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13 Things About
THE OLYMPICS

By **ERIC RASKIN**

GRIZZLY VS. HIKER

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Our Family Rule:
SAY YES TO EVERYTHING

By **ANNE FRITZ**

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Reader's Digest

A Trusted Friend in a Complicated World

58

Features

46

COVER STORY **RAISE A GLASS***

Favorite drinks from every state.

BY EMILY GOODMAN
AND EMILY TYRA WITH
TASTE OF HOME

58

HEALTH **Stop the Ride!***

Amusement parks are meant to thrill. But often they just make us sick. One intrepid rider is on a quest to find out why she's always losing her lunch.

BY EMILY LATIMER
FROM LONGREADS

66

INSPIRATION **Band of Survivors**

Armed with his drum kit, a Holocaust survivor fights antisemitism one musical note at a time.

BY JOHN ROSENGREN

74

DRAMA IN REAL LIFE **A Grizzly Encounter***

The bear had his jaws clamped on his friend. There was only one thing to do: tackle.

BY RYAN HOCKENSMITH
FROM ESPN

84

YOUR TRUE STORIES **Won't You Be Our Neighbor?**

These folks do Mr. Rogers proud.

BY READER'S DIGEST
READERS

88

NATIONAL INTEREST **Umm ... Where's My Pool?***

All I wanted was some summer fun. What I got instead was a harsh lesson in the rip-off potential of payment apps.

BY DEVIN FRIEDMAN FROM
BUSINESS INSIDER

88

COVER PHOTOGRAPH *by Emiko Franzen*

RD.COM | JULY/AUGUST 2024

1





30

The Healthy

35 **Who's Getting Colon Cancer**
BY CHARLOTTE HILTON ANDERSEN

38 **I Tried It ... Water Flosser**
BY LYNN SMITH

40 **News from the World of Medicine**
BY BETH WEINHOUSE

Brain Games

106 **Filter Buster, Long Story Short and More**

109 **Word Power**

Humor

Life in These United States	16
All in a Day's Work.....	28
Humor in Uniform	34
Laughter, the Best Medicine	44

Departments

- 4 **Dear Reader**
MORE TO DIGEST
- 6 **Reader Letter; Buy Me Some Peanuts, No Cracker Jack; and More**
WORLD OF GOOD
- 9 **Tiny Museums**
EVERYDAY HEROES
- 10 **The Alpha Dog**
BY SYDNEY PAGE FROM THE WASHINGTON POST
GLAD TO HEAR IT
- 13 **It's a Date!, You've Got a Friend and More**
BEST PET PALS
- 14 **Henrietta the Heifer**
LIFE WELL LIVED
- 18 **Let's Say Yes!***
BY ANNE FRITZ

FOOD PASSPORT

21 **There's More to S'mores**
BY EMILY TYRA

13 THINGS

24 **Go for Gold at the Olympics***
BY ERIC RASKIN

DEPARTMENT OF WIT

30 **A Race Well-Limped**
BY JAMES BREAKWELL FROM EXPLODING UNICORN

THE RD LIST

101 **Fly Me to the Moon, Family Trips with the Meyers Brothers and More**

QUOTABLE QUOTES

104 **Sheryl Lee Ralph, Jelly Roll, Jane Goodall and More**

WHERE, OH WHERE?

112 **Gorgeous Geysers**

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FOR THE LIFE HE WAS BORN TO LIVE



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DEAR READER

Cheers! Salut! Prost!

I AM A BIG drinker. I always have a tall glass of water nearby, and I never leave the house without my keep-it-cold S'well bottle full. I used to drink less water and more Diet Coke: four a day, to be exact. I would crave one so intensely every afternoon that I didn't need a clock to tell me it was 3 o'clock—time to crack a cold one!

Until I decided I was done. I knew that drinking that much soda isn't good for you. Lugging four cans to work every day in my ugly brown cooler bag was a pain. And I didn't like being hooked on anything (except lip balm, but I'm not giving that up!).

So I quit. Cold turkey. First I did some research about breaking the Diet Coke habit (which seems to have an inordinate number of Gen X women like me in its clutches). I read that the best way forward is to replace both the caffeine and the bubbles. So I stocked up on green tea and flavored seltzer and gave those a try. Ten or so years later, I drink the occasional soda, but almost never



My summer drink, with a catchy name!



Diet Coke. Honestly, it just doesn't taste that good to me anymore. The spell is broken.

My go-to summer cocktail is a refreshing drink with a special name: the Jody. A friend poured it for me on a hot day some years back, filling a tall glass with ice, some blueberry vodka, a lot of soda water (or plain seltzer) and a fast splash of cranberry juice.

For our sixth annual America the Tasty cover story, on page 46, we rounded up fun and favorite drinks from every state. Obviously you don't have to live in that state to enjoy the drink. And if you want to skip the alcohol in any of them (including the Jody), you'll have a delicious mocktail.

Cheers to a refreshing summer!

Jody L. Rohlena,
CONTENT DIRECTOR

Write to me at
letters@rd.com.

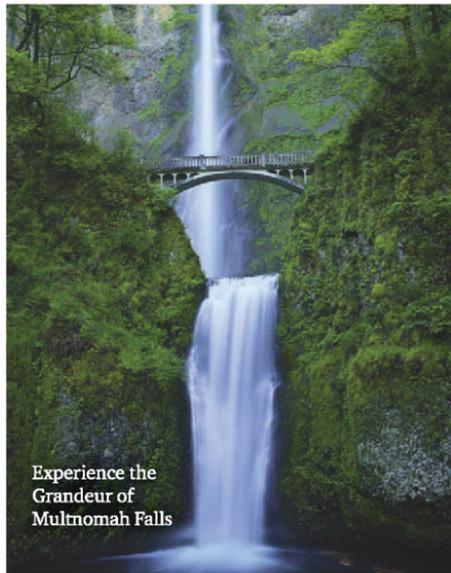


On The Trail Of LEWIS & CLARK

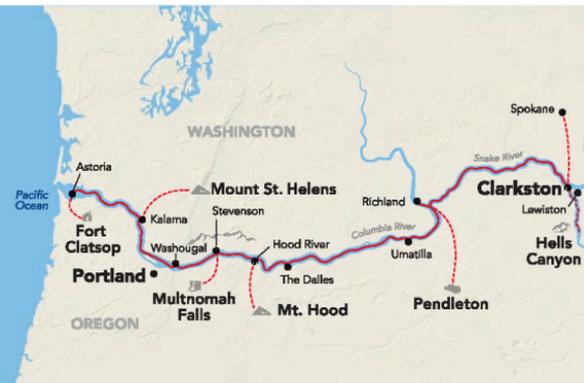
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Buy Me Some Peanuts, No Cracker Jack

It's easy to strike out nutritionally at the concession stand, where fare is typically fast, greasy and salty. So sports dad and nutrition coach Jeff Whittington came up with a roster of better-for-you food choices at the ballpark. His home base? A classic hamburger (solid protein source) and water or lightly sweetened iced tea rather than soda or beer. See the rest of his concession stand lineup, plus a lot more great health info, at TheHealthy.com/ConcessionFoods.



Contribute to Reader's Digest
 You're absolutely correct: Your joke should be in RD. Visit our Community Hub to learn how your jokes, pets and true stories can appear in print. You're a star—we know it.

In "What Happens to All the Stuff We Return" (March/April 2024), David Owen writes about a repairman believing the fragments clogging his dishwasher to be broken ceramic. Owen reveals they were actually coyote teeth, says it was a long story and declines to explain—I really need to know this long story. —AMBER CARROTHERS *Du Quoin, IL*

From the Editors: Owen wanted to add coyote to his collection of local wild animal skulls (he'd already found deer, possum and woodpecker) and decided to buy one on eBay. The skull wasn't as clean as advertised, so Owen ran it through his dishwasher before displaying it, which he cites as a mistake because of both the dishwasher damage and the resultant wet dog smell.

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Tiny Museums

AN ART GALLERY may be popping up near you, maybe even in your own front yard. Free Little Art Galleries (FLAGS) are small structures similar to Little Free Libraries, only instead of books, they house paintings, textile art, homemade jewelry, etc. You can take home a piece of art and/or leave a piece of your own. Best of all, anyone can participate. So far there are about 415 FLAGS around the country and abroad. One of the first was started in 2020 by Seattle artist Stacy Milrany (the gallery below is hers). As one art lover told a gallery owner, "What a gift [your FLAG] is to our neighborhood." 



STACY MILRANY

EVERYDAY HEROES

The Alpha Dog

*To rescue lost animals, she climbs
into places most of us avoid*

BY Sydney Page

FROM THE WASHINGTON POST

CALLIE CLEMENS WAS close to falling asleep at around 11 p.m. last July 26, when an emergency message on the Facebook page she runs—Lost & Found Pets of Spring Branch & Spring Valley—caught her eye. A tiny black puppy had been spotted scurrying across a road in Spring Branch, the Houston neighborhood where she lives. Whimpers had been heard from inside a nearby storm drain, so there was likely another puppy—maybe more than one—stuck down there.

Clemens sprang out of bed and drove to the scene. Once there, she heard desperate howls and whimpers from underground echoing through the

storm drain. She grabbed her son's toy flashlight from her car, pulled a metal grate off the drain and shimmied down.

"I wasn't very well equipped," Clemens says. "I was not expecting to go into the drain." But nobody else was around, and puppies were stuck in there. "Somebody's got to do it."

This was not Clemens's first foray into a storm drain. An animal lover and the mom of 7-year-old twin boys, Clemens is known in the Houston area for her rescue efforts. Aside from the Facebook page, Clemens also runs Paws Off The Streets, an outreach program for needy animals. She has saved dogs and cats as well as the occasional possum and



Callie Clemens
with her rescue
dog/assistant,
Giselle

raccoon. Over the past nine years, she estimates she's saved at least 100 creatures exposed to danger.

After lowering herself roughly 7 feet down the drain, Clemens crawled through about 10 feet of a 24-inch-wide cockroach-infested tunnel before reaching an area where she could crouch and search. It was 700 yards of pitch black.

“I HEARD SPLASHING, THEN SAW TWO SETS OF EYES LOOKING AT ME.”



“I heard splashing,” Clemens says. She pointed her flashlight and saw “two sets of eyes looking at me.” Then the dogs ran off. “They were crying,” she says.

Around midnight, staffers from the local Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (SPCA) arrived and joined Clemens in the storm drain. They worked until 3 a.m. trying to track down the dogs.

“We searched end to end, side to side,” Clemens says.

They were not able to find the two dogs that Clemens had seen underground, but they did find a female black Lab mix puppy outside under a dumpster, which the SPCA took in.

But there were at least two more puppies trapped below, and Clemens was not about to give up. Although venturing down a storm drain is terrifying,

Clemens says, “it would never resonate with me to know that I left an animal in there to starve and suffer.”

She went home for a few hours of sleep, then went straight back to the storm drain, joined by several volunteers, including a local engineer who drew a map of the drain system.

After several hours of searching, they finally found a tiny black pup. While Clemens was still underground, volunteers spotted the dog standing outside a small tunnel at one exit of the drain.

“We were very excited,” says Clemens, adding that the puppy weighed about 5 pounds and had parasites and ringworm. They named him Timmy; he was taken to a city pound and later adopted.

That left one dog underground. Clemens climbed down the storm drain several more times to look for it, even leaving food, some of which, they were glad to see later, had been eaten. But the fact that Clemens found an exit hole and had stopped hearing the dog's whimpers makes her confident that the puppy found its way out. In fact, she's pretty sure it's the same puppy that was found later and adopted through her program.

Clemens's tenacity doesn't surprise Tena Lundquist Faust, who, along with her sister, runs another Houston animal rescue nonprofit, Houston PetSet. “Once she becomes focused on a rescue situation, she is unstoppable,” says Lundquist Faust. “She is really a rock star.” 

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GLAD TO HEAR IT

3 STORIES TO
Make Your Day



It's a Date!

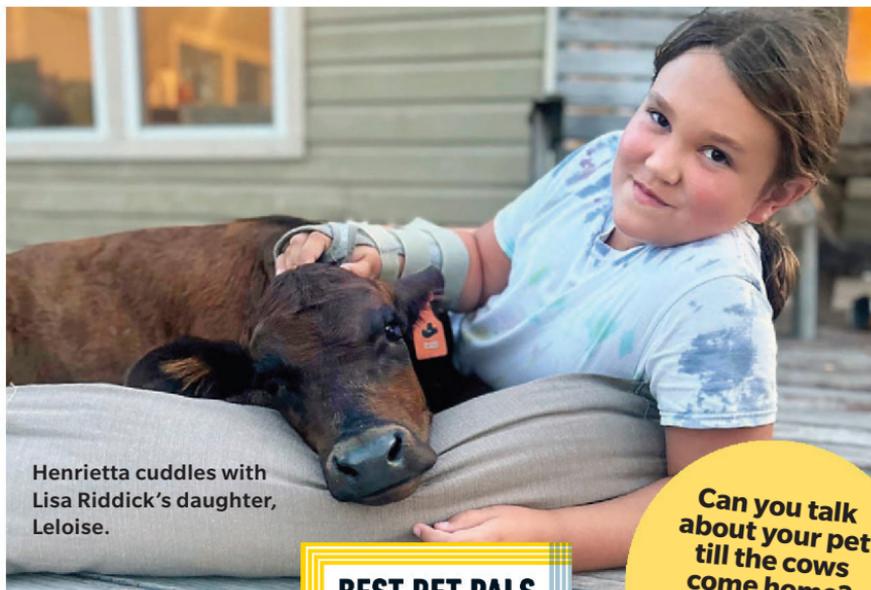
Online dating was a nightmare for Jacqueline Child. When potential beaus learned that a chronic illness required her to have a feeding tube, they often ghosted her. “My self-confidence was down the drain,” she told *Nice News*. So Jacqueline and her sister, Alexa Child, started Dateability, a dating app for people with disabilities. It’s like other apps but with one big difference: Clients can search for “wheelchair user,” “mental illness,” “service animal” and more. “If I’m swiping on someone and they have chronic fatigue and chronic pain on their profile, none of my first questions are going to be ‘What are your favorite hikes?’” she says. “I can ease into that.” Dateability is not just for the disabled, she adds. Love can be found among disabled and able-bodied partners. “And it often is.”

This Land Is Your Land

Ronnie and Terry Urbanczyk’s 750-acre ranch in Texas bordered a verdant state park and a protected natural area abounding with towering cypress trees. So when it was time for Ronnie to retire and they toyed with building a massive subdivision on the land, neighbors voiced fears about the ecological impact the new housing might have on the nearby parks. The Urbanczyks listened and had a change of heart, selling 515 acres to the state for a fraction of what the subdivision deal would have brought them. “It really did make me feel 100 percent better,” Terry told *Texas Monthly*. “You can make a subdivision as pretty as you want, but it’s still a subdivision.”

You've Got a Friend

Among the more heart-wrenching scenarios is a funeral that no one attends. Andy Jackson of Dundee, Scotland, is on a crusade to make sure no one dies unremembered. He attends funerals others don’t, even going so far as to say a few words about the deceased—often in the form of poetry—gleaned from whatever information he can find. Sometimes a photo of the deceased will do—any hints “a poet could use to celebrate the real person,” he told the BBC. He calls his endeavor the Lonely Funerals project and hopes it spreads. “If we want to live in a humane country,” he says, “these are the little things we can do for people.” **R**



Henrietta cuddles with Lisa Riddick's daughter, Leloise.

BEST PET PALS

Can you talk about your pet till the cows come home?
See terms and submit your story at rd.com/petpals.

Henrietta the Heifer

ALICE, TX

WE DON'T KNOW why Henrietta was abandoned by her mother, but when we found the small calf alone and starving in the pasture last spring, we knew she was our next bottle-feeding project. We've had orphaned calves before, but never one of Henrietta's character. She much prefers plopping down on the patio for evening conversation with us to roaming with the herd. It was clear that her destiny was pet rather than livestock.

She peers in the back door and the windows, wondering what we're doing inside the house, and follows us to the pasture. She loves to headbutt and play with the other cows, but she's right on our tail when she realizes we're heading home.

She is just over a year old now and may want to rejoin the herd when she's older, but she can remain a pet as long as she wants. Our business is selling cows, but Henrietta is our "cow emeritus"—and she will have a life tenure on the ranch with us for as long as she lives. 🐮

—Nominated by LISA RIDDICK

LISA RIDDICK

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I took my 7-year-old grandson for his yearly flu shot. As the nurse prepared the syringe, she asked, "Did you have a reaction to the shot last year?"

"Yes," my grandson answered somberly.

The nurse stopped in her tracks. "What was your reaction?"

"I screamed."

—ANDREW HAYDU
Roseville, CA

The day after Independence Day, I was on the golf course behind some elderly men waiting to tee off. The starter, making small talk, asked one of the men, "So, how's your Fourth been?"

The man shook his head and said, "He's dead. He's not playing."

—GARY HAGER
North Andover, MA

"Whatever we do, we don't put in a comments section."

On his first night at Christian summer camp, my son, who was 10 at the time, called us begging to come home.

"What's wrong?" I asked.

"They're trying to turn me into a Christian," he said, "when I'm a Methodist!"

—BEVERLY TRUSTY
Macon, MO

Kitchen Confidential Yin ...

Me to anyone else: "It's in that cabinet." Me to my husband: "It's in the upper cabinet next to the fridge on the left at

eye level. It's bright green. It's right there. IT'S RIGHT THERE."

—X@MARLEBEAN

... and Yang

My wife and I play this cute game where she puts away ingredients I'm about to use without telling me.

—X@GBERGAN

Although my husband has a PhD, on occasion the English language befuddles him. Recently, I sent him off to buy flowering clematis. He arrived at the nursery, found a

Sometimes I just sit and admire the gray in my husband's beard, how distinguished it's becoming, and think, "I did that!"

—X@LOVENLUNCHMEAT

woman who worked there and, in a loud, earnest voice, said, "Excuse me, but do you have chlamydia?"
—MICHELLE KEITH
Traverse City, MI

What I was warned about as a kid: strangers in vans; gum taking seven years to digest; quicksand.
What I wasn't

warned about as a kid: arguing with a computer that I'm not a robot; being sad when my favorite spatula breaks; meeting a "pickleball influencer."
—X@ABBYHASISSUES

Far from the corner of Maple and Main, you'll find these oddly named byways:
♦ Yellowsnow Road

(Fairbanks, Alaska)
♦ Farfrompooopen Road (Story, Arkansas)
♦ Uptha Road (Casco, Maine)
♦ Liquid Laughter Lane (Columbia, Maryland)
♦ Divorce Court (Pittston, Pennsylvania)
♦ No Name Road (South Londonderry, Vermont)
—RD.COM

YOUR FUNNY STORY

about friends or family could be worth \$\$\$. For details, go to page 2 or RD.COM/SUBMIT.

CUE THE OBVIOUS!

Cinephiles took to reddit.com to complain about their least favorite movie tropes:

♦ "Are people shooting at you? Take cover behind ... anything! Car doors, drywall, couches, tables, cardboard boxes, it doesn't matter! EVERYTHING is bulletproof!

♦ "Candles. Who lit all those candles and who goes and puts them out?"
♦ "Standing under the showerhead when you turn on the shower. It's way too cold."

♦ "Digging graves in wooded areas. There are roots everywhere. You can't dig a 6-foot grave with a pair of shovels in an hour; that takes time."
♦ "When there's a big fight scene and all the bad guys attack the protagonist one at a time while the rest just stand at the side. If you wanna win, all attack at once!!"



LJUPCO/GETTY IMAGES



LIFE WELL LIVED

Let's Say Yes!

*What started out as a way to get
my son to try new foods opened up a world
of adventure for my family*

BY Anne Fritz

LAST YEAR, AS my then-9-year-old son, Leopold, and I were preparing for a mom-son ski trip to Keystone, Colorado, I came up with a rule: We would say yes to everything. You see, Leopold is a picky eater—he subsists on chicken nuggets and yogurt—and can be hesitant to try new things. According to him, it's because he has phobias, including heights, spiders and the dark, though I suspect he just has normal kid-sized jitters.

I was hoping to find a way to encourage him without resorting to worn-out adages like "If you don't try it, you'll never know if you like it." So I borrowed the idea of a Yes Day, something our family has done a handful of times since watching the movie of the same name. Before the trip, Leopold and I agreed we would say yes to everything, including food and experiences—especially new ones.

We started saying yes before we even boarded our flight, when we stopped at a breakfast buffet at the airport. For me, that meant I sampled a vegan meatball, while Leopold tried a mouse bite of hash browns he said looked "funny." Neither of us went back for seconds, but we each rated our respective new foods as "not bad."

The next day, after we got settled at our hotel, I took Leopold to meet his snowboarding instructor. He had taken a few lessons back at home in Connecticut but had never had the opportunity to snowboard on a

mountain of this size. My hope was that Leopold would make the most of this opportunity.

While he was in snowboarding school, I skied by myself. On the first day, I played it safe and stuck to the long and winding easy green run. On the second day, I thought of Leopold, who, the day before, had kept to our bargain and faced his fear of heights to learn how to ride a chairlift. In the spirit of camaraderie, I challenged myself to ski an intermediate blue run. There was a part that was steeper than I would have liked, but I did my slow, diligent S-turns and I made it down in one piece. Better than in one piece—I was proud of myself for trying something new.

Later that afternoon, when Leopold and I were reunited back at the lodge, he asked if we could go in the outdoor hot tub. Mind you, it was a 20-degree day, and the only thing I hate more than being cold is being cold and wet! When I started to demur, Leopold invoked our pact.

Yes, it was cold, and yes, I was wet. But it was also invigorating to feel the cold air on my skin, and the warm water of the hot tub felt that much better once we got in. Getting out was a different story, but the experience was a delight as Leopold and I braved it together.

We had so much fun saying yes to everything that Leopold and I decided we should get the rest of the family—his dad and sister—on board



While visiting Yellowstone, the author and her family said yes to trekking through the Shoshone National Forest on horseback.



during our spring break trip to St. Augustine, Florida. We collectively said yes to a moonlit ghost tour of the city's allegedly haunted sites, including a century-old jail and gallows. While others in the group got claustrophobic and left the creepy jail cell during the telling of ghost stories, Leopold and I stayed until the bitter end.

On that same trip, Leopold tried his first spicy tuna roll, and his sister, Nola, sampled blackened grouper. I went in the freezing ocean because Nola asked me to. I not only survived, I enjoyed it, as we had the whole ocean to ourselves.

On our summer adventures, we continued the tradition of saying yes. For me, this meant going down a scary 90-degree waterslide at a water park. Again, the only reason I did it was because my daughter asked me to. You know what? It was pretty fun, though next time I would plug my nose. Leopold braved the ropes

course and made it all the way up to the top.

When we went to Yellowstone for our big family vacation, saying yes led us to take a 15-mile bike ride in Jackson Hole, go line dancing at a country-western bar and ride horseback through a national forest. On the last night of our trip, at the rodeo in Cody, Wyoming, neither my son nor my daughter hesitated when all the kids in attendance were invited onto the field to take part in the traditional calf chase. Though neither came back with the prized bandanna, they were both laughing, sweaty and excited. I know it's an experience they'll never forget.

And therein lies the beauty of saying yes on vacation: It pushes you to bust out of your comfort zone. Though it's not always possible to say yes to everything back home, where work, school and other obligations can get in the way, we're trying to say it more. Cultivating a sense of adventure helps us live life to the fullest—even if you sometimes wind up cold and wet. **R**



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FOOD, FACTS & FUN

There's More to S'mores

Gather round the fire and we'll tell you

BY *Emily Tyra*

THE GOOEY GOODNESS at the heart of s'mores goes back to the summer of '92—1892, that is. That year, roasting marshmallows around a campfire became all the rage in seaside towns, according to reports published in *New York World* and the *Chicago Daily Tribune*. “Marshmallow roasts are the newest thing,” a trendspotter wrote in a dispatch from the New Jersey shore that August. “One buys 2 or 3 pounds of marshmallows, invites half a dozen friends ... to build

a small fire in an unfrequented spot on the beach, away from crowds unfamiliar with so refined a species of entertainment." The writer noted the fad was "an excellent medium for flirtation ... appropriately exhibited by nibbling the marshmallows of each other's sticks."

Graham crackers and chocolate bars soon followed. The graham cracker's inventor, Presbyterian minister Sylvester Graham, died in 1851, so he never saw his namesake snack become a commercial success. By the turn of the

WHO WAS THE FIRST TO COMBINE ALL THREE COMPONENTS? THE GIRL SCOUTS.

century, bakers were selling their own, sweeter versions. And in 1900, Hershey's released its famed milk chocolate bars, becoming a household name.

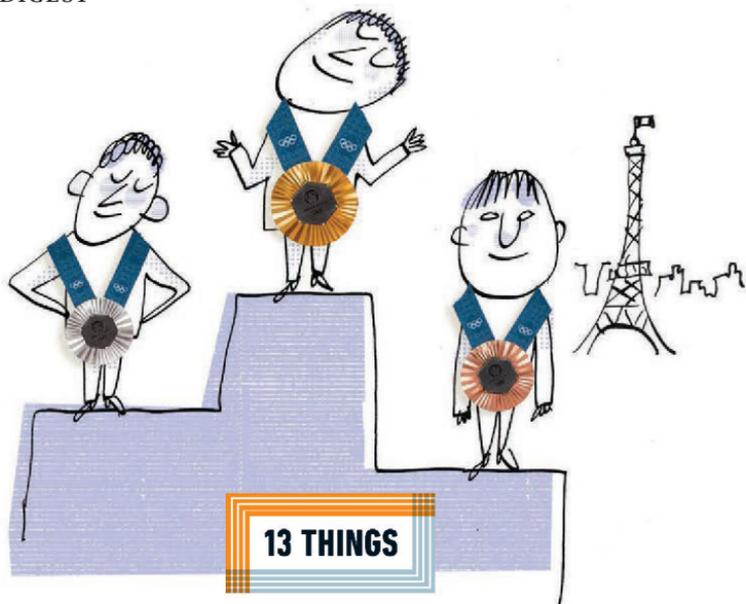
Who was the first to combine all three components? The Girl Scouts, experts in both campfires and cookies. Their 1927 tome, *Tramping and Trailing with the Girl Scouts*, features singalongs and survival skills, including an all-important lesson on how to "toast two marshmallows over the coals to a crisp gooey state" and then place them inside "a graham cracker and chocolate bar sandwich." The author's quip, "Though it tastes like 'some more,' one is really enough," even gave the treat its name.

But in truth, one s'more will never be enough, especially if its ongoing popularity is any indication. An oven-baked riff on the s'more, developed by food writer Nea Arentzen and viewed 8 million times on TikTok, starts with the requisite recipe but adds a scoop of chocolate chip cookie dough mounded and baked on top, transforming it into a cookie marvel. Meanwhile, Pinterest contains a smorgasbord of "s'mores boards," with pretty rows of graham crackers, marshmallows and exotic flavors of chocolate bars, plus peanut butter cups, cookies, berries, peanut butter, jam and hazelnut spread.

Chefs and culinary entrepreneurs are making s'mores statements too: Manhattan pastry chef Daniel Alvarez created a stunning s'mores pavlova with toasted marshmallow ganache, speculoos ice cream (made with crumbled Biscoff cookies) and molten chocolate cake batter. Artisan s'more company S'morology, launched in West Covina, California, ships gourmet kits all over the country. And in Indianapolis, a startup called S'morecicles makes small batches of frozen s'mores on sticks and delivers them via a teal tricycle they call the S'morecycle.

As variations on the toasted trifecta make their rounds this summer, you may get the feeling—that warm, toasty feeling—that if you're willing to snag the supplies and stoke a fire, you can always count on a classic. **R**





Go for Gold at the Olympics

BY *Eric Raskin*

1 THE 2024 Summer Olympic Games kick off July 26 in the host city of Paris, though several of the 41 event venues are located elsewhere in France. The farthest away—the surfing competition—will take place in Tahiti, part of the territory of French Polynesia in the South Pacific Ocean, 9,750 miles away from

the host city. That's an Olympic record!

2 THIS MARKS the third time Paris has hosted the Summer Games. The second-ever modern Olympics were held here in 1900, then Paris hosted again in 1924. Paris and London are now tied for hosting the most Olympics. At the next Summer Games,

in 2028, Los Angeles will host its third, making it a three-way tie.

3 BEFORE THE Games begin, there's a months-long Torch Relay, which is already underway. As always, the relay began in Greece, an homage to the home of the ancient Olympics. Greece also has the honor of entering first during

the Parade of Nations, while the host nation enters last. (In 2004, when Athens hosted, the Greek flag bearer entered first, while the rest of the Greek delegation entered last.) The torch was lit in April, reached France in May, and continues to tour the country and its territories overseas. Along the way, about 10,000 torchbearers will carry it through more than 400 towns.

4 DURING THIS year's Opening Ceremony, rather than parade through a stadium, athletes are expected to float on boats down the River Seine toward the Eiffel Tower. For the first time ever, free access will be offered via invitation. Of course, some shelled out for the best seats and views: The last unsold tickets were just shy of \$3,000 apiece.

5 AIRBNB AND VRBO prices in Paris have more than doubled, reports

Business Insider, from an average of \$435 per night to \$932 during the Olympics. And the cost of a ride on the Paris Metro will almost double during the Games. The *New York Times* reported that a basic room at an Ibis hotel that normally costs \$97 to \$215 was going for \$431 to \$755. Tickets to Olympic events aren't cheap, either. The lowest prices as of January for the men's 10-meter platform diving event were about \$950.

6 BUT MOST of the estimated billions of spectators will watch on TV. NBC has the U.S. broadcasting rights, having paid \$7.75 billion to air the Games from 2021 to 2032 on its network and its Peacock app. The flagship network is planning at least nine hours of live coverage daily, plus a prime-time show packaging highlights. Tune to Telemundo for Spanish-language coverage.

7 FOR THE first time since 1960, these Olympics will feature fewer events than the previous Games, which had a whopping 339. The count is still high, though, at 329. Gone are karate (not entertaining enough, according to Reuters) and baseball (the Olympics schedule conflicts with Major League Baseball). But there is also one entirely new sport this summer: breaking—or, as it's more commonly known, break dancing. No other dance sport has previously been included at the Olympics.

8 UNUSUAL SPORTS that have once been part of the Games include solo synchronized swimming (ummm ...), tandem bicycle, tug of war, hot air ballooning, and swimming obstacle race. And from 1912 to 1948, the Olympics also included artistic competitions. Painters, sculptors, architects, writers and musicians

all vied for medals in their fields.

9 SIX ATHLETES have medaled at both the Summer and Winter Olympics. The most recent was Miami native Eduardo “Eddy” Alvarez, who won a silver medal in speed skating relay in 2014 and in baseball in 2021. Germany’s Christa Luding-Rothenburger is the only athlete to medal across both seasons in the same year, after winning medals in speed skating and sprint cycling in 1988. That won’t be matched as long as the Summer and Winter Games remain staggered, as they have been since 1994.

10 AMONG THE stranger traditions of the Games (at least since 1968) is the inclusion of Olympic mascots, anthropomorphic something-or-others that are supposedly symbolic of the host country’s culture. This time, it’s a *phryge*

(*FRI-jee-uh*)—a soft red hat worn during the French Revolution. Other odd mascots have included the indefinable Izzy (prompting the question from those who couldn’t tell, “What Izzy?”) from Atlanta ’96, and a one-eyed Teletubby-esque creature called Wenlock from London 2012.

11 THE CITY of Lights is also called the City of Love, a particularly apt nickname while Paris plays home to the Olympic village. Four-time Olympic swimmer Ryan Lochte estimated in 2012 that 70% to 75% of Olympic athletes are having sex during the Games. Organizers of the Rio 2016 Games distributed so many condoms, it averaged 42 per athlete!

12 SOME ATHLETES can earn their livings as pros in their sports, but many others pay their bills through unrelated day jobs. Jared Ward, a

2016 U.S. marathon runner, is a statistics professor at Brigham Young University. Three-time Olympic trampoline gymnast Ana Rente of Portugal balanced those dreams with being a doctor. And badminton player Scott Evans of Ireland is also co-owner of Hosbjerg, a women’s clothing company.

13 REPPING TEAM USA, along with household names such as swimmer Katie Ledecky, gymnast Simone Biles, and basketball player LeBron James, is a name we may all know soon: track standout Sydney McLaughlin-Levrone. The 24-year-old from New Brunswick, New Jersey, keeps breaking and rebreaking her own world record in the 400-meter hurdles and should be favored in a variety of events in Paris. Who knows? Perhaps the Paris Olympics will be remembered as the “Sydney” Olympics. **R**

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ALL
in a Day's
WORK

I was out jogging when two little boys selling lemonade waved at me.

"I'd love to buy a cup," I said, "but I don't have any money on me."

The young entrepreneurs were very understanding. "That's OK," said one. "We take Venmo."

—HELEN DADMEHR
Sacramento, CA

While closing up a health club one night, I heard someone in the women's locker room yelling, "Liar! Liar! Why can't you cooperate once in a while!"

As she stormed past me, I asked her how many others were still getting changed.

"None," she fumed.

My 9yo on *Shark Tank*: "It's a shirt, but look, it's also a napkin!"

—X@DADDYGOFISH



I walked in, wondering who had angered her. Then I spotted the upright scale. The weight bar was still shaking from her hasty departure.

—GCFL.NET

Please stop asking me to send a calendar invite. I do not know what that means. The calendar invite was

me asking you to do the thing. You manage your own little calendar.

—X@1FOLLOWERNODAD

Early one morning, while on the way to work, I stopped at a coffee shop and gave the barista my order: "Medium skim decaf latte."

The barista read back my order: "One medium Why Bother."

—THELMA WELLS
Middleton, WI

A good résumé helps one land jobs. A bad

résumé lands here:

- ◆ “Working at XX airline, I gained experience managing cabin crew in a pressurized environment.”
- ◆ “My hobbies include regular attendance at my local gym and swimming pool.”
- ◆ “Previously at Starbucks Coffee Co. the position I occupied allowed me to serve customers and exceed their expectations, by providing them with the right product.”

—RESUMEHELL.BLOGSPOT.COM

Growing up with the last name Odor has not been easy. Nor has it ever been. On my great-uncle’s first day in seminary school, a professor called on him and asked his name.

“Ivan Odor,” he answered.

“Son,” said the professor, “I just want to know your name. I don’t need to know your personal problems.”

—TODD ODOR
Union, KY

Before GPS, my boss at our courier company was lost on a rural road. So he asked a local for directions. “Go as far as you can see, twice, and there’s your turn,” said the local.

Confused, but with no better options, my boss fixed his eyes on a spot as far as he could see. He drove to that spot and made a

mental note of the next farthest spot he could see. Upon arriving at the second spot, dead on was the little unmarked turn he was looking for.

—BOREDPANDA.COM

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REALLY?

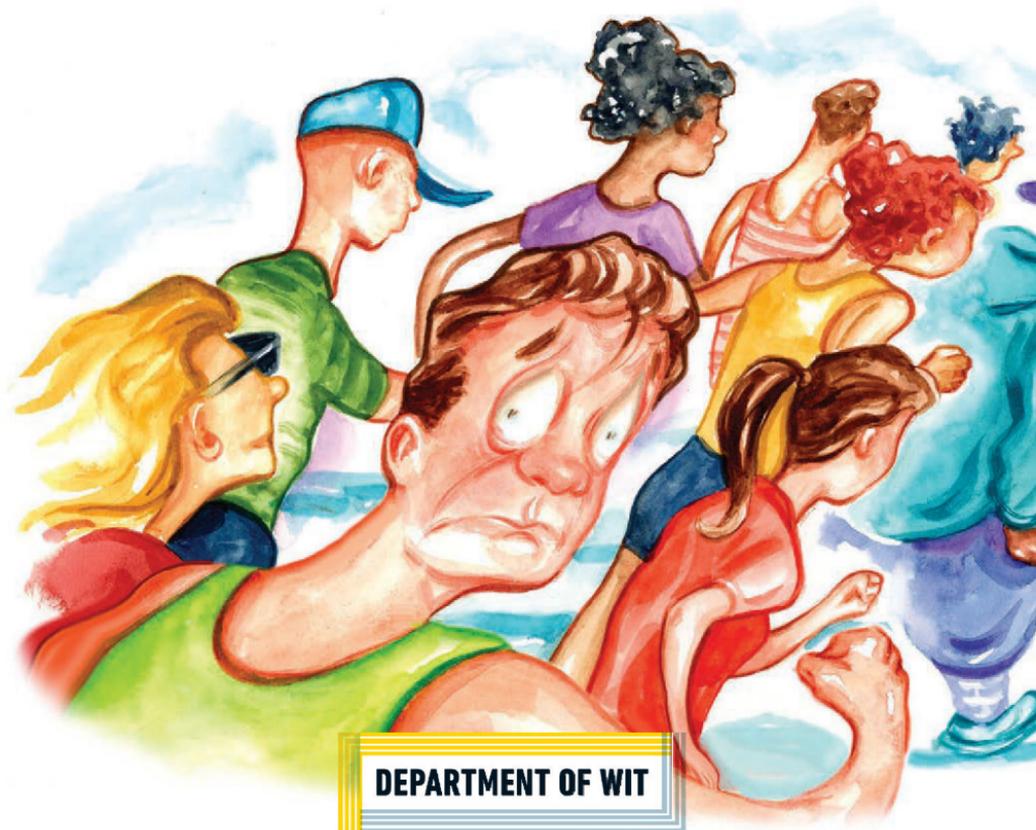
Police in Springfield, Colorado, pulled over a driver going 52 in a 30-mph zone last year. But, reports 9News in Denver, as the officer walked toward the car, he watched the driver switch places with a dog in the passenger seat. The human then insisted that he wasn’t the one driving. Since the officer believed the dog to be a good boy that would never drive so recklessly, he arrested the man. Here are more unlikely excuses police have encountered, collected by police1.com:

- ◆ “I wasn’t speeding—I just got a haircut, and it makes me look fast.”
- ◆ I stopped a guy for doing 71 in a 50 because he wanted to get to McDonald’s before the breakfast menu ended.
- ◆ “I know I was going fast. I was trying to get the snow off my windshield so I could see where I’m going.”
- ◆ A drunk guy told me

he was pregnant, then urinated all over himself, claiming his water broke.

- ◆ “I have a cold and when I cough, my foot mashes the pedal.”





DEPARTMENT OF WIT

A Race Well-Limped

*A reluctant runner's key to keeping high spirits?
Low expectations.*

BY James Breakwell
FROM EXPLODING UNICORN



I'M WALKING AROUND the house with a severe limp and actively second-guessing every decision I've ever made. That can only mean one thing: I just ran my one race for the year.

For the second time in a row, my 13-year-old, Betsy, accompanied me on this foolish endeavor because the best mistakes are made in tandem. We both went into the 7-mile course with no training, and it showed. Determination and a can-do attitude are no match for gravity and distance.

As an extremely sedentary person, it's important for me to occasionally do something semi-athletic to remember that it's much better to not move. I'm greatly envious of those coral reef creatures that sit in one spot their entire life while plankton filters through their mouth holes. I'm out here working for my food while the ocean basically has

free DoorDash 24/7. It was a mistake for mankind to give up gills.

Betsy and I were accompanied to the race by a group of three extremely in-shape people. You wouldn't think that such individuals would want to associate with me, but we all live in the same Indianapolis suburb.

I lift weights because it's the form of exercise that requires me to move the least. I can literally do it while sitting down. These guys bike and run countless miles, often in the same day. One has done dozens of Spartan Races, which are grueling obstacle courses that require you to crawl through mud, flip tires and throw spears. Another is training for a triathlon. He's the worst because in addition to being faster than me on foot, in the water and on wheels, he can also outlift me.

I was the leader of our expedition because I told everyone about the race,



and also I own a minivan. The race is in my hometown in Illinois, and I've been doing it almost every year since I was Betsy's age. I peaked about 15 years ago and have been phoning it in with performances of various levels of ineptitude ever since.

Why do I keep going if I no longer enjoy it and am getting worse every year? Tradition, mostly. A bad idea is somehow less bad if you do it consistently at regular intervals. Besides, I don't dislike the whole race, just the running part. I like seeing all the running club members I've known since childhood, and I love the free beer afterward. Running is just a minor stumbling block on the way to the good stuff.

My athletic friends don't understand any of this. While they're all laid-back, well-adjusted individuals, they're also good at things, which skews their perspective of the world. All three had a reasonable chance of winning the race.

That wasn't enough of a challenge for

one of the guys. When I messaged our group chat to let everyone know what time I'd pick them up Saturday morning, he said he didn't need a ride. He was going to ride his bike there. I don't mean a motorcycle but an actual bicycle with pedals.

The race was 66 miles away by interstate. If you take back roads, it's more like 84. He set out in the dark at 4 a.m. to meet us at 10 a.m. We arrived at almost exactly the same time. After biking for hours, he stretched a bit, then beat me by nine minutes in a 7-mile run.

He's probably not even sore today. Afterward, he tossed the bike in my minivan for the return journey. I should have made him ride it home.

Betsy was a trouper. She finished the race for the second year in a row. She's not a huge fan of the running part, either, but she likes the adventure of going places with me and hanging out.

As for how I ran, I did better than I thought I would, even with my considerable slowdown from last year. My

expectations for myself were very low—no one puts less pressure on me than me. I was actually having a strong race through most of the course. Between miles 4 and 5, I felt so good that I wondered why I only do this once a year. Then I hit mile 6, and my body reminded me. The human form is like a convoy of ships: It can only go as fast as its slowest part.

Usually, the lagging component is my breathing. I simply can't guzzle enough oxygen to get my awkward, unwieldy body to go. This time, it was my legs. I pushed until I had a mile left, at which point my quads and hamstrings decided they were done.

Still, I can honestly say I gave everything I had. My slow, plodding finish was actually a victory shuffle that proves I gave it my all. I don't need a huge trophy to commemorate my heroic performance. My grossly swollen knee is enough of a souvenir.

As I slowly made my way to the finish line, I had no idea how the rest of the group placed. I thought it would be funny if my friends came in first, second and third, and people got the impression that our nondescript suburb was somehow a running powerhouse. They actually finished between fourth and 12th. Our fastest guy cut five minutes off his run from last year, yet there

were still three people ahead of him.

He didn't get a medal, but he did come away with an even better trophy: a massive, authentic made-in-Japan German beer stein I picked up from a secondhand store years ago. It's basically our group's Most Improved award. I took it home last year because it's not hard to get better from rock bottom. When I passed the stein on to its new owner, I was supposed to fill it with beer and present it on one knee. Our top guy doesn't drink beer, which definitely has nothing to do with why he's so fast. So I gave him the beer stein full of diet soda instead.

A day later, even as my entire body tells me I'm an idiot, I can't help but feel that the race was a success. Everyone in our group wants to do it next year. My 11-year-old, Mae, starts cross-country this fall. I strongly suspect I can talk her into racing with me at least once. Kids don't actually know you're giving them bad advice until they test it for themselves. Parenthood is all about destroying your children's trust one misguided family tradition at a time.

As for me, I'll keep doing this race as long as my legs can support me. I proved I can still roll out of bed and run 7 miles, even if those 7 miles will prevent me from getting out of bed for all the days thereafter. **R**



Adding Insult to Injuriousness

Hippopotomonstrosesquipedaliophobia is the fear of long words.

HEALTHLINE

HUMOR *in*
UNIFORM

A colonel I heard speak at a convention told of the time he was transferred from San Diego to Germany. It was up to his wife to get their eight rambunctious children to Europe by herself. After an hours-long layover in Baltimore, which she spent chasing and corralling her brood, they finally arrived in Germany, exhausted. At customs, the official asked if she was carrying contraband such as drugs, alcohol or weapons.

The colonel's wife replied, "I assure you, if I had any of those items, I would have used them all by now."
—RONALD NIEDERMAYER
Chesterfield, VA

During mail call one day, our sergeant belted out, "Lee One! Lee One!" No one by that name came forward. After two or three

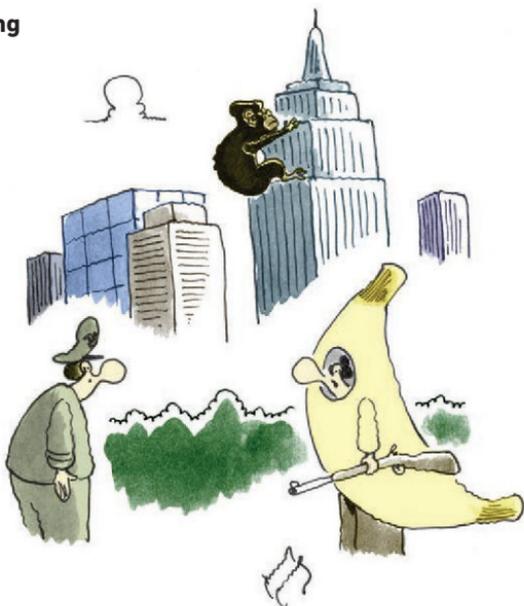
more unanswered calls, a GI wondered aloud, "Do you mean Leone?"
—DON JELSOMINO
Fishers, IN

Who Knew?

The rock band Foo Fighters gets its name from UFOs observed during World War II by Allied and Axis pilots. Scientists may have finally identified the previously unidentified objects: plasmas found naturally in the atmosphere. "Plasma represents the fourth state of matter distinct from

solid, liquid and gas," England's *The Telegraph* explained, and it's attracted to the electrical charge of aircraft. It wasn't just pilots who spotted the UFOs. In 1965, astronaut Frank Borman aboard Gemini 7 reported a foo fighter, telling Houston: "Bogey at 10 o'clock high!"

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"Special forces, sir. Reporting for duty."

CARTOON BY *Scott Arthur Masear*



The
HEALTHY

WELLNESS FROM THEHEALTHY.COM

Who's Getting Colon Cancer

*With rates rising among
younger people, testing
should start sooner*

BY *Charlotte Hilton Andersen*

JANA BOYER WAS 54 in June 2021 when she and her husband traveled to Mexico to renew their wedding vows. As they were getting ready to fly home, she started experiencing stomach problems. She called her doctor, who recommended she get checked out by a gastroenterologist to see if she'd picked up a parasite from contaminated food or water.

"My sister-in-law is a retired colorectal nurse, and she'd been bugging me to get a colonoscopy since I'd turned 50,"

ILLUSTRATIONS BY *Kate Traynor*

RD.COM **35**

Boyer says. "I'd kept putting it off, but I figured I might as well kill two birds with one stone."

That colonoscopy probably saved her life. The procedure detected a mass measuring 3 centimeters in her large intestine. Further tests determined that the mass was malignant, and she immediately had surgery, followed by six months of chemotherapy. Until her trip to Mexico, Boyer hadn't experienced any symptoms that might have been signs of colon cancer.

"Most colorectal cancers cause no symptoms in the early stage, when they are most treatable," explains Folasade May, a gastroenterologist and an associate professor of medicine at the David Geffen School of Medicine at UCLA. "This is why starting at age 45, everyone needs to get screened for colorectal cancer, regardless of whether you have symptoms or not." Those symptoms, when they do occur, include rectal bleeding, blood in the stool, constipation and other sudden bowel changes.

Before 2021, the recommendation was for people at average risk of colon cancer to begin screening at age 50. But because of a rising rate of the disease among younger people, the recommended age to begin is now 45. People at higher risk—those with a family history of colorectal cancer, for example—should start screening even earlier.

Last year, the American Cancer Society reported that 20% of colorectal cancer cases in 2019 were in patients under age 55, about double the rate from

25 years earlier. Yet in spite of these troubling statistics, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services reports that fewer than 60% of adults age 45 to 75 have been screened for this disease.

Colonoscopy vs. Home Tests

The colonoscopy is considered the gold standard for colorectal cancer screening. It's a procedure in which a small tube with a light and a lens is passed through the rectum and intestines, allowing doctors to see any growths or irregularities. If the doctor discovers polyps (small growths) in the intestines, they can be removed through the tube. Most of these polyps are benign, but there is a risk that over time some could turn cancerous.

While many people feel squeamish about the test, most who've had one admit it's really not so bad. The day before the test people drink a lot of liquids, some of which include a laxative to induce diarrhea and clean out the bowel, which will enable doctors to see the intestine walls clearly. While that might sound unpleasant, it's mainly just inconvenient, requiring that you stay close to a bathroom until the prep is finished. Patients are sedated for the colonoscopy procedure, which is usually painless.

Still squeamish? Some people may be able to do a home test instead. The home tests aren't recommended for anyone with a personal or family history of polyps or colon cancer. But

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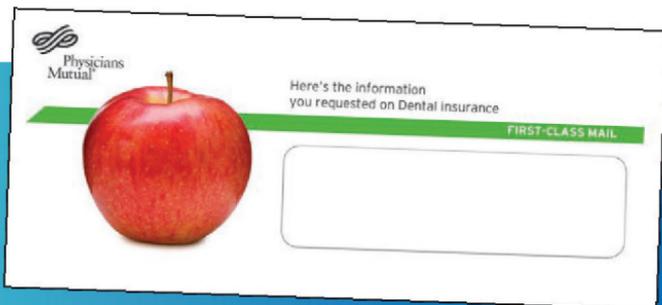


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they're considered a good alternative for people who have no underlying risk factors and who are unable or unwilling to have a colonoscopy.

Unfortunately, the home test is not without its ick factor, either. Several tests have been approved by the FDA; Cologuard, which requires a prescription, is one of the most well known. All require that you collect a stool sample and then mail it to a laboratory to be tested for microscopic or invisible blood—and sometimes DNA—that may indicate the presence of cancer. And if the test result is positive, then you'll have to have a colonoscopy anyway.

Researchers are still trying to develop even easier (and less icky) ways to detect colon cancer while it's still early.

While there is a blood test available to test for colon cancer, it is not as accurate as the tests described above. But recently researchers announced that a new blood test still under development can detect genetic material that tumors shed into the bloodstream. In a trial of almost 8,000 people, the new test accurately detected early colon cancer almost 90% of the time.

Jana Boyer's cancer is in remission now, but she'll continue to be carefully monitored. She says she is grateful for many things these days, including the opportunity to share her story with others and spread the message about the importance of colon cancer screening.

"After you read this," she says, "reach out to your doctor to see whether you should be screened." **R**

I TRIED IT ...

Water Flosser

I've had more cavities than I'd like to admit, plus a couple of crowns, and my dental hygienist warned me recently that my sensitive gums were receding and at risk for periodontal disease. I remember my dad having extensive (and expensive!) periodontal work done, and I'd like to avoid that for myself. So at my dentist's recommendation, I started using a water flosser. I chose a hand-held rechargeable one. Water flossing can be messy if you're not careful, which is why my hygienist says she uses hers in the shower. And when I'm extra tired at bedtime, I'm tempted to skip it. But my dentist says it's helping, and a 2023 review in the journal *Cureus* found that water flossers are better than dental floss for removing food, plaque and bacteria. Yes, I use regular floss, and I brush with an electric toothbrush, as instructed by my dentist. And my gums are holding steady, so I plan to keep it up ... no matter how tired I am. —Lynn Smith



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THE BRAINY BENEFITS OF A DAILY MULTIVITAMIN

Wouldn't it be nice if there were a simple, safe pill you could take to ward off dementia? According to new research from Brigham and Women's Hospital (part of Harvard Medical School) and the Fred Hutchinson Cancer Research Center in Seattle, that magic pill might be a daily multivitamin. In the final of three studies looking at multivitamins' benefits for heart disease, cancer and other health issues, researchers found that "a daily multivitamin improved memory and slowed cognitive aging," says JoAnn Manson, MD, a leader of the study and chief of the division of preventive medicine at Brigham and Women's Hospital. The investigators estimated that taking the daily multivitamin over the three years of the study slowed cognitive aging by approximately 60%, which is the equivalent of almost two years of life.

Your Partner, Your Blood Pressure

If your partner has high blood pressure, you might be on your way to having high blood pressure too. That's the finding of a large multinational study that set out to investigate "if many married couples, who often share the same interests, living environment, lifestyle habits and health outcomes, might also share high blood pressure," says Jithin Sam Varghese, a faculty member at the Emory Global Diabetes Research Center in Atlanta. Varghese and the other scientists looked at thousands of couples across the United States, England, China and India, finding a clear link where blood pressure was concerned. Based on the results, which were published in the *Journal of the American Heart Association*, improving blood pressure, too, can be a family affair.

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Can't Stop Stress Eating?

If you've ever suspected that stress might be the reason for your weight gain, science has just found an explanation. According to a new study published in the journal *Physiology & Behavior*, stress can actually make food taste worse, reducing the "reward" people get from eating. This may cause them to eat more to feel satisfied. In the study, 76 people were evaluated and placed in either a high-stress or

low-stress group. Then they were given large amounts of two soups—one sweet and one savory—and told to eat as much as they wanted. People who were highly stressed didn't enjoy the taste of either soup as much as the people with low stress levels did. While there wasn't a lot of difference in the amount eaten, the researchers say that in real life, not enjoying certain foods as much as expected could lead people to seek satisfaction by eating—and overeating—other foods.

Colon Cancer Risks

A survey of 1,000 adults done at Ohio State University found that many didn't know about the lifestyle factors that can increase colon cancer risk. Contributing factors to watch include obesity, drinking alcohol, lack of physical activity, and a diet high in fat and processed foods. And, of course, everyone should start having regular colonoscopies at age 45—or earlier if you have any known risk factors or if your doctor advises.

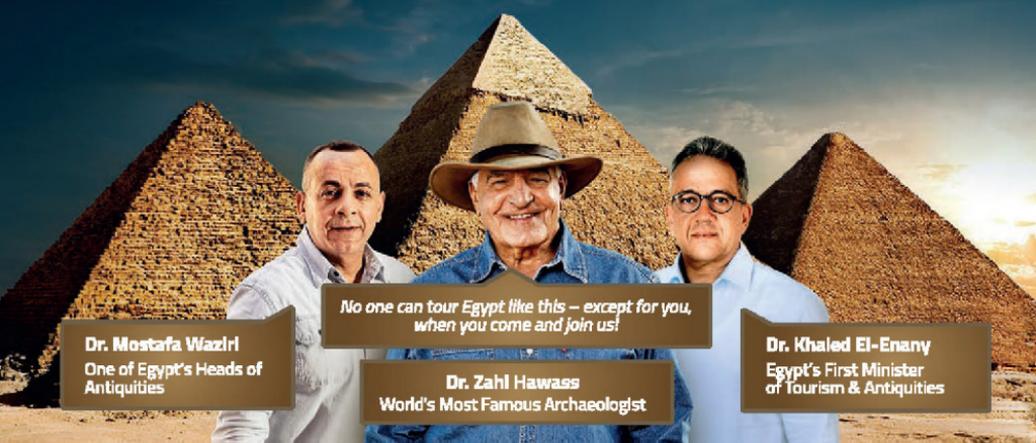
A Nutty Way to Better Health

One in three Americans has at least three risk factors for cardiovascular disease (such as high blood sugar, high cholesterol, high triglycerides and excess fat around the middle)—a condition called metabolic syndrome. All these things increase a person's risk for heart attack, stroke, other cardiovascular events and diabetes. But it looks as if people who regularly eat walnuts have some protection. Iranian researchers writing in the journal *Food Science & Nutrition* looked at multiple studies and found that people who regularly ate walnuts tended to have better markers of metabolic health. Walnuts also seemed to combat some complications of diabetes. One study even found that walnut eaters had a 68% lower risk of having diabetes compared to the non-walnut eaters. So go ahead and sprinkle some walnuts on your morning yogurt, but don't go overboard. Walnuts are high in fat, and even though it's healthy fat, they are still relatively high in calories. **RD**



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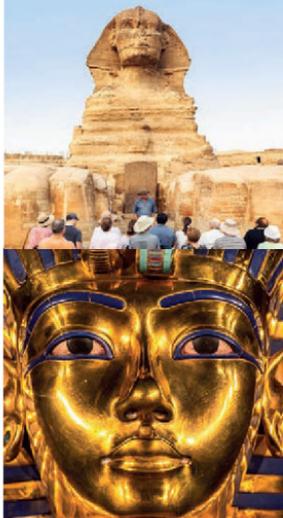
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LAUGHTER

THE BEST *Medicine*

A jeweler spots a shoplifter trying to steal a necklace and nabs him. "Listen," the crook says, "you don't want any trouble and I don't want any trouble. What do you say I just buy the necklace and we forget this ever happened?"

The jeweler agrees. He writes up a sales slip and hands it to the crook.

"Y'know," says the crook, "this is more than I wanted to spend. Mind showing me something less expensive?"

—VIRALGFDIY.COM

Two men are seated on a train. One pulls out his phone and shows

the other a photo of his girlfriend. "Isn't she beautiful?" he asks.

The second man responds, "If you think she's beautiful, you should see my wife!"

"Oh? Is she gorgeous too?"

"No, she's an optician."

—Submitted by
DAVID MITEFF
Lafayette, IN



"I'm you, from three days in the past. I think I'm going to buy a skateboard!"

The Van Gogh Family Tree

◆ *Vincent's dizzy aunt:* Verti Gogh

◆ *The brother who ate prunes:* Gotta Gogh

◆ *His magician uncle:* Where Diddy Gogh

◆ *The nephew who drove a stagecoach:* Wells Far Gogh

◆ *The ballroom dancing aunt:* Tang Gogh

◆ *The little bouncy nephew:* Poe Gogh

◆ *His niece who drives an RV:* Winnie Bay Gogh

—PLANET PROCTOR NEWSLETTER

Sorry for the things I said when the air conditioning was broken.

—X@DELOISIVETE

What do you call it when your parachute doesn't open? Jumping to a conclusion.

—Submitted by

ALICE H. MURRAY
Niceville, FL

A salesman is at a barber convention demonstrating an unbreakable comb by putting it through all sorts of stress. As his pièce de résistance, he bends the comb in half. *Crack!* it unexpectedly snaps. Unfazed, he holds up both halves for all to see, saying, "And *this* is

what an unbreakable comb looks like on the inside!"

—B2BSALESCONNECTIONS.COM

The biggest challenge for the average mime is thinking outside the box.

—Submitted by

DANIEL FECHT
Kansas City, MO

An American couple, lost while driving through Canada, stop at a gas station. The man gets out of the car, goes inside the station and asks the attendant,

"Can you tell me where we are?"

The attendant says, "Saskatoon, Saskatchewan."

The man nods and goes back to his car.

"Did he tell you where we are?" his wife asks.

"No," says the husband. "He doesn't speak English."

—QUORA

GOT A FUNNY JOKE?
It could be worth \$\$\$.
For details, go to
RD.COM/SUBMIT.

LET'S GRAB A GUINNESS!

◆ If you were looking to set the record for most matchsticks stuck up your nose, things have gotten more difficult. That's because last February, a Danish man found room in his nostrils for 68 (unlit!) matches. "Surprisingly, it didn't really hurt," Peter von Tangen Buskov said, according to Guinness World Records.

◆ Canadian LuLu Lotus recently set a new Guinness record for the loudest nose whistle by performing the theme song from *The Godfather* at 44.1 decibels, which, per Yale's school of environmental health and safety, is louder than a whisper but quieter than a refrigerator.

◆ Need something to write with? Ask Aaron Bartholmey. Maybe he'll loan you one of his 69,255 pencils. Last July, with the help of the American Pencil Collectors Society (who knew?), the Iowa man spent two days counting up all his pencils—some from World War II emblazoned with patriotic slogans, others used to dial old rotary phones. The result: a new world record, blasting past the old bar of 24,026 pencils.





From left:
Cheerwine, Egg cream,
Kool-Aid



COVER STORY

Raise =A= GLASS!

**FAVORITE DRINKS FROM
EVERY STATE**



BY *Emily Goodman and Emily Tyra*

WITH TASTE OF HOME

ALABAMA

Buffalo Rock Ginger Ale

Born in the basement of Birmingham's Alabama Grocery Co. in 1901 when grocer Sidney Lee carbonated a pharmacist's extra-gingery stomach tonic, the formula—which fans say has a nose-tickling, almost spicy finish—has remained largely unchanged.

ALASKA

Duck Shot

If it walks like a duck and quacks like a duck—or has distinct layers of coffee liqueur, Irish cream and whiskey—it's got to be a duck. In this case, the shot created one snowy December afternoon in 1987 at the Peanut Farm sports bar in Anchorage. Order it by its full

(if not particularly appetizing) name: Duck Fart Shot.

ARKANSAS

Grapette

This grape soda from Camden first made a big purple splash in the 1940s, followed by its sister soda, Orangette. After trickling to near extinction in the '90s, it made an early 2000s comeback exclusively at another Arkansas-born company: Walmart.

CALIFORNIA

Wine

Before 1976, good wine meant French wine. But a blind taste test in Paris that year saw the underdog, California, unexpectedly win for both red and white.

ARIZONA

Lemonade

The summer sipper featuring squeezed and sweetened lemon juice became the official way to beat the (dry) heat here back in 2019, after a local teen realized the state seal included four of Arizona's five C's (cattle, copper, cotton and climate) but left out citrus, a major industry of the Grand Canyon State.



Nearly 50 years later, Napa and Sonoma counties are called Wine Country.

COLORADO

Hot cocoa

What else would you want to drink during a Rocky Mountain winter? Enjoy cocoa as an après-ski sipper, or skip the slopes and go straight to the chocolate.

CONNECTICUT

White birch soda

Better known as birch “beer” despite its lack of alcohol content, white birch (which tastes of wintergreen) is a favorite of the many fizzy flavors from East Haven soda-maker Foxon Park.

DELAWARE

Dogfish Head

What started as the nation’s smallest brewpub has become one of its biggest. Its SeaQuench Ale—one of America’s most popular sours—is brewed with lime juice and sea salt, and screams summer on the Delaware boardwalk.

FLORIDA

Orange juice

So synonymous are the Sunshine State and citrus that consumers are more likely to buy OJ if they think the oranges are Florida grown—they’re even willing to pay more for it. In fact, only about half the orange juice we drink hails from Florida (Brazil is the world’s biggest producer by far), but more than 95% of Florida’s oranges get squeezed into juice.



COLORADO

Hot cocoa

GEORGIA

Coca-Cola

The most popular soft drink on the planet is still headquartered in Atlanta, where it was born in 1886. Nine Cokes sold per day that year; today, the figure hovers around 2 billion worldwide.

HAWAII

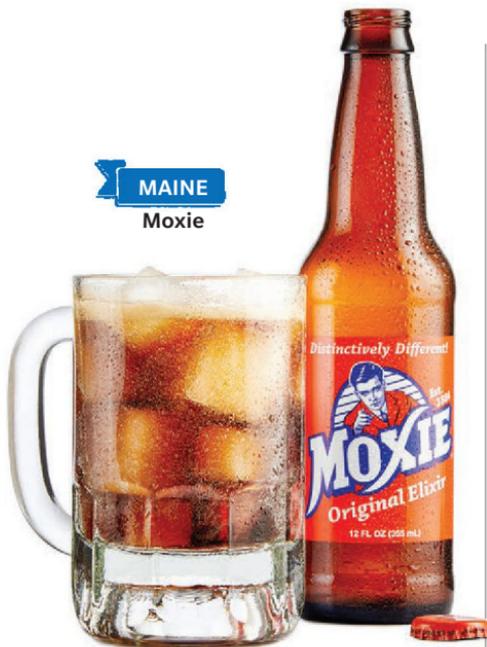
Pineapple juice

Although pineapples are not native to Hawaii, they grow so plentifully in the Aloha State that the Dole plantation in Oahu used to feature a drinking fountain that dispensed pineapple juice instead of water.

IDAHO

Potato vodka

Yep, the state that produces 13 billion pounds of potatoes per year turns those sublime spuds into fries, tots ... and spirits. Grand Teton Distillery crafts its version with spring water from the Tetons.



ILLINOIS

Old Style

This beer may be brewed in Wisconsin, but it's ingrained in the Windy City identity, as evidenced by the bounty of Heileman's Old Style signs hanging outside bars dotting the city. A swig of Old Style is part two of a "Chicago handshake"; part one is a shot of the iconic, oddly bitter Malört liqueur, made in Chicago.

INDIANA

Water

Lest we forget the foremost way to hydrate, Hoosiers have hailed H₂O as their official state beverage since 2007, the only member of the union to pay homage to the very essence of life.

IOWA

Nehi Grape

Fans of the TV series *M*A*S*H* cherish scenes with the Nehi Grape-sipping Cpl. Walter "Radar" O'Reilly, who hails from Ottumwa, Iowa. But you don't need to be a homesick GI to enjoy this nostalgic drink.

KANSAS

Icee

We have a Kansan to thank for the twirling Icee machines that churn out a kaleidoscope of perfectly slushy drinks. World War II vet Omar Knedlik bought a Dairy Queen franchise in Coffeyville and found a hit selling semifrozen bottles of Coke from his freezer. So he converted an ice cream machine to produce the consistency on demand, landing a patent for the process in 1960.

KENTUCKY

Bourbon

A bona fide part of the Bluegrass State (Kentucky is home to more barrels of it than people), bourbon features in both the mint julep—the signature drink of the Kentucky Derby—and in the state's clever tourism slogan: Unbridled Spirit.

LOUISIANA

Sazerac

You can stroll the iconic French Quarter sipping a fruity red hurricane, but those in the know go for the Sazerac: rye whiskey, a sugar cube, Peychaud's bitters, anise-flavored Herbsaint

liqueur and a lemon twist. It's been on Big Easy bar menus in some incarnation since the mid-1800s, and it was made the official cocktail of New Orleans by the state of Louisiana in 2008.

MAINE

Moxie

Among the first sodas ever produced, this rugged, root beer–esque elixir outsold Coca-Cola nationally in the 1920s. Its pluck and verve (yes, the word

moxie comes from this drink) are as popular as ever in Maine, where Moxie soda has both a museum and an annual festival.

MASSACHUSETTS

Cranberry juice

Cranberries have been commercially cultivated on Cape Cod since the mid-1800s. Today, juice giant Ocean Spray is based in the Bay State and squeezes about 4,400 berries into each bottle.

MARYLAND

Black-eyed Susan

Symbolic of the state flower, this stiff cocktail (usually made of orange juice, pineapple juice, vodka, rum and orange liqueur) is the official drink of the Preakness Stakes, the second leg of the Triple Crown. The race is the third Saturday in May, but Marylanders mix this drink up year-round.



MICHIGAN

Soda pop

It's too close a call to say which is Michigan's most popular pop, but two worthy of hometown pride are barrel-aged Vernors ginger ale, first poured in 1866, and Faygo, the 1907 brainchild of Russian immigrant bakers who transformed frosting flavors into effervescent drinks—especially the strawberry-flavored Redpop.

MINNESOTA

The Bootleg

This legendary libation is a harbinger of the summer all across the Land of 10,000 Lakes, but it got its start at country clubs on Lake Minnetonka during Prohibition. *Artful Living* magazine



NEW HAMPSHIRE

Apple cider

reports that Al Capone and other notorious mobsters allegedly sipped the concoction of citrus, sugar and fresh mint because it packed the right punch to mask the burn of bootlegged liquor.

MISSISSIPPI

Barq's root beer

Edward C. Barq's 1898 root beer formula, crafted in an unassuming white house in Biloxi, Mississippi, stood out from the pack because of its use of sarsaparilla instead of sassafras. These days what gives regular Barq's its bite is the caffeine content—22 mg for each can, while most American root beer brands are naturally caffeine free.

MISSOURI

Fitz's sodas

Fitz's antique yet operational bottling line is on full display at the flagship restaurant in suburban St. Louis, a city of soda. (7UP was also invented here.)

**MONTANA****Huckleberry milkshake**

An irresistible way to enjoy Montana's wild, sweet-tart huckleberries—what locals call hucks—is to blend them into a cool lavender milkshake, a tasty treat at Big Sky Country diners, especially in the summertime.

NEBRASKA**Kool-Aid**

In 1920s Nebraska, entrepreneur Edwin Perkins had a problem: His most popular item, a soft drink concentrate called Fruit Smack, came encased in glass bottles that often broke. So he removed the liquid, transforming Fruit Smack into a powder. The rebranded result was so robust that later, the Kool-Aid Man could crash through walls. (Oh, yeah!)

NEVADA**Picon punch**

This Basque-American tradition made popular in boardinghouses for sheepherders is still poured today with the citrusy aperitif Torani Amer (similar to the cocktail's namesake, the French spirit Amer Picon), plus a nip of grenadine, soda, brandy and a twist of lemon.

NEW HAMPSHIRE**Apple cider**

The Granite State's official beverage does double duty: It's the key ingredient in apple cider doughnuts (a particular point of New Hampshire pride), and it's great for dipping them in!

NEW JERSEY**Green juice**

With juice joints galore—popular brands include Arlee's Raw Blends, Green Point Juicery and Purely Juiced—Jersey makes it easy to get your daily fruits and veggies in. What else would you expect from the Garden State?

NEW MEXICO

Agua fresca

The colorful centuries-old tradition of steeping fresh fruit in water with sugar is both a street-cart treat and a bright, beautiful way to beat the heat.

NEW YORK

Egg cream

Nostalgia in a glass, this frothy, fizzy soda fountain concoction of milk, seltzer water, and U-Bet chocolate syrup contains neither egg nor cream. One theory is that its name comes from the Yiddish *echt keem* ("pure sweetness"). Your inner child will want to chug it in a New York minute.

NORTH CAROLINA

Cheerwine

Affectionately nicknamed the Nectar of North Carolina, this cheerful cherry

soda (nope, no wine in Cheerwine) is the official soft drink of the National Barbecue & Grilling Association. The pairing works so well that it's become known as a "southern handshake": Cheerwine in one hand, barbecue in the other.

NORTH DAKOTA

Chokecherry wine

The state fruit grows wild in all parts of North Dakota, where generations of home canners have turned the astringent cherries into a sweet-tart wine.

OHIO

Tomato juice

Ohio was the first to designate a state beverage in 1965, an ode to the concentration of tomato farmers in the northwestern part of the state. Meanwhile, another plant-powered drink, V8, is

OREGON
Craft beer



OKLAHOMA

Cherry limeade

The Sooner State's signature pick-me-up is a sweet-tart cherry limeade, with folks flocking to their neighborhood Braum's or to the Oklahoma-grown Sonic Drive-In for their fix.



made with a secret recipe—including tomatoes, carrots, celery, beets, parsley, lettuce, watercress and spinach—by the Campbell Soup Co. plant in Napoleon, Ohio.

OREGON

Craft beer

The state's story of suds goes back to pioneering brewers and hops farmers in the mid-1800s. But a brewpub revolution in the 1980s—when a group of brewers helped change Oregon's law to allow brewing and dispensing beer at the same location—put “Beervana” (which can refer to Portland or the entire state) on the map as a destination for craft beer.

PENNSYLVANIA

Milk

A whopping 22 states list milk as their official beverage, but the Keystone State is one of the top milk producers. Plus, Pennsylvanians have the advantage of swirling in some Hershey's chocolate syrup fresh from the factory.

RHODE ISLAND

Coffee milk

More sweet treat than caffeine fix, the Ocean State's official drink is essentially coffee ice cream in liquid form. Made with milk and coffee syrup (Autocrat is locals' preferred variety), it offers creamy coffee flavor without the beans—or the bitterness.

SOUTH CAROLINA

Sweet tea

The “house wine of the South,” sweet tea can be anywhere from slightly sugary to downright syrupy. Summerville is not only the birthplace of this beloved beverage, it also boasts the Sweet Tea Trail and the world’s largest sweet tea, served in a 15-foot-tall Mason jar statue called Mason.



SOUTH DAKOTA

Red beer

If a beer and a bloody Mary had a baby, it might be a South Dakota red beer, aka light beer mixed with Campbell’s tomato juice. Many say it’s more refreshing and quaffable than beer alone. Others up the ante by plunking in olives or a pickle—they call that a South Dakota martini.

TENNESSEE

Tennessee whiskey

If you think all whiskey is the same, you don’t know Jack. By law, Tennessee whiskey must be made from grain that’s at least 51% corn and filtered through maple charcoal prior to aging. Just ask Chris Stapleton and others who

exult its song-worthy spirit in country music—Tennessee’s other trademark.

TEXAS

Horchata

Each region in the Lone Star State has its own spin on this ancient beverage made with soaked rice, cinnamon and sometimes almonds, all blended, strained and mixed with vanilla and sugar for a sweet, milky and refreshing melange.

UTAH

Dirty soda

Made in Utah and made famous nationwide on TikTok, dirty sodas are dressed-up soft drinks mixed with cream and optional flavored syrup.

Swig, the soda fountain chain, is their home; its menu boasts 40 combinations.

VERMONT

Maple lemonade

In the land of maple, it just makes sense to use some of that syrup to sweeten a summertime favorite.

VIRGINIA

George Washington's Rye Whiskey

Adding to all his other achievements, our first president was one of the nation's largest whiskey producers. Staff at his Mount Vernon estate still distill his original recipe, which has been the state spirit since 2017.

WASHINGTON

Coffee

A robust coffee culture has percolated from the Pacific Northwest for decades, but in 1971 came Seattle's Starbucks (named for the first mate on the ship *Pequod* in Melville's *Moby-Dick*) and the dawn of one of the most recognizable cafe brands in the world.

WEST VIRGINIA

Mountain Dew

Of course the soda reached for most in the Mountain State is Mountain Dew—even if it was invented on the other side of Appalachia in Tennessee.

WISCONSIN

Brandy old-fashioned

Bartenders at every supper club and corner bar know the Wisconsin way to

make an old-fashioned: muddled sugar, bitters, orange slices and cherries; a pour of brandy instead of whiskey; and a splash of citrus soda, sour mix or seltzer. It's a tradition so beloved that in 2023 lawmakers finally declared it the state's official cocktail.

WYOMING

Sloshie

A slushie that can get you sloshed, the "it" drink in these parts began in 2012 with The Hound: a frosty concoction of fresh-squeezed grapefruit juice and vodka first churned at Creekside Market in Jackson Hole. **R**

UTAH

Dirty soda



READER'S DIGEST

HEALTH



STOP THE

ILLUSTRATIONS BY *Made Up Studio*



RIDE!

AMUSEMENT PARKS ARE MEANT TO THRILL.

BUT OFTEN THEY JUST MAKE US SICK.

ONE INTREPID RIDER IS ON A QUEST TO FIND

OUT WHY SHE'S ALWAYS LOSING HER LUNCH.

BY *Emily Latimer* FROM **LONGREADS**

IT'S MARCH IN FLORIDA,

and I'm walking around Hogsmeade village in The Wizarding World of Harry Potter at Universal Orlando. It's a Christmas card come to life: a picturesque setting with charming storefronts, cobbled streets and faux snow-capped brick buildings with crooked chimneys. My friends and I want to see Hogwarts, so we head to the Harry Potter and the Forbidden Journey ride, a flying adventure through the castle.

We pass through the gates and eventually it becomes dark and atmospheric, with cold stone walls and stained-glass windows everywhere. Talking portraits speak to us as we move deeper into the castle, and Professor Dumbledore welcomes us to Hogwarts. "You may encounter all manner of things not common to your own world," he warns.

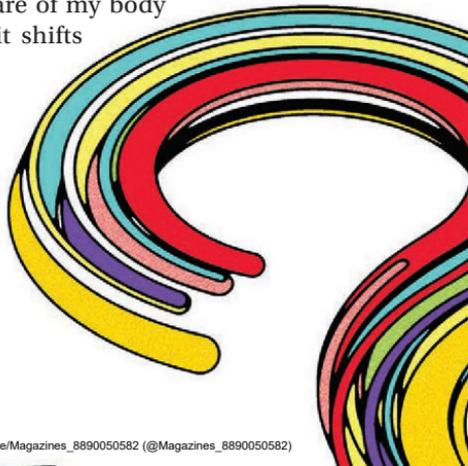
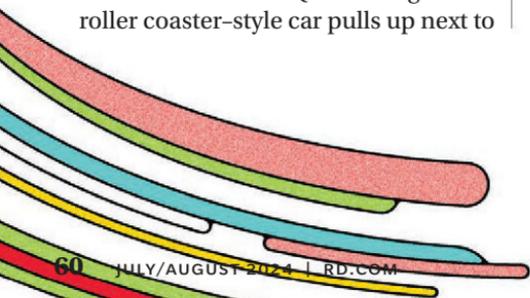
As we approach the end of the line, Harry, Ron and Hermione appear and invite us to watch a Quidditch game. A roller coaster-style car pulls up next to

us. It looks like some kind of enchanted bench. Above us, countless candles float in the air as if they're all under a spell.

"Huh," I say to my friend. "I think this is the ride that made me feel sick last time." We walk onto the moving platform and take our seats. I pull the ride restraint over my shoulders, and it clicks into place.

The bench abruptly moves sideways, and we're lifted into the air, feet dangling. We're swept up and to the side at the same time, which throws me off balance.

Instant regret. My heart is beating hard, I'm accumulating spit in my mouth, and after a few seconds I'm already dizzy and nauseous. I'm hyper-aware of my body as it shifts



and sways at the mercy of a robotic arm that lurches me, tilts me, turns me. I hold on for dear life.

I've been told that the ride is about four minutes long. But it feels as if I've entered a portal to another dimension where time loops on and on. I suddenly remember the \$8 butterbeer I chugged right before the ride. Whoops. I close my eyes; I know I'm going to be sick. I can't escape it, but maybe I can delay it. I take deep but shaky breaths. I brace myself against the unpredictable movements. And then, I let it happen.

I surrender to the ride's pre-programmed destiny. Its force is bigger and stronger than mine, and better engineered. I'm flung around like a rag doll. I curse Harry Potter and his friends, the ride designers, the thrill seekers who rave about the ride, and most of all, me, for willingly going on it. I open my eyes. I see Harry on screen, flying a broom through a Quidditch field. And then I throw up all over my lap. In my hands. And into the open air.

I LOVE AMUSEMENT PARKS. I love rides. Unfortunately, they make me barf. There was the time I emerged green and shaky-legged from The Simpsons ride, a motion simulator attraction at Universal Studios Hollywood, and another occasion when I nearly blacked out

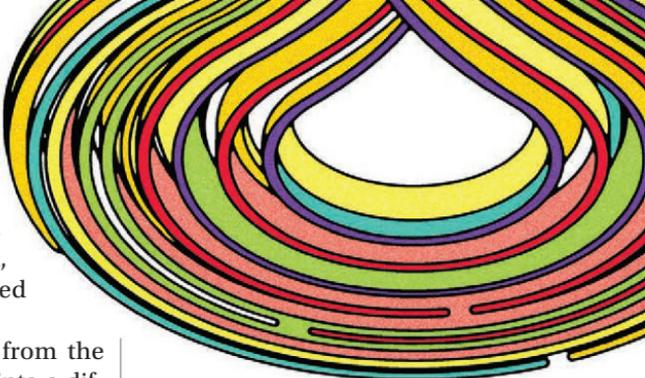
from the G-force on Dueling Dragons, a roller coaster that Universal Orlando retired in 2017.

It's not just rides: I once spent six stomach-churning hours in the cabin of a rocking lobster fishing boat, and I often feel disoriented on an especially windy car ride. But I've always denied my propensity for motion sickness.

That is, until I found myself wandering Universal Orlando's Islands of Adventure carrying a plastic bag stuffed with my puke-covered clothing and searching for a new pair of shorts. It was then, at age 27, having thrown up at multiple amusement parks in my life, that I realized motion sickness was something I'd have to live with. And that even though I've loved going on theme park rides since I was a kid, I've never been able to fully experience what they're built to do: give me a free-wheeling, exhilarating thrill.

Thrill seekers want an extreme adrenaline rush, but also an emotional journey. Theme parks are designed to deliver both. The fear and ultimate satisfaction we feel from thrill rides is similar to what we seek in a horror movie or a painfully spicy hot sauce. They're all benign forms of masochism.

There's an enduring interest in theme parks and their manufactured thrills. In 2019, over half a billion people visited theme parks worldwide. The



global theme park industry, valued at just over \$55 billion, is built on family fun, shared experiences, and escape.

“It’s about getting away from the everyday and disappearing into a different world,” says Sabrina Mittermeier, author of *A Cultural History of the Disneyland Theme Parks*. There’s no time to think about your silly little problems when your body is flying through the air against all odds.

But what happens when a ride that’s meant to excite you or make you feel awe doesn’t strike that perfect balance of fun and fear? What does a shattered mirage look like?

UP TO A THIRD OF PEOPLE experience motion sickness. It’s the body’s response to different types of movements that cause disequilibrium: a sensation of unsteadiness, imbalance and spatial disorientation. Cue the nausea, dizziness, headaches, cold sweats, general unwellness and, well, barfing.

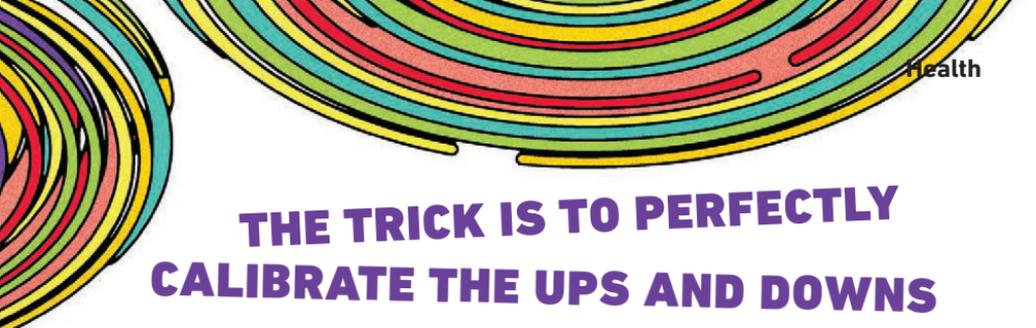
Anyone can get motion sickness. It’s been described as “a natural response to unnatural conditions,” and somehow, that makes me feel better. Children as young as 2 can experience it, and women are more susceptible than men, as are migraine sufferers and those with inner ear troubles. Heck, sheer anticipation may bring it on: People who have experienced it in the past

may have worse symptoms, brought on by expecting to feel sick.

Motion sickness can be felt anywhere: land, sea, air and space. Charles Darwin was continually seasick on his nearly five-year journey on the HMS Beagle, writing in 1835, “I hate every wave of the ocean, with a fervor, which you, who have only seen the green waters of the shore, can never understand.” Angry!

In recent decades, new technology that mimics vehicular travel—such as flight simulators, virtual reality (VR) headsets, video games and motion simulator rides—have joined the classic motion-sickness provokers: the car, the railcar, the airplane and the boat. You can’t escape it.

The cause of this condition is simple: motion. The reason why motion does this to us is not so simple. Sensory conflict theory says sickness is brought on by a mismatch between what the eye sees and the information the brain receives from the vestibular organ, located in the inner ear, which is responsible for balance. So when the eyes tell the brain that a person is sitting still on a boat, for example, but the



THE TRICK IS TO PERFECTLY CALIBRATE THE UPS AND DOWNS

vestibular system senses head movements from waves rocking against the ship, these mismatched messages are traditionally believed to cause disorientation, which can lead to motion sickness.

Thomas Stoffregen has a different take. A professor of kinesiology at the University of Minnesota, he maintains that the inner ear is not the culprit. Instead, he says, blame the brain. In an inconsistent environment—such as a rocking boat—the brain can't influence the body's movement as it usually can. The result is that you lose your equilibrium first, and then you get motion sickness. To understand, just picture poor me strapped to a seat and pushed through space.

"You're trying to stabilize the head against these motions that you cannot predict and cannot control," Stoffregen says. "That's why you got sick in that device."

While I got sick on a very modern Harry Potter ride thanks to the mismatched stimuli between screens and physical motion, ride-induced motion sickness is nothing new. In 1893, ride designer Amariah Lake invented an "illusion apparatus" called the Haunted Swing. Victorian-era riders entered a

room and took a seat on the swing. Attendants gave it a push, and, as one New Zealand newspaper described, "The swing seems to whirl completely over ... while the occupants shriek convulsively and hug each other."

The ride mechanics deceived riders enough for them to believe they were the ones moving violently. In reality, they were stationary; it was the room that rotated. People were amazed by the engineering and overwhelmed by the physical experience—sometimes enough to vomit. But the ultimate trick in designing theme park rides is to perfectly calibrate their ups and downs so people don't end up sick.

If you ask me, Harry Potter and the Forbidden Journey missed the mark.

On that day in March, the ride that did me in features a roller coaster-style four-seat bench mounted on a robotic arm that drops, spins, twists and turns. The bench doesn't go upside down, but at one point, riders are laid flat on their backs, and honestly, what's the difference?

For me, there's too much movement: The arm is attached to a track, which moves through a physical set with animated props. Dome-shaped projection screens fill the rider's entire field of

view. (Read: There's nowhere else to look.) As a press release from Universal Orlando gloated, the ride, which debuted in 2010, blended the "first-ever combination of live-action advanced robotic technology and innovative filmmaking," creating a new, immersive experience.

And hey, people really love it: There's a cultlike following online, with fans calling it a revolutionary ride with insane state-of-the-art tech that refreshes the indoor "dark ride" genre.

But push the drama too intensely and a person may never come back again. Ride designers must walk that fine line between safety and danger, while balancing the physical stress on the body. The truth is that thrill rides are designed to induce some level of discomfort. But what's too much? Throwing up? Whiplash? Blacking out from the G-force?

Past and present, some rides go too far. One of the world's first looping roller coasters, the Flip Flap Railway at Coney Island's Sea Lion Park, was infamous for knocking people out. It had a perfectly circular loop, which meant that passengers were nailed with serious G-force. In 1910, Rough Riders, another early Coney Island roller coaster, tossed 16 passengers out of the car, killing four.

Even if you don't die, some rides are notorious for making you feel sick—even today. In 2022, the *New York Post*

reported that Epcot employees were handing out barf bags at the new Guardians of the Galaxy: Cosmic Rewind ride, which rotates 360 degrees and has Disney's first-ever reverse launch on a roller coaster. On message boards, park visitors plot when to take their Dramamine and ask which stomach-turning rides to skip.

You can try to beat motion sickness, but once it sets in, it's already too late. The best way to stop motion sickness is to avoid situations that may provoke it. But if you're like me and absolutely must ride: Look at the horizon. Try Dramamine. Consider acupuncture—press the center of the forearm, three fingers' width away from the wrist. Stay hydrated. Don't eat foods that are spicy, greasy or fatty (i.e., the typical food you'd find at a fair). Try not to get annoyed when your friend says, "I didn't think it was that bad."

THE SEAT ON THE HARRY POTTER and the Forbidden Journey ride was curved, so puke pooled under my butt and legs. *Who's going to clean this?* I thought when the ride came to an end. Spaced out and doused in vomit, I stood up and watched as the bench rolled away. I hurried toward the nearest

unmoving wall, squatted and took deep breaths as my friends surveyed what had happened. The cool floor looked like a good place to lie for a while. Then I heard a voice.

“Ma’am, I have a room for you.”

I glanced up and saw a kind employee looking down at me. From his expression, I could tell he had seen this before and knew exactly what to do. He ushered me to a door marked “for employees only” and opened it to reveal a hidden space—one dedicated to unfortunate souls like me who couldn’t make it through the ride without getting sick.

There was a square basin that looked like a toilet filled with water. It was a special puke sink, with a silver flush handle. I hovered over it for a second, but I was all puked out. Two of my friends came in after me, and one of them was inspired to throw up too.

The small room had a normal sink and soap and throw-up bags and paper towels. I wiped off my shorts and legs, and removed my T-shirt, which was ruined. The attendant knocked on the door and asked if I needed anything. A new shirt. Shorts. Water. He came back with a blue T-shirt, size adult large, with a screen print of the Hogwarts castle. “Visit Enchanting Hogsmeade,” it read. A \$27 souvenir, free for the price of vomit. “No shorts,” he said.

As I scrubbed my body and donned my new T-shirt, I asked the attendant. “Does this happen a lot?”

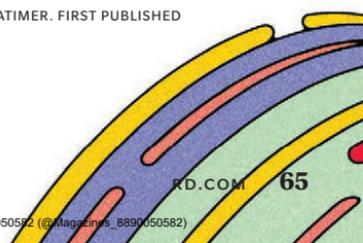
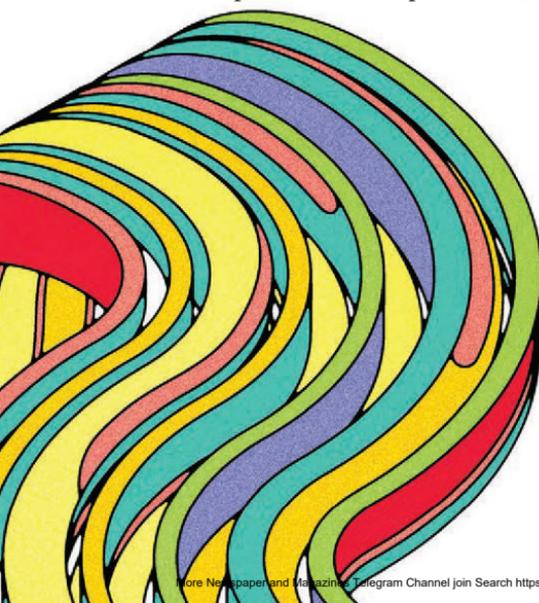
“Pretty often,” he said.

I balled up my old T-shirt and my ruined hat and shoved them into a plastic bag. I was still shaky, but I took sips of water and felt ready to leave.

I wobbled through the busy gift shop toward the bright Florida sunlight, dazed as people dressed in Hogwarts-themed clothing moved around me. I put my clammy hand to my cheek and took a SnapChat selfie with my barf bag. “Bag of shame,” I posted.

As I cowered in a shady area while my sister hustled around looking for a new pair of shorts for me, I thought about how quickly the illusion can shatter in theme parks: When you puke in a land of magic and whimsy, the wonder vanishes. **III**

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Band of Survivors

Armed with his drum kit, a Holocaust survivor fights antisemitism one musical note at a time

BY John Rosengren

Saul Dreier stands in the wings of the Kennedy Center's Millennium Stage in Washington, D.C., waiting to be introduced. A short, wiry nonagenarian, he's appearing there with his Holocaust Survivor Band in December 2015, a few days shy of the new year. It's a prestigious venue for a musical group that, up to that point, had only existed for just over a year. Dreier is excited but not nervous. He has seen too much in his lifetime to be unnerved by a mere performance.

When the band is announced, the crowd greets it enthusiastically. Dreier, 90, and Reuwen "Ruby" Sosnowicz, 88, both Holocaust survivors, take the stage, dressed in matching red shirts, black vests and black trousers. Sosnowicz, the more reserved of the two, goes to his keyboard, barely acknowledging the

crowd, while Dreier waves and blows a kiss before taking a seat behind his drum kit. They are joined by younger musicians, including Sosnowicz's daughter Chana Rose, who sings and plays tambourine. A violinist, a guitar player, a horn player, a backup singer and another keyboard player—some the children of survivors as well—round out the band.

A steady beat, followed by the shimmy of a snare drum, introduces the first song, "Shalom Aleichem" (meaning "peace be with you"). An old Yiddish tune, it tells of angels that visit on Shabbat, the Jewish Sabbath. While some sing the song as a lullaby, Dreier and company play it fast and bouncy. They're a klezmer band, combining traditional Jewish folk songs and the boisterous dance music of Eastern Europe



with a heavy dose of improv thrown in. Think Yiddish jazz.

The audience nods along. Many mouth the words or hum the tune. Chances are, most know the song.

In stark contrast to the upbeat tune, haunting black-and-white images from the Holocaust flash on a large screen behind the band: prisoners being marched into the camps, bodies heaped on top of one another, families awaiting their inevitable fate.

The band segues into "Hava Nagila," the wedding standard. Dreier leaps to his feet and demands of the audience, "Everyone, clap your hands!" They do. Caught up, Dreier remains vertical as he beats the drums. The photos are replaced by an illustration of dancing silhouettes under the words *Enjoy Yourself*.

When the song ends, Rose asks, "Are there any survivors or children of survivors of the Holocaust in the audience?"

A man, a child of a survivor, stands and is warmly received.

It's Sosnowicz's turn to sing now, and he slows things down with the heart-breaking Yiddish ballad "Where Can I Go?" The lyrics describe the plight of the wandering Jew: "Tell me, where can I go?/ There's no place I can see./ Where to go, where to go?/ Every door is closed for me."

The rest of the song list includes old Yiddish tunes that Dreier and Sosnowicz grew up with, such as "Bei Mir Bistu Shein," as well as American standards including "Those Were the Days" (my friend) and a rousing rendition of "To Life" ("to life, to life, *l'chaim*") from *Fiddler on the Roof*.

The audience is loving every second of it. The band is loving every second of it. But no one in the hall is loving it more than Saul Dreier. Despite the nasty hand life dealt him, Dreier is naturally ebullient, blessed with an infectious smile



The Warsaw ghetto of the 1940s, where thousands of Jews died each month

and a zest for life on display with each nimble crack of his drums and in the way his playful eyes engage the adoring audience. The crowd has come to see the band he's put together that honors fellow victims of the Holocaust. In an age of fading memories and Holocaust denialism, he sees it as his duty to make sure no one forgets. His goal, he says, is "to beat antisemitism."

POLAND IN 1925, the year Saul Dreier was born, was a very different place than what it would become. Growing up in Krakow, surrounded by friends, a loving family and the constant hum of music, life was "idyllic," he says.

All that ended in the fall of 1939 when invading German troops marched into his hometown. They imprisoned his father, who was a musician and an officer in the Polish army. His mother and others were herded into boxcars and sent via train to the concentration camps.

He and his sister, Helena, moved in with their disabled grandmother. Under Nazi occupation, school was no longer an option for Jews. Instead, Dreier was put to work sorting through furniture, clothes and jewelry that the Nazis had taken from Jewish families.

In 1941, Dreier's world was again upended after he watched soldiers drag his grandmother into the town square and shoot her dead. Weeks later, soldiers separated the siblings and marched Dreier, then 16, and other workers outside of town to the Plaszow

labor camp, where he was given a new identity: 86540, which the Nazis tattooed on his forearm.

The camp commandant was Amon Goeth. If that name sounds familiar, it's probably because he was depicted in the film *Schindler's List*. Following the war, Goeth would be executed for crimes against humanity. Such crimes included drunkenly riding his white steed through the camp while shooting prisoners for sport. Other times, says Dreier, he fired at them from his balcony.

In the camp, Dreier was starved, humiliated and whipped. Death was a constant presence. What sustained him was music. In those precious moments when he wasn't working 12-hour shifts at whatever job was forced on him, he could be found crammed into a single-room barrack with some 50 other men, often tucked into bunks stacked three high. To keep up their spirits, a cantor would lead the men in singing traditional Jewish songs. One time, Dreier noticed they were out of sync. He found two metal spoons and kept the beat by clapping them together. That became his de facto job: the keeper of the beat. And he relished it.

"Singing helped me survive," he says. "If you don't eat but you work hard and you sing, you forget you haven't got food."

Over the next few years, Dreier, young and able-bodied, was moved from camp to camp, wherever workers were needed. One stop was at Oskar

Schindler's factory, repairing radiators for German fighters. Later, he spent time at the Mauthausen concentration camp in Austria, where more than 95,000 Jews were killed.

At an Austrian camp in Linz, an Allied bombing raid left Dreier's hands, back and skull riddled with shrapnel. Wounded and unable to work, he grew alarmed. He'd heard that the Nazis were gassing and burning Jews in the

"MY INSTINCT TOLD ME THAT BECAUSE THEY TOLD ME I'M CRAZY, I'M GONNA DO IT."



concentration camps, and now, he says, he feared the worst, telling another wounded friend, "We are going to die here like everybody else."

Days later, in early May 1945, with the Germans aware that the war was nearing its end, the prisoners were marched at gunpoint a few miles to a cave and ordered to walk in. Some complied. Others resisted and tried to flee. The soldiers opened fire. In the confusion, Dreier, who was near the back of the line, saw a chance to escape and took it. He ran.

Soon, he heard an explosion. Dynamite had blown up the cave filled with prisoners. He kept running until he stumbled upon more soldiers. But these were Americans.

After a brief recuperation, Dreier was sent to the Santa Maria di Bagni Displaced Persons Camp in Italy, where refugees were sheltered until they could return home or find someplace else to live.

Once again, music sustained him. One fortuitous day, a truck arrived and unloaded a piano and a drum kit. While others gravitated toward the piano, Dreier took to the drums. Adept at playing the spoons, he figured, *How hard could it be?* It was the first time he played on a proper drum kit. On weekend nights in the town hall, he would accompany the piano as locals and former prisoners alike danced.

"That," he says, "is how I learned to play the drums."

Santa Maria di Bagni gave him hope, but it was also the site of his greatest despair. He learned from other former prisoners that both his parents had died in the camps, as had his sister and two dozen extended family members. Dreier would not be returning home. He was one of those who needed to find someplace else to live.

IN 1949, SAUL DREIER, who had lost everything, began anew. He migrated to Brooklyn, New York, and got a factory job working as a welder. He met and married a fellow Holocaust survivor from Poland, Clara Brill, and the couple raised four children before moving to Florida in 1980.

By then, Dreier had stopped playing the drums. He was kept busy by work—

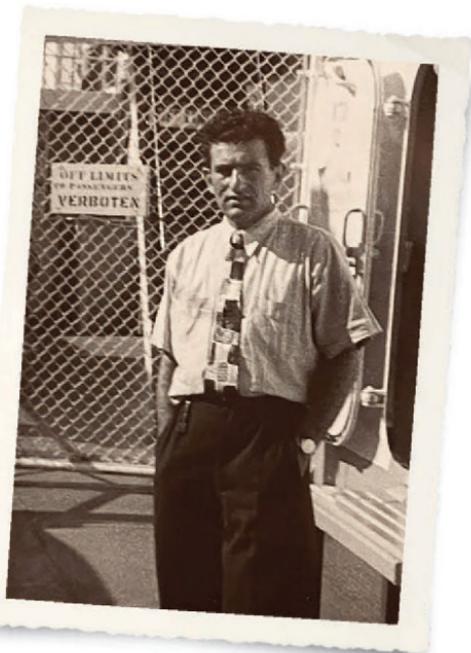
he had started his own construction company—and his family, which would eventually include eight grandchildren and three great-grandchildren.

Then in 2014 he came across an article about a remarkable woman named Alice Herz-Sommer, a Holocaust survivor who had died that year at age 110. If, as it's been said, a survivor's best revenge against Hitler is to lead a long, fruitful life, she certainly exacted hers. Her story resonated with Dreier. While imprisoned in the camps, Herz-Sommer, a concert pianist before the war, had drawn strength from playing music.

Dreier thought back on those spoons and that first drum kit. The article moved him to want to honor Herz-Sommer—and all the Jewish victims of the Nazis. And he knew how. It would be through his shared love of music.

“Music to me is life,” Dreier says. “If I play music, I’m alive.” Performing traditional Jewish songs before an audience, he reasoned, would be a way to keep the victims—not to mention Judaism itself—alive. To do so, he would need to form a band. But not just any band: a band of fellow survivors.

First, a reality check: Saul Dreier was 89 years old at the time. Retired 15 years. A stomach cancer survivor. Madness, right? That’s what his wife told him after he sprung his plan on her. That’s what his rabbi said too. But



Dreier, in 1949, on board the ship that brought him to America

a man who has survived Amon Goeth isn't easily dissuaded.

“My instinct told me that just on the contrary, because they told me I’m crazy, I’m gonna do it,” he says.

Within days, he returned home from the music store with a five-piece drum set and the resolve to form the Holocaust Survivor Band.

His first recruit was an accomplished keyboard player and accordion teacher, Ruby Sosnowicz, whom he met through a friend. Sosnowicz’s family had fled Poland soon after the Nazis invaded. In the mad dash to escape, he became separated from his parents and siblings at the Russian border. A sympathetic



Dreier dances in the heart of the old Warsaw ghetto during his concert.

“But if I’m gonna play for free,” he says, “everybody show up.”

And 400 did. By their reaction, it was clear that Dreier was onto something. Even Clara was impressed, conced-

ing, “Now I know you are a celebrity.”

farmer took him in until the war’s end, when he made his way to Israel and then America. Unlike Dreier’s family, his family survived. The pair was soon joined by four younger musicians and an Israeli singer.

To spare Clara the sound of his rusty drumming skills, Dreier rented a room in a temple where the musicians could practice. There, the klezmer band rehearsed Jewish folk songs like the Israeli classic “BaShana HaBa’a,” an upbeat tune with a deceptively sad backstory—the song is a memorial to the lyricist’s brother, who was killed in battle in 1968. “You will yet see, you will yet see, how good it will be next year,” goes the song. Of course, there is no next year for the brother.

The next step was finding a venue to play. Dreier reached out to a nearby synagogue and offered to play a free concert, reasoning that if they charged, no one would show.

ing, “Now I know you are a celebrity.”

The band, often featuring different musicians, would go on to perform across the United States and around the world—Israel, Germany, Brazil and Poland—in public libraries, colleges, community centers, malls. They played on a float parading down New York’s Fifth Avenue during the Israel Day Parade. Dreier even met President Joe Biden last year when he accompanied the Marine Corps Band at the White House during a Hanukkah celebration. Wherever they play, they are met with enthusiasm and warmth. Not because they’re a novelty act, but because they have a message to impart.

“People are so interested because Saul brings the history of his Holocaust experience,” says Mel Olman, who plays piano in the band. “They want to know.”

And they want to hear from a man who was marched into hell and survived. “Death called me several times

in my life," Dreier says on his website. "But I said no! I said to Death that as long as I'm alive I will live my life fully. I will inspire other people to share peace and wisdom around the world."

To that end, Dreier started a non-profit, Saul's Generation Foundation (sauldreier.com/foundation), that connects older and younger generations by, among other things, promoting education about the Holocaust. That's why Dreier travels to schools and universities to share his experiences. He says he hopes his story of resilience "serves as an inspiration for the world's youth," especially those who have suffered traumatic events.

DREIER'S WIFE, CLARA, passed away in 2016, and Sosnowicz has retired from the band. Still, Saul Dreier plays on. He recently performed in front of high school students in Florida.

Now, at age 99, he figures the various iterations of the Holocaust Survivor Band have played nearly 100 shows, each gig meaningful. But if he had to pick one that stood out, it would likely be a performance in 2016 when he and Sosnowicz returned to their native Poland for the first time since the war. They headlined a concert in Warsaw—held outside in the former ghetto where Nazis had confined over 400,000 Jews and sent nearly 300,000 to the Treblinka extermination camp.

Around 3,700 people—young and old, Jew and gentile—gathered in the street. The air was electric. Everyone

wanted to meet Dreier and Sosnowicz. In a documentary, *Saul and Ruby's Holocaust Survivor Band*, we see a Christian couple engage Dreier. The woman's family members had hidden Jews from the Nazis at great peril to themselves. She and Dreier talk about peace and the horror of war, then they wrap each other in a heartfelt hug.

On stage, the emcee addresses the audience: "How many times will we have the chance to hear a Holocaust survivors' band? To remember what they went through, to remember those that we lost, and to remember those incredible few who stayed with us? So when we hear the Holocaust Survivor Band play, we all have to take upon ourselves to be their witnesses and to take on their message of peace and love to the entire world."

He then introduces the band, and Dreier and Sosnowicz mount the stairs to the stage, dressed in matching mint green shirts, black vests and black trousers. Dreier takes his seat behind his drum kit, while Sosnowicz straps on his accordion. And the show is on. The elderly are clapping, teenagers dancing, everyone swaying.

It's daylight when they start, and nightfall when they take their final bow. In the documentary, Dreier can be heard yelling over ecstatic applause in a loud, unwavering voice, "Never forget. Never forget. Never forget! Never again. Never again!" Each phrase punctuated by an emphatic thrust of his drumsticks. **R**





DRAMA IN REAL LIFE

A GRIZZLY ENCOUNTER

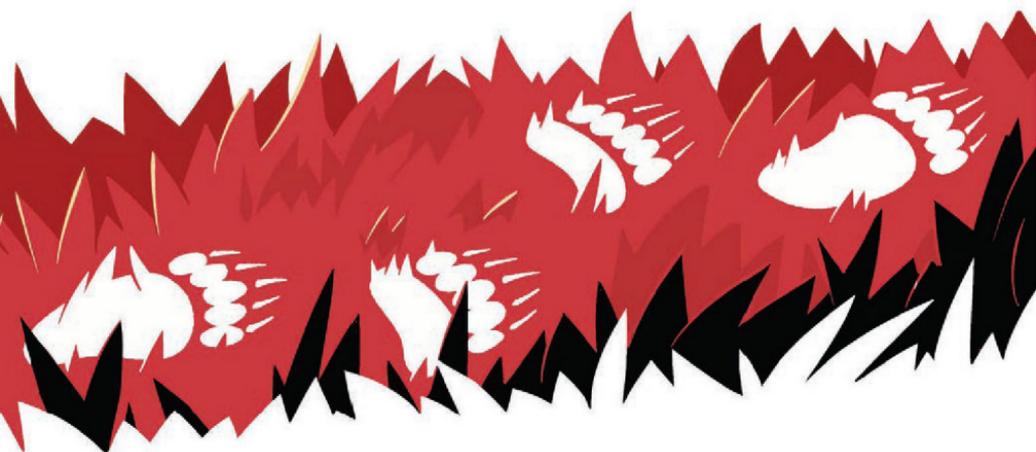
The bear had its jaws clamped on his friend.
There was only one thing to do: tackle.

BY *Ryan Hockensmith*

FROM ESPN

ILLUSTRATIONS BY *Steven P. Hughes*

RD.COM 75



A good friend never lets his buddy step in bear scat.

So when Brady Lowry stumbled upon a fresh pile back in the fall of 2022, deep in the thick brush of the Wyoming wilderness near Yellowstone, he turned his head and alerted Kendell Cummings. Those were almost his last words.

The two wrestlers at Northwest College in Powell, Wyoming, had known each other for only about a month and a half, but they'd become fast friends. Lowry, who had been a National Junior College Athletic Association All-American as a freshman, was back on the team after taking a year off from college. Cummings was a hardworking sophomore who hadn't cracked the lineup yet.

There's something about being wrestling practice partners that can forge lifelong friendships in six weeks. Pushing each other on 5-mile runs, sweating and bleeding all over the place, either twisting your friend into a pretzel or

getting pretzeled ... it's violence and then forgiveness, for hours on end, and that can weld two people together almost instantly. That's what it had done for Lowry and Cummings.

So they started hanging out after practice. They both loved the outdoors, and as wrestling season started up, Lowry mentioned how much money he makes "shed hunting." Shed hunting involves scouring mountain trails, looking for antlers that elk, moose, mule deer and other male animals lose once a year. A big set of antlers can be worth \$200. A good day of shed hunting can net a college kid \$500, and today, Oct. 15, was off to a great start.

They had gone out with two other Northwest College wrestlers, Gus Harrison and Orrin Jackson, and spent the 45-minute drive teasing Harrison for wearing a bright red sweatshirt instead of camo or dark clothing. They kept

telling him he was going to be a blinking food sign for any aggressive wildlife in the area.

The four stuck together for most of the day. They hiked close to 15 miles in six hours on the Bobcat-Houlihan Trail, which sits on the outskirts of Yellowstone National Park. They traversed areas of wide-open jagged rock and then spots where every shrub and tree seemed to have banded together and decided to form a neighborhood. Thick and thin, thick and thin, for miles.

As sunset approached, they split up into pairs and headed toward a specific rock off in the distance where they could meet in an hour or so. Lowry and Cummings went high; Harrison and Jackson stayed lower. The pairs were a half-mile apart at around 4 p.m.

Up on the mountain, Lowry and Cummings had waded into deep brush. Cummings was about 50 feet away when he heard Lowry yell, "Hey, watch out for this big pile of bear"

That's when they heard a loud crackling noise. Lowry never ended his sentence; instead, he blurted out "Bear!" just before a 500-pound grizzly hit him in the chest.

THERE'S AN OLD adage that if you're going to be a bear, be a grizzly. Its true meaning speaks to human admiration of the singular ferocity of the grizzly bear, which just might be the most dangerous creature on earth. It's hard to say for sure how a grizzly would fare against a tiger or hippo, but wildlife

experts say the grizzly might be the No. 1 seed in that bracket.

A typical female grizzly weighs around 300 pounds and stands 7 feet tall, with a speed that tops out at about 35 mph and a mouth that can crush a bowling ball.

All this is to say that Lowry didn't stand a chance. He's a two-time Utah high school state wrestling champion and finished seventh in the country as a freshman 149-pounder, which means he has spent his entire life locking horns with strong humans. But he never felt anything like he did that day.



CUMMINGS RAN AND THREW HIS BODY ONTO THE BEAR'S BACK, YANKING ON ITS FUR.

The bear, likely a mama grizzly, struck him and knocked him across the scraggly ground. She ran right alongside his tumbling body, clobbering him as he rolled. He still remembers the way his body came to a stop and the bear started pawing at him, almost dribbling him up and down on the ground.

Cummings found himself about 30 yards away, facing the bear's back as the initial attack unfolded. He wanted to help, but how? He would be tossed like a beanbag, too, and then they'd both be dead. Maybe he could run and get their teammates. Harrison had a



gun. Maybe running was his best chance.

But when he watched the bear pushing and pulling Lowry, he realized that his friend had maybe 30 seconds of this before he'd be dead.

So Cummings started yelling at the bear. No reaction.

He threw a stick at the bear. Nothing.

He threw a rock, a perfect strike in the middle of the bear's back. Still nothing.

The bear was in kill mode, and sticks and stones were not going to distract it. "I couldn't even get her to budge," Cummings says.

So he launched the most dangerous takedown attempt he had ever tried. Cummings ran and threw his body onto

the bear's back, yanking on the fur around her neck. That got the grizzly's attention, and she swung around just as Cummings released his hold and started sprinting away. Cummings hoped maybe his counterattack would distract the bear long enough that Lowry could scrape himself off the ground and run in the opposite direction. Maybe, just maybe, the bear would be content to just let them run off.

She wasn't. As Cummings took off running, he peeked over his shoulder and watched in horror as the bear spun from Lowry's collapsed body, took two giant gallops and was on top of him.

She clubbed Cummings to the ground and pounced. Her mouth drove down toward his head, and he could

smell the rancid breath of a creature that spends its life killing prey and eating raw meat. Her slobber flew all over him as he desperately tried to protect his face with his hands and arms. She chewed on those first before clamping down on his face and head, biting several times until Cummings went limp on the ground.

The bear looked at his still body for a few seconds, then slowly lumbered away, back toward where Lowry had been. Cummings opened his eyes and tried to see if his friend had gotten away. But he had so much blood pouring down his face that he couldn't tell. He just knew the bear was heading in the opposite direction and maybe he had a shot to get away.

When the bear was out of sight, Cummings pulled himself up off the ground and sought out the path down the mountain. He was bleeding badly and his left bicep had been torn off the bone, but he was conscious and full of adrenaline. He hoped he could find his three friends and they could get out of there.

But he wasn't even sure that Lowry had survived the initial attack. Without thinking, Cummings yelled as loud as he could muster. "Brady!"

And that's when he heard the crash and crunch of something that wasn't his friend. The bear was back.

UNBEKNOWNST TO CUMMINGS, Lowry had scrambled to his feet as the bear turned her attention toward Cummings. Lowry

had screamed "Kendell!" but the bear was after him already. He saw Cummings moving faster than he thought was possible, which made him hope his friend could outrun the bear.

As Cummings ran, Lowry pulled out his cellphone to call for help, then made a dash for the clearing to alert the others.

He somehow got a signal and called 911. He told the operator what had happened and where they were. At about the same time, he spotted Harrison and Jackson 200 yards down. The only reason he saw them in the distance? Harrison's red sweatshirt.

Lowry screamed "Help!" and waved his hand. At the bottom of the hill, the two wrestlers couldn't make out what he was saying. Harrison actually smiled and waved back.

But as Lowry wobbled down the trail, the pair could see that he was carrying his left arm like a baby, limp and pinned to his side. It became obvious that he hadn't been yelling hello; he needed help.

They sprinted up toward him. Harrison made out the words "bear" and "Kendell," and then he really hit the gas. As he streaked up the mountain, he pulled his gun.

Jackson got to Lowry and took the phone from him. The 911 operator was saying that help was on the way, that they should get off the trail and head toward their cars, and that they couldn't do anything to stop a grizzly attack by themselves.

"We're not leaving," Jackson said, and he hung up.

He and Lowry started up the hill after the red sweatshirt running ahead of them. But Lowry was in bad shape, physically and emotionally. A bone in his forearm was broken in half from a bear bite, and it was poking out of his arm, which he carried as if it wasn't even a part of his own body. And even worse, he didn't think he could look at whatever they were going to find at the top of that hill. "Kendell is dead," he told Jackson. "He's dead."

Their friend wasn't dead, but he was barely alive.

AS HARRISON CLOSED in with his gun drawn, the bear returned to Cummings and struck him again. Then she leaned down and bit into his head, lifting his body completely off the ground. Cummings felt the teeth crunch into his skull, and he was powerless.

The bear held him there for a moment, then dropped him into a heap on the ground again. Cummings was so injured at that point that even if he had wanted to keep up the fight, he wouldn't have been able to. A calmness came over him as he took what he thought would be his last breaths.

The only thing he felt was the bear nudging him in his side, over and over again. Cummings realized that his backpack, loaded up with the antlers they had found that day, was so bulky that she couldn't roll him over.

Looking back now, he thinks she

wanted to attack his back and finish the kill. But the backpack kept him stuck on his side, which might have saved his life.

After 30 seconds of trying to flip him, the bear gave up and began to scoop dirt over his body. He hadn't moved, so he figures that she must have presumed him dead and was covering his carcass so she could go back, check on her cubs and then return to eat him.



HE LOOKED OVER HIS SHOULDER, EXPECTING HER TO COME OUT OF THE BRUSH.

"I was going to be a snack," he says.

After hearing the bear shamble off, Cummings reached down toward his stomach and unhooked the latch for his backpack, and it rolled off. He toppled over onto his belly. His adrenaline had dipped just enough that he began to feel the pain of what were catastrophic injuries. His head was punctured in multiple spots by the bear's teeth, and he had devastating bite marks up and down his body. He was in agony.

But he dragged himself up off the ground, and this time didn't yell anything as he staggered back down the trail. He kept looking over his shoulder, expecting her to come barreling out of the brush again.

CUMMINGS HAD MADE IT 100 yards or so when Harrison arrived, his gun raised. Harrison crouched down and hoisted Cummings up on his shoulders in a fireman's carry and started down the bumpy path. Harrison, a 157-pounder, couldn't lug Cummings's 150-pound body far before needing a breather. After around 100 yards, he lowered Cummings's legs to the ground to rest for a second.

Cummings could barely stand. He was woozy from two long gashes on his head that poured out blood like a scene from a horror movie, wounds that would eventually require 60 staples to close back up.

Jackson was helping a struggling Lowry up the mountain when they spotted their friends. Lowry was so happy he inexplicably couldn't look—his brain couldn't process that Cummings wasn't dead.

Eventually, the four friends reached a spot where an ambulance was going to pick them up, a mile or two away from the attack scene. That's when Lowry lost it. With tears flowing, he embraced Cummings. They were both bleeding profusely and each had one arm that was almost useless. It was the best hug they'd ever had.

When the EMTs assessed both, they called in an emergency helicopter to take Cummings to the trauma center in Billings, Montana. His wounds weren't life-threatening, but he needed a level of emergency repair work to his head and face that only a large hospital could provide. Lowry was taken to a closer local hospital. But doctors there decided his arm was broken so badly that they needed an orthopedic surgeon to look at it that night. So he, too, was sent to the hospital in Billings.

Cummings's face was a wreck. The bear had bitten into his left cheek so violently that the surgeons found pieces of the bear's teeth embedded in his mouth. But they repaired his face using skin grafts from his legs to reconstruct





Brady Lowry (left) and Kendall Cummings haven't let the bear attack stop them from hiking the trails, though now they go armed with bear spray and a gun.

the area where the bear had bitten a hole through his cheek and into his mouth, and stapled his head back together. Remarkably, a few days later, both men were sent back to Northwest College to heal.

They were going to live. But would they ever be the same again?

IT'S JAN. 26, 2023, about 100 days after the bear attack, and Lowry says he's not nervous. His left knee says otherwise. He's in his Northwest College warm-up gear, with his knee jittering up and down. Fast. Over and over again.

Northwest has welcomed three other top-10 teams for a series of duals in Powell this weekend. Lowry recently got cleared to return for competition—a remarkable recovery—but he hasn't

wrestled a match in two full years. So yeah, he's a little fidgety.

In his Friday night match, Lowry gets taken down almost immediately. He escapes and then notches a takedown of his own.

Lowry is lean but strong. He has a power advantage and begins to use it to take an 11-7 lead on North Idaho's Ryan Graves heading into the third and final period.

But as the third period unfolds, Graves begins a barrage of takedowns. Lowry fights hard, but he's out of gas. He had an adrenaline dump at the beginning of the match and now can't weather the storm and is fading fast. His lead shrinks and then is gone. When Graves takes a 15-13 lead in the final minute, Lowry bellies down on the

mat. The clock isn't at zeros yet, but Lowry is done.

He moves quickly off the mat after the loss, headgear in his hands. He looks heartbroken and exhausted as he leaves the mat area. Cummings swoops in and grabs him in a side hug and says something into Lowry's ear. It's their mantra, the thing they say every time somebody asks about the grizzly attack and how they're doing: "Move forward."

Lowry stares at him, and Cummings says it again: "Move forward."

It's the perfect phrase for these two stoic friends. Short. Direct. Literal and figurative. Vague to someone else, but incredibly specific to them. They were offered counseling by the school after the bear attack. And while that may have worked for others, they declined. That would be looking backward. They had each other, and they would move forward.

Cummings hasn't been cleared to return yet, but he thinks he could wrestle right now. Instead, as Friday night's wrestling concludes, he mops the mats, then leads the charge to roll them up afterward. Then he collects some chairs

near their coach, Jim Zeigler, who silently watches him carry the chairs out of the gym.

As he watches them clean up, the coach meditates on the concept of what it means to be a friend. He says the story of the four teammates is one of man versus nature, survival against all odds, and a bunch of other things too. But he also says it's a story of four friends at an unprecedented moment in the history of friendship.

A recent survey showed that the number of Americans who say they have zero close friends has quadrupled in the past 30 years. Too many Americans don't have someone who would fight a parking ticket for them, let alone a grizzly bear.

Zeigler points a finger toward the end of the gym. "See that door?" he says. "That's about how far away Kendall was from Brady that day. If you knew a grizzly was on the other side of a door attacking your buddy, would you go through the door?"

He never answers.

He doesn't need to. 

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Sold for a Song

Would you believe the artist with the most expensive last-minute concert tickets last year wasn't Taylor Swift? That honor belongs to Adele—at \$1,011 per ticket.

Swift wasn't far behind: The median last-minute ticket price for her Eras tour was \$958. U2, Drake and Usher round out the rest of the top 5, but their ticket prices (\$502, \$473 and \$406, respectively) were only half as expensive.

FORBES



Won't You Be Our Neighbor?



These folks do Mr. Rogers proud

BY *Reader's Digest* Readers

Cold Treats, Warm Hearts

I wondered who our neighbors would be when we bought land for our new house. I didn't have to wonder long: On a hot day, a beautiful (and pregnant) woman walked across the field with popsicles for us. Rachelle and I were both expecting our fourth daughters, and all our girls lined up within a year of one another. Our families spent the next 22 years making memories between our homes. They had to move out for a year about a decade ago while their house was rebuilt after a fire. They moved back in on Christmas Eve, but the kitchen wasn't done, so I suggested they come over on Christmas for a big

breakfast in our pajamas. Now every year we go back and forth. Who knew a few popsicles would have such an impact?

—KONDA KOOREY *Warsaw, IN*

Forgive Thy Neighbor

On Sunday afternoons, my neighbor Dick and I often mowed our lawns. Most people wouldn't give it a second thought, but we were both pastors who encouraged our parishioners to make Sunday a day of rest. On such occasions, we'd meet at the fence, confess our sin, assure each other of divine forgiveness, then finish the job.

—PAUL BAILEY *Fayetteville, NY*

Keeping It in the Family

My sister, Lynne, and I were close growing up, but our lives took different directions after high school. Decades later, she was divorcing and needed a place to live. I'd been thinking of buying the home across the street as an investment, and the owner agreed to sell it to me at a discounted "neighbor" rate. My sister moved in the day I closed, happy to be in town with her grandkids. Now, she and I are closer than ever: exactly 100 feet door to door.

—CHRISTINE COWAN *Charlotte, NC*

A Good Place to Plant Roots

When I moved into my new house, I noticed the woman next door working long hours in her garden. A few weeks later, Claudia knocked on my door, reluctantly informing me that our puppy had crawled through the fence and dug up every vegetable she'd planted—four times! I apologized profusely and built a better fence. I also helped replant every vegetable right alongside her and helped with weeding all summer. Not only did Claudia teach me about gardening and share the harvest, we also bonded during those sessions and have been inseparable since. She taught me to knit so I could make ski sweaters for my kids, and we organized my parents' 40th anniversary party together. I even wiggled through her doggie door when she locked herself out. I can't imagine a better friend or neighbor.

—LISA LAMBERT *Denver, CO*

Living in Harmon-y

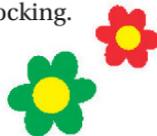
When I was 4, my parents bought a farm. Not many would treat new neighbors with a bunch of rambunctious kids as family, but Harmon and Wilma, the people who lived in the log cabin next door, did. Wilma regaled us with tales of her days as an outdoorswoman. Harmon took us for rides on his donkey cart and brought us treats for every birthday and holiday. When our parents went out, their instructions were "Call Harmon if you need anything." In an account of his life, Harmon wrote, "When the Rietschlin's bought the farm, we added a new family to ours."

—KATIE DI LULLO *Crestline, OH*

The Cookie Lady

When I was a kid, my neighbor worked for the Keebler company. Their spare room was packed with more cookies than they could ever eat. His wife, aptly nicknamed the Cookie Lady, loved the neighborhood kids and often passed out cookies from their stash. My mom told me it was rude to knock on her door asking for some, but Mrs. Millie assured my mom that it made her happy when we came knocking.

—JANE GIBSON
Allentown, PA



Codename: BFFs

My neighbor Anne and I liked taking walks through the woods or to the bakery for a cookie. We enjoyed our girl time and didn't want our husbands crashing. When she was ready to head

out, she'd signal by pulling down a bedroom window shade. Taking my cue, I'd call the house and tell her husband that I needed to borrow her for a bit. He felt good about helping a neighbor, and never asked to tag along.

—SANDE SNYDER
Trumbull, CT



Nurture the Hearth

When my husband entered hospice, we set up his bed next to our wood-burning stove. That day, I heard my neighbor Jim chopping wood outside, and next thing I knew, he was bringing it inside by the armful. We had more than enough to keep my husband warm through his final days. During our decades as neighbors, we've done plenty of good things for each other, but this memory still brings tears to my eyes.

—KRISTI ROBERTS *Middletown, OH*

A Positive Note

Eight-year-old Mikynlee's family moved into our mostly senior neighborhood two years ago. One morning, I found a handwritten note on my

porch. It said I was "beautiful," "nice," "cool" and "awesome," and was signed "Your neighbor" in orange crayon. It was the first of many notes and drawings that always brightened my day. My favorite was a note in green ink: "Never forget you light up my heart." I left notes and small gifts for her in return. Mikynlee's family has since moved away, and I sure miss that thoughtful kid who taught me how to be a good neighbor.

—GLENDA FERGUSON *Paoli, IN*

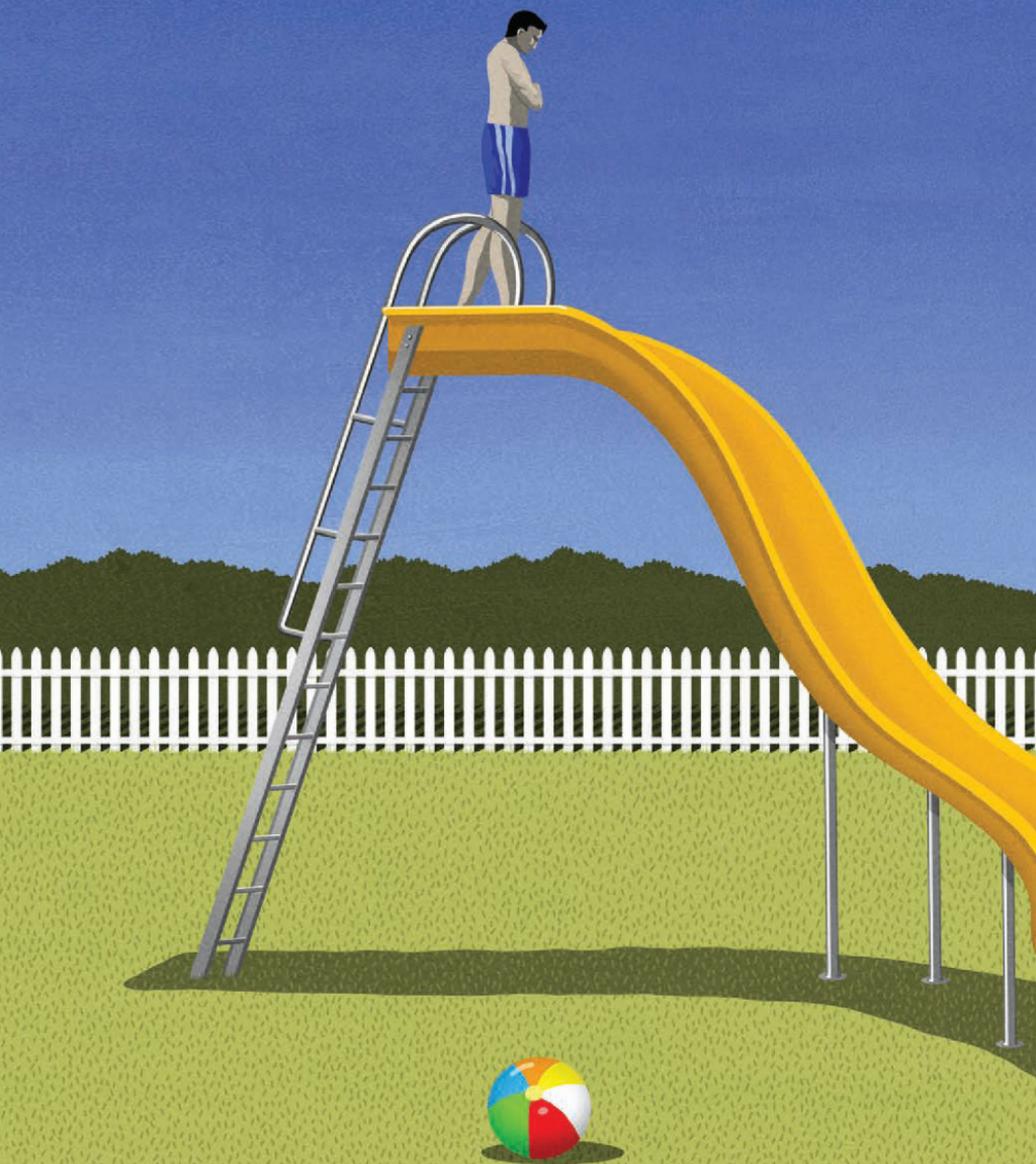
Ding-Dong Switch

We felt like fish out of water when we moved to a new town in Minnesota, but my mom finally made friends with our neighbor Betty. Our first Halloween there landed on a Sunday, which meant we had evening church services and had to skip trick-or-treating. Betty jumped into action: She called all our neighbors and told them the Drooger kids would be going door to door for candy on Saturday night, so be prepared. That's when I knew we had a very special neighbor.

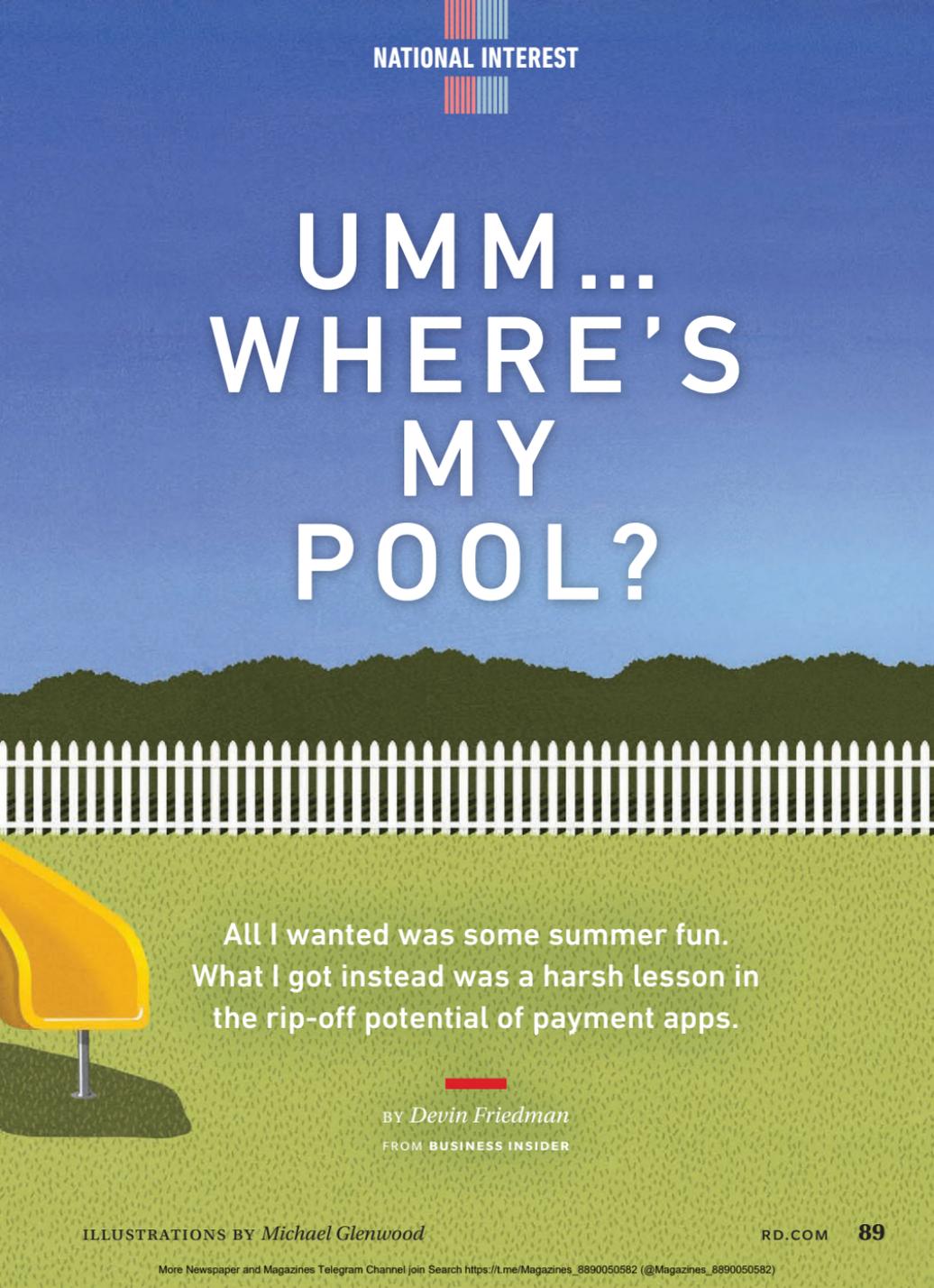
—MIKE DROOGER *Edgerton, MN* 

HAVE MY STORY PUBLISHED IN *READER'S DIGEST* ... CHECK!

We all have things we'd love to do—someday. Well, as the ancient proverb goes, someday ain't a day of the week. What items have you successfully crossed off your bucket list? Whether you've learned to bake a cake from scratch, finally finished writing that novel, or shot for the moon and experienced a zero gravity flight, we want to hear about it. See terms and share your story at rd.com/bucketlist.



UMM... WHERE'S MY POOL?



All I wanted was some summer fun.
What I got instead was a harsh lesson in
the rip-off potential of payment apps.

BY *Devin Friedman*
FROM BUSINESS INSIDER

was trying to reach Gary, the proprietor of Royal Palace Pools and Spas. Gary cuts a certain figure. Just a hair over 6 feet tall with an unusually high voice for a man his size, he wears a mustache, square wire-rimmed bifocal glasses and short-sleeved dress shirts. I wouldn't say Gary is perplexed by this modern world we find ourselves living in as much as he might not be aware it exists. Sometimes when you talk to him, he'll look up from his papers and blink, like a bird that has heard something in the underbrush.

Gary—not his real name—spends his days in an office covered desk-to-credenza in product manuals and spa brochures, and invoices produced in triplicate. A man trapped in the amber of another era, the type of guy who answers his phone “Yelllllow” and says “Bye now” when he hangs up. But at this moment, Gary was not answering his phone at all. And I was desperate to reach him because my wife and I had paid him a deposit of \$31,500 to build us a pool, and he had apparently disappeared off the face of the earth.

“I'm sorry, Gary is not available right now,” said Cheryl when I phoned that morning.

As best I could tell, there were three women who worked at Royal Palace Pools. Cheryl, Cheryl and Sheryl. There was a rumor that one of the Cheryls—Sheryl—was Gary's wife.

“Do you know where he is?” I said. “This is urgent.”

“Um. And who is this?” said Cheryl.

I gave her my name and her tone changed.

“I see,” she said tightly. “Well, I'll tell him that you called. Again.”

“Please do,” I said, trying to sound both grateful and angry.

IT'S TRUE THAT my wife and I had been calling Gary a lot. About a year and a half prior, we'd walked into his office in the Berkshires, in Massachusetts, and signed a contract for Gary to build a pool in our backyard. Originally, the pool work was supposed to commence in April 2020. But obviously that didn't happen, because that was when everyone was sealed in their homes rinsing groceries in a solution of 3 parts water to 1 part Clorox. But now it was 2021. The construction trade was lurching back to life. There were delays, of course. We were in the throes of the great pandemic renovation boom, and



there weren't enough workers or materials, and the cost of lumber had become something that normal people talked about. The *New York Times* was publishing hate-reads about people from cities moving to places like the Berkshires and building swimming pools and bringing their demanding me-first city culture with them.

And so that March, we began calling Gary to say "me first." Can you ensure we'll be first in line once the ground thaws? He'd try, he said.

We called him in April. We called him in May. The further into summer we got, the less responsive he became. June crept along, and Gary went dark.

Finally, on July 5, we received a response. Gary emailed us that he was ready to begin. He said he could start

within the week and reminded us that, according to the contract, we owed him around \$30K before construction commenced. He sent an email with instructions for payment. Because a lot of bank branches were still closed, he requested that we transfer the money via the bank payment app Zelle. But because there are daily limits, he said, we should just transfer a little bit every day.

We Zelle-ed \$3,500 on the 6th, \$3,500 on the 7th, \$5,000 on the 8th and again on the 9th. Now that he was getting his money, Gary was more responsive. "Do you have all the materials you were waiting for?" we asked in an email. "Yep, mostly." "Can you start next week?" "Yes." The emails were strange. We sometimes had to read them aloud. *What if you put a period here, would it*

make sense then? What if there were a verb?

After we Zelle-ed more money, we asked Gary to send us a receipt for the \$23,000-ish we'd sent. A few minutes later we got a signed receipt from Royal Palace Pools and Spas, printed on letterhead and photographed. All we had to do was send another \$3,500 on the 12th and another \$5,000 the 13th, his start date. If things went our way, the construction would be finished in a few weeks.

And then July 13 arrived. Early that morning, Gary emailed that he was down the road with his crew and would be there imminently.

But hours passed, and he didn't show. That's when we reached Cheryl and she said, "Oh, it's you," and told me she'd get him a message. We started calling every 15 minutes.

That afternoon, we got Gary on the phone. "Yelllllow," he said. We asked him where he was. He was confused by that. He was at the office, he said. "But

you emailed us and said you were already on the road."

Gary was silent for a moment. "I haven't emailed you in a month," he said.

LIKE SO MANY things I use to conduct the most critical tasks in my everyday life with a carefree obliviousness, I didn't really know what Zelle was. Yes, I knew Zelle was a peer-to-peer, or P2P, payment app—like PayPal and Venmo—and that it lets users give one another money directly for pizza and rent (and pools) without paying any fees. But what I've since learned is that



it's an entity wholly owned by a company called Early Warning Services LLC, which is itself owned by a consortium of America's largest banks: Chase, Bank of America, Wells Fargo, PNC, Truist, Capital One and U.S. Bank. The reason for this byzantine structure is that 1) it's pretty hard for a bunch of enormous banks to own something together without forming a separate company to own that company and 2) it allows the banks to not be liable for losing someone's 30 grand.

P2P apps are also quite useful for perpetrating fraud. The money transfers almost instantly between people who may know each other only as a cellphone number or an email address. So Zelle, by default, became one of America's most popular platforms for tricking people out of their cash. Zelle isn't very forthcoming about how often that happens. The company told me that "more than 99.9%" of transactions on the network are executed safely. On one hand, that means that the chances you're getting scammed are very low.

On the other hand, Zelle reported that it processed 2.3 billion payments in 2022, and less than 0.1% of that puts us at somewhere less than 2.3 million transactions that maybe were not executed quite so safely.

Sen. Elizabeth Warren has petitioned Zelle to find out exactly how much fraud there is. And the data she's collected suggests there is probably, technically speaking, a whole lot. According

to Warren's office, U.S. Bank—a single institution in the consortium—reported 45,000 incidents of Zelle scams in 2022. That's triple the number from 2020. It's certainly possible, if the criminals keep at it, work hard and show some grit, that they can triple the amount of fraud again by the end of this year.



IN A WORLD OF MARKS AND CONS, WE WERE ... COMPLETE IDIOTS.

WE WERE IN the kitchen when we hung up with Gary and everything fell into a terrible, humiliating focus. The way we had been goaded every day for two weeks to send the max Zelle amount. The way the email messages from Gary were subliterate in a completely different way from the way a classic Gary email is subliterate. The receipt we'd made him email, which we realized didn't really look like the other receipts we'd gotten from Royal Palace Pools and Spas. The letterhead had typos on it.

And the email addresses. Ugh, the email addresses.

Now is when I need to make some confessions. When Gary told us to Zelle

him, he didn't really tell us to Zelle him. He told us to Zelle two people we had never met before. What I'm confessing is that we sent a full \$30,500 of our own hard-earned money to sunshineyasmin48@gmail.com and personalbreezy@gmail.com. Yes, someone emailed us and said, "Hey, will you Zelle 30 grand to a perfect stranger who goes by the name Personal Breezy and has no identification except for a Gmail account?" And our response was: "Done!" In a world of marks and cons, we were ... complete idiots.



"ONCE IT'S IN CRYPTO, IT'S GONE. YOU WON'T GET IT BACK."

There in the kitchen, we understood that there's no guarantee that anything you're doing most of the time in your life is what it seems. There is no assurance that anyone online is who they say they are. It became clear just how foundational trust is to the economy of my life, which essentially consists of countless virtual transactions with people I have never seen, every transaction requiring a faith that a set of numbers or letters actually corresponds to a person of pure intention.

And now the intentions of even the

best of us—even the Garys, with their bifocal glasses and their loyal contingent of Cheryl's—had been called into question. And, for us, it made everything suspicious. Every email in my inbox, every transaction on my credit card—all of it seemed infected and evil.

Still, in the immediate aftermath of the crime, we believed we were not without recourse. It had been only moments since our money had been zapped into the welcoming receptacle of the bank account of Personal Breezy. So we just needed to compel Chase to go in and extract our money and give it back to us.

When we contacted Chase, our call was "answered" by a buoyant robot voice that had been engineered to keep us from talking to a person. We did the tricks you do to get to a human. Pressed zero. Said "operator." We persevered. Eventually a woman came on the line, thanked us for being a client and asked if she could help us with something. "Yes," we said. "Someone stole \$30,000 out of our Chase account and we need you to get it back." There was a pause as she typed something. In the background, I could hear what sounded like a 2-year-old playing close by.

When the woman spoke again, she said this wasn't her area and passed us on to a fraud specialist. I explained our situation and he told me he was very sorry. He sounded like he was the kind of sorry you are if you have to say sorry to hundreds of people a day. He told us that he would open up a case. The team



was on it, and we would hear from someone shortly.

At some level, I realize now, I expected someone at Chase to say, "Holy crap, that's crazy! Hey everyone, stop what you're doing because we need to raise this one up to DEFCON 1 and send a drone over to Sunshine Yasmine48's house!"

But that is not what happened. We didn't hear much from the fraud-investigation team for a long time. And when they got in touch it was to tell us what by then we already knew: That money was long gone. That money was gone the moment we sent it.

SO HOW WAS our \$30,000 stolen? It most likely happened like this:

First, Gary was targeted. Not personally, according to an official at the Department of Justice. Whoever did this, he told me, probably went after the emails of a ton of people who had a Gary-esque profile. Pool guys in the Northeast. Contractors in Massachusetts. Relatively tech-unsophisticated folks who conduct transactions for large sums of money.

Maybe they got Gary to give up his email password via the time-honored scam of phishing. "The guy probably clicked on a link he shouldn't have clicked on," said Evan Kohlmann, a cyber intelligence expert. "They send you a text message or an email message: 'Here's the receipt for the thing you bought at Best Buy.' The email looks real, so you open it."

Or maybe the scammers got Gary's password the old-fashioned way: by buying it. Hacked credentials are relatively cheap to buy on the dark web. They're part of a vibrant shadow economy built to service a booming subculture of would-be fraudsters. Cybercriminals often use software that was designed to test a system's security, but lots of its tools—including its password-cracking feature—come in handy for hacking as well.



"THE BANKS SAY GO TO ZELLE, AND ZELLE SAYS GO TO THE BANKS."

Once whoever it was got into Gary's email, they could look through correspondence between, say, Gary and my wife, familiarize themselves with our contract and see exactly how much we owed. They now had everything they needed to ask for money.

But if you don't want to get caught perpetrating fraud, it's best not to have victims send you anything directly. So the next step is to hire people to receive the money—your Personal Breezys or your Sunshine Yasmynes—folks who are more often than not dupes themselves. Sometimes they're part of a "work from home" scam, people who

think they're moving money to and from bank accounts as part of a legitimate business. Or maybe all they know is they get 10% of the money if they forward it to another Zelle account, and they don't ask any questions.

Personal Breezy most likely passed our money on to another account. It may have gone through Estonia via Paxful, a P2P app that converts money into cryptocurrency. Or whoever got the money next used it to buy Target gift cards, which were resold on the dark web at a discount, for crypto. One way or another, our money was almost certainly converted into crypto, and then, at some point, back into paper currency to be spent as the fraudster liked.

"Once it's in crypto, it's gone," Kohlmann, the cyber intelligence expert, told me. "You won't get it back."

AFTER CHASE SAID it couldn't help us, we turned to law enforcement. We called the FBI, which had us fill out a form online. It's been two years since we submitted that form, and we have never heard from the FBI.

A person at the Massachusetts attorney general's office told me the best bet would be to have the state police begin an investigation. After a series of calls, I was able to speak with a Massachusetts State Police detective, who told me I needed to start with my local police department. They, in turn, could call on the state police to aid in the investigation if they needed it.

So that's what we did. The Monterey

Police Department was very responsive. The chief himself showed up at our house and sat at our table. He took a police investigation notebook out of his utility belt and listened to our story. But I do not believe that the chief of police in Monterey was quite equipped to deal with this issue. Monterey has two, maybe three, full-time police officers. Thus far none of them have formed an "internet crimes task force."

We tried calling Zelle, which proved to be harder than calling the FBI. "The banks say go to Zelle," a staff member from Elizabeth Warren's office told me. "And Zelle says go to the banks. But what the banks don't tell you is that the banks own Zelle."

The truth is that this was essentially no one's problem. It was not the FBI's problem or the state police's problem or the problem of the local police or Chase or Zelle or Gary, who just went right on yellow-ing through the rest of the summer pool season. This was a crime that no one would investigate. One federal prosecutor told us they lacked the resources to chase down the vast majority of fraud cases. Unless you've had millions of dollars stolen, it's essentially like living in a lawless world.

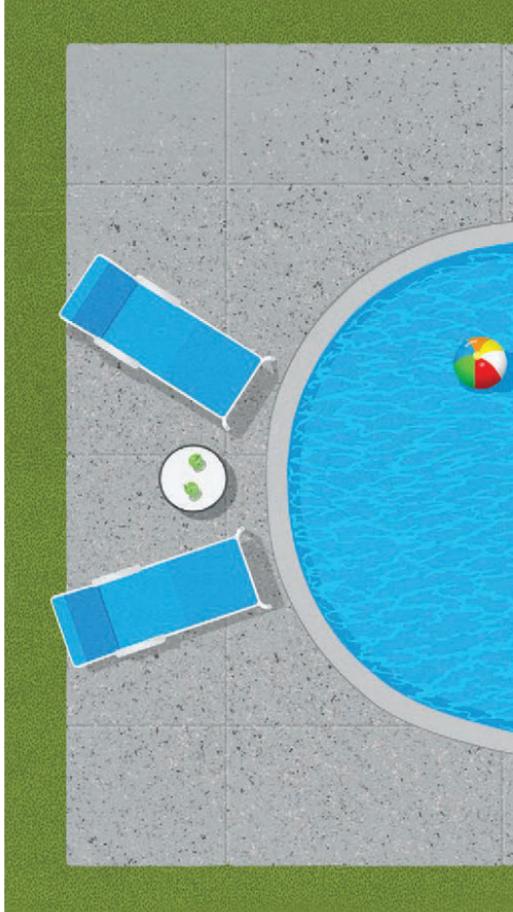
For the moment, Zelle has almost no responsibility for what happens to your money on their platform. That's because, Zelle argues, they're a platform, just like Meta and X and all the other Silicon Valley behemoths who operate by the argument that none of

the bad and scary stuff that takes place on the networks they built and maintain and profit from is their problem. Their job is to be iconoclastic technological innovators who facilitate bringing new worlds together, and governments and institutions and everything in the old guard are just trying to slow them down.

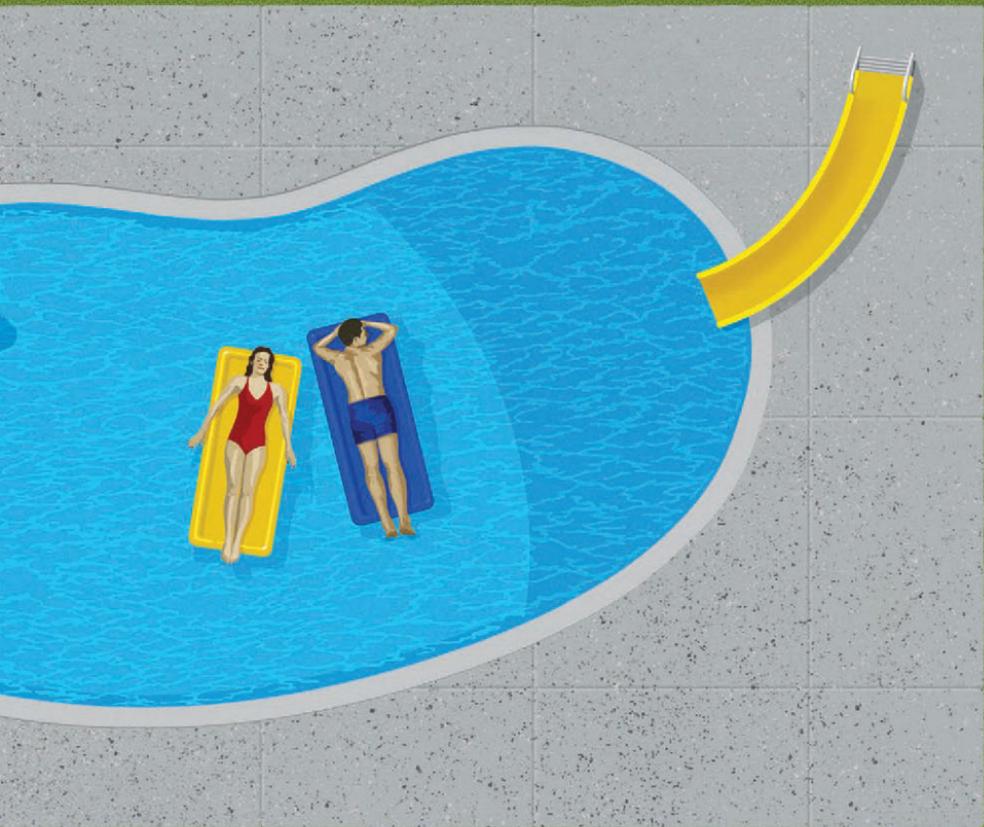
That we could require Zelle to protect users from fraud is, of course, not exactly an idea without precedent. “The context I use for Zelle is my credit card,” the staffer from Warren’s office told me. “If someone steals my credit card, I’m protected. If someone fools me to pay with my credit card, the same thing holds. But it’s important to remember that when credit cards were introduced, they didn’t have those protections. The Fair Credit Billing Act built in those protections.”

Warren would like to have something like the Fair Credit Billing Act for peer-to-peer payments. But because there doesn’t seem to be any political will for banking regulation, and Zelle certainly isn’t going to just volunteer, it doesn’t seem likely to happen any time soon.

IT’S POSSIBLE THAT the government will eventually be moved to safeguard consumers against this type of fraud. But the greater issue is one that will plague us for a long time: the dilemma of knowing who is real and who is not, and assigning responsibility for the consequences. The arms race between



those trying to prove realness—whether through passwords or two-factor authentication or biometric scans—and those trying to evade realness is moving at breakneck speed. Someone at Clear, the identity protection company that helps people skip the lines at airports, told me they’ve built “liveness detection” technology. To prove you’re you, you not only have to possess all the information and devices that prove who you are, but you also



have to prove that you are actually alive in the instant and in the place where a transaction is happening, by doing stuff like moving in a humanlike way.

This is what security has come to—proving an instant of existence. And while knowing if Gary is Gary or I am me or Breezy is the breeziest Breezy on the internet is getting harder and harder, the pull to decouple ourselves from any real-world identity—the anonymity of crypto, the evolving deepfake

of AI—gets even more powerful. Knowing who anyone really is will likely become a philosophical question, not to mention a practical one. Anything can be true. Nothing is real.

In the end we did get the pool. We saved for another two years and hired Gary.

This time, we paid him by check. **R**

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The RD
LIST

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Fly Me to the Moon

Starring Scarlett Johansson and Channing Tatum

HOUSTON, WE HAVE A romantic comedy. In this film, set against the Apollo space program in the late 1960s, marketing whiz Kelly Jones (Scarlett Johansson) is hired to boost NASA's flagging public image and "sell the moon." She creates merchandise tie-ins, brings in tele-genic astronaut stand-ins, and then, to appease the White House, is tasked with staging and shooting a fake lunar landing in case the actual mission fails. This plan doesn't jibe with Cole Davis

(Channing Tatum), the program's beleaguered launch director. As their worlds collide, interoffice sparks fly.

Though the film circles the real-life moon-landing conspiracy theories, it's really all about the stars: Johansson and Tatum are the sun and the moon. As director Greg Berlanti raves, "Watching them act together was like watching two great rock stars do a duet for the first time." (*In theaters July 12*) —Mara Reinstein

COURTESY SONY PICTURES (3); THE NOUN PROJECT (FILM ICON)



Treasure

Starring Lena Dunham and Stephen Fry

This family drama is set in 1991, shortly after the Iron Curtain fell, when exiled Jews and their descendants were permitted to return to Eastern Europe and learn about their heritage. One such traveler is Ruth (Lena Dunham), a cynical New York City music journalist visiting Poland with some unexpected baggage: her father, Edek (Stephen Fry), a Holocaust survivor with an optimistic and larger-than-life personality. The pair explore Poland, and, despite their squabbles, find a way to reconnect. The unconventional love story is adapted from Lily Brett's 1999 novel, *Too Many Men*, and directed by Julia von Heinz, who has smartly examined the aftermath of the Holocaust in previous films. This one was shot in Germany and Poland, including the Auschwitz II-Birkenau concentration camp. (*In theaters June 14*) —MR

STEPHEN FRY AND LENA DUNHAM IN TREASURE COURTESY BLEECKER STREET. THE NOUN PROJECT (FILM ICON)



PODCAST

Family Trips with the Meyers Brothers

Hosted by Seth Meyers and Josh Meyers

What better way to crush miles during your own road trip than with the hilarious childhood vacation memories of comedy greats? Hosts Seth and Josh Meyers reminisce with the help of a star-studded, gut-busting guest list (Jeff Daniels, Julie Andrews, Nick Offerman, John Mulaney, Leslie Jones and more). Foremost, *Family Trips* is an excellent reminder that no matter how rowdy your kids are in the backseat, at least they aren't a young Colin Jost combating boredom by noshing on the foam of a seat headrest—one of the show's more uproarious revelations. —*Caroline Fanning*

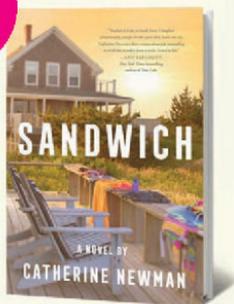
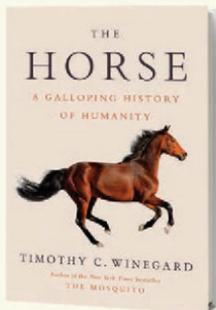


BOOKS

The Horse

By Timothy C. Winegard

Mankind invented and advanced the modern world, but horses invented and advanced mankind. When the first rider—likely an adolescent on a dare rather than a prehistoric visionary—climbed atop the first mount 5,500 years ago on the grasslands of Eastern Europe, human progress sped from a trot to a gallop. Suddenly, we had an invaluable agricultural tool, a weapon of war, a mode of transportation and, above all, a companion. Today, humanity finds new uses for its old friend in therapeutic initiatives, competitions, entertainment and beyond. And Winegard, a historian, argues it's because horses keep us tethered to our most elemental selves. —*CF*



Sandwich

By Catherine Newman

Between baby boomers and millennials is a generation that knows what it's like to carry a heavy load with both hands. Gen Xer Rocky, a newly menopausal matriarch, is—yup—sandwiched between adult kids and aging parents on an annual vacation to a small Cape Cod cabin where everyone swims, eats and unravels. Rocky's comical narration vacillates from sentimental daydreams to a neurotic overanalysis of the future—though not all can be chalked up to hormones. A deeper pain lingering in the background forces the revelation of some weighty secrets. But it's not all bundled nerves and family drama: Author Ann Patchett described the novel as “joy in book form.” —*Wendy Wilson*

QUOTABLE QUOTES

I had to bust rocks to create my road. And now that road is there for my kids and other people's kids to travel. They might look at those broken rocks by the side of the road and say, "Wait a minute. If we melt that rock, we'll have four more lanes."

—Sheryl Lee Ralph, ACTOR, IN *AARP*



Stuff only gets better because people show up and work. No one else is coming to save the day. You've just got to do it.

—Sam Altman, TECH ENTREPRENEUR, IN *TIME*



VARIETY/CONTRIBUTOR/GETTY IMAGES (RALPH); NORDIN CATIC/CONTRIBUTOR/GETTY IMAGES (ALTMAN); GILBERT FLORES/CONTRIBUTOR/GETTY IMAGES (JELLY ROLL)

I was told animals needed numbers, not names, that mind, personality and emotion were unique to humanity. To me, this was so obviously not the case. A fact anyone with a pet could attest to.

—Jane Goodall, SCIENTIST, IN *THE GUARDIAN*

The windshield is bigger than the rearview mirror for a reason. Because what's in front of you is so much more important than what's behind.

—Jelly Roll, MUSICIAN, AT THE 2023 CMA AWARDS



Only a fool says "never."

—Bryant Gumbel, SPORTSCASTER, ON CBS NEWS SUNDAY MORNING

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Brain GAMES

SHARPEN YOUR MIND

Fact or Fiction?

MEDIUM Determine whether each statement is fact or fiction. To reveal the solution to the bonus question at the bottom, write the letters indicated by your responses in the corresponding numbered blanks. Turn the page upside down for the answers.

1. Gerald Ford once modeled on the cover of *Cosmopolitan*.

FACT: **C** FICTION: **P**

2. Dolphins are the fastest swimmers.



FACT: **E** FICTION: **H**

3. The name of the game Jenga comes from a Swahili word meaning "to fall."

FACT: **P** FICTION: **E**

4. Reese Witherspoon's book club is bigger than Oprah's.



FACT: **E** FICTION: **S**

5. Scratching poison ivy spreads the infection.

FACT: **I** FICTION: **R**

6. Writing tomorrow's to-do list before you go to bed can help you fall asleep faster.

FACT: **W** FICTION: **C**

7. Tug of war is a professional sport.



FACT: **I** FICTION: **O**

8. Greece has more islands than the Philippines.

FACT: **L** FICTION: **N**

9. Hot dogs eaten in the U.S. on July Fourth could stretch across the country five times.

FACT: **E** FICTION: **A**



BONUS QUESTION What's the official soft drink of the National Barbecue & Grilling Association? (Need help? Turn to "Raise a Glass" on page 46.)

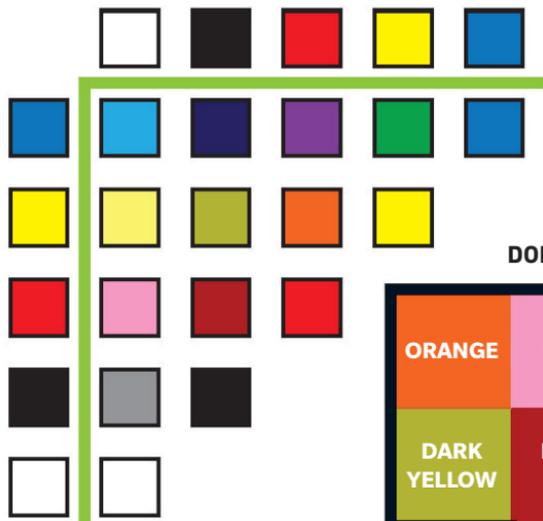
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9

Answers: 1. Fact; 2. Fiction; several fish are faster, including sailfish and swordfish; 3. Fiction; the Swahili word means "to build"—ironically; 4. Fact; 5. Fiction; not even if the blisters break; 6. Fact; nine minutes faster, according to one study at Baylor University in Texas; 7. Fact; 8. Fiction; Greece has about 6,000 islands, but the Philippines has more than 7,000; 9. Fact; **Bonus Question:** Cheewine.

Filter Buster

DIFFICULT Five dominoes (one of each color: red, yellow, blue, black and white) have been laid out below (in the shape with a bold border), and then five colored glass dominoes (one in each of the same five colors) have been laid on top of them, affecting the look of their colors somewhat. Based on the color mixing guide, can you figure out how the two layers of dominoes are arranged?

COLOR MIXING GUIDE



DOMINOES SEEN FROM ABOVE



DARREN RIGBY (FILTER BUSTER), EMILY GOODMAN (DO THE MATH)

Do the Math

EASY Use five mathematical symbols (+, -, x, ÷ and √) to complete the equation below. Use each symbol only once, and ignore the standard order of operations.

$$? \ 64 \ ? \ 6 \ ? \ 9 \ ? \ 4 \ ? \ 2 = 11$$

Long Story Short

MEDIUM The kids at Camp Kiwi want to play kickball, so their counselor, Ava, thinks up a way to select two team captains. She tells the nine kids in her group to sit in three rows of three.



◆ First, she asks the tallest student within each row to stand up. Of the three standing students, the shortest one becomes the first team captain. Then everyone sits back down.

◆ Next, she asks the shortest student within each column to stand up. Of the three standing students, the tallest one becomes the other team captain.

Will Ava's strategy pick two unique students?

Number Maze

EASY In this maze, start at the 5 in the top left corner and move horizontally or vertically (but never diagonally) to reach the star in the bottom right corner. At each move, travel the same number of squares as the number in the cell you are currently on. Since you are starting on a cell containing a 5, your next move is either 5 squares to the right or 5 squares down. The next move will be based on your new cell's number. Can you find the correct path?

5	5	4	2	3	4
3	3	1	4	1	1
2	3	2	1	2	2
4	4	4	3	4	2
5	1	2	3	4	5
4	5	4	5	2	★

For more Brain Games, go to [RD.COM/BRAINGAMES](https://www.rd.com/braingames).

For answers, turn to **PAGE 111**.



The Paris Olympics will bring together athletes from more than 200 countries. In honor of that spectacular diversity, we're hosting our own international challenge:

Each word in this quiz has a different language of origin. Clear each hurdle, then sprint to the next page for the answers.

BY *Sarah Chassé*

1. drub *v.*
(druhb)

- A goof off
- B scrub clean
- C soundly defeat

2. archipelago *n.*
(ar-kuh-'peh-luh-goh)

- A island group
- B major chord
- C clock tower

3. kinetic *adj.*
(kuh-'neh-tuhk)

- A wireless
- B energetic
- C psychic

4. commandeer *v.*
(kah-muhn-'deer)

- A salute
- B seize
- C steer

5. spiel *n.*
(speel)

- A sales pitch
- B skewer
- C small dog

6. juggernaut *n.*
('juh-gr-not)

- A handsaw
- B space explorer
- C unstoppable force

7. kowtow *v.*
('kow-tow)

- A discuss with
- B tug along
- C suck up

8. floe *n.*
(floh)

- A ice mass
- B lava stream
- C ocean current

9. tycoon *n.*
(ty-'koon)

- A lung infection
- B top businessperson
- C windstorm

10. vamoose *v.*
(va-'moos)

- A depart quickly
- B leap over
- C coat with varnish

11. troika *n.*
('troy-kuh)

- A high priestess
- B apricot cookie
- C group of three

12. amok *adv.*
(uh-'muhk)

- A in a frenzy
- B sluggishly
- C underground

13. élan *n.*
(ay-'lahn)

- A perfume
- B flair
- C peak

14. beleaguer *v.*
(buh-'lee-gr)

- A trouble
- B balance
- C recite

15. kismet *n.*
('kiz-met)

- A headscarf
- B lovers' quarrel
- C destiny



Easy as ABC? Not Exactly

During the Parade of Nations, athletes enter in alphabetical order by country, as spelled in the language of the host country. In Paris, the United States (*États-Unis*) follows Spain (*Espagne*). But in Beijing, based on the number and order of strokes in the first character of each name in simplified Chinese, the U.S. appeared between Kosovo and Bulgaria.

Word Power ANSWERS

1. drub (C) *soundly defeat*
(from Arabic)

The boxer drubbed his opponent with a first-round knockout.

2. archipelago (A) *island group* (from Italian)
Many archipelagoes are formed by undersea volcanoes.

3. kinetic (B) *energetic* (from Greek)
The dancers' kinetic leaps thrilled the audience.

4. commandeered (B) *seize* (from Afrikaans)
Ardent protesters commandeered city hall, vowing to stay until their demands were met.

5. spiel (A) *sales pitch*
(from German)
Leon hung up the phone before the telemarketer could launch into a spiel.

6. juggernaut (C) *unstoppable force* (from Hindi)
Taylor Swift has become a pop-culture juggernaut.

7. kowtow (C) *suck up*
(from Chinese)
"I shouldn't have to kowtow to my boss to get the raise I deserve," Aaliyah grumbled.

8. floe (A) *ice mass*
(from Norwegian)
The floe split with a loud crack, sending ice chunks flying.

9. tycoon (B) *top businessperson*
(from Japanese)
The railroad tycoon built an empire from coast to coast.

10. vamoose (A) *depart quickly* (from Spanish)
Once they heard sirens, the burglars vamoosed.

11. troika (C) *group of three* (from Russian)
In Disney's *Sleeping*

Beauty, Aurora is raised by a troika of fairies.

12. amok (A) *in a frenzy* (from Malay)
After one whiff of catnip, the kitten ran amok around the living room.

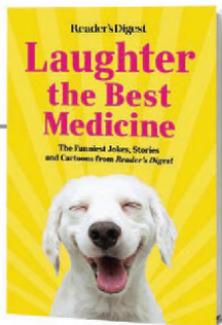
13. élan (B) *flair* (from French)
Selma dived in to her dream job with élan.

14. beleaguer (A) *trouble* (from Dutch)
Beleaguered by personal scandals, the town's once-popular mayor decided to resign.

15. kismet (C) *destiny* (from Turkish)
Call it kismet: I met my wife in an airport after we both missed our flights.

Vocabulary Ratings

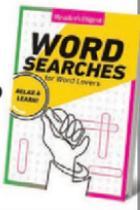
9 & BELOW: Bronze
10-12: Silver
13-15: Gold



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ANSWERS

WHERE, OH WHERE?

(page 112)

B. Gerlach, Nevada

BRAIN GAMES

(pages 107-108)

Filter Buster



Do the Math

$$\sqrt{64} - 6 \times 9 + 4 \div 2 = 11$$

Long Story Short

Not necessarily: Ava's process might pick the same student in both steps. (You can simultaneously be the shortest of the tall, and the tallest of the short.)

Number Maze

The correct sequence of moves is: down 5, right 4, left 2, up 4, left 1, down 3, up 1, right 4, down 2.

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WHERE, OH WHERE

THAR SHE BLOWS! Located in the 3,800-acre plot next to where the Burning Man festival is held, this man-made wonder is the result of happy accidents. Wells drilled in 1916 and 1964 shoot out scalding water, creating geysers that grow several inches every year. Where is it? (*Answer on PAGE 111.*)

- A** Koloa, Hawaii
- B** Gerlach, Nevada
- C** Mammoth, Wyoming
- D** Soda Springs, Idaho

STEVE TETZ/GETTY IMAGES