes obviously thought they were a very practical gift.

When it came time for the gift exchange, all eyes were glued to the pant stretchers, wondering who would be receiving this unusual gift. Sure enough, the pant stretchers were for

me. I received them as nonchalantly as a cool teenager could and slipped them under the pew in the hopes of avoiding any embarrassing conversation with my buddies seated next to me.

Unfortunately, I never properly thanked the Rudes for the well-intended gift. I like to think they forgave me for my lapse of good manners.

Obert Frigstad, Saskatoon

ABOUT 10 YEARS AGO, I was going through a difficult time, as I had lost my father and moved my mom in with me. I was feeling sad about the death of my dad and stressed about having to care for my sick mother, all while working a full-time job. I decided to get a Frenchton puppy to help get me out of the

house, motivate me to go for walks and for something to cuddle.

While I was waiting for “Freddy” to arrive, my son and his wife stopped by my house for a visit and gave me a lovely card with a soother attached to it. I laughed and said, “You guys are funny. Puppies don’t use a soother.”

Then I realized that the card was actually a baby announcement. While I had been awaiting the arrival of my fur-baby, they were expecting a human baby—my first grandchild!

Nine years later, Freddy is still with me, giving me unconditional love every day. My granddaughter is nearly nine, and I’ve also been blessed with a grandson. Though I have since lost my mom, the love of my children, my



grandchildren and my fur-baby have gotten me through the difficult times, and I have never felt alone.

Bernice LeDuc, Port Alberni, B.C.

I WAS TALKING TO my grandson, Youri, about what we wanted most in life. “I’d like to see penguins,” he said. I replied, “That’s funny! I had the same dream when I was your age. Why penguins?”

Neither he nor I knew. Perhaps because this exotic animal was unknown to us. The nearest penguins lived in South America; we live in France.

As time went by, Youri and I continued to talk about penguins, as if to remind ourselves that we should always make our dreams come true. Then, I received a vacation postcard from him. On the back he had written that the place was nice, but it lacked penguins. That triggered something in me. I dipped into my savings and said to him, “Come on, let’s go and see them!”

At the time, I was 81 and Youri was 14. We set off together, all on our own. From Buenos Aires, we crossed Patagonia by bus, all the way to Tierra del Fuego. Youri looked after me every step of the way, from making sure I got a good room at the hotel to translating the menu for me with the little Spanish he spoke. Along the way, some French tourists said to me, “You’re lucky to have such a grandson!” For me, my grandson’s presence made this trip the greatest gift of all.

We saw the penguins on the banks of the Beagle Channel, near Ushuaia, Argentina. In the middle of a colony, an

adult penguin emerged from the water and approached its young, spitting out a mouthful of fish it had just caught. It looked exhausted. The young pounced to eat the fish, and the adult lay on its side, eyes half closed, looking satisfied with its work.

These days, I feel like that penguin when I look at Youri, who is now 20 and knows he can dream big.

Monique Arnoult, Pau, France

MY TURTLE, KASSIOPEIA, is almost exactly as old as I am—nearly 45. I was six when I fell in love with the little turtle in a pet shop, and I was overjoyed when my parents gave her to me. The journey home with my new pet is one of my favourite childhood memories.

I now share her with my two sons, who spoil her with small slices of her favourite foods: cucumbers, apples and pears. I look forward to every spring, when she wakes up from hibernation.

Tobias Deeg, Leutenbach, Germany

ALTHOUGH MY HUSBAND and I received many useful and lovely gifts at our wedding, there was one given by a dear friend that transcended them all. At first it really seemed unassuming and too practical. But as a young, inexperienced and completely overwhelmed woman in the kitchen, it turned out to be a lifesaver. I’m talking about a cookbook called *Better Homes and Gardens Complete Step-By-Step Cook Book*, which not only provided me with recipes but taught me how to prepare tasty meals.



I learned techniques—such as how to braise meat, how to debone chicken and how to make a lattice-top pie—that have served me well for nearly 43 years. It remains my favourite cookbook, and I still regularly consult it. I love it so much that I made an exhaustive search to find a copy to give to my daughter when she got married.

Every time I open my cookbook, I think of the friend who gave it to me.

Karen Woosnam, Wynndel, B.C.

ONE GIFT I'LL ALWAYS REMEMBER was a simple reminder from my daughter, Hannah, of the good things in life.

It happened 16 years ago. Hannah, then 10 years old, hadn't been feeling well for a couple of weeks. Our family

doctor ordered some tests, but before the results came back, things took an alarming turn. Hannah started vomiting and her breathing became laboured. My wife, Cathy, and I rushed her to our local hospital, where doctors quickly determined that she had Type 1 diabetes and was in a life-threatening state called ketoacidosis.

As the medical team scrambled to stabilize Hannah, I held her hand and wondered if she was going to survive. After what seemed like hours, she started to respond to the treatment, and the doctors transferred her to a children's hospital with an ICU and a diabetes unit.

Hannah recovered quickly and during her stay in the hospital gamely took on the job of monitoring her blood-sugar levels and injecting insulin several times a day. Cathy and I, on the other hand, were haunted by the realization that our lives were never going to be the same.

Amid all the talk of finger-prick blood tests, counting carbohydrates and the ever-present danger of hypoglycemia, one of the diabetes educators told us that children, eager to fit in and be "normal," often pushed back against the burden of managing their diabetes when they became teenagers.

One day that week in the hospital, a nurse came in to watch Hannah inject herself. Holding the insulin pen over her abdomen, Hannah looked up at her mother and I and said, "I'm getting really sick of this." I held my breath and looked at Cathy; this was going to be

even harder than we had imagined. Then, with a grin, Hannah said, “Just kidding!”

We laughed long and hard, probably more than Hannah’s innocuous joke deserved. After a week of intense stress and anxiety, it felt like a dam had broken. We wanted to make this moment of happiness last.

Hannah had reminded us that, despite everything, she was still our sweet, fun-loving girl. Yes, this new reality was going to be difficult, but there would still be joy and laughter.

In a sense, she had given us back our lives. That’s a gift I’ll always cherish.

Peter Dockrill, Leura, Australia

IN 1962, WHEN I WAS six years old, my mother gave me a beautiful gold watch for Christmas. Being a kid, I went straight for the bigger presents, and it wasn’t until later that I unwrapped the small box and learned what was inside. Eventually, I grew to see the value of the gift and wore it for years.

The watch hasn’t worked for a long time now, but I held on to it for sentimental reasons. About two years ago, I checked out how much it would cost to repair it: more than \$300. It wasn’t worth doing. These days, my five-year-old

granddaughter loves to wear it—which is fine, because she can’t yet tell time.

Anita Morton, Kelowna, B.C.

THE GREATEST GIFT I ever received was my marriage. I thought that such happiness would never be mine. Before I met my husband, I believed I would always be alone because of my disability. I’m in a wheelchair.

I was 22 when my body was broken by a speeding truck that slammed into my car. It was February 3, 1993. I underwent 45 surgeries and caught a serious infection in hospital. My body deteriorated further. Then, in 2007, after respiratory failure and septicemia, doctors warned my family that I was dying. I survived, but at the cost of great suffering.

In 2010, I volunteered with an association that sponsors children. That was where, one year later, I met another volunteer named Patrice, a man with a radiant smile. For several months, he accompanied me by car on the trips from my home to the association. We talked about everything and anything, and felt at home together.

One day, we decided to go to the seaside, an hour-and-a-half drive away, for lunch. We haven’t been apart since.

Sylvie Huchet, La Bruyère, France 



Universal Currency

**Time is the coin of your life. It is the only coin you have,
and only you can determine how it will be spent.
Be careful lest you let other people spend it for you.**

CARL SANDBURG

Canadian telecom providers will soon “sunset” 3G networks in favour of faster 5G. Here’s what you need to know.



NO SIGNAL

BY *Anna-Kaisa Walker*



THE STORM SEEMED to come out of the blue. In the small cottage-country village of Cloyne, in eastern Ontario, residents started that sunny Saturday—May 21, 2022—in a festive mood, gathering outside the community hall for a trunk sale, barbecue and live music.

But by early afternoon, violent winds began to pick up as heavy rain fell. Some partygoers left and others scrambled into the town hall as a derecho—a fast-moving thunderstorm that causes widespread wind damage—ripped through town.

Late that morning, a series of emergency mobile smartphone alerts had been issued by Environment and Climate Change Canada, warning of a wall of wind and rain barreling toward eastern Ontario from the southwest. But the shrill alarm tone and emergency text messages sent from Alert Ready, Canada's emergency alert system, hadn't reached many at the Cloyne gathering. While infrastructure upgrades have been underway since 2021, the most consistent access in the area comes from a 3G (third-generation) cellular network. "We didn't get the message," says township councillor Ken Hook.

Like much of our daily life, Canada's Alert Ready system operates on the assumption that Canadians have good cellular service—and these days, that means something better than 3G. To receive Alert Ready messages on your mobile phone (alerts are also broadcast over radio and television), you must have access to at least a 4G/LTE network

(the current standard for data transmission on most smartphones) *and* have a cellphone that is compatible with that network—typically one that's no more than six to nine years old. While it's easy enough (though not so cheap) to upgrade to a newer cellphone, your network access depends on where you live, with rural areas more likely to rely on 3G alone or a patchwork of 3G and 4G/LTE networks.

THE 3G SHUTDOWN COULD AFFECT MEDICAL-ALERT DEVICES, VEHICLE SOS BUTTONS AND MORE.

Now, that connection is at a crossroads: Over the next few years, Canada's major telecommunications providers—Bell, Rogers and Telus—are expected to "sunset" the 20-year-old 3G infrastructure to save money and free up resources for newer, faster 5G networks. That means older cellphones will no longer work, and some remote communities could become cellular dead zones, even if they previously had service.

For Cloyne and other small communities that still have unreliable network connections—including Brooklyn, N.S., where Alert Ready messages warning of a flash flood failed to reach many residents in July 2023—being left off the emergency-alert list is just a taste of

what could happen if cellular networks aren't upgraded.

And it's not just your cellphone connection that's at risk. The shutdown could also affect any Canadian who has a home-security alarm, medical-alert device, vehicle SOS button or other device that still transmits data over 3G. Unless people upgrade their devices to newer models, they could suddenly stop working, leaving seniors, homeowners and drivers unable to contact loved ones or call for help in an emergency.

Once heralded as cutting-edge, 3G ushered in the smartphone revolution when Rogers and Apple launched the iPhone 3G in Canada in 2008, allowing users to access the internet on their mobile phones. Now, like its 1G and 2G predecessors, 3G is headed for the technology dustbin.

In the U.S., major American service providers T-Mobile, AT&T and Verizon finished "sunseting" the last of their 3G networks at the end of 2022. Experts say Canada will be following suit. And while we don't know exactly when, it's essential that we get ready.

OUR GREAT DIGITAL DIVIDE

With its vast geography and unevenly distributed population, Canada's "digital divide" is nothing new. While every province has at least 99.9 percent coverage for urban residents, that's not the case for rural residents. And First Nations reserves have the lowest levels of 4G/LTE coverage, at less than 88 percent.

As of 2021, 46,000 Canadian house-

holds relied solely on 3G networks, while 76,000 had no connection at all, according to the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe. While telecommunications providers are building new towers, they're more likely to focus on major cities and highly populated areas. That leaves the various levels of government to fill in the gaps.

In Nova Scotia, when four people died after being swept away during a flash flood in July 2023, politicians again voiced long-held concerns about cellular dead zones and an inability to contact emergency services. During a visit to an emergency command centre in Brooklyn, N.S., Deputy Prime Minister Chrystia Freeland said, "It's not acceptable for people not to be able to get emergency alerts." She then called on the Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission (CRTC) to address the issue.

To solve the problem, financial incentives must be offered to private carriers to expand up-to-date network infrastructure in sparsely populated areas, reports the Auditor General's office. With a limited number of subscribers, telecommunications companies are reluctant to pay the high cost of leasing land, building new towers, hauling equipment and laying fibre-optic cable over vast expanses.

Recognizing that access to the internet is a basic utility—like electricity, water and heat—the CRTC aims to ensure high-speed internet access to 100 percent of Canadians by 2030. "[Internet

and voice services] are an important part of Canada's public safety infrastructure," said CRTC chair Ian Scott in a 2022 press release. In 2016, the CRTC established the Broadband Fund, a \$675-million, five-year commitment to improve high-speed internet and wireless services in underserved communities.

5G IS FASTER AND BETTER

While satellite technology promises a tantalizing solution to the connectivity gap, offering fast and dependable (but expensive) internet in previously underserved rural areas, it doesn't offer cellular service—at least not yet. (Starlink, a subsidiary of SpaceX, owned by Tesla billionaire Elon Musk, is one example.)

Meanwhile, in major cities across the country, cutting-edge 5G networks are already widely used. And while 4G/LTE is expected to be around for a while, 5G is the future. It can deliver download speeds 10 times faster than 4G/LTE and more than 50 times faster than 3G. The increased capacity and lower latency—the time it takes for a message to be sent and received—allow users to stream high-definition video on their phones and could enable self-driving cars, improve traffic safety in cities and allow for advanced health-care diagnostics.

So why can't 3G and 5G coexist? The reason is that the radio-frequency spectrum—which the government licenses to telecommunications providers—is the range of invisible electromagnetic airwaves that transmit all forms of wireless communication, including your local

radio station, your cellphone and your home Wi-Fi. And there is only so much of that spectrum available.

Plus, because of the new networks' higher speed and data capabilities, they require more bandwidth on the spectrum. That means that the bandwidth used by 3G technology may need to be freed up, as has been done in the U.S.

“WITH FEWER 3G USERS, SHUTTING DOWN THE NETWORK IS A BUSINESS AND ECONOMIC DECISION.”

Also, maintaining 3G, 4G/LTE and 5G networks concurrently is very expensive for carriers, especially over a huge geographic area like Canada, says Mai Vu, professor of electrical engineering at Tufts University in Massachusetts. “Because 3G uses different equipment and algorithms, providers have to run two entirely separate systems—one for 3G and one for 4G and 5G,” says Vu.

The costs to maintain towers and hardware, power the system, pay technicians and renew spectrum licenses can be onerous. “With the number of 3G users getting smaller and smaller, shutting down the network is really a business and economic decision,” Vu says.

You can find out what network coverage your location has by going to your service provider's website and finding

it on their coverage map. The farther you are from an urban centre or a major highway, the more likely you are to be using 3G. You'll often see it as "H" or "HSPA" in your phone's status bar, which stands for high-speed packet access, another name for 3G.

At the time of this writing, Bell, Rogers and Telus would not confirm an exact date for when the 3G shutdown would begin, although some experts believe it will be by the end of 2025.

In the U.S., the now complete 3G shutdown will also affect travellers to that country. Canadians with older phones that are only compatible with 3G (see the sidebar to find out if that's yours) will find they can no longer access the internet, send texts or make calls—including 911—while travelling south of the border.

How the 3G sunset played out in the U.S. offers insight into what we might expect on this side of the border. By the end of 2022, 2.3 million U.S. mobile accounts had been disconnected. Although U.S. carriers claimed they'd been reminding customers for years to upgrade their devices, seniors and other users of older phones tend to be less tech savvy and often dismiss messages and calls from wireless carriers as marketing spam.

WHAT NEEDS AN UPGRADE?

Even if you live in an area with reliable high-speed network access, you'll need to make sure your cellphone and other devices are compatible. Things like

5G is widely used
in major cities
across Canada.



medical devices, smart meters for electricity, water and gas, and GPS systems may still operate on slower 3G. Upgrading them usually involves a change of hardware, not just a simple software update. Manufacturers should proactively reach out to customers to offer an upgrade, but in some cases, the onus may fall on consumers themselves. For the less tech-savvy among us, we may not know our devices are obsolete until it's too late.

In Canada, major carriers are already offering customers free upgrades of devices that will soon be out of date. Telus, makers of the LivingWell Companion emergency-response device, has been telling customers since mid-2022 about the need to upgrade to a 4G

DO YOU NEED A NEW PHONE?



All iPhone models 4S and older are only 3G compatible, as are the first Google Pixel and all Samsung Galaxy models older than S5. Older cell-enabled tablets and e-readers, such as the first and second iPad and early Kindle models (up to and including the 2010 model), also rely on 3G to download data.

You can check which networks your device has access to by opening "Settings," then "Network Settings" and "Mobile Network." If you don't see 4G/LTE or 5G in the drop-down menu of networks, chances are your phone is only 3G capable.

You can also dial *#06# to display your phone's 15-digit international mobile equipment identity (IMEI) number, then enter it at www.imei.info to see your phone's specifications, including networks.

or higher cellular-enabled model. Available as a pendant or smartwatch, the device can detect falls and automatically dial a 24-hour operator for help, providing a valuable sense of security and independence to seniors living alone.

Last year, Telus identified almost 2,000 customers who were still using older models of the pendant and contacted them via email, phone and mail, says Chris Engst, Telus Health's vice-president of consumer health.

"Almost all of the customers we reached out to accepted the free upgrade, which we sent out to them by mail, with support over the phone," he says. "It was especially important to make the process seamless." According to the Public Health Agency of Canada, 20 to 30 percent of Canadians over 65 have a serious fall each year.

Owners of older home-security systems, which normally connect to the alarm company's call centre via land-line, should check if their hardware uses a 3G backup cellular communicator to contact a monitoring centre in the event of a power failure or an intruder cutting phone lines. If you haven't been contacted by your home-security supplier, be sure to get in touch to schedule an appointment with a technician.

You may also need to get your car's software and/or hardware upgraded. At least 150 common car models—manufactured from 2010 to as late as 2021—come equipped with an SOS button or crash-notification system that dials emergency services via 3G. If you drive one of these vehicles—such as the Volkswagen Golf, Hyundai Elantra or Honda Accord—you'll need to contact your dealer to find out what fixes are available and if they can offer you refunds or incentives.

If you use an older smartphone and are hesitant to trade it in—or you do not own a smartphone—you're not alone. HelpAge Canada, a non-profit that advocates for more inclusion and quality of life for older adults, offers "Dig-It" digital-literacy workshops at community centres and retirement homes. Participants can explore tablets and smartphones in a supportive environment, where seniors learn from each other about how to manage their devices and stay safe online.

SLOWLY, TELECOM GIANTS ARE WORKING WITH GOVERNMENTS TO CLOSE THE DIGITAL DIVIDE IN CANADA.

"There's sometimes a confidence barrier, when people assume they're too old to learn anything new," says Raza Mirza, director of national partnerships and knowledge mobilization at HelpAge Canada. "But older adults have no lack of motivation to use technology once they get comfortable with it."

If a smartphone seems too overwhelming, many carriers offer low-cost talk-and-text "dumbphones"—like the TCL Flip or the ZTE Cymbal 2—that are even making a comeback among young people seeking to unplug from social media. But unlike their early-2000s ancestors, these new simpler phones

are 4G/LTE-enabled, so you won't have to worry about being sunsetted anytime soon.

SLOWLY, CANADA'S TELECOM giants are working with governments to close the digital divide, town by town, road by road, with the goal of giving all Canadians online access by 2030.

Near Cloyne, the future is already looking brighter. A non-profit called the Eastern Ontario Regional Network (EORN) recently secured \$300 million in funding to improve cellular service in the region, thanks to a partnership with various levels of government and Rogers, the provider that was selected through a competitive bidding process. So far, more than 300 towers have been upgraded to support 5G, and 44 new towers have been built across EORN's 50,000-square-kilometre territory.

"Besides economic development and tourism, our work is also important for public safety," says Jason St. Pierre, EORN's CEO. "Not only will people be able to call 911, but paramedics will be able to triage with emergency-room physicians on their way to the hospital over video conference."

Residents in Cloyne hope the missed alerts, dropped calls and dead zones will soon be things of the past. "It's been a fight for years and years," says councillor Hook. "I'm glad we're finally getting the connection we need."

But it's up to each of us to make sure we'll be able to use the latest communications networks.





Charity isn't only about big donations. Here are the innovative ways people are helping those in need—even when money is tight.

Unique Ways to Give

BY *Penny Caldwell*

FOR ABOUT TWO HOURS a week when my kids were little, I spent one-on-one time at their school with children who had reading difficulties. The measurable reward for volunteers like me was the kids' growing confidence and delight as words on the page started to make sense. Hugs were a bonus.

Fortunately for non-profit organizations, the feel-good reward of helping others is universal. Nearly a quarter of all adults worldwide volunteer and about 35 percent of individuals give money to charities, according to the World Giving Index, which includes data for 119 countries. It also reports that since 2021, the rate of giving has increased among the wealthiest nations.

That's a good thing because in today's cost-of-living crisis, the demand on charities is greater than ever. Here are a dozen innovative ways people around the world are giving back.

RICE BUCKET CHALLENGE, INDIA

Perhaps you've heard of the Ice Bucket Challenge, a social media initiative that started in the United States and spread around the world, raising a whopping \$115 million dollars for ALS (or Lou Gehrig's disease) research. The idea is to take a video of yourself dumping a bucket of ice water over your head, then nominate three more people to do the

same. In some versions, the participant donates \$100 if they don't complete the challenge.

"I did think it was an amazing way to garner awareness of ALS and raise funds," recalls Manju Kalanidhi, a journalist based in Hyderabad, India. But it didn't make sense in her country, where water is scarce and too precious to waste, even for a good cause. Then in 2014, it hit her: Why not help make it a *Rice Bucket Challenge* to fight hunger?

"I gave a bucket of rice to someone in need and clicked a photograph. Then I shared it on Facebook and said, 'This is a Rice Bucket Challenge. Why don't you do it, too?'" To participate, you



Rice Bucket Challenge, India.

COURTESY OF RICE BUCKET CHALLENGE TRUST

simply donate a bucket of rice to an individual or family—no, it's not dumped—take a photo and post it on social media with a message encouraging others to do the same. Or people can donate through a website set up for the cause.

"I don't have a big army of volunteers, but I do have donations and I have people who need food, so I put them together." To date, Kalanidhi says the Rice Bucket Challenge has raised millions of rupees and distributed an estimated 35,000 kilograms of rice.

#DOGSELFIE, ENGLAND

Social media swept another charitable effort to success in the United Kingdom, where people posted photos of themselves with their beloved canines in support of the Manchester & Cheshire Dogs Home after a fire ripped through the facility and 60 dogs died. The initiative encouraged people to donate to the shelter, which raised the equivalent of around \$3 million to rebuild.

DONATION FENCE, GERMANY

For the past six years, the non-profit association Hamburger Gabenzaun e.V. (Hamburg Give Fence) has encouraged locals in that city to hang sealed bags of donated clothing, hygiene items, sleeping bags and non-perishable food on a fence near Hamburg's central train station. Though construction that began in May 2023 has forced the group to look for a new donation-fence location, its initiative will continue.

FOOD ANGEL, HONG KONG

Food insecurity has become a global problem for families as the cost of food increases. In Hong Kong, the people behind the Food Angel program collect 45 tonnes of edible surplus food each week that would otherwise be disposed of by grocery stores, restaurants and individuals. These items include fresh fruits and vegetables and other perishables that wouldn't normally be accepted in a food-donation box.

The impact is significant: Volunteers make and serve around 20,000 meals and distribute more than 11,000 other meals and food packs every day.

FRIGOS SOLIDAIRES, FRANCE

Imagine if those in need could help themselves to food with anonymity and dignity. Frigos Solidaires, or Solidarity Fridges, was started with that aim by Dounia Mebtoul, a young restaurateur in Paris. Now, 130 fridges installed in front of places such as shops and schools offer free food to the hungry across France. A similar program in Sweden is run by the volunteers of Solikyl, a food-rescue organization that encourages stores, hotels, restaurants and individuals to donate food rather than throw it out.

MOBILE SHOWER FOR WOMEN, GERMANY

Offering services where they're needed is also key to the success of a blue-and-white travelling shower mobilized,

literally, by the Sozialdienst Katholischer Frauen e.V. Berlin (Social Service for Catholic Women in Berlin). The Duschmobil vehicle operates in eight locations across the city, six days a week, providing private hot showers to homeless women. Social workers operating it also offer donated clothing and toiletries, as well as coffee and conversation, to women who are struggling.

LITTLE FREE LIBRARIES, VARIOUS COUNTRIES

Another visible example of the gift network in action are Little Free Libraries (LFLs), which sit atop eye-level posts. Worldwide, 120 countries host LFLs, most of them in Canada and the U.S. All you need to do is build (or buy) a box and fill it with books you've finished reading. Registering your LFL with the organization lets avid readers find its location through their mobile app. The more creative LFLs look like real libraries, schoolhouses or replicas of the homes behind them.

Anyone can take, leave or exchange a book from the box. The goal is to promote literacy, but community-building, as neighbours connect, is a happy bonus.

STUFF A BUS, CANADA AND THE U.S.

In Edmonton, the transit service parks vehicles in front of local supermarkets for its annual "Stuff a Bus" campaign



each November. Volunteers collect non-perishable food and cash donations from shoppers to fill buses bound for local food banks. Since its inception in 1995, the campaign has collected 553,000 kilograms of food and roughly half a million dollars.

Across the country to the east, St. Francis Xavier University in Antigonish, Nova Scotia, also has a Stuff the Bus campaign; it collects money and non-perishable food items to support students and local food banks.

And in Chambersburg, Pennsylvania, United Way volunteers have an annual drive to fill a yellow school bus with paper, binders and other school supplies to help local students.

TAXILUZ, SPAIN

Since 2016, taxi drivers in Madrid have devoted one evening each December

to decorating their cabs and taking the elderly, as well as children who have been hospitalized, on a two-hour tour of the city's Christmas lights. The annual event has expanded to include taxi drivers in 13 other cities in Spain. The group reports that in 2022, nearly 1,000 taxis and 3,000 seniors and kids participated.

COMMU APP, FINLAND

How do people wanting to volunteer connect with groups needing help? In 2021 in Finland, three 20-something entrepreneurs founded Commu, an app that makes it easy for individuals to offer help to those in need or to ask for help in their communities. It works in Finnish, English, Ukrainian, German and Norwegian and features a special area on the app that focuses on the needs of Ukrainian refugees in Finland.

GIVING AT THE CHECKOUT, CANADA AND THE U.S.

You've likely seen charity-donation boxes for coins and bills next to cash registers. For the last few years, people paying for their purchases with debit or credit cards have also been invited by cashiers to round up their purchases,

or to add a couple of dollars to the total bill, in support of a designated cause. This has been making it so easy to give that, in 2022 in the U.S., for example, some \$750 million was raised by 77 point-of-sale fundraising campaigns.

You don't get a tax receipt, but here's a myth-busting fact: neither does the retailer.

DONATION DOLLAR, AUSTRALIA

Motivating people to donate is the objective of a unique one-dollar coin created by the Royal Australian Mint. Featuring a green centre with a gold ripple design, the coin reminds people who find it in their change to donate it to charity. The ripples symbolize the coin's ongoing impact while it continues to circulate. According to the Royal Australian Mint, by the end of 2022, 11 million Donation Dollars had gone into circulation.

Eventually a total of 25 million coins will be released, or roughly one for every Australian. It estimates that by the end of last year, about \$2 million had been donated to charities and people or businesses in need. **R**



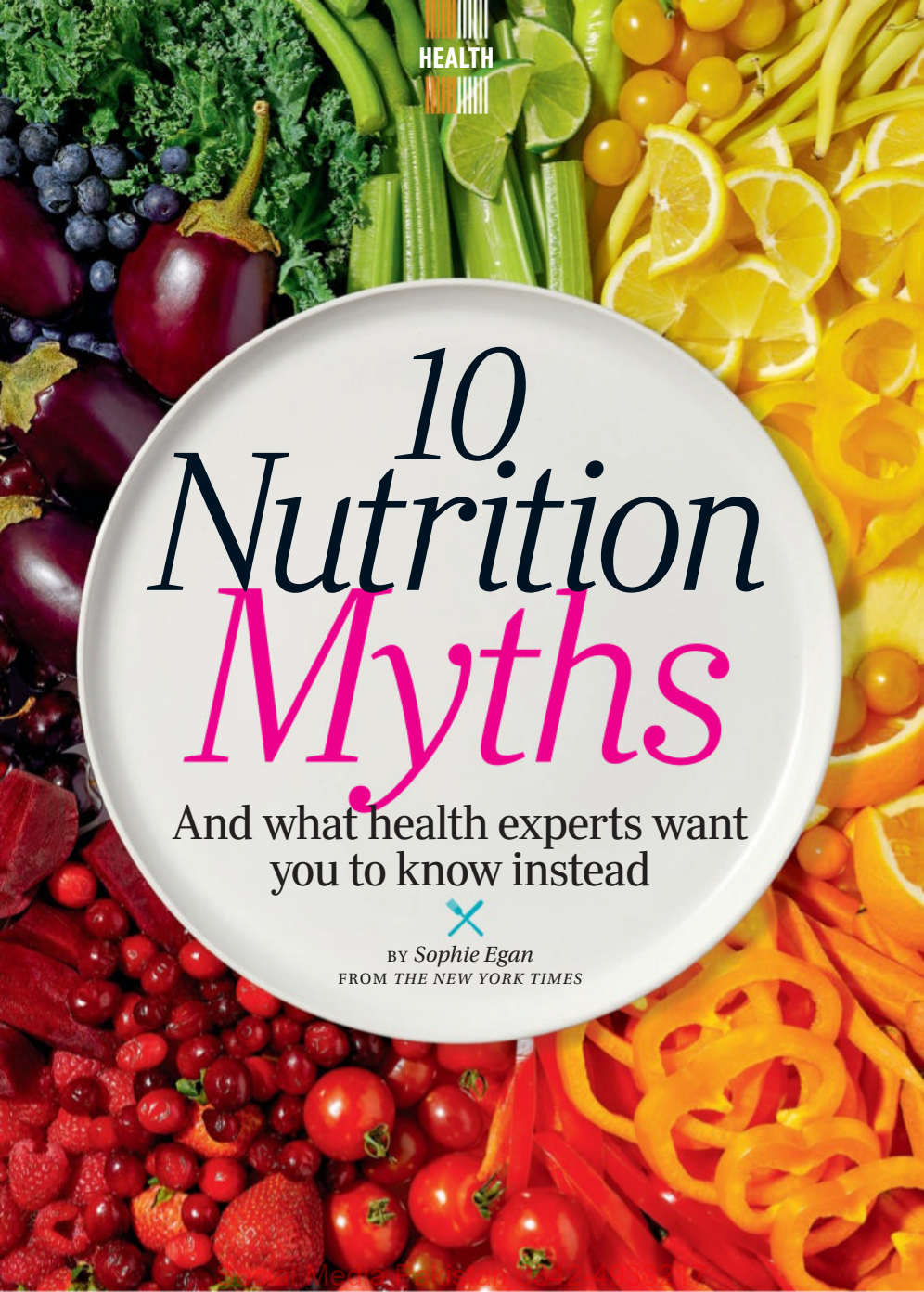
The Best-Laid Plans

Even if I knew that tomorrow the world would go to pieces,
I would still plant my apple tree.

MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR.

It does not do to leave a live dragon out of your calculations, if you live near one.

J.R.R. TOLKIEN



HEALTH

10 Nutrition Myths

And what health experts want
you to know instead



BY *Sophie Egan*
FROM THE NEW YORK TIMES

MYTH 1: Fresh fruits and vegetables are always healthier than canned, frozen or dried varieties.

► Despite the enduring belief that “fresh is best,” research has found that frozen, canned and dried fruits and vegetables can be just as nutritious as their fresh counterparts.

“They can also be a money saver and an easy way to make sure there are always fruits and vegetables available at home,” says Sara Bleich, a professor of public health policy at Harvard University.

One caveat: Some canned, frozen and dried varieties contain added sugars, saturated fats and sodium, so be sure to read nutrition labels, especially on prepared foods. Choose the ones that keep those ingredients to a minimum.

MYTH 2: All fat is bad.

► When studies published in the late 1940s found correlations between high-fat diets and high levels of cholesterol, experts reasoned that if you reduced the amount of total fats in your diet, your risk for heart disease would go down. By the 1980s, doctors, government health experts, the food industry and the media were reporting that a low-fat diet could benefit everyone, even though there was no solid evidence that doing so would prevent heart disease, obesity and other health issues.

As a result, says Vijaya Surampudi, an assistant professor of medicine at



the University of California, Los Angeles, Center for Human Nutrition, many people—and food manufacturers—replaced calories from fat with calories from refined carbohydrates such as white flour and added sugar.

“Instead of this helping us stay slim, rates of overweight and obese people went up significantly,” she says.

In reality, not all fats are bad. While certain types, including trans fats, can increase your risk for heart disease or stroke, healthy fats help reduce your risk.

Examples of those include monounsaturated fats (found in olive oil, avocados and certain nuts and seeds) and polyunsaturated fats (found in sunflower oil, walnuts, fish and flaxseed).

Good fats are also important for supplying energy, producing important hormones, supporting cell function and aiding in the absorption of some nutrients.

If you see a product labelled “fat-free,” don’t automatically assume it is healthy, Surampudi says. Instead, prioritize products with simple ingredients and no added sugars.

MYTH 3: “Calories in, calories out” is the most important factor for maintaining weight.

► It’s true that if you consume more calories than you burn, you will probably gain weight. And if you burn more calories than you consume, you will probably lose weight—at least for the short term.

But research does not suggest that eating more will result in becoming overweight or obese.

“Rather, it’s the *types* of foods we eat that may be the long-term drivers” of those conditions, says Darius Mozaffarian, a professor of nutrition and medicine at Tufts University in Massachusetts. Ultra-processed foods—refined starchy snacks, cereals, crackers, energy bars, baked goods, sodas and sweets—can lead to weight gain.

The reason for this is that they are rapidly digested, so they then flood the bloodstream with glucose, fructose and amino acids—

which the liver then converts into fat.

Instead, the best way to maintain a healthy weight is to make the shift from counting calories to prioritizing healthy eating overall. Go for quality over quantity.

MYTH 4: People with type 2 diabetes shouldn’t eat fruit.

► This myth stems from conflating fruit juices—which can raise blood sugar levels because of their high sugar and low fibre content—with whole fruits.

But research has found that this isn’t the case. Some studies show, for instance, that those who consume one serving of whole fruit per day—particularly blueberries, grapes and apples—have a lower risk of developing type 2 diabetes.

And other research suggests that if you already have type 2 diabetes, eating



whole fruits can help control your blood sugar.

It's time to bust the myth, says Linda Shiue, director of culinary medicine and lifestyle medicine at Kaiser Permanente San Francisco. She says that everyone—including those with type 2 diabetes—can really benefit from fruit's health-promoting vitamins, minerals, antioxidants and fibre.

MYTH 5: Plant beverages are healthier than dairy milk.

► Kathleen Merrigan, professor of sustainable food systems at Arizona State University and a former U.S. deputy secretary of agriculture, disagrees. She says that while the nutrition of plant-based beverages can vary, many have more added ingredients—such as sodium and added sugars, which can contribute to poor health—than cow's milk.

Consider protein: Typically, cow's milk has about eight grams of protein per 250 millilitres, whereas almond beverage typically has one or two grams in the same amount. Oat beverage usually has around two or three grams.

MYTH 6: Potatoes are bad for you.

► Potatoes have often been vilified in the nutrition community because of their high glycemic index, which means



they contain rapidly digestible carbohydrates that can spike your blood sugar. However, potatoes can actually be beneficial for health, says Daphene Altema-Johnson, a program officer of food communities and public health at Johns Hopkins University.

Potatoes are rich in vitamin C, potassium, fibre and other nutrients, especially when consumed with the skin on. They are also inexpensive and available year-round in grocery stores. The healthiest ways to prepare them include baking, boiling and air-frying.

MYTH 7: Never feed peanut products to little kids.

► For years, experts told new parents that the best way to prevent their chil-

dren from developing food allergies was to avoid feeding them common allergenic foods, such as peanuts or eggs, during their first few years of life. But now, allergy experts say, it's better to introduce peanut products early on.

If your baby doesn't have severe eczema or a known food allergy, you can start introducing peanut products (such as peanut powders or watered-down peanut butter, but not whole peanuts) when they are around four to six months old, around the time your baby is ready for solids.

Start with 10 millilitres of smooth peanut butter mixed with water, breast milk or formula two to three times a week, says Ruchi Gupta, director of the Center for Food Allergy & Asthma Research at Northwestern University in

Illinois. "It's also important to feed your baby a diverse diet in their first year to prevent food allergies," Gupta says.

MYTH 8: The protein in plants is incomplete.

► "Where do you get your protein?' is the most common question vegetarians are asked," says Christopher Gardner, a nutrition scientist and professor of medicine at Stanford University in California. "The myth is that plants are completely missing some amino acids," also known as the building blocks of proteins, he adds.

But in reality, all plant-based foods contain all 20 amino acids, including the nine essential ones. The difference is that the proportion isn't as ideal as the proportion of amino acids in animal-based foods.

So to get an adequate mix, you simply need to eat a variety of plant-based foods—such as beans, grains and nuts—through the day, and eat enough total protein.

"It's easier than most people think," Gardner says.

MYTH 9: Eating soy can increase breast cancer risk.

► High doses of plant estrogens in soy, called isoflavones, have been found to stimulate breast tumour cell growth in animal studies.





“However, this relationship has not been substantiated in human studies,” says Frank B. Hu, chair of the department of nutrition at the Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health. So far, the science does not indicate a link between soy and breast cancer risk in humans. Instead, consuming soy-based foods and drinks—including tofu, tempeh, edamame, miso and soy milk—may even have a protective effect toward

breast cancer risk and survival.

“Soy foods are also a powerhouse of beneficial nutrients related to reduced heart disease risk, such as high-quality protein, fibre, vitamins and minerals,” Hu says.

MYTH 10: The best nutrition advice keeps changing.

► Not true, says Marion Nestle, a professor emerita of nutrition, food studies and public health at New York University. In the 1950s, she explains, the first dietary recommendations for prevention of obesity, type 2 diabetes, heart disease and other ailments advised balancing calories and minimizing foods high in saturated fat, salt and sugar. That is still the case today.

Yes, science evolves, but the bottom-line guidance remains consistent. As author Michael Pollan put it: “Eat food. Not too much. Mostly plants.” That advice leaves plenty of room for eating foods you love. **R**

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Beer Wars

In 1983, Freddy Heineken, the owner of the eponymous Heineken brewery, was kidnapped and held for ransom for weeks. As awful as it was, Heineken never lost his sense of humour. Legend has it that, after finally being released, he told a friend, “They tortured me. They made me drink Carlsberg.”

FORBES.COM

SMILE



Jaywalkers, Photocopiers and Other Mysteries

BY *Richard Glover*

THRILLERS AND WHODUNITS are all the rage on television, yet the real mysteries of life go unsolved. It may be time to put a modern-day Sherlock Holmes or Hercule Poirot on these real-world cold cases.

Why is hotel plumbing so bad? I understand the theoretical problem: The woman in Room 4 turns on the shower, diverting hot water from the man taking a shower in Room 5. As he furiously turns the taps, his shower fluctuates between boiling hot and freezing cold. This creates a nightmare for the honeymooning couple in Room 6, who now have burns over 20 percent of their bodies because they were, ahem, not close to the taps when the water went thermo-nuclear. Some hotels manage to provide consistent hot water; why can't the rest of them? Any theories, Sherlock?

Why don't change rooms have flattering lighting? Okay, I understand

that fluorescent lights are cheaper, but when your business relies on convincing people to spend \$120 on a piece of poorly stitched fabric that costs \$2 to manufacture, maybe you could cough up an extra 10 cents so the customers don't give themselves a fright.

Why have big-city pedestrians lost the will to live? Sure, jaywalking has been around for years. People would cross the road only after waiting for a break in the traffic. What's different now? First, pedestrians no longer wait for traffic to clear; they just hurl themselves into the fray. Second, they are *looking at their phones* as they jaywalk. It's like crossing a Formula 1 racetrack with a bag over your head.

Why does our collection of Tupperware lids not match our collection of Tupperware bottoms? And why are so many tops missing? Do they dissolve in the wash? Do children use them as Frisbees? Do aliens steal them? Over to you, Monsieur Poirot.

Why are we sensitive about some prices but not others? A pub charges \$12 for a glass of chardonnay and \$10 for a beer, and still there's a queue at the bar. We know that we might get cheaper life insurance if we shopped around, yet most of us shrug our shoulders and say, "I just don't have the time." But if the price of gas goes up by four cents a litre, people lose their minds.

Speaking of insurance, why is it so expensive? Property crime is down all over. Canada's property-crime rate fell by more than half between 1990 and

2020. In Europe, the number of burglaries has dropped 42 percent since 2010. And here in Australia, motor-vehicle theft has declined by 16 percent since 2016. And yet insurance premiums are as high as ever. Who, exactly, is pocketing the extra cash? Why does competition, that much-lauded feature of our capitalist system, not push down the price? Miss Marple, can you please take on this case?

Why do parents "parent" so publicly? We'll take it on faith that you are a good parent. When denying your child access to her iPad, the whole train carriage does not need to hear details of the transgression that led to this temporary ban, all delivered in your "I'm a reasonable person" voice and at a volume sufficient for everyone to consider the facts. We've all been there. We're on your side. We won't call the authorities, we promise.

Why are photocopiers so complicated? The paper is always jammed and the ink always runs out. The solution is supposed to be simple: Follow the onscreen guide to fixing the problem—a guide that consists of flashing arrows going in all directions seemingly at random, much like a diorama of the Battle of Agincourt.

Personally, I wish I had one of those Gestetner duplicating machines that was invented 140 years ago and worked perfectly fine before the photocopier came along in the mid 20th century. But where can I find one? Lieutenant Columbo, maybe you have a theory? 

Keeping Hope Alive



BY *Emma Gilchrist*
FROM *THE NARWHAL*

Jane Goodall isn't slowing down in her mission to raise awareness about the planet's shrinking biodiversity.

WHEN WORLD-RENOUNDED naturalist Jane Goodall visited Victoria in mid-2022, she had an air of serenity. The octogenarian began to walk onstage in front of a sold-out crowd, leaning on an assistant's shoulder and using a cane. But then she abruptly hopped across the stage, lithe as can be—no cane necessary.

"That was poor 88-year-old Jane Goodall," she quipped from the mic.



The world's best-known naturalist, now 89, isn't slowing down for anyone or anything. When I caught up with her via Zoom a few months after her visit to Victoria, she was in Los Angeles, the latest stop in her relentless schedule to spread the message she learned from observing chimpanzees in their natural habitat decades ago.

Even in a sprawling metropolis like L.A., she tries to find little pockets of nature. "If I go to a hotel and there's one tree, I will sometimes move my bed around so I can just be there and see the tree," she said. "A little bird comes on the palm tree outside the window. I like it."

That message—that we are part of the animal kingdom and that we all have a part to play in saving our planet—is arguably more important now than ever.

You've said that hope is a survival skill that enables us to keep going in the face of adversity. Lately it has become almost fashionable to be cynical, to throw up our hands and say "It's all hopeless." Why do you think so many people seem to be giving up hope these days?

If you just look around the world, you can't help but lose hope. I mean, you have feelings of helplessness and hopelessness if you look at what's happening politically, socially, environmentally. You've got the war in Ukraine, there's major loss of biodiversity, we're still losing forests, and we've got industrial agriculture poisoning the land. The picture globally is grim. You can't look

around and not feel sort of despairing.

So when people tell me they've lost hope, I say, "Stop looking all around the world. Just think about where you are or some project you really care about and roll up your sleeves and do something about that."

Throughout all the things that have happened in your life, have you personally ever lost hope?

I don't know if it was losing hope, but I have felt desperate because things had gone so wrong. Like when four of my students were kidnapped [from Goodall's Gombe Stream Reserve research station in Tanzania in 1975], and all the funding melted away from Gombe. It looked as though it would have to be closed. I knew that that could not be, so I had to go around with my hat in my hand. At the same time, I was looking for a new executive director for the Jane Goodall Institute in the U.S. It just seemed hopeless.

That was a pretty bad time and we managed to steer through. I don't think I've ever lost hope. I've had my back against the wall, but that makes me determined to fight. (Editor's note: The students were eventually released and the Gombe station remains open.)

Can you stay hopeful by turning that sense of anger or desperation around?

Yes, into action. Because being angry and depressed isn't helping anything. One of course feels angry, but you can channel that into making a difference.



Looking back on your life, do you have any regrets?

Not really. I mean, I've made mistakes, but we all make mistakes. I've tried to learn from them. I suppose, in a way, I wish my first marriage had lasted, but it couldn't. That was a shame for my son, particularly. But that's life. It just wasn't working, and so it had to end.

Apart from that, I don't think I've had major regrets. I mean, I've done things that were silly and had to go back and redo them.

How have you witnessed biodiversity change during your lifetime?

Massively. I just need to think of the house I grew up in [in Bournemouth, England]. My sister and I own it—she lives there with her family, and I go back between trips. I'd say 50 percent of the birds I knew around that area as

a child have gone, due mostly to herbicides and pesticides and the proliferation of roads and traffic. And there are no hedgehogs around there anymore.

When I was a child, if you opened the windows at night and the light was on, your room filled with bugs of all sorts. Now I get excited if one moth comes in. The insects have just disappeared. That, of course, is another reason why we've lost birds. So just in that one place, I've seen the loss of biodiversity.

What kind of commitments should world leaders be making to address these problems?

I wish they would do more than make pledges. And that somehow we could find a way of having them actually do what they say they're going to do. So many of the COPs [international conferences held by the United Nations] have



In Gombe National Park in 2010; (right) Goodall has studied chimpanzees for more than 60 years.



made all these wonderful pledges. If you go back to the Paris Agreement [on climate change in 2015], I don't think any country has lived up to what they promised in the way of emissions. So I don't know. I mean, one always hopes.

I think the main thing that goes on at these COPs is the networking. They bring together groups that are passionate about the same area of conservation. It's collaboration that we need if we're going to reverse climate change and loss of biodiversity. Those two go together because climate change is definitely affecting the loss of biodiversity.

You visited Canada last year after a three-year hiatus due to Covid-19. What conservation work did you find the most interesting or exciting?

I witnessed the re-greening of the city

of Sudbury. I had visited before, and the change was enormous. That was very exciting.

And I know that the Jane Goodall Institute of Canada is doing an awful lot of work with Indigenous people. They're using the approach of community-led conservation that we use all over the world to get protection for more and more Indigenous lands.

Do you ever want to slow down a bit and do less? What is keeping you going at this point?

Lots of people said to me that it must have been lovely during the height of Covid to be at home and to stop travelling. But I've never ever been so exhausted in my entire life because I was doing up to four Zoom calls a day, all around the world. My voice never

recovered, it got so overused. It was virtual conferences, virtual lectures, virtual panels, then it was messages. It was stuff for the different Jane Goodall Institutes—27 of them.

It was nonstop. I didn't have one day off. During the pandemic, the number of hits I got on social media went up dramatically, from about a million at the beginning to about one billion now.

So it was decided, well, Jane should travel less and do more Zooms and social media, that kind of thing. So what happens? Now I'm doing the travelling and the Zooms as well.

But you could slow down. Why do you keep doing all of these things?

I think I came to this world with a reason. I have a mission to keep hope alive and to encourage people to take action now. Not just moan and groan, not just talk about what should be done, but actually roll up their sleeves and get to work.

I want to help people understand that every day we live, we make some kind of difference, and we can choose what kind of difference we make. If enough people are making ethical choices in how they live, then that's going to move us toward a much better world.

Where do you recommend that people start?

I feel one of the major problems we're facing vis-a-vis climate change and loss of biodiversity is industrial agriculture, and particularly the farming of animals.

Billions and billions of animals around the world are in factory farms, and they all need to be fed.

Huge areas of land are cleared to grow the food to feed them, and a lot of fossil fuel is used to move the food, to get the grain to the animals, to get the meat to the table.

These animals also produce methane, which is a very, very virulent greenhouse gas. All these things are contributing to climate change.

[I recommend] moving towards a vegan diet, if possible. Otherwise, please be vegetarian. When you learn how the laying hens are treated, when you learn how the milk cows are treated, you don't want to eat those eggs or drink that milk. So I just stopped.

How long have you been vegan?

I won't say I'm 100 percent vegan. I was during the pandemic because I was at home and I could choose the food I ate. But when you're traveling all the time, you cannot be completely vegan unless you take food with you.

I went vegetarian when I read Peter Singer's book *Animal Liberation* [published in 1975], and I am vegan as much as I can be now.

What does a perfectly happy day look like for you?

A happy day for me is if I can be out in nature somewhere. 

© 2022, THE NARWHAL. FROM "JANE GOODALL ON HOPE, FATIGUE AND FINDING POCKETS OF NATURE WHEREVER YOU ARE," BY EMMA GILCHRIST, THE NARWHAL (DECEMBER 10, 2022), THENARWHAL.CA



DRAMA IN REAL LIFE

WHAT'S IT LIKE WHEN A WILDFIRE IS
BARRELLING TOWARD YOUR TOWN? A
SURVIVOR OF THE 2021 LYTTON, B.C.,
SHARES HER EXPERIENCE.

INFERNO ON THE HORIZ

BY *Michele Feist*,

AS TOLD TO *Aldyn Chwelos* AND *Christina Gervais* FROM *THE TYEE*



The July 2021
Lytton wildfire.

Raised on a remote farm near Fort St. John, B.C., Michele Feist discovered her love of the outdoors at an early age. She'd fill her backpack with a pop and a peanut butter and jam sandwich, cross the river that ran beside the farm, and wander into the hills. When she was 22 Michele moved to Vancouver to complete a psychiatric nursing diploma at British Columbia Institute of Technology and, later, earned her registered nursing degree. Her 30-year career included mental health nursing and palliative care.

A practising Buddhist of 30 years, Michele developed close relationships with the monks at a small temple in Vancouver. The abbot of the temple led the marriage ceremony for Michele and her husband, Grant. When Grant died in 2014, Michele pursued the dream she and Grant had held of moving out of the city. The monks had relocated to the Botanie Valley, so she found a home in nearby Lytton—a place she calls “a hidden gem because most people drive by it.”

“It's not a shiny kind of neighbourhood. You either saw the beauty or you didn't,” says Michele, describing its rundown buildings and the amount of love in the place. “I'd sit under my tree, have my morning coffee and, because of where my house was located in Lytton, a good chunk of the population would wander by.”

The little house she lived in was more than 100 years old and built after the town's last major fire. Michele poured years of effort into fixing it up: hauling rocks, landscaping and painting the

exterior a bright yellow. She spent most of her time gardening, exploring with her large 11-year-old rescue dog, Finn, and socializing with neighbours and friends.

Here is Michele Feist's first-hand account of fleeing the 2021 Lytton fire and the aftermath, as told to Aldyn Chwelos and Christina Gervais of the Climate Disaster Project.

IT WAS WEDNESDAY, JUNE 30. We had all been on alert because there was the George Road fire up the hill. People were on edge. The night before, I couldn't sleep and there were a bunch of us out watching the fire. Peggy, an older friend who lived up the way, said, “I think I'm going to pack a go bag.” We didn't dream we'd need it.

I packed my husband's memorial album, a couple of statues that are one of a kind. (The weirdest thing I took: a fridge magnet I treasured that reminds one to be kind.) I packed the ugliest bra, two pairs of underwear and pants that didn't really fit because I thought, *I'm not going to use these.*

It was so hot. Since we'd been in a drought from April onwards, the area was incredibly dry. In fact, 20 minutes before the fire arrived, my friend Christine texted me and said, “How you doing?” I said, “It's fine. But one spark leads to disaster.” We were just coming out of the heat dome.* It was set to break the next day, so the temperature had come down

*BETWEEN JUNE 25 AND JULY 1, 2021, TEMPERATURES IN LYTTON REACHED NEARLY 50 C, BREAKING RECORDS THREE DAYS IN A ROW. THE PROVINCE SAW ROUGHLY 600 HEAT-RELATED DEATHS.

a little bit, but then the wind picked up. It was a nasty, nasty wind. It was blowing harder than I've experienced and Lytton's a windy enough place.

When the fire came, it was very fast. We were all in our houses. I was making dinner. I looked out the window and I saw that the quality of smoke had changed. There was a thickness and it rolled along lower. It was a roiling, brown, awful-looking smoke. I knew we were in trouble then. I walked out onto the front porch just to see the lay of the land and that's when my friends drove by. One of them, Kerri, said, "Get out!"

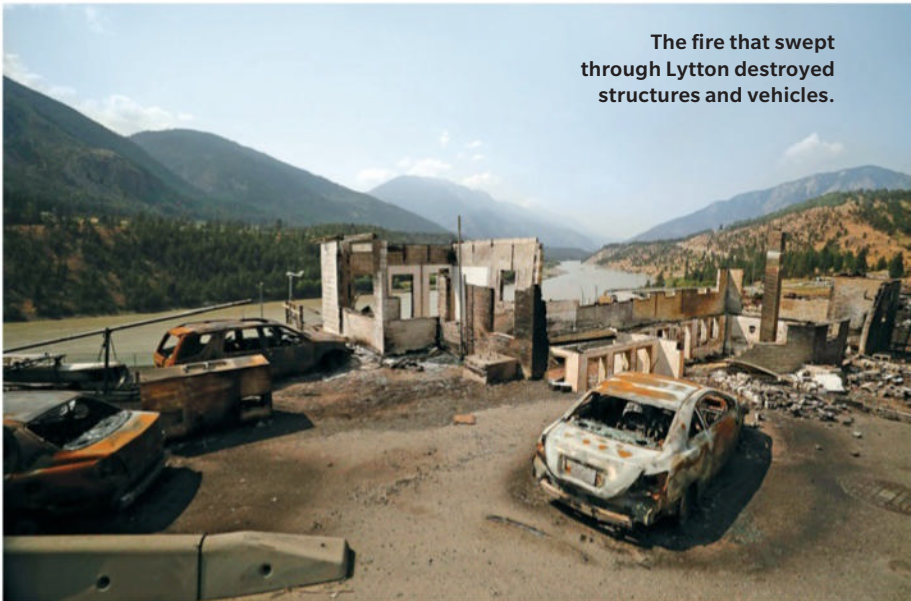
I went in, grabbed what I'd had ready in case of an evacuation. Grabbed the dog, put him in the truck. I was ready

to run. I was in the truck and driving away, then I got an internal nudge. I thought, *Oh shit*. And I turned the truck around and went to my neighbour Lorna's house. I had to find out if she was okay because I knew she was asleep.

The front door was shut but I blew on in. She was awake. Her son had called her and she was standing there holding her phone. Her house was quiet. We had this little back and forth. I remember at one point, we held hands. I said, "Lorna, we've got to go." And she said, "I know." She grabbed her purse and we went.

There were embers falling on my head. People's backyards were on fire. I saw people going along the street, banging on doors and making sure

The fire that swept through Lytton destroyed structures and vehicles.



everyone was accounted for. It's such a small town, so we were able to do that.

My friend Michele, she had urged Peggy to get going. Peggy had come back to collect the box of things she'd put together the night before. Michele grabbed her and said, "Get in your car and drive." These little actions were going on all over the place. We've compared notes, and that is why more people didn't die. Everyone who could help another person, did.

There was someone directing traffic. He was pointing to go north but all I could think of was, *The wind is coming from the south. I'm not letting the fire chase me.* So I went south. It was terrifying because there was zero visibility. I knew there was a vehicle in front of me, and someone was following me. And I was so afraid to go. I wanted to drive quickly but I knew I couldn't because I'd hit the person ahead of me. I was

also afraid I was going to get rammed by the person behind me. So we just crept along. There were flames six to eight feet high on either side of my truck. The smoke was so dense. I just kept going. All the while, I knew somewhere in the back of my head that Lytton was gone.

When I got to Hope, it was right before the long weekend. There was this whole juggling act around where the displaced people would go. I'm sure that to hotel owners, tourists are way more attractive than evacuees who are panicking, hauling their dogs, their kids, their possessions. I kept thinking, *I'll just sleep in the truck.*

But the monks got me shelter. One contacted his brother in Ontario and said, "Can you get on the internet and find Michele a place?" They found me a hotel in Hope, for one night, that would take the dog. Then we scrambled again. I got booked for two weeks at a hotel in Chilliwack. It was a bit hellish because it was still a heat wave. But I had two weeks to think about what I was going to do.

So I ended up selling my truck, buying a little RV and taking it to a place where we were allowed to camp for free for much of the summer. It was its own little circle of hell, because the campground had many evacuees, a couple of whom were quietly—not intrusively, but just quietly, despairingly—drinking to get through the day.

Everybody wanted to go home. But it was apparent that no rescue



Michele Feist and Finn
outside their new home
in Williams Lake.

was coming. There was no organization. There was no assurance of interim housing. I thought, *Well, okay, Feist. It's time for you to look after yourself.*

After a couple of weeks, I ended up trading in the RV and getting a small car. Many other parts of the province were also on fire. I drove up the Coquihalla Highway to get to Kamloops and there were fires next to the highway. I met a friend in the hotel where she and her husband and her dog had been evacuated to. And we just cried together. And then I carried on because what do you do? You need to keep going.

I drove out of the smoke. I contacted my financial adviser and said, "What can I afford?" I found a house in Williams Lake. It's not my dream house, but I'm working on it. I believe that if you find yourself in a situation, it's good to give it an application of love. So that's what I'm trying to do. The little yellow house in Lytton is paying for the little yellow house here.

I know people who want to rebuild, are trying to rebuild, in Lytton. I also know people who just want to put it all behind them. I'm somewhere in the middle. I'll visit. It's a beautiful place. Such good people. The temple is there. My husband's ashes are at the temple.

I visited a few months after the fire. The abbot of this little temple, my teacher, sat with me when we sifted the remains of my house. We took a walk; it felt so good to walk on that ground.

My house was decimated. We weren't allowed to be on the property but a

volunteer group, all masked and PPE'd up, went in and sifted; I got a couple of items out of the remains. The place was scorched. It looked like a bomb blast had gone off. But the acacia trees were unbelievably resilient. The elm tree in my front yard, the one I used to sit under and drink coffee, had survived, and it sheltered a bit of my lawn. So there's this little patch of green. There were flowers trying to come up.

I think, ultimately, that we incline towards life. That we're really not trying to kill ourselves off as a species. That maybe it's going to get more uncomfortable before it gets more comfortable, but that we have the capacity to look up.

What gives me hope? Planting the garden, watching seeds come up. I don't think we're a completely lost cause. We just keep putting one foot in front of the other. We're in the situation we're in, and we keep plodding along.

Epilogue: Since the Lytton wildfire, Michele has been gardening, and remodelling her new home in Williams Lake through labour and love. The province has promised to rebuild Lytton, but has little to show for it. Locals who have not been forced to move are still waiting for work to begin on rebuilding of their beloved village. **R**

© 2023, MICHELE FEIST, AS TOLD TO ALDYN CHWELOS AND CHRISTINA GERVAIS. FROM THE TYEE (MAY 22, 2023) THETEE.CA

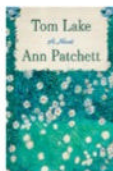
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That's a Wrap!

Books make great gifts, but which ones to pick? We've rounded up some of 2023's most talked-about reads.

BY Emily Landau



TOM LAKE

by Ann Patchett

If novels take about three years to go from idea to final product, we're just about due for a tidal wave of fiction inspired by and set during the 2020 pandemic lockdowns. One of the buzziest and loveliest comes from Ann Patchett, who is among modern literature's great chroniclers of familial drama. This wistful novel follows a woman hunkering down with her grown daughters at the family orchard during the early days of the pandemic, and flashes back to her youthful romance when she starred in a summer production of *Our Town*.

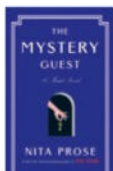


THE COVENANT OF WATER

by Abraham Verghese

Anyone who loves a compulsively readable novel that will last through the holidays will enjoy this epic family chronicle, one of Oprah's Book Club selections for this year. Sprawling multi-generational sagas are kind of Verghese's thing: he won accolades for his first novel, 2009's *Cutting for Stone*, the tragic story of a pair of identical twin surgeons in Ethiopia. This latest effort, which clocks in at more than 700 pages, spans the history of a family living at the southern tip of India and the mysterious medical condition that plagues them over generations. (On top of writing bestsellers, Verghese is a long-time physician.)

(MAIN IMAGE) NOAHGOLAN/GETTY IMAGES



THE MYSTERY GUEST

by Nita Prose

Last year, mystery readers fell in love with Molly Gray, the quirky, socially awkward hotel-housekeeper heroine of Toronto-based Nita Prose's surprise 2022 hit novel *The Maid*. (Florence Pugh is scheduled to play her in an upcoming film adaptation.) In this sequel, Molly is back, solving yet another murder at the Regency Grand—this time that of a mystery author who drops dead in the hotel's tea room.



MUCH ADO ABOUT NADA

by Uzma Jalaluddin

Canadian Uzma Jalaluddin reimagines classic rom-coms—*Pride and Prejudice*, *You've Got Mail*—with modern settings (usually Toronto's suburbs) and edgy Muslim heroines. *Much ADO* is a witty retelling of Jane Austen's *Persuasion* that's as warm and cozy as a mug of tea. In Jalaluddin's version, the main character, Nada, is almost 30 and still living at home, with a floundering career and a heart full of regret for her lost love—who just happens to re-enter her life as the novel begins.



THE FRAUD

by Zadie Smith

Fans have been itching for a new Zadie Smith novel for almost seven years—and the wait was worth it. In her new book, historical fiction set

against the backdrop of real events, she abandons her usual contemporary London setting and zips back more than a century to 1873, following the notorious case of a lower-class butcher from Australia who claimed to be heir to an abundant London estate. Smith tells her story from the point of view of a housekeeper (and secret abolitionist) and swirls issues of class, race and privilege into the legal drama.



THE WAGER: A TALE OF SHIPWRECK, MUTINY AND MURDER

by David Grann

David Grann writes history books so vivid, adventurous and compelling that they seem more cinematic than literary. Just ask Martin Scorsese, who is set to direct a film adaptation of this book, and whose adaptation of Grann's 2017 book, *Killers of the Flower Moon*, came out this fall. Grann's latest page-turner is a swashbuckling true story about the doomed *Wager*, an 18th-century British warship whose sailors engage in a vicious and violent power struggle after a catastrophic shipwreck off the coast of Chile.

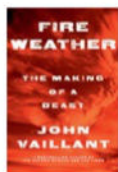


ROUGE

by Mona Awad

Awad is Canadian fiction's wizard of weird, spinning macabre feminist satires. Her latest novel is an all-too-timely spoof of the beauty industry.

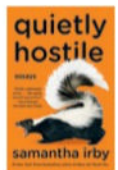
It's about a young woman who returns home after her mother's death and discovers her mom's ghoulish obsession with beauty rituals, as well as a pair of red stilettos that lead her to a cultish spa. This is pure spooky fun, with hints of *Death Becomes Her*.



FIRE WEATHER: A TRUE STORY OF A HOTTER WORLD

by John Vaillant

In a year when wildfires swept both our coasts and filled the country with smoke and devastation, Vaillant's book could not be more relevant. In a thrilling, can't-put-down narrative, he reconstructs the 2016 Fort McMurray wildfire, which devastated the town, caused an estimated \$10 billion in damage and served as a forecast for the intensifying wildfire seasons that followed. He amplifies that story with lots of in-depth reporting about the causes of wildfires and how human activity has stoked the flames.



QUIETLY HOSTILE

by Samantha Irby

Samantha Irby loves the Dave Matthews Band. And Trader Joe's. And Justin Bieber. And in her tart, always relatable, pop-culture-sprinkled essay collection, she acerbically explains why she loves these things, all the while delivering a steady stream of belly laughs. Irby, who's written for shows

like *Shrill* and the recent *Sex and the City* revival, *And Just Like That*, luxuriates in her awkwardness, describing the cringe-inducing mundanities of everyday life—bodily functions, how to look cool in front of teens, etc.—with withering self-awareness. (Hot tip: this would be a great choice for an audio-book; the narrator is Irby herself).



YELLOWFACE

by R.F. Kuang

Kuang's novel opens with one of the most horrifyingly funny scenes in modern fiction: Juniper Hayward, a struggling writer, watches her frenemy, the wildly successful Athena Lu, choke to death during a late-night pancake-eating contest. Before she knows it, Juniper has passed off Athena's manuscript—about Chinese labourers in the First World War—as her own, misrepresenting her identity to pass as Asian and become a publishing phenomenon. It's a deliciously twisty satire about jealousy, deception and cultural appropriation.

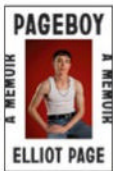


REALLY GOOD, ACTUALLY

by Monica Heisey

Monica Heisey is one of the funniest Canadians most people have never heard of: her resumé includes writing stints on *Schitt's Creek*, the *Baroness Von Sketch Show* and *Workin' Moms*. Heisey's first novel is the semi-autobiographical tale of a woman who

gets married and divorced before she turns 30—an experience Heisey knows first-hand. It's a messy millennial comedy worthy of *Girls* or *Broad City*, with enough gasp-for-air jokes to populate a Netflix stand-up special.



PAGEBOY

by Elliot Page

The Canadian actor and activist is achingly vulnerable in his memoir, a heady mix of dishy celebrity tell-all, intimate personal history and rousing *cri de cœur* for LGBTQ+ rights. Page, who came out as gay in 2014 and as trans in 2020, describes the challenges of enduring a closeted life in Hollywood—secret relationships, sexual harassment from executives, body dysmorphia and depression—while expounding on the joys and challenges of his rocky road of transitioning.



CLASS: A MEMOIR OF MOTHERHOOD, HUNGER AND HIGHER EDUCATION

by Stephanie Land

Land's bestselling debut memoir, *Maid* (which was endorsed by Barack Obama), described her harrowing experience of poverty and menial labour as a house cleaner. (It was adapted into a Netflix miniseries in 2021.) In this follow-up, she shows how just hard it is to escape that cycle. In the book, she describes her frustrated attempts to navigate a university career while trying to clothe and feed

her young daughter. It's equal parts brutal and inspiring, as Land sheds light on the costs, both literal and metaphorical, of education and upward mobility.



KING: A LIFE

by Jonathan Eig

This one's for the history buffs: Eig's biography is as impressive and significant as the man himself. (Eig has a solid track record: his last book was a 600-plus-page bio of Muhammad Ali.) This is Martin Luther King, warts and all; it's a scrupulously detailed and balanced portrait of his vulnerability and strength, his flaws and heroism and his monumental role in the history of American civil rights—a subject that's as urgent today as it was in King's era.



FINDING LARKSPUR: A RETURN TO VILLAGE LIFE

by Dan Needles

In 1988, playwright Dan Needles moved his family from Toronto to Larkspur Farm, a 40-acre plot near Collingwood, Ont. There, they raised livestock and grew crops, largely shielded from technology, traffic and other trappings of big-city life. His book is a warm and fascinating history of modern Canadian villages—where most of the population lived until recent decades—that doubles as a folksy diary of his own rural life and the quirky neighbours who enrich it. **R**



HEART



Holiday Magic

Real-life stories of comfort and joy



My Season of Nostalgia

Sometimes, I wish I had a river I could skate away on

BY Patricia Dawn Robertson

It was December 2009 and my partner, Grant, and I were travelling with our border collie, Laddie, from our rural Saskatchewan home to friendly Manitoba. We'd be spending Christmas in Winnipeg Beach, where my parents had moved when they retired a few years earlier. After a hectic career as a sports journalist, my dad was keen to enjoy his twilight years with my mom in this rustic town an hour north of Winnipeg.

It had been a horrendous drive. As Grant deftly navigated the icy Prairie roads in our trusty Volvo station wagon, I white-knuckled it in the passenger seat and averted my eyes from the cars in the ditch. Highway 9, the road north from the city, was treacherous. But we weren't about to turn back. That's the pull of Christmas.

We made it safely, and Mum greeted us at the front door like we were long-lost members of the Shackleton expedition. From his blue La-Z-Boy chair, Dad turned his head and smiled. Relief flooded through me. He still recognized me. It wasn't too late.

Mum was clearly beyond exhausted. She refused to take even one day off from taking care of him. "If I go away,

I'm afraid I'll return and your dad won't know me." Who could argue with her logic? Besides, it wasn't up to me.

A FEW DAYS LATER I found myself doing some retail therapy at Tergesen's store in nearby Gimli, a fishing community with a strong Icelandic heritage. The general store, a binge-shopping favourite of my whole family, is stacked with Canadian fiction, Icelandic sweaters, cozy mittens, luxe scarves and jaunty winter hats.

It was good to be back on familiar turf; I was born in Winnipeg but moved a lot over my lifetime. Our family trailed behind my ambitious sportswriter father, John Robertson, as he covered major league baseball for the *Montreal Star*, *Toronto Sun* and *Toronto Star*. Because we moved so frequently, home was more of a concept than bricks and mortar. Still, even now that I'm in my 50s, Manitoba will always feel most like home.

Whenever I'm back, I go to Tergesen's for my retail *hygge* fix. The bountiful seasonal inventory evokes memories of the gorgeous red sweater my parents brought back for me from their 1974 ski trip to Norway. I'm noticing that, as I grow older, everything is starting to remind me of something else.

As I considered a purchase—a short-story collection by Alice Munro—Joni Mitchell's wistful song "River" floated out of the store speakers. "I wish I had a river I could skate away on," sang the homesick Prairie ex-pat in 1971 from sunny California. Christmas nostalgia took hold of me.

My mood plummeted like a winter thermometer, and I transformed from relaxed shopper into a downbeat daughter on a duty visit to her aging parents. Since I had last been to Winnipeg Beach, Dad had turned 75 and his dementia had accelerated. Mum, 74, was burned out from caregiving but refused to let him go.

As the tears welled up, I set aside the book and instead purchased a lovely pair of brown suede Santa-style mittens. My dad had always insisted that I should have warm hands. In past years, when the first signs of winter appeared, my phone would ring: "Do you have enough warm clothes?" he would ask. "Of course, Dad. I'm 40 years old."

My father had been homeless starting at age 17. He couch-surfed at the homes of his married siblings, stayed at the YMCA and slept in his future in-laws' garage one Winnipeg winter with Mum's cocker spaniel, Buffy, curled up at his feet for warmth. Because of that early adversity, he was always on the alert to make sure I was warm enough.

I adored my dad and couldn't imagine life without him. It wasn't the first time I'd confronted his mortality. When I was 18, he'd had a stroke. I floundered. I was truly lost. What if he died? What would become of me?

WHEN GRANT AND I RETURNED to my parents' overheated condo, I showed off my new suede mittens to my parents. "Tergesen's?" Dad said. "You know it," I replied with a wink.

"How much?" he asked. "Fifty dollars,"

I said, knowing, sheepishly, that Mum would find them extravagant. She had bought me a similar pair of expensive mittens in Winnipeg when I was in Grade 10. I had forgotten them on a bus-shelter bench. She was not impressed.

"Betty, can you write Patty a cheque for those mittens?" Dad instructed. "And while you're at it, cover Grant and Patty's gas and meals." Mum frowned at me from her seat at the dining room table, then pulled out her cheque book.

I'D HAD A LIFETIME WITH A FATHER WHO ALWAYS CHECKED IF I HAD ENOUGH WARM CLOTHES.

If my brother were here and was offered the same thing, he'd tear up the cheque. A grandiose gesture that said: "I'm an adult now. Keep your money."

But I made no such offer. Money was tight that year and I was grateful for the help. To finance this visit, I'd skipped paying our annual house taxes. I would arrive home to a threatening letter from the town office: "If you don't pay, we'll publish your name in the local paper." That was a bluff; they only print your roll number. The price of nostalgia.

FIVE YEARS LATER, in December 2014, Grant and I were back in Winnipeg Beach to celebrate Christmas. This time,

though, Mum was alone. Dad had passed away almost a year earlier.

A few days after Christmas, we braved the icy roads to visit the new Canadian Museum for Human Rights in Winnipeg. But first, some shopping at Ikea, where Grant and I wandered the thousands of square feet in a seasonal daze.

As we lined up to pay for our purchases—a small cutting board and some colourful tea towels—I noticed that one of my brown suede Santa mittens was missing. It must have fallen out of my jacket pocket. I cried like a toddler, thinking, *I wish I had a river I could skate away on.*

I couldn't return to my mom with one mitten. Grant went into rescue mode, retracing our steps while I stayed in line. He returned 10 minutes later, triumphantly waving my wayward mitten in the air.

I smiled genuinely for the first time since Dad had died the previous January. I was going to be okay. I had cozy mittens and a caring spouse. And I'd had a lifetime with a father who always checked if I had enough warm clothes.

Thanks to my lost mitten, Grant and I arrived late for our museum tour. As we looked for a parking space, I decided to let it all go: the winter roads, our late arrival and the raw pain of losing my father. It was time to move forward.

Back when I was 18 and worried sick about what I'd do if my dad died, my parents dispatched me to see a family friend who was a psychiatrist. Dr. Fred took one look at my downcast expres-

sion and smiled: "You don't need to ever fear losing your father, Patricia. He's always with you, right there, in your heart. He's in you and he'll continue to be a part of you for the rest of your life."

Sitting next to Grant that day in the museum parking lot, I made a personal pledge: no more gloomy nostalgia, no more pining for Christmases past. From now on, I would skate my own way home. With Dad in my heart.



A Holiday Welcome Home

My cat was long gone. Then a Christmas miracle happened.

By Sister Sharon Dillon FROM GUIDEPOSTS

It was Christmas Eve morning, and I awoke with a mission: to find my lost cat, Baby-Girl. As I got ready, I could hear icy rain pelting the windows. I said a quick prayer for Baby-Girl. She was out there somewhere in the storm, I could just feel it. Sure, it had been six months since she'd gone missing, but I still had faith. It was the season for miracles, after all.

That summer, my sweet kitty had disappeared from my parents' house in Indiana. Baby-Girl had been staying with them while I was between apartments. At the time, I lived and worked in Washington, D.C. I was staying with

friends until I signed my lease on a new place. Baby-Girl had gotten out of my parents' house three days before I was set to fly back home to pick her up.

My dad and I spent that entire visit searching for her. Dad was the family's resident "realist," which meant he spent a whole lot of time trying to prepare me for the worst. "She's either been hit by a car or been taken in by someone who found her," he said. I rolled my eyes. Dad always supported me, but he was so skeptical. He could do with a little more faith!

Besides, though I couldn't explain it, I knew I'd see Baby-Girl again. She'd been a stray when I found her. A scrappy little tabby that had survived all on her own. If any cat could do the impossible, it was

my Baby-Girl. Even after I returned to D.C. without her and the weeks stretched into months, deep down I had this feeling that we'd be reunited.

Now, home again for the holidays, I was determined to pick up my search. I grabbed Baby-Girl's cat carrier and loaded it into the car, then asked my dad to drive me to the shelter, hoping she'd been found.

"Sharon, you have to be realistic," my dad said as we headed to the garage. "She's been gone too long. You're not going to find her."

"Well, I just have a feeling," I said.

Dad raised an eyebrow as he climbed into the driver's seat.

"Don't you believe in Christmas miracles?" I asked.



"Bah humbug," he said, lightening the mood. It was his favourite Christmas saying and an inside joke in our family. He even had a shirt with the phrase emblazoned across the front, which he wore every Christmas morning. I threw my hands up in mock despair.

At the shelter, the woman at the front desk greeted my dad warmly. "Good to see you again, Mr. Dillon! Still looking for your cat?"

Ah, I thought, maybe he's not such a pessimist after all.

A staff member took us to see the cats. "When did she go missing?" the woman asked.

"Six months ago."

"And was she chipped?" No, I had to admit, Baby-Girl was not. The staffer noticeably winced at the words. "When we get unchipped cats, they're put up for adoption after three days," she explained. "Even if your cat was brought in, she's probably gone by now."

We walked through rows of cages. My eyes scanned cats of all shapes and sizes. None of them was my Baby-Girl. Then I noticed a room farther back. I pushed ahead. "Sweetheart, that's where they keep the cats that just came in," Dad said. "Your cat wouldn't be in there."

"It doesn't hurt to look!" I said.

I stepped in the room and heard a familiar meow. My eyes zeroed in on a little tabby cat with big green eyes. She was skinnier than I remembered, but it was Baby-Girl all right! My eyes welled up with tears. I opened the cage door. Baby-Girl practically jumped into

my arms. I held her close as Dad looked on, mouth agape.

"Dad! It's Baby-Girl!" I cried.

"There's just no way ..." he mumbled to himself.

I returned to the front desk to let them know I'd found my cat. The shelter staff was skeptical. I pointed out that this cat matched Baby-Girl's description perfectly—right down to her hind left white paw. Still, they looked uncertain.

BABY-GIRL HAD ARRIVED DURING THE ICE STORM—LIKELY ABOUT THE SAME TIME I HAD PRAYED.

"Wait here! I can prove she's my cat," I said, excusing myself to grab the carrier. I'd trained Baby-Girl to walk inside the carrier when I opened its door. Sure enough, when she was let down in the middle of the room, she made a beeline for the carrier and scooted right inside.

"That's definitely your cat," a staffer laughed. "I've never seen any cat do that willingly."

I asked when she'd been brought in. She'd arrived during the ice storm—likely about the same time I'd prayed.

Back home, the rest of the family welcomed Baby-Girl. She purred like a motorboat, rubbing up against everyone's legs. She seemed completely at home. Dad remained stubbornly skeptical.

"It just cannot be her," he said. "Not after all this time."

I rolled my eyes. Eventually, Baby-Girl made her way down to the basement, where her litter box was kept.

"See? How would she know that the box was there if she hadn't been here before?" I said to Dad.

"Fine," he said. "I'm 40 percent convinced it's her."

"What would it take to change your mind?" I asked.

He considered for a moment. "If she sits in her favourite spot in the hearth, I'll believe it's her."

Baby-Girl loved to sit curled up inside my parents' decorative fireplace. And that's exactly what she did as soon as dinner was done.

"Okay, maybe it's her," Dad admitted. "I'm about 60 percent sure."

We all groaned. Dad took to his armchair to read as we wound down for the evening. All of the sudden, he burst out laughing.

"What's so funny, Bill?" Mom asked him.

"My book," he said. "It says: 'Baby-Girl, I have lost you. Now I have found you. I will never lose you again!'"

We all roared with laughter. "Is that enough, Dad? Or does the Holy Spirit himself have to appear and tell you?" I asked.

"Okay! Ninety percent!" Dad said. "But only because the Baby-Girl in the story is a lost dog, not a cat."

We were all almost in tears from laughing so hard. My heart was filled with

gratitude—I was surrounded by family and, against all odds, my cat was home again, six months after going missing.

It turned out, Baby-Girl's return wasn't the only Christmas miracle that year. The next day, when Dad came downstairs for Christmas morning, he was wearing a new holiday shirt. It read: *I Believe!*

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Grandma's Recipe for Love

At her house, the holidays set off a whirlwind of baking

BY Courtney Shea

My grandmother wasn't the warm and cozy type. When she came to stay with us, even our family dog sat up straighter. She wasn't big on cooing or cheek-pinching or saying, "I love you." Instead, she made turtle-shaped pancakes from scratch for her grandchildren.

I was always a fan of Grandma's baking. According to family lore, my first sentence was "Grandma's peach pie." (Which is actually a sentence fragment, she would want me to point out.)

She baked pies according to the season: peach and blueberry in the summer, apple in the fall. By first snowfall



she turned her attention to holiday treats, including my personal favourite, cherry chews: three-layer squares made with salty oats, gooey coconut and maraschino cherries, and topped with icing coloured pink by the fruit's juice. To my eight-year-old palate, they were confection perfection.

At my house, Christmas mornings were a whirlwind of crinkled wrapping paper and squeals of excitement, but by lunchtime my sisters and I were always brushed and dressed, ready for the drive to my grandma's place in Aylmer, Ont.

A small farming community two hours southwest of Toronto, the town is best known for its tomatoes, corn and tobacco—and, in some circles, for my grandmother Marjorie Waterworth Grant, who lived in her home on Wellington Street for 65 years. She worked as a legal secretary before getting mar-

ried and starting a family; when she was widowed at the age of 30, she took on her husband's job and sold insurance, eventually putting four children through university.

A single mother with a modest income, her devotion to DIY was unwavering. She scoffed at anything "store bought." As a result, her holiday baking required a staggered approach.

The Christmas pudding took six weeks to harden, and her "nuts and bolts" snack mix was baked in advance, jarred and stored to better soak up the Worcestershire sauce and seasoning salts. Then came the

blondies, date trillies, mincemeat tarts, gingerbread Christmas trees, rum balls, shortbread wreaths with holly garnishes and cherry chews. When friends or neighbours dropped by, Grandma was never short on seasonal refreshments.

On Christmas Day, my aunts, uncles and cousins would arrive, eagerly anticipating the roasted turkey. My grandma cooked a perfect bird, but for me it was a preamble to the baked goods. My mission was simple: Consume the cherry chews as quickly as possible, then feign surprise when stocks ran out.

As a teenager I started making cherry chews myself, going off the recipe my mom had in her childhood cookbook. In my 20s, the tradition lagged. My family spent the holidays at our home in Toronto or up north skiing, so some years there were cherry chews and others the season slipped by without them.

My grandma died in 2012, when I was in my early 30s. I don't think I consciously decided that making cherry chews was my way of honouring her, but now, every December, I grease up my baking trays. The recipe isn't exactly hard, but it does require focus. Not enough time in the oven and the base will crumble in your hands; a minute too long and you're biting into rock.

*EVERY YEAR I TELL
MYSELF I'M DONE, BUT
THEN DECEMBER HITS
AND I CAN'T WAIT FOR
THE RITUAL.*

Also, you must be patient: The bottom must be cool before you layer on the coconut and cherries and put everything back into the oven. Then, more cooling and more waiting while icing was eaten straight from the bowl. My one tweak has been to triple the amount of icing sugar, butter and cherry juice so that the top layer is a centimetre thick, minimum. I suspect my grandma would see this as terribly overindulgent.

When possible, I make a day of it: I pop into the local dollar store to pick up seasonal cookie tins, listen to Christmas music and turn my kitchen into a Yuletide crime scene (we're still finding flecks of pink icing come February).

That batch of cherry chews is my one and only foray into baking. The mixer is

then tucked away on our highest shelf; it won't be needed for the next 11 months.

Two years ago, I made cherry chews at my mom's place, where my family had gathered to weather the latest Covid-19 surge. We had multiple false starts and no shortage of drama. I forgot to set a timer and only realized my mistake when smoke pouring from the oven set off the alarms. I woke up to find that my sister had eaten my backup batch before it was even iced.

Every year there is a moment when I tell myself that I'm done—but then December hits and I can't wait to re-enact the ritual. Just that one recipe, though. I can't fathom devoting the time and care that my grandma did, continuing with her epic holiday bakes well into her 90s.

When I asked various family members to share their recollections of Grandma's baking, the texts I got back were about date trillies and rhubarb pies and picnics where my uncle refused to eat anything that wasn't baked by his mom or her sister. Each of us has our own special memories.

I realize now that my grandma and I never actually baked cherry chews together. By the time Christmas rolled around, the work was done. I like to think that she would approve of my small way to mark her much larger legacy, if not of my updated icing ratio.

When my own daughter is older, I hope to share my memories of holidays at Grandma's while the cherry chews bake in the oven.



Why do we feel younger
than we actually are?

Young At Heart

BY Enrique Alpañés FROM EL PAÍS

HER CHRONOLOGICAL AGE is 66 but her subjective age is 40. The woman I'll call Ana did not become fully aware of this disconnect until she went for her Covid-19 vaccination a couple of years ago. As she stood in line, surrounded by her contemporaries, she looked around and thought: *Are they really my*

age? Later, amused and slightly worried, she discussed it with her friends. Almost all of them said the same thing had happened to them.

According to a 2006 Danish study published in the *Psychonomic Bulletin & Review*, people over age 40 perceive themselves to be, on average, 20 percent younger than what their ID indicates. Having a younger subjective age begins at age 25—before then, most people tend to feel *older* than they are.



Why do some of us feel that the number of candles on our birthday cake can't be right? Psychologists and scientists have been studying this phenomenon since the 1970s. Some wonder about the cultural factors that push us to look younger. A 1989 study by the American Psychological Association concluded that subjective age identities are "a form of defensive denial by which adults can disassociate themselves from the stigma attached to growing old."

Belén Alfonso (chronological age 35, subjective age 30) agrees. "We internalize negative stereotypes about old age, so we resist identifying ourselves with being an older person," says the psychologist who specializes in gender studies. Alfonso explains that these ageist attitudes especially persecute women, who are the target of advertising that associates being active and attractive with being young. "In contrast, old age is associated with being unproductive, ill and dependent," she says.

Alfonso doesn't believe that a mature person should be blamed for perceiving themselves, or presenting themselves to others, as younger, but she argues that we need to understand the social context that pushes them to do so. "Having a subjective age of 20 when we are 65, for example, suggests that we see ourselves as energetic, strong, attractive. But why can't we associate those qualities with being 65?"

Take Madonna. The singer, who is 65, has long been criticized for how she presents herself: a woman confident in

herself and her sexuality. Surrounded by people who could be her children, Madonna twerks, smokes cannabis, shows off her vibrators and joins viral trends on TikTok. Judging by the comments on social media, many people see this as a big problem—they believe that a woman in her 60s should cover herself up and not attract attention.

THOSE WHO PERCEIVE THEMSELVES AS YOUNGER TEND TO BE HEALTHIER AND HAPPIER.

In a statement posted on Instagram earlier this year, the singer responded to the haters: "Once again I am caught in the glare of the ageism and misogyny that permeate the world we live in. A world that refuses to celebrate women past the age of 45 and feels the need to punish her if she continues to be strong-willed, hardworking and adventurous. I have never apologized for any of the creative choices I have made, nor the way that I look or dress, and I'm not going to start."

For Belén Alfonso, Madonna "shows us that physical activity, eroticism and trending on social media are not exclusive to a specific age." But the problem is that in the music industry, pop divas are supposed to be young; mature women often feel pressured into getting

cosmetic surgery and using Photoshop to fit into a single mould.

Nor has age constrained Paddy Jones of the United Kingdom. Her place was on the dance floor—and in the Guinness Book of World Records as the oldest acrobatic salsa dancer in the world. Well into her 80s, she danced salsa with an agility and fearlessness that many would want for themselves at 40. (“I don’t plead my age, because I don’t feel 80, or act it,” she once said in an interview.) Her videos, which are hypnotic, tender and slightly terrifying, have accumulated millions of views.

A dancer as a young woman, Jones gave it up to have a family. But her fame came much later: In 2009, at age 75, she entered the Spanish TV dance competition *Tú sí que vales* (*You Are Worth It*) with “Nico” Espinosa, 40 years her junior—and won.

Her story went viral, and she danced on shows in the U.K. (she and Espinosa made the finals of *Britain’s Got Talent*), Germany, Chile and Italy. In interviews she encouraged women to throw down their walking stick and go after their dreams in defiance of ageist stereotypes. She has squeezed the juice out of each year, competing until 2021, when she performed on *Spain’s Got Talent*; she and Nico made it through the first round. Now 88 years old, she no longer competes. Subjective age can help improve quality of life, but in the end, real age imposes itself.

Chronological age cannot be modified, “but lifestyle and behaviour can

influence subjective age,” says Bruno Arpino, a sociologist at the University of Padua in Italy who coordinated a European study looking at the quality of life of elderly people. Arpino is 43 and prefers not to say how young he is in subjective years. (“I study the subject, so my answer would be biased.”) He says there are positives for people who perceive themselves as younger than their real age.

“They tend to be healthier, happier with their lives,” Arpino says, “and they live longer.” But he cautions that it’s not known to what extent these positives are a cause or an effect. “The phenomenon occurs mostly among people who are active for their age,” he points out.

Other factors that lead to us perceiving ourselves as younger are being sociable, cultivating hobbies or having intergenerational relationships.

ALL THE STUDIES and theories seem to boil down to a rather simple idea: In adulthood, it’s hard to find our place. At the high-school reunion, we may feel we are the best-preserved of our fellow alumni. That’s okay, but it’s not real; it may be a disappointment to realize you look just as old as everyone else your age.

At the end of the day, seeing yourself as younger can be good for your physical and mental health. So be defiant, like Madonna, or a dancer, like Paddy Jones. Forever young, to the end. 

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ELPAÍS.COM





PERSPECTIVE



Reader's Digest
editors share their best
no-effort tips to make
the most of every day

75 **EASY** WAYS TO IMPROVE YOUR LIFE

1. Put a glass of water by your bed when you turn in. In the morning, drink what's left for a good start to hydration for the day.

2. Each day, spend at least 10 minutes of dedicated one-on-one time with loved ones you live with.

3. Make your to-do list specific. It's easier to get started when the item says "Make outline for report" than when it says "Write report."

4. Print photos that you have on your phone as birthday gifts. Printed photos are a rare treat these days.

5. Call your parents; they want to hear from you. One day you won't be able to.

6. Life's too short for uncomfortable shoes.



7. Keep cut-up fruit and veg in the fridge so there's an easy, healthy snack when you're hungry.

8. Make sure to do the things that bring you the most joy at least once a week.

9. Pay your bills as soon as they come in.

10. After answering your friend's question about yourself, always follow up with a question about them.

11. Do a few rounds of "square breathing" at the start or end of the day and whenever you're stressed: Breathe in for four counts, hold for four, exhale for four and hold for four.

12. Set up automatic transfers to your rainy-day savings account on your payday. Any amount will do.

13. Work in an office? At 3 p.m., an informal stand-around chat with your colleagues is a good energy boost.

14. Any exercise is good. A five-minute walk is better than no walk at all.

15. Smell the lilacs.

16. Always strike up a conversation with the grocery-store clerk.

17. Buy the sunscreen you will use, even if it is pricier.



18. Seize the weekday: Don't save your best china for weekends or special occasions.

19. Exercise first thing in the morning, because even if you achieve nothing else for the rest of the day, you've accomplished that.

20. Keep a pot of rosemary on your windowsill. It's delicious in potato dishes.

21. Don't go shopping when you're bored or hungry.

22. Find a community outside of work and family.

23. Wear the shorts, the tank top, the bikini if you want to. Who cares?

24. The next time you're tempted by an amazing bargain, ask yourself, "Do I really need this?"

25. Smile at people you pass on the street.

26. Not sleeping great? Cut out caffeine after noon.

27. Spend an afternoon at a sidewalk café and watch the world go by.

28. Travelling? Take only carry-on luggage. You can do it!

29. Spend at least a few minutes outside every day—especially when the sun is out.

30. Make your bed as soon as you get up.

31. Choose your battles. They're not all worth fighting.

32. Follow social media? Take a day off.

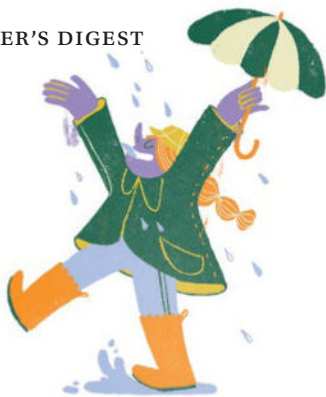
33. For an afternoon pick-me-up, tea with a little sugar can't be beat.

34. Call a friend you haven't spoken with lately.

35. Learn to say hello in at least three other languages.

36. Take the time to relax and enjoy your meals.

37. Take your kids to museums, art exhibitions and concerts, even if they're adults.



38. Don't let bad weather stop you from enjoying the outdoors; just wear the right clothing.

39. Pick up some books from your local library to read over the holidays.

40. Try cold-water swimming, or a cold shower, for a natural high.

41. Cook something from another culture.

42. Write a letter. With a pen. On paper.

43. Turn off your phone at around 9 p.m. for a better night's sleep.

44. Got a large box of mixed leafy greens? Use the red leaves first. They deteriorate fastest.

45. For just a few minutes each day, try learning a new skill, like juggling, drawing, doing Sudoku or playing the guitar.

46. If you like to cook, try a new recipe once a week. If you don't cook, try a new restaurant.

47. If you have an outdoor space, dry your laundry in the sun.

48. Doing something repetitive, like sweeping the floor, can be therapeutic, taking your mind off of stressful thoughts.

49. Don't forget about your old boxes of photos; drag them out, dig in and relive the memories.

50. Fuel your car when you are not in a hurry to get somewhere. You'll avoid having to do it on a day when you're in a rush.

51. If worries are keeping you awake at night, try slowly counting backward from 100.

52. For a healthy start to the day, do 10 minutes of simple yoga exercises, such as sun salutations, downward dog, child's pose or cat-cow stretches.

53. Celebrate and encourage other people's talent, even if they're better at something than you are.

54. Have a catnap after lunch. You'll be more alert all afternoon.

55. Read poetry. When you find a poem you love, send it to a friend.

56. In a political discussion with friends or family, don't try to be right at all costs; listen and learn from other points of view.

57. Hug your children every time you see them.

58. Visiting another country? Don't be afraid to step off the tourist path. Most people in the world are good, like you.

59. Honesty is the best policy (and be true to yourself, too).

60. Don't just read the news headlines; take the time to read the whole article.

61. Get to know your neighbour by inviting them over for a drink.

62. Feeling blue in the summer? Treat yourself to an ice-cream cone. In the winter? A bowl of noodles will do the trick.



63. If you have a choice, take your bicycle rather than your car.

64. When faced with a difficult decision, don't overthink it; the right choice is often what's in your heart.

65. When you're wrong, admit it.

66. Cook a good meal for someone.

67. Even after an argument, try to part with a smile.

68. Give your partner a massage.

69. Always buy quality cookware (and wait for the sales).

70. Explore a street, a square or a hill you've never been to before.

71. Don't hesitate to decline an invitation if you just don't feel like going. It's okay to say no.

72. Always keep reusable shopping bags and an umbrella in the car.

73. Pamper yourself: Get a manicure, spa treatment or luxury shave.

74. When in an argument, ask yourself if you're hungry, tired, hot or cold. Resolve that first, then your disagreement might not seem so bad.

75. Take your shoes off and walk barefoot in the surf.



BONUS READ

The inside story of Terry Fox's Marathon of Hope

BY *Bill Vigars* WITH *Ian Harvey* FROM THE BOOK *TERRY & ME*



TERRY



A N D M E

When I first joined him on June 9, 1980, Terry Fox

was 58 days into the Marathon of Hope, running across Canada on his artificial leg to raise money for cancer research. He'd dipped his prosthesis in the Atlantic Ocean at St. John's two months earlier and planned to end his run in Vancouver's Stanley Park, completing his sea-to-sea journey. Hardly anyone had heard of him at that point.

I had been sent as an emissary of the Ontario division of the Canadian Cancer Society. We had spoken several times in the weeks before, with Terry calling me in my Toronto office from pay phones along the highway.

I met him at 4 a.m. in his motel parking lot in Edmundston, N.B. Doug Alward, Terry's driver and best friend, seemed a bit confused: "You're the guy from the Cancer Society?"

Terry was eager to start his daily run. We piled into the Ford Econoline van. Half an hour later, under a sliver of moon barely casting a shadow on the dark two-lane Trans-Canada Highway, 21-year-old Terry slid the van door open and eased himself down to the gravel shoulder. He walked over and touched a plastic bag covered with gravel they'd placed there the day before. It marked the exact spot Terry had finished yesterday's run of 24 miles.*

Alone, in the dark, Terry began to run. We drove ahead a mile and then Doug pulled over as a far-off train blew its whistle. The three of us sat in silence and waited for Terry.

Eventually I saw a figure emerge from the gloom, running towards us at an even pace. He ran with an unusual gait, taking slight hops after each step with his good left leg to give his prosthetic right leg time to catch up. He was intensely focused on the road ahead and didn't stop when he reached the van. We watched him pass, then we drove another mile down the highway.

At the next mile it was the same routine, except this time Darrell, Terry's younger brother, stood by the headlights with a plastic cup of water in hand. Terry stopped, took a drink, then headed off. No words were spoken.

So far, Terry had covered nearly 1,500 miles. The donations had been very good in some towns, but overall they weren't exactly flowing in. My job was to help with the fundraising by bringing awareness of what Terry was doing—and why. But in the van that morning I couldn't think about fundraising. All I

*FOOTNOTE: THE AUTHOR REFERS TO MILES, RATHER THAN KILOMETRES, THROUGHOUT BECAUSE THAT WAS THE MEASURE TERRY FOX USED AND THAT MANY MARATHONERS USE TO THIS DAY.

could think about was the figure shuffling along behind us on the endless shoulder of the Trans-Canada Highway.

THE FOXES WERE A hard-working family. Terry's father, Rolly, was a switchman for the Canadian National Railway. He and his wife, Betty, raised four children: Terry was the second oldest. When the kids were still young, the family moved from Winnipeg to Surrey, B.C., and when Terry was about 10, they settled in the Vancouver suburb of Port Coquitlam.

As a kid, Terry was relentlessly active and fiercely competitive. He played to win, whether it was table-top hockey, wrestling with his brothers, soccer or

basketball—his game of choice. He wasn't naturally talented at it, but in practice he out-hustled every other player on the court and muscled his way onto the school team—becoming its star guard. In Grade 12, he shared athlete-of-the-year honours with his best friend, Doug.

After high school, Terry went to Simon Fraser University to study kinesiology. He tried out for the SFU junior varsity basketball team, and his strong work ethic again secured him a spot.

In November 1976, Terry drove his forest-green 1968 Ford Cortina into the back of a pickup truck. The car was a write-off. He was fine, just a little knee



Terry Fox was 21 when he started his Marathon of Hope.



All across the country, Terry was met with fans and supporters. Below, with his brother Darrell.



pain, and after calling his mother to let her know about the accident, he headed for his basketball practice. But by February 1977, the pain persisted, so Terry went to see the campus doctor. He was given painkillers and told to rest. For a month, the pain subsided.

While he was running track a month later, the pain came back worse than ever. Now barely able to walk, he was referred to an orthopaedic specialist—who looked at his x-rays and knew something was seriously wrong. Terry had osteosarcoma: bone cancer. It was festering around his knee and threatening to metastasize; his leg would have to be amputated 15 centimetres above the knee, and he would need chemotherapy. The doctor told Terry that until just two years prior, the survival rate was only 15 percent, but that thanks to advances in cancer research, it was now between 50 and 75 percent.

The night before his operation, Terry's high school basketball coach brought him a *Runner's World* article about Dr. Dick Traum, who had run a marathon with an artificial leg in 1976. Terry read it and a dream took shape in his mind. The next morning, before his surgery, Terry showed the article to Judith Ray, his nurse at Royal Columbian Hospital in New Westminster, B.C. "Someday I'm going to do something like that," he said.

Terry was 18 at the time of the amputation. Post-surgery, he was fitted with a prosthesis that had a plastic bucket for his stump and a hinge at the knee.

When Terry began chemotherapy, each round left him sick in bed for several days. Being in the cancer ward, surrounded by other patients—many of them children, many of them desperately ill—profoundly changed him. He felt a sense of responsibility towards his fellow cancer sufferers and he saw the value of research: He was beating the disease largely due to recent pharmaceutical advances.

PEOPLE REACTED TO THIS BOYISH-LOOKING ONE-LEGGED RUNNER WITH AWE, TEARS AND APPLAUSE.

TERRY SOON MASTERED the art of running on his artificial leg. He started by walking up and down his driveway in Port Coquitlam, then the street and finally the track at a nearby elementary school.

The idea of doing a fundraising run—clear across Canada—became an obsession. His goal was to raise \$1 million for cancer research. After 14 months in training, he figured he'd built up the strength to complete a marathon a day.

But Terry's prosthetic limb wasn't built for running. As he increased his mileage, he suffered bone bruises and shin splints, among other injuries. So he worked on his gait, searching for a new technique that would allow him to move comfortably, eventually settling

on his now-famous hop-step-shuffle.

In the fall of 1979, Doug, a serious runner, signed up for a 17-mile race in Prince George, B.C. Terry joined his friend. He finished dead last with a time of three hours and nine minutes, but he trailed the last two-legged runner by only 10 minutes.

Galvanized, he returned home and broke the news to Betty Fox: "Mom, I'm going to run across Canada."

"You are not," she said.

"Yes, I am."

ON JANUARY 2, 1980, Terry, now 21, sent a letter to his nurse on the cancer ward,

Judith Ray, to tell her about his plans.

"Things have been going super for me. My running has become number one for me right now. I'm now up to 20 miles a day. Christmas was my first day away from running in 102 days. This spring and fall will probably be the most exciting days of my life. I'm running across Canada to raise money for cancer.

"I can still remember the night when Dr. Piper told me I was going to have my leg amputated and go on to chemotherapy. At first it was terrible, but it didn't last long. I remember you telling me I could still finish my university and

GAIL HARVEY, COURTESY OF SUTHERLAND HOUSE BOOKS



Terry and
Bill Vigers.

that I could keep in shape. I was too busy to ever go into depression or feel sorry for myself. Now I have the chance to help others, just as you helped me, only in different ways.”

THAT FIRST DAY IN New Brunswick we had breakfast at a roadside diner, where Terry loaded up on eggs, bacon, pancakes, home fries, French fries and a piece of pie. We passed through several small towns that day, heading towards the Quebec border. People reacted to this one-legged runner—a boyish-looking young man in sweat-stained shorts—with awe, tears, applause.

Around 5 p.m., we were in a park in one of those towns. Terry perched on a railing and spoke about what he was doing and why. It looked like the whole town had shown up. As always, he spoke from the heart and his message was clear: He wanted to find a cure for cancer for the kids he’d met back in the cancer ward. There were rousing cheers and shouts of those famous Down East words of encouragement: “You go get ‘em, boy.”

Still, he was frustrated by the sporadic attention and inconsistent support he’d received. And, with his daily mileage now much greater than anything he’d attempted before, the run was taking its toll. He’d been running in the cold, rain, and occasionally snow, always in shorts rather than

sweatpants so that people could see his prosthetic leg. Hills were a challenge for the artificial leg, and the uneven surface on the highway’s shoulder made it difficult for him to keep an even stride.

He tried to make light of these issues in his diary. “Having an artificial leg has its advantages,” he wrote. “I’ve broken my right knee several times and it doesn’t hurt a bit.” But at other times, he was truly scared. After he experienced double-vision on the road in Newfoundland, he wrote:

“I TOLD MYSELF IT IS
TOO LATE TO GIVE
UP. I WANT TO SET AN
EXAMPLE THAT WON’T
BE FORGOTTEN.”

“I was dizzy and light-headed, but I made it to the van. It was a frightening experience. Was it over? Would I let everybody down? I told myself it is too late to give up. I would keep going no matter what. If I died, I would die happy because I was doing what I wanted to do. How many people could or can say that? I went out and did 15 push-ups in the road and took off.

“At five miles Doug and I talked about it for a while. I cried because I knew I was going to make it or be in a hospital bed or dead. I want to set an example that will never be forgotten. It is courage and not foolishness. It isn’t a waste.”



THERE WERE MANY memorable moments in the time I spent with Terry. At 5 a.m., as we prepared to leave Ottawa, the van pulled up at the spot that Terry had reached the day before. It was still dark. A black-and-white police cruiser was parked on the gravel shoulder, waiting to accompany us. I headed over to identify myself, and quickly got the sense that the officer was not too enthused with his assignment. There was no mistaking his gruffness and "Why am I here?" attitude.

THE OFFICER WAS
STARING AT TERRY,
A TEAR RUNNING
DOWN HIS FACE. "HOW
IS HE DOING THAT?"

"Okay everyone, let's move," I said, and Terry ran two miles before taking his first break.

I walked up to the cruiser to see if everything was okay. The officer was staring at Terry, a tear running down his face. "I have never seen anything like this, ever," he said. "How is he doing that?"

The officer's transformation was something I witnessed daily with Terry. I didn't have an answer to that question, no matter how many times I heard it.

I'D HAD AN IDEA IN MIND since New Brunswick that we could get Rolly and Betty to fly out and surprise Terry as he got

closer to Toronto. It happened near Whitby on July 10 just before 6 a.m. as the sun was rising. Terry crested a small rise in the road and there, a block ahead, were his parents, standing in the middle of the road. Terry ran into his mother's arms and the three of them stood there hugging.

The image was on the *Toronto Star's* front page the next day. Things were coming together for the Marathon of Hope. It hadn't been long ago that we had been arranging everything that happened, coaxing people to share in the run. Now things were happening in every direction. It wasn't long after that Terry was on CTV's national program *Canada AM*. The thing was taking on a life of its own.

The Marathon of Hope was a roller coaster of extreme emotions, high and low. Seeing Terry with his parents was one of the highs. Later in the day, when we were at a rest stop near Pickering, came one of the lows.

A large crowd surrounded the van and Terry was open, at ease, chatting with everyone. I was at his side when a woman approached with a donation and quietly said to Terry, "You are running for my son."

Terry glanced around: "Where is he?"

"He passed away last month from cancer," she said, looking directly into Terry's eyes.

You never got used to that. As Terry comforted her, I turned and walked away, choking back tears. I marvelled at how graciously Terry handled these



A marathon a day
required a lot of fuel
—at every meal.

moments. In addition to the physical pain of every step in his journey, he carried with him the hopes and tears of all the people he met along the way. It fuelled his purpose.

As we reached City Hall in Scarborough, on the outskirts of Toronto, the streets were a mass of people. Three motorcycle officers slowly opened a pathway for us. Inside, the city presented him with a cheque for \$5,000. Then Terry was introduced to 14-year-old Anne Marie Von Zuben, who had been battling kidney cancer since the age of 3 and looked much younger than her age. When Terry leaned down to talk to her, she kissed him on the cheek and gave him a single daffodil. Terry was deeply affected by this simple gesture.

THOUSANDS CAME TO SEE TERRY. THEY LINED THE STREETS AND WAVED OUT OF WINDOWS.

The nearby Scarborough Civic Centre was packed with thousands of people, by far the largest indoor crowd that had greeted Terry so far. At least 1,000 kids were seated on the floor. When he walked in, Terry received a thunderous round of applause that felt like it would never end. He responded with a warm smile. Then the crowd started chanting his name.

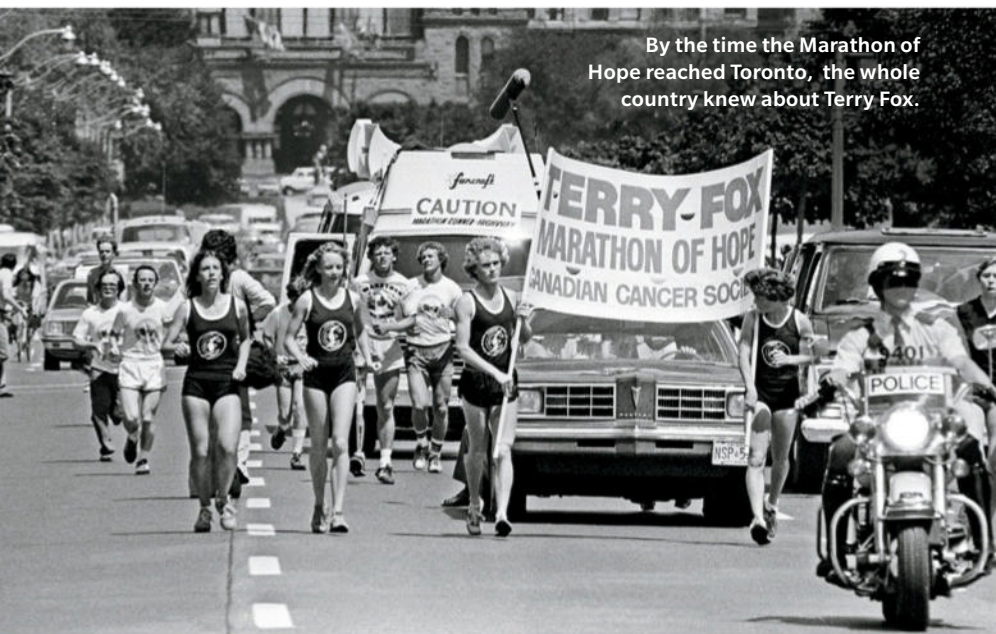
In all the weeks I was with him, I never heard Terry speak with so much emotion. He addressed his discomfort about the cult of personality that was starting around him. "For me," he said, "being famous is not the idea of the run. I'm just one member of the Marathon of Hope. I'm no different than anyone else. If I ever change that attitude about myself there's no use in continuing."

UNIVERSITY AVENUE in downtown Toronto is a grand eight-lane boulevard. On either side are some of Canada's top research hospitals, including what is now called the Princess Margaret Cancer Centre, one of the world's leading cancer research facilities and one that benefits to this day from the Marathon of Hope.

With the flashing lights of the police vehicles leading the way down University Avenue that July 11, Terry ran alone, followed closely by Darrell, former Toronto Maple Leaf star Darryl Sittler, Doug and myself running behind. The scene was unreal. I still get shivers thinking about it. The road was lined with thousands of people. It seemed as though every window of the buildings on either side was full of waving, cheering people. A young girl on roller skates kept pace with Terry, a respectful distance to his right.

At some point during the Marathon of Hope, a Toronto group called the Nancy Ryan Take One Singers had recorded a song called "*Run Terry Run*." We'd heard it, non-stop, at almost every





By the time the Marathon of Hope reached Toronto, the whole country knew about Terry Fox.

event we attended. So as we ran past a beer company's van that was blasting it out of speakers, Terry smiled and yelled at me: "If I hear that song one more time, I'm going to shoot somebody."

We turned onto Queen Street towards City Hall and Nathan Phillips Square. It was a heaving sea of people—pure bedlam with music playing, and people yelling and clapping. As Terry ascended the stairs to the stage, 10,000 souls let loose the biggest cheer I've ever experienced in person. The skyscrapers surrounding us seemed to amplify the sound. Actor Al Waxman was at the microphone and had to yell to be heard: "Ladies and gentlemen, Terry Fox!"

I was confident that all Canadians would soon be believers in this kid from Port Coquitlam and his mission to make a difference in the fight against cancer, which is all he wanted.

THERE IS A STEEP TWO-MILE INCLINE on the Trans-Canada Highway between Sault Ste. Marie and Wawa, Ont., called the Montreal River Hill. That day, August 16, there seemed to be a larger than normal crowd at the base of the hill as Terry set out. I drove to the top, parked, and sat on the fender waiting. The locals still talk about Terry's grit in taking on that hill. But when he got to the top he yelled, "Is this it?"

Terry had trained on Gagliardi Way in Vancouver. It is longer and steeper than Montreal River Hill, and Terry had run up it almost daily while training for his trip. He had Montreal River Hill beat before he even started.

Over the next couple of days, Terry thought he might have a broken ankle. He'd been soaking his foot in ice water, but didn't take any days off from his run. The pain was getting worse and Terry had to be driven back to Sault Ste. Marie hospital, where a doctor took x-rays. The diagnosis was severe tendinitis, as might have been expected after running 3,000 miles in four months. Terry was prescribed pain pills and told to stay off his feet for 36 hours.

"THE CANCER IS BACK.
TERRY HAS BEEN
ADMITTED. THEY ARE
DOING TESTS, BUT
THEY'RE SURE."

Not long after, when Terry was near Terrace Bay, Ont., he learned that Greg Scott, a 10-year-old amputee he'd met in Hamilton, Ont., was flying north with his parents to visit Terry. Greg, an all-star baseball player, had the same type of cancer as Terry. Both had lost a leg, Terry his right, Greg his left.

Their connection had been immediate. In Hamilton, they had joked about losing their hair and Terry told Greg

about having to wear a bad wig until his hair grew back much curlier than it was before. Since then, Terry had asked me daily if I had any news about Greg.

The morning after learning that Greg was coming, Terry was back on the road. He knocked off 13 miles by breakfast, as though his ankle were brand new. After the Scotts arrived, Terry suggested that Greg ride a bike alongside him. He marvelled at Greg's cycling ability, saying that when he had tried to ride a bike in Port Coquitlam his leg kept falling off. Greg kept pace with his hero for six miles, the two of them chatting as they went.

While giving his speech on a hotel lawn in Terrace Bay the next day, Terry said, "I had the most inspirational day of my life today. I'm crying now because there's somebody right here that's going through the exact same thing I went through, and he's only 10 years old. Greg Scott has been with us for two days and I haven't heard one complaint. He just had his operation two months ago. I wish he could stay with us, but he will be with me every step of the way."

After Greg departed, Doug showed Terry a scrapbook of press clippings to give him a flavour of what was happening back home. Flipping through them, Terry found a piece by a well-known British Columbia controversialist. In a Vancouver weekly, he wrote that Terry had driven, not run, through Quebec.

Terry, who had been careful not to skip a single step along the way, took it

as a knife through the heart. I asked if he wanted me to get the writer on the phone. He did.

From a roadside motel/restaurant just outside Gravel River Provincial Park, I handed the phone to Terry. The first words out of his mouth were: "Why would you write something like that? It's a total lie! People will read this and believe I cheated!" Terry was crying, saying over and over again, "Why would you do this?"

I couldn't hear what was being said on the other end, but I could tell the writer was backtracking (his story was later retracted). In no mood to listen, Terry got angrier and angrier. Suddenly, he slammed the phone down and punched the wall. He just stood there, his body shaking, wracked with sobs.

THE MORNING AFTER, my kids and I flew south for my parents' 40th wedding anniversary. While we were away, it occurred to me that Terry had been due to reach Thunder Bay that afternoon. I thought I should check in.

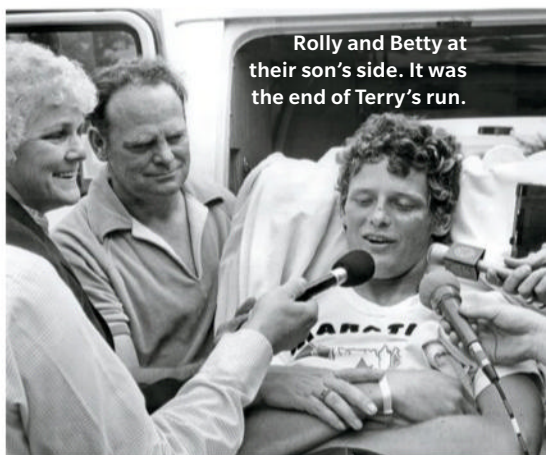
No one seemed to know where Terry was. Finally, I called the hospital in Thunder Bay. Lou Fine, the Cancer Society district rep, came on the line and said: "The cancer is back. Terry has been admitted. They are doing tests, but they're sure."

It was September 1, some 143 days and 3,339 miles into the Marathon of Hope.

At the packed press conference soon after, Terry, half sitting up on his gurney, began speaking. He tried, unsuccessfully, to contain his disappointment and emotions, telling the reporters that his cancer had spread to his lungs and he had to go home for treatment. Still determined, he added: "If there is any way I can get out there again and finish it, I will."

As he spoke, Rolly and Betty stood together next to him. Betty tightly held his hand, tears staining her cheeks. Rolly had a deep sadness etched on his face. Later, he said, "This is unfair. This is so unfair."

"No, it's not, Dad," Terry responded. "I'm not special. It happens all the time to other people. I could have sat on my rear end after the operation. I could have forgotten everything I saw in the hospital but I didn't. I just wish people would realize that anything is possible if they just try, dreams are made if you



Rolly and Betty at their son's side. It was the end of Terry's run.

try. Maybe people will see this and go wild with fundraising.”

He paused. “Maybe now, people will realize why I’m doing it.”

Afterwards, during an interview with Barbara Frum on CBC Radio’s *As It Happens*, I said: “He told me in the ambulance that he wasn’t shocked that the cancer had returned and he was going to go home and fight it like the last time. I never thought he would go home this way.”

I found it difficult to continue. “He’s the greatest person I have ever met.”

TERRY WAS AMAZED BY WHO WAS AT THE TELETHON: ELTON JOHN, ANNE MURRAY, JOHN DENVER.

A week later, the Cancer Society’s Ron Calhoun (the Marathon of Hope’s national coordinator) and his wife, Fran, flew to Thunder Bay to pick up the donated motor home used by Terry and his crew and drive it back to Vancouver. As they headed across the prairies, long lines of cars followed, not wanting to pass. At times it felt as if they were leading a funeral procession and the only way to get people to pass was to pull over. In one car, children held up a hastily drawn sign: “We Love You Terry.”

A few hours after I returned to my Toronto office, my boss asked me to go to a CTV office down the street, where

a nationwide telethon in support of Terry was being pulled together for Sunday, September 7, just three days away. The producers needed to know more about the man they were honouring.

At the end of the day the executive producer asked me where I would be on Sunday. Probably at home watching on TV, I said. “Would you like to go to B.C. to be with Terry?” he asked. He didn’t have to ask twice.

I flew to Vancouver and headed to the Fox home in Port Coquitlam. Terry was in the Royal Columbian Hospital so I slept in his bedroom. There were cardboard boxes piled to the ceiling, full of memorabilia that had been presented to him by well-wishers during the Marathon of Hope. When I visited Terry in the hospital, he was lying in bed, fully dressed. He greeted me with that great smile.

We watched the telethon together, and Terry was amazed at what he saw: Elton John, John Denver, Nana Mouskouri, Gordon Lightfoot, Darryl Sittler, Anne Murray. The studio audience roared with delight at the revelation of each new tally on the donations board. At show’s end, the proceeds of the five-hour telethon, together with what had been raised during the run, totalled more than \$10 million.

I went for another visit, my last with him, in October. Terry was out of the hospital, returning intermittently for treatment. By and large, he was living a normal life, even getting out sometimes with his circle of friends. One day, Terry and

I went for a drive. He casually asked if I wanted to see where he would be buried.

Port Coquitlam Cemetery is small and beautifully tended. There are no ornate tombstones, only simple cement markers. At the back, we pushed through a broken wire fence and arrived at a patch of grass where the embankment fell off steeply to the Coquitlam River below. This was Terry's special spot, the place he often visited to contemplate the world, long before the Marathon of Hope. It was private and peaceful. We talked for a bit and then went for a beer.

MEANWHILE, RECOGNITION FOR Terry continued pouring in. Schools, streets and even a mountain were named for him. He appreciated it all, but became genuinely excited when he received the Lou Marsh Award in December 1980, presented annually to Canada's best athlete. To be recognized by the sporting world was the highest praise he could get.

By early June 1981, Terry was spending much more time in the hospital. On Friday, June 12, someone at the Cancer Society told me the end was near. Terry told me on the phone that he had moved back home.

Two weeks later, I was in St. Thomas, Ont., visiting my parents. I stopped to see my sister Beth. When I walked in

her back door, she looked at me and said, "Have you heard the news?"

I didn't have to ask.

Terry's resting place is marked by a simple slab. It reads: "Terrance Stanley Fox, July 28, 1958-June 28, 1981: He made his too short life into a marathon of courage and hope." Shortly after Terry's passing, young Greg Scott passed away. His father, Rod, said, "He died unafraid, knowing that he was going to join his friend Terry."

Right from the start, Terry received plenty of offers from people and companies wanting him to endorse one thing or another. But Terry had been steadfast: Nobody was going to commercialize his run. The Terry Fox Foundation, www.terryfox.org, maintains this position to this day.

Some 300,000 people participated in the first annual Terry Fox Run in September 1981, raising \$3.5 million. Today, the run—which takes place every year on the second Sunday after Labour Day—is said to be the world's largest one-day fundraiser for cancer research. Close to \$1 billion has been raised in Terry's name. **R**

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Common Sense

I'm an old-fashioned guy. I believe in the Enlightenment, and reason, and logic, and, you know, facts.

BARACK OBAMA

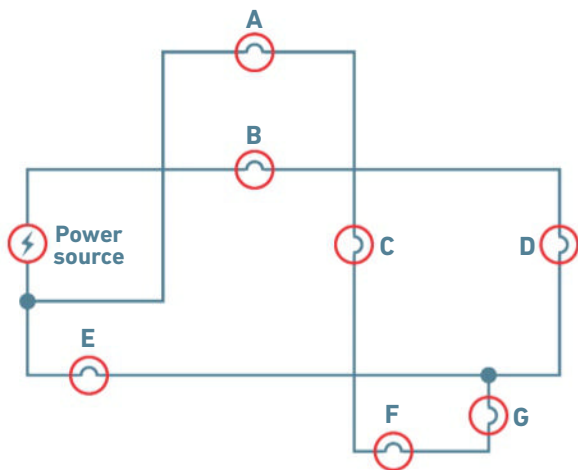
Brain GAMES

SHARPEN YOUR MIND

Let There Be Light

MEDIUM Ella has only six bulbs to place in the seven sockets on the Christmas lights on her roof (labelled A to G in the diagram). For a bulb to shine, it needs to be part of an uninterrupted path leading from one end of the power source to the other. An empty socket breaks any path that passes through it.

When there's a dot at the intersection of two wires (+), they are connected. If there's no dot (+), one wire simply passes under the other, without an electrical connection.



If Ella wants to enjoy the highest possible number of shining bulbs, which socket should she leave empty?

LET THERE BE LIGHT BY SAMANTHA RIDEOUT; TIMES SQUARE BY FRASER SIMPSON

12

45

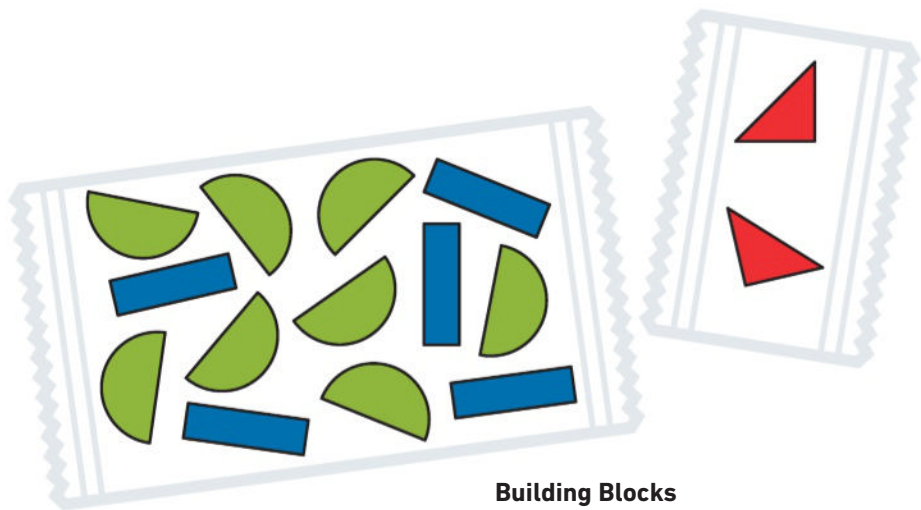
56

60

42 54 50 16

Times Square

MEDIUM Fill in each cell of the grid with a digit from 1 through 9. Each number outside the grid is the result of multiplying together the digits in its row or column. The number 1 will appear only once in each row and column; other numbers can be repeated and not every digit will be used.



Building Blocks

EASY Lloyd wants to buy some construction blocks for his grandchildren so they can build houses and bikes following the designs to the left. The parts are sold in the packs shown above, and Lloyd doesn't want to have any blocks left over. What is the minimum number of each pack he should buy, and how many houses and bikes will his grandkids be able to make?



Final Battle

DIFFICULT You're playing a video game in which you defeat each enemy by making a unique sequence of moves, which are numbered 1-6. You've figured out all of them (listed at the right) except the last one. What sequence will take down the final enemy?

VOBAFERNO 2-1-6-5
RABADOOL 1-2-1-4
SCEFFRIT 3-5-6-6
PICADELLOR 3-1-4-5
ZODDAFIZZ ?-?-?-?

For answers, turn to PAGE 114



BY *Louis-Luc Beaudoin*

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

To Solve This Puzzle

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

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

SOLUTION

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

BRAIN GAMES ANSWERS

FROM PAGE 112

Let There Be Light

Socket E, which leaves the other six bulbs lit.

Times Square

2	3	1	2
3	3	5	1
7	1	2	4
1	6	5	2

Building Blocks

If Lloyd buys three larger packs and 23 packs of the triangles, his grandchildren can make five houses and 12 bikes with no leftover blocks.

Final Battle

4-4-1-6

Each enemy's name has a sequence of four letters that includes four of the first six letters of the alphabet, A to F. With A=1, B=2 and so on, these letters represent the correct combination of numbers.



BY *Beth Shillibeer*



1. Saint Nicholas was born in the ancient Greek city of Patara. In what modern-day country is the city located?
2. What type of “novel” food source did the European Union recently approve as safe to eat, with another eight applications in the works?
3. What celebration device has been around since as early as 200 B.C. in China, when it was accidentally discovered that the noise it makes scares off intruders?
4. In June 2022, what did 2021 Nobel Peace Prize winner and journalist Dmitry Muratov auction off—for US\$103 million—to raise money for Ukrainian children affected by the war?
5. What tiny European country is home to a theme park called Naturland, where you’ll find Tobotronic, the world’s longest alpine coaster ride?
6. What Asian country named the Siamese fighting fish—also known as the betta—as its national aquatic animal in 2019 due to its cultural significance in the nation?
7. What full-length animated film from 2004 was the first to be entirely created using motion-capture technology?
8. Which region gets more snow: the Swiss Alps or the Australian Alps?
9. In the ancient Roman calendar, December was the 10th month of the year. What was the first month?
10. What did some players in the Swedish Women’s Hockey League wear during the 2023 season to call attention to gender inequality in the sport?

11. The Nordic countries love heavy-metal music; which one has the most metal bands per capita?

12. American psychologists G. Stanley Hall and Arthur Allin coined the terms "knismesis" and "gargalesis" in 1897. To which physical human experience do these words refer?

13. How many official languages does the United States have?

14. On which planet in our solar system would you find the Great Red Spot, a storm with a diameter larger than Earth that has been raging for at least 300 years?

15. Now with a Catholic church built on top of it, where is the world's largest pyramid, known as Tlachihualtepetl, located?

16. Per- and poly-fluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) are also known as "forever chemicals," based on their tendency to hang around in the human body. They are often used in the oil-resistant coating of what household items?

17. After Juan de Pareja was freed from slavery by Spanish painter and slave owner Diego Velazquez in the 1600s, he went on to become a successful what?

18. According to 2021 data, what has been reduced by 32 percent in the EU compared to 1990 levels?

19. On what date is New Year's Day celebrated in Japan?

20. Which South American country was the first ever to protect nature in its constitution?

Answers: 1. Turkey. 2. Insects, specifically house crickets and mealworm larvae. 3. Firecracker. 4. His Nobel Peace Prize medal. 5. Andorra. 6. Thailand. 7. The Polar Express. 8. The Australian Alps, located in southeast Australia. 9. March. January and February were added later. 10. Transparent helmets, to represent the glass ceiling. 11. Finland. 12. Tickling. Knismesis is light tickling and gargalesis is intense, laughter-inducing tickling. 13. Zero. 14. Jupiter. 15. Choula, Mexico. The structure is also known as the Great Pyramid of Choula. 16. Some non-stick pans. 17. Painter. 18. Greenhouse gas emissions. 19. January 1. 20. Ecuador.

CROSSWORD ANSWER

FROM PAGE 119

P	O	U	N	D		P	O	I	S	E
A	D	I	E	U		U	N	T	I	L
N	I	E	C	E		P	E	O	N	S
T	E	S	T		S	P	O	N	G	E
			A	G	U	E		Y	E	S
	C	H	R	I	S	T	M	A	S	
S	H	O		M	I	S	O			
M	A	R	B	L	E		L	G	B	T
E	N	T	R	E		U	S	E	I	T
A	C	O	A	T		S	O	O	T	Y
R	E	N	T	S		A	N	G	E	L

WORD POWER

Wouldn't it be ice? This time of year is colder, and in case you hadn't *noticed*, this three-letter sequence is all over the English language. As the winter *solstice* approaches, raise a glass to the *ice* hiding in these *choice* quiz words. If one or two skate by you, take our *advice* and check the answers on the next page.

BY Mary-Liz Shaw

1. viceroy *n.*

- A** appointed ruler
B winning entry
C legal document

2. surpliced *adj.*

- A** crossed at centre
B unnecessary
C airy

3. latticework *n.*

- A** structured payment
B temporary shelter
C decorative grid

4. licentiously *adv.*

- A** lewdly
B legally
C nervously

5. serviceable *adj.*

- A** likely
B usable
C unique

6. caprice *n.*

- A** salad
B sudden whim
C light breeze

7. beneficent *adj.*

- A** rich
B charitable
C religious

8. cornice *n.*

- A** boulevard
B species of grasshopper
C ornamental moulding

9. suffice *v.*

- A** heat up
B hide
C be adequate

10. artifice *n.*

- A** pleasure
B honesty
C trickery

11. sluice *v.*

- A** flow
B shoot
C bury

12. epicentre *n.*

- A** attraction
B ultimatum
C focal point

13. pumice *n.*

- A** hand drill
B a volcanic rock
C uneven ground

14. coppice *v.*

- A** interrupt
B cut back
C insert

15. avarice *n.*

- A** insatiable greed
B exceptional talent
C desire for approval

Going with the Floe

Just how many different words for ice are there? Among northern Indigenous communities in Canada, Alaska, Russia, Greenland and Scandinavia, the answer is well over 100. In Inuktitut, the main language spoken by Inuit, these include *sikuq* (the thin layer that forms on water in autumn), *qinu* (slushy ice) and *igalaujait* (frost on plants).



Word Power ANSWERS

1. viceroy (A) appointed ruler

British kings installed 20 viceroys in India alone.

2. surplined (A) crossed at centre

Though she originally wanted a strapless gown, Abigail decided that a *surplined* neckline was more flattering.

3. latticework (C) decorative grid

Skilled gardeners can train vines to grow through the woven slats of *latticework*.

4. licentiously (A) lewdly

Partygoers disrupted the cruise, acting *licentiously* at the pool and catcalling patrons.

5. serviceable (B) usable

"Sure, I'd love a new car, but my old one is still *serviceable*," Nanette said.

6. caprice (B) sudden whim

Elaine threw caution to the wind and bought a boat in an act of sheer *caprice*.

7. beneficent (B) charitable

For years, the *beneficent* grocery store owner has donated her excess inventory to the food bank.

8. cornice (C) ornamental moulding

The architect admired the carved *cornice* running the length of the ceiling.

9. suffice (C) be adequate

Dad never raised his voice at us; one stern look from him *sufficed* to get us in line.

10. artifice (C) trickery

Edgar sensed the salesman was using *artifice* and flattery to get him to invest in a get-rich-quick scheme.

11. sluice (A) flow

Once the engineer

opened the floodgate, water immediately started to *sluice* down the trough.

12. epicentre (C) focal point

Thanks to the Beatles, 1960s Liverpool suddenly became the *epicentre* of a musical revolution.

13. pumice (B) a volcanic rock

Many people like to use a *pumice* stone to exfoliate their feet.

14. coppice (B) cut back

The forester *coppiced* several overgrown birch trees to encourage new growth.

15. avarice (A) insatiable greed

The board of directors accused the CEO of unchecked *avarice*.

Vocabulary Ratings

9 & BELOW: Novice

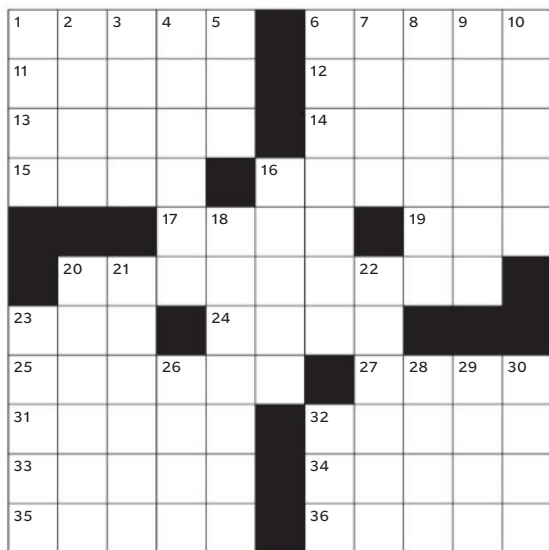
10-12: Practiced

13-15: Magnificent



Piece of Cake!

BY Barbara Olson



ACROSS

- 1 *British currency
- 6 Social grace
- 11 French farewell
- 12 Up to a point in the future
- 13 One's flower girl, perhaps
- 14 Slang term for unskilled labourers
- 15 Reason to cram
- 16 *Mooch
- 17 Chills and fever

- 19 Answer to a decent proposal
- 20 *_____ Island (Austrian territory in the Indian Ocean)
- 23 *Homeland* network, for short
- 24 Sushi-bar soup
- 25 *Stone from which Michelangelo's *David* was sculpted

- 27 Pride letters
- 31 ___ nous (between you and me)
- 32 Start of a rhyming workout motto: 2 words
- 33 Apply ___ of paint: 2 words
- 34 Like Santa after his deliveries
- 35 Uses as an Airbnb
- 36 *Yuletide tree-topper

DOWN

- 1 Out-of-breath sound
- 2 *Garfield* canine
- 3 One-eighties on the road
- 4 Hummingbird's sweet treat
- 5 Word on a library slip or a bill
- 6 Toys to have on hand?
- 7 "___ 'Clock Jump" (Count Basie hit)
- 8 Biopic about skater Harding: 2 words
- 9 Burns with a curling iron, say
- 10 Someone ___ problem
- 16 "Wake Up Little ___"
- 18 Lime and vodka cocktails
- 20 Opportunity
- 21 "Timmie's" founder
- 22 Canadian brewer that brews Canadian
- 23 Spread thickly, as cream cheese
- 26 Whiny foot stamper
- 28 Study of the globe: Abbr.
- 29 Sink one's teeth into
- 30 Texter's signoff: Abbr.
- 32 Country between the 31st and 49th parallels

* Indicates a clue related to the crossword's title.

For answers, turn to PAGE 116



A TRUSTED FRIEND IN A COMPLICATED WORLD

Friends and Family by Tom Froese, exclusively for *Reader's Digest*

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Plant a tree. Thank a hero.

First responders. Nurses.
Frontline workers. We're honouring
the sacrifices of those who serve
us by planting trees in their names.
Together, we can help plant living
tributes to the people who matter.
Donate today at **treesforlife.ca**.

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“I can go anywhere and
I know there's
no leakage,”

-Dolores

Boutique underwear. 8 oz of liquid.



always
discreet

The bladder leak underwear we deserve

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