

**#1 Secret
To A Sharper
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**5 WAYS
TO SPOT
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**Iran Threat
What You
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ILLUSTRATED BY BILL MAYER



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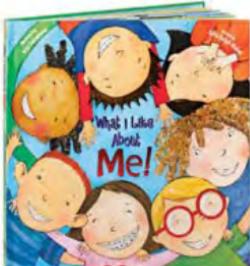
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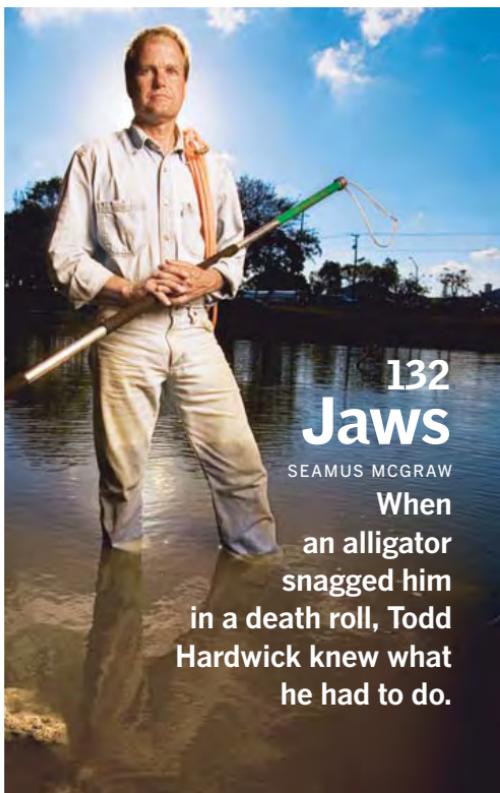
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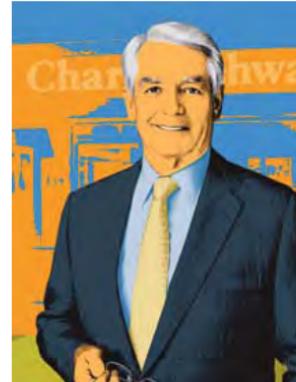
For a vacation that's really out there, book a voyage to the stars.

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(DOG) MEREDITH PARMELEE/STONE/GETTY IMAGES;
(DANCER) LISA PEARSON/STONE/GETTY IMAGES;

PHOTO-ILLUSTRATION BY JOHN RITTER;
(PHOTO OF CHARLES SCHWAB) FERGUS GREER

GO AHEAD: MAKE US LAUGH

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YOU SAID IT

LETTERS ON THE JUNE ISSUE



A Mole, or Worse?

ICAN ONLY HOPE all readers of "Burned by the Sun" will end their love affair with tanning. Those mentioned in the article are the lucky ones.

My niece had a mole removed from her back, which turned out to be malignant melanoma. Doctors assured her they had caught it in time. Eventually she started to have back pain, probably due to a slipped disk, she was told. Surgery was performed, and it was discovered that the melanoma had returned and spread to her spine. She became paralyzed from the waist down; then the cancer spread to her brain.

Kirsten died last August. She was blond, fair-skinned, so very beautiful and so very loved. She was only 26 years old.

ANN MAZZARO, Scranton, Pennsylvania

That's Outrageous!

MICHAEL CROWLEY'S column on crooks getting rich off the Iraqi war brought tears to my eyes ("The \$9 Billion Heist"). First, for members of our military who gave their lives, and then for taxpayers like me. Robert Stein and Philip Bloom misused government contract money for their own gain. How dare they rape the American people? They should be left on a road in Iraq to fend for themselves. C.L. QUEENS, Los Angeles, California

Children of Divorce

READING "New Reasons to Stay Together" was like reading my own life story. My parents divorced when I was three; 29 years later, I am still dealing with the effects. That one event has done more to shape who I am today than anything else. It has made me determined to keep my marriage healthy so my children do not have to divide their time and love between two homes. The reasons for divorce may make it unavoidable, but there is no such thing as a "good" divorce.

MANDY DOWDY, Walnut Grove, Mississippi

I speak for my brothers and sisters. All five of us feel that our lives

would have been much better if our parents had divorced. The constant arguing, bickering and unhappiness between our parents resulted in a dysfunctional family and unhappy childhoods for us all.

Remaining together for the sake of the children is not always best, especially when the children are made to feel that's the only reason their parents are staying married.

NAME WITHHELD BY REQUEST,
Okanogan, Washington

Fighting for Life

ONE YEAR AGO, when my doctors were unable to stop a life-threatening hemorrhage, I gave birth to an extremely premature baby girl. The doctors said there was nothing they could do for her because she was too small. She died three and a half hours later.

So I had strong emotions as I read "Miracle Girl," about Adrianna Mancini, who was born premature but saved by an experimental process called liquid ventilation. I was in awe that the technology exists to save premature babies, frustrated that it is not FDA-approved, angry that it was not available to us, and disgusted that the FDA and critics aren't doing more to advance this lifesaving treatment.

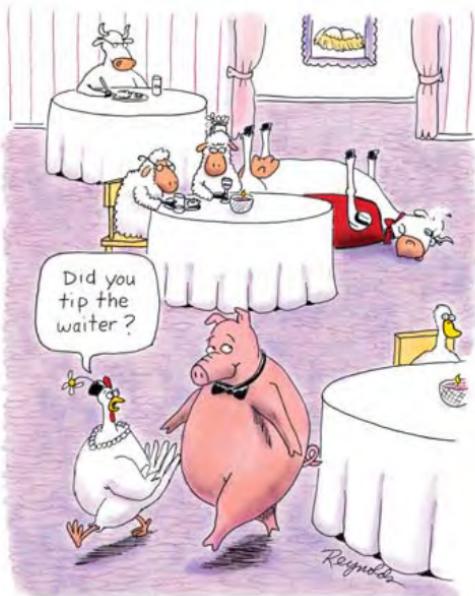
HEATHER CHRISTIANSEN,
Tacoma, Washington

Rescued in Time

TWO THUMBS UP for the boys who came to Samantha Schink's rescue, and two thumbs down for the justice system (Everyday Heroes: "Hot on the Trail"). Mark Mead is a registered sex offender. He drove his car into Samantha's bike and was accused of tearing at her top. If attempted rape charges couldn't stick, at the very least he should have been convicted of assault. The boys' actions were fitting for "Heroes." Mead's conviction for lesser crimes was more suitable for "That's Outrageous!"

RHONDA COPLIN, Glendale, Arizona

I want to applaud Luke Schumacher, Matt Rodriguez, Drew Jenk-



ins and Zach McIntyre for their bravery in saving Samantha. It is boys like them who make teenage girls like me feel respected and honored. It terrifies me to think that this dangerous man will be out on the prowl again in three to five short years. Men who rape, or who attempt to, should be given a life sentence. Only then will girls like Samantha and me feel safe to ride our bikes in our own town.

NAME AND ADDRESS WITHHELD BY REQUEST

Foods Can Kill

I REMEMBER THE NIGHT my husband and I rushed our six-month-old son to the hospital, begging him to "just breathe!" The ER doctors and our pediatrician could not determine the cause of his near-fatal symptoms. Six months later I figured out he was allergic to dairy and eggs. He had eaten a cracker containing milk before having the anaphylactic reaction ("When Food Turns Fatal").

We have learned to read every label and trust no one when it comes to preparing food. Our son, now age two, has been reaction-free for over a year. Everyone, including medical professionals, needs to learn more about the severity of food allergies and that common allergens can hide in unsuspecting foods.

BETHANY SCHOEFF, Hilliard, Ohio

The sidebar "Allergy or Intolerance?" mentions celiac disease, "an

intolerance to gluten, a group of proteins found in certain grains such as wheat, barley and rye." It says that a gluten-free diet means no bread, pizza, pretzels, pasta or beer.

I have been on a gluten-free diet since I was diagnosed with celiac disease two years ago. I make all of those dishes using gluten-free grains, and they taste like the "real" thing. I even drink gluten-free beer. Your readers shouldn't hesitate to get tested. If they have the disease, they have many dietary options.

KAELA BRYANT, Paradise, California



HOW TO REACH US

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- You Said It, Reader's Digest, Box 200, Pleasantville, New York 10572-0200
Include your full name, address, e-mail and daytime phone number. We may edit letters, and use them in all print and electronic media.

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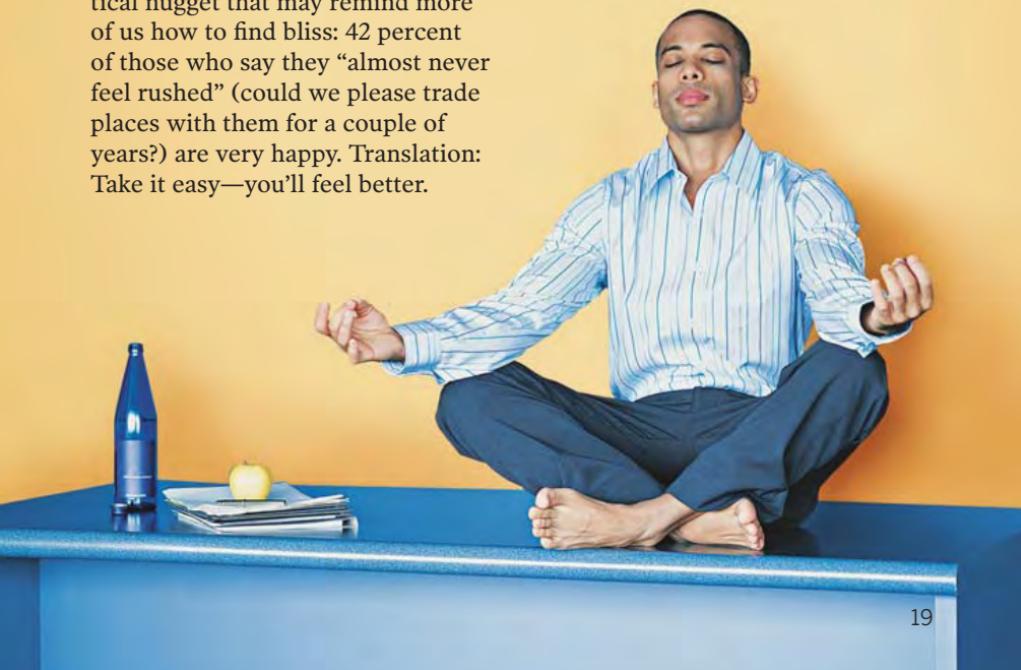
Slow Down, Get Happy

AH, THE PURSUIT of happiness. It's one of our inalienable rights. Capturing happiness, well, that's another matter. A recent Pew Research Center poll confirmed what's been true for a while: Just a third of adults in the United States say they are "very happy," while about half say they're "pretty happy." Who does that leave? Two types of people: miserable wretches and folks who just don't know.

The Pew poll did offer one statistical nugget that may remind more of us how to find bliss: 42 percent of those who say they "almost never feel rushed" (could we please trade places with them for a couple of years?) are very happy. Translation: Take it easy—you'll feel better.

A second recent survey dug a bit deeper in terms of what brings joy. This poll, from Directions Research, suggested that happiness is highest among adults who dine with friends regularly or frequent the movies.

Yes, it's hard to find time to stop and smell the roses these days (we're all so busy waking up to smell the coffee), but why not round up a few pals for dinner and a trip to the multiplex? Consider it part of the fight for your right to be happy.



Call Them the New Laps of Luxury



VACATION-HOME SHOPPING used to mean seeking peace and quiet. Now, people want noise, and they're buying track-side condos next to NASCAR ovals in Atlanta, Charlotte and Fort Worth. Next up: Trophy Towers near Las Vegas Motor Speedway, set to break ground in September. Like others of its kind, Trophy Towers has floor-to-ceiling windows with great track views and sturdy walls that tend to shake on race days. You'll know you're home when you see the checkered flag.

(CARS) GEORGE TIEDEMANN/GT IMAGES/CORBIS;
MUNIZ/STONE/GETTY IMAGES

COLLECTING CASH WITHOUT PASSING THE PLATE

Religious groups have long found novel ways to mix commerce with a higher calling (think ale brewed by Belgian monks). And the trend is heating up. Here, several examples of how flocks raise funds to reinforce—and spread—their faith.

BUSINESS	MISSION	WHERE THE \$\$ GO
LMI Services (lmiservicesinc.com)	Founded in 2005 by Xenia, Ohio-based evangelical Legacy Ministries International, this information-technology consulting firm actually turns a profit. Clients range from Fortune 500 companies to government agencies.	Supports such ministry-related ventures as a religious school and senior housing.
The LaserMonks (lasermonks.com)	Since 2002, this Cistercian order from Sparta, Wisconsin, has hawked printer cartridges and copying machines on its website at prices it claims are up to 60 percent below retail. Catchy slogan: "The markup on ink supplies is sinfully high."	Provides assistance to the monks and their charitable endeavors.
Monastery Blend Coffee (vashonmonks.com)	The All-Merciful Saviour Russian Orthodox Monastery of Vashon Island, Washington, has cranked out this righteous java since 1993.	Benefits monastery and non-java good works.
Polynesian Cultural Center, Oahu	Opened in 1963, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints site offers luaus and IMAX movies.	Helps pay bills at Brigham Young U's Hawaii campus.

HOW YOU GONNA PUT IT BACK IN THE TUBE?

FORGET BRUSHING. Like many once-boring household items, toothpaste is "experiential" these days. First, there are the new flavors (from cinnamon to lemon ice). Then there are the new functions. Colgate's Luminous brand touts a "Fluoride Mineral System" that claims to fill in weak enamel spots. And Crest's Pro-Health brand, due out soon, has bacteria-killing "stabilized stannous fluoride." That's nothing to spit at.



THE BIG IDEA



When Public Health Is for the Birds

Poultry farmers, doctors and border agents aren't the only ones watching for avian flu to strike U.S. cities. So is Dominic Travis at Chicago's Lincoln Park Zoo. The 37-year-old Travis (above) is a veterinary epidemiologist who started working at Lincoln Park in 2000, not long after West Nile virus killed several birds at New York's Bronx Zoo—and infected several dozen people who lived nearby. Travis realized that because zoo animals usually live in cities and are "a closely

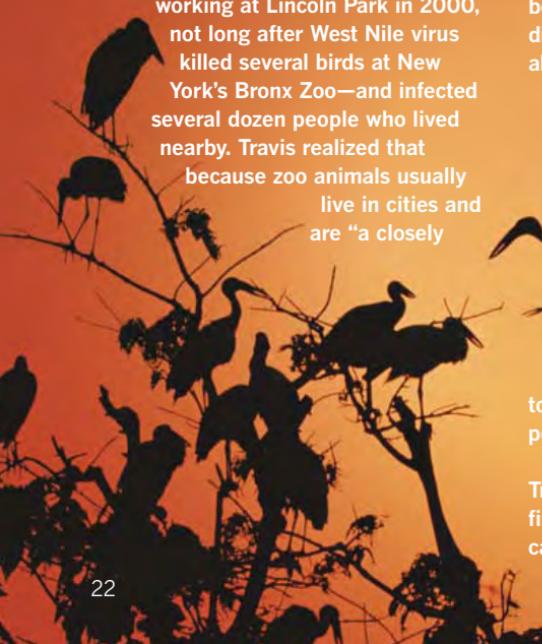
watched population," they make an ideal population for studying the movement of infectious diseases into urban areas.

Armed with his theory, Travis and a few colleagues approached the federal Centers for Disease Control with an idea: If zoos shared data about sick animals, public health officials might be able to catch and contain infectious diseases early. For the past few years, about 180 U.S. zoos have participated.

Vets test animals for infectious agents ranging from tuberculosis to hoof-and-mouth disease. They report their findings to local health officials, the CDC and Travis.

Vets also share ideas on containing diseases and keeping animals safe. These days, for example, Lincoln Park checks delivery trucks to ensure they haven't first stopped at poultry farms.

If avian flu does pop up in a U.S. city, Travis and his network may well spot it first. "By doing our job," he says, "we can help public health."





Take Back Your Garage

In 1992, just 11 percent of new homes built in this country had garages big enough for three or more cars. Now, 19 percent do. What we're parking isn't more cars, but everything we refuse to toss. The garage, says Barry Izsak, author of *Organize Your Garage in No Time*, has "become the family dumping ground." Among the biggest offenders: children's bikes and toys, lawn furniture, gadgets and cans of paint. Good news, then, that the clutter-busting effort has moved out back. Garage-organization gear is now an \$800 million-a-year market, with an array of bins, shelves and hooks available for stashing our stuff. Maybe we can finally get the car out of the driveway.

RD INDEX

A quick review of some of the good, bad and ugly to cross our radar recently.

YEA

Army Corps of Engineers For candidly taking blame for a flawed levee system whose post-Hurricane Katrina failure doomed New Orleans. Why can't more government agencies do the right thing?



Kelly Kulick For being the first woman ever to qualify for a full-season spot on the all-male Professional Bowlers Association Tour. The 29-year-old from Union, New Jersey, failed to make the cut in two previous bids, but now she's on a roll.

NAY

FEMA For doling out some \$1 billion in potentially bogus Katrina-related aid. An audit found that the federal relief agency didn't properly monitor where its funds were going. Just one disaster after another.



Major League Baseball For going after a firm that runs online fantasy leagues using players' stats. Baseball bosses say they own the stats; the firm says they belong to the public. Hey, MLB, want to play hardball? Take on reality: No more steroids.

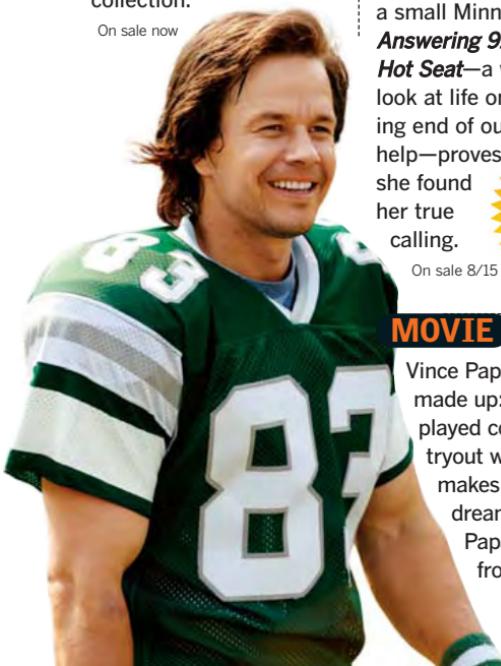
5 THINGS We Don't Want You to Miss

RD's picks for great ways to spend your free time this month

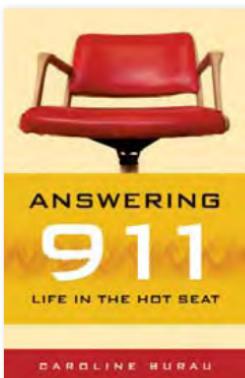
CD

Pop icon Linda Ronstadt heads back to the blue bayou on *Adieu False Heart*, her second effort with Cajun chanteuse Ann Savoy. A haunting collection.

On sale now



BOOK



Caroline Burau was 29 and adrift when she took a job as a 911 operator in a small Minnesota town. *Answering 911: Life in the Hot Seat*—a witty, gritty look at life on the receiving end of our cries for help—proves she found her true calling.

On sale 8/15



EVENT

A traveling drive-in of sorts, Netflix's *Rolling Roadshow* is a 10-stop cross-country tour that lets film buffs see classics on location. Example: *Field of Dreams* in a Dyersville, Iowa, cornfield (netflix.com). Runs 8/2–8/26

DVD

For a gripping look into the heart of darkness that is international terrorism, pick up



The Al Qaeda Files, a compilation of seven hourlong *Frontline* episodes examining Osama bin Laden and his hate-fueled minions from every possible angle.

On sale 8/1

MOVIE

Vince Papale's story is so unlikely, you'd swear it was made up: Substitute teacher/bartender who never played college football but was a sandlot star gets a tryout with his beloved Philadelphia Eagles—and makes the team. An inspiring story of realizing a dream, *Invincible* stars Mark Wahlberg (left) as Papale, a real-life Rocky Balboa who made it from the grandstand to the goal line. Opens 8/25

EVERYDAY HEROES

Roadside E.R.

BY HAL KARP

DR. SCOTT KURTZMAN was right on time. He'd left his house in Simsbury, Connecticut, early enough to allow for the inevitable traffic on the way to deliver an 8 a.m. lecture. A surgeon by training, Kurtzman had given up his full-time position at the University of Connecticut the previous spring to become chief of surgery at Waterbury Hospital. But he loved teaching, and kept his professorship so he could lead several workshops a year.

As he drove, Kurtzman mentally ran through his talk, a discussion on breast-cancer detection aimed at third-year medical students. A warm summer breeze blew through the open windows as he listened to NPR's *Morning Edition*. By 7:30, the 50-year-old father of three had joined the hundreds of commuters

Dr. Scott Kurtzman, at the scene of one of the worst crashes in Connecticut history.

filtering through one of the state's busiest intersections.

Driving east on Route 44, a winding, narrow highway, Kurtzman navigated his silver SUV into the far right lane, preparing to head south on Route 10. The light changed to red. A short line of cars was stopped in front of him.

Glancing around as he waited for the light to turn green, Kurtzman was alarmed to see a dump truck barreling down the hill on the other side of the intersection, where Route 44 descends sharply from Avon Mountain. The driver was going too fast—clearly he had lost control.

The truck swerved to avoid the cars up ahead. But the sudden weight shift heaved the fully loaded vehicle off balance. With six tires on the ground and the other six high in

the air, the rig hurtled down the road, straight at the intersection. It looked like something Kurtzman had seen in a stunt show once.

Thanks to years of emergency-room experience, he immediately shifted into trauma mode. Yanking the steering wheel hard to the right,

A station wagon flew 10 feet off the ground and smashed into a commuter bus.

Kurtzman maneuvered onto a patch of grass alongside the road. An instant later, he heard what sounded like a thousand tailgates slamming shut. The dump truck was on its side, plowing into vehicle after vehicle as it slid through the stoplight.

A station wagon flew 10 feet off the ground and smashed into a commuter bus. Other chain-reaction collisions followed. Sparks flew. The truck's load—dirt, slabs of concrete and boulders—showered the roadway. Fifty yards farther, the skidding stopped, and the truck burst into flames.

Kurtzman was shocked at the carnage around him. It looked like a war zone. Like on the news. He clipped on his hospital ID, in case anyone questioned his credentials, and went looking for injured victims. "Who needs help?" he yelled. No reply. He felt eerily like the last soul alive.

Kurtzman ran toward the burning truck. He was 15 feet away, but the temperature was volcanic. Ignoring the pain in his lungs, he lifted his arm to shield his face and circled around, looking for a way in. Flames shot five feet out from the truck. Kurtzman closed his eyes and tried to get through, but the fire pushed him back, nearly toppling his six-foot, one-inch frame. It was too late for the driver.

Alongside the rig, he spotted a small car, folded up like an accordion. Inside, a woman was covered in blood and glass.

"Are you hurt?" he asked, leaning in to check her pulse. She muttered something he couldn't understand. She's in shock, Kurtzman realized. He yanked on her door, but it felt welded shut.

Directly behind, flames were now shooting 25 feet from the truck. They licked the woman's car, and within moments, fire shot out from underneath it.

A police officer began scooping up handfuls of spilled dirt and hurling them onto the flames. He had been driving to work, he told Kurtzman, when he spotted smoke.

"I need some help here!" the officer shouted. "This car's going to blow!"

Several men in business suits jumped in beside him. Flames had reached the backseat, and the door still wouldn't open. The policeman



Flames from the dump truck shot 25 feet in the air.

tossed Kurtzman his pocketknife, and he sawed at the woman's seat belt until it finally gave way. The others quickly pulled her out.

"Over there," Kurtzman instructed, pointing to an open patch of grass. A good triage zone, he thought. Looking out across the sea of mutilated cars, dirt and smoke, he could see more victims being pulled from cars. Employees from nearby businesses had come to help. And there was the welcome sound of approaching sirens.

"Dr. Kurtzman really took charge," said Rev. Jon Widing, the Avon Police chaplain, who was riding along on patrol that day.

With a surgeon's steady nerves, Kurtzman never panicked. "When I felt things were under a modicum of control," he remembered, "I called my wife so she wouldn't worry when she heard about the accident." He asked her to get word to the school that he'd be late for class.

The crash—one of the worst in Connecticut history—involved

20 vehicles and killed four people. Two were hidden behind the burning truck. "If only I'd seen them," Kurtzman said.

Later it was reported that the company's fleet had failed numerous safety exams. The year before, this particular dump truck was cited for five brake violations. (The company, American Crushing and Recycling, has since gone out of business, but charges of insurance fraud are still pending.)

After about 90 minutes, when all 16 victims had been triaged and taken to area hospitals, Kurtzman climbed quietly into his car and drove to the medical school. After swapping his blood-soaked clothes for scrubs, he delivered his lecture—two hours late.

The Avon crash wasn't Kurtzman's first. Friends and family know that if the good doctor is running late, he's probably helping somebody. Over the years, he's stopped at a half-dozen crashes and assisted at three.

"A person with my skills simply can't drive by someone who's injured," says Kurtzman. "I refuse to live my life that way."

WHERE'S WILLIAM?

Track William Hibbard as he runs from New York to California to raise money for the Free Wheelchair Mission (Everyday Heroes, 7/05). For his route, the daily Count His Steps contest, and other information, go to rd.com/fwm.

® THAT'S OUTRAGEOUS!

MICHAEL CROWLEY



They Own Your Body

Biotech firms are making big bucks—and preventing vital research—by patenting human genes

A FEW YEARS ago, UCLA geneticist Wayne Grody was working hard to help deaf children. Grody was conducting clinical tests on Connexin 26, a human gene linked to deafness, hoping it would lead to more effective treatment for kids. Then one day he received a letter from Athena Diagnostics, a Massachusetts-based biotechnology company. Grody says the letter informed him that Athena owned a patent for the Connexin 26 gene—and he could no longer perform tests on it himself. Instead, he would have to pay thousands of dollars up-front and send future gene samples to Athena for testing. He had no choice. “I had to stop,” Grody says. “The cost was out of sight.” The clinical tests ground to a halt.

It may sound bizarre,

Michael Crowley is a senior editor at *The New Republic*.

but it's true: A company can actually “own” human genes. That's the brave new world of gene patents, where big biotech firms are claiming rights to our genetic blueprints and guarding them with teams of lawyers. And the result, say scientists like Grody, is stalling vital medical research, perhaps even delaying lifesaving cures.

“I don't think most people realize what's occurring,” says Lori Andrews, a law professor at the Illi-



nois Institute of Technology who specializes in the subject. "People find that the genes within their bodies have been patented without their knowledge and consent."

About one-fifth of the recently decoded human genome, which contains about 24,000 genes, has already been patented. Those

"It's as if you patented a star, and then charged people to look at it."

patents include ownership of genes related to breast cancer, diabetes, Alzheimer's disease and epilepsy. Under U.S. law, the holders of these patents—often biotechnology companies—enjoy total control over those genes for 20 years. That means they can stop other people from doing any research whatsoever involving the genes. Or they can charge hefty fees to anyone who wants to work with the genes—costs that already are stifling science.

Why, exactly, are companies even allowed to hold these patents? After all, human genes are part of nature, like sunlight or zebra stripes. "It's as if you patented a star that you discovered, then charged people to look at it," says Andrews. Here's the loophole: In order to work on individual genes, scientists process DNA to isolate them. The U.S. Patent and Trademark Office says this means the isolated gene is no

longer in its natural state, and thus can be patented.

But Dr. Debra Leonard, vice chair of laboratory medicine at Cornell's Weill Medical College, contends that's "really a technicality." We're still talking about the basic genetic information. And given the effect patents could have on scientific

progress, says Dr. Leonard, "it's just not in the best interests of public health to have this system continue."

There's no denying that patents are a vital part of our free-enterprise system, and biotech companies say the financial rewards of gene patents are driving important research. These companies "don't have products yet—they have incredibly novel technologies that they've patented," says Lila Feisee of the Biotechnology Industry Organization. "If you want to get rid of patents on genes, you have to think about what that would mean for companies that are innovative and risk-taking, and have no other way [to raise money]."

But there's a larger obligation here. It's one thing to patent drugs you've manufactured; other drug-makers can still market slightly different versions of them. Human genes, however, are gateways that everyone must pass through to conduct certain medical research. Block these entrances, and you may prevent exciting breakthroughs.

A 2002 *Nature* magazine article looked at the effects of patents on

laboratories capable of testing for specific gene mutations that can cause hemochromatosis, a potentially fatal iron-overload disorder. According to the article, after the patent-holder began asking for up-front fees of as much as \$250,000—plus royalties up to \$20 per test—nearly one-third of the laboratories reported that they avoided tests on the gene.

Then there's the case of BRCA1, a gene linked to breast cancer. Among white women in the United States, 5-10 percent of the breast cancer cases stem from flaws in this gene, and another related to it. A Salt Lake City-based company called Myriad Genetics holds patent number 5,693,473, giving it control over a test that detects flaws in BRCA1. That enables Myriad to charge up to \$3,000 to screen for the genetic flaws most associated with breast cancer—a test that, according to an article in *The Journal of the American Medical Association*, is faulty up to 12 percent of the time among patients with a significant amount of cancer in their family histories.

Myriad says that relatively few

patients fall into this category, and that its patent has brought “tremendous benefit” to those tested. Critics argue that the patent stifles competition, which might lead to a better and less expensive test.

It's no wonder some people want to cancel all gene patents. But that could cause economic chaos. A wiser reform might be to allow patents on the gene tests that companies devise, but not on “God's handwriting”: the underlying genetic information. This would still enable companies to profit from their research and inventiveness.

There's also precedent for government to step in to protect the public welfare. In 1996, Congress decided that doctors would not have to pay licensing fees to new patent holders for performing surgical procedures. You can help get Congress to tackle gene patents, too, by contacting your representatives in Washington. Their e-mail addresses and phone numbers are just one click away at rd.com/sendamessage.

*Outraged? Write to Michael Crowley
at outrageous@rd.com.*



CILDRENISSIMO

When it comes to tunes, my local music shop prefers the sound of silence. A sign prominently displayed on a grand piano reads “The management is not responsible for the actions of its employees if your child plays ‘Heart and Soul’ or ‘Chopsticks’ on this instrument.”

ARTHUR LEE

Unchained Melody What could be better than an outdoor concert on a warm summer night? Whether you're headed to Tanglewood, a jazz fest or just your local park, here are some musical terms to get you ready. Spread out the blanket, unpack the picnic and enjoy. Answers on next page.

- 1. baton** *n.*—A: lengthy tune. B: emotional ballad. C: all-girl band. D: conductor's tool.

- 2. nocturne** *n.*—musical work for A: morning. B: fall. C: spring. D: night.



- 3. flautist** *n.*—A: showy person. B: antique violin. C: flute player. D: orchestra leader.

- 4. impromptu** *adj.*—A: without preparation. B: late. C: off pitch. D: inappropriate.

- 5. encore** *n.*—A: additional performance. B: musical masterpiece. C: break between sets. D: sold-out show.

- 6. bridge** *n.*—A: opening act. B: transitional section. C: repeated chorus. D: audience participation.

- 7. adagio** *adv.*—A: with variation. B: quickly. C: softly. D: slowly.

- 8. timpani** *n.*—A: set of drums. B: horn section. C: quarter-note beat. D: cathedral concert.

- 9. vivace** *adv.*—in a tone that's A: loud. B: lively. C: harsh. D: somber.

- 10. venue** *n.*—A: young musician. B: traveling group. C: place for a performance. D: list of songs to be played.

- 11. riff** *v.*—A: to argue within a chorus. B: do a benefit. C: introduce a

tune. D: play a repeated pattern.

- 12. score** *n.*—A: printed piece of music. B: vocal passage. C: rearrangement of a classic. D: novice conductor.

- 13. timbre** *n.*—A: quality of tone. B: type of harp. C: bronze cymbal. D: drum solo.

- 14. bagatelle** *n.*—A: new lyrics. B: boating song. C: light composition. D: piped instrument.

- 15. woodshed** *v.*—A: to ruin a concert. B: stop playing. C: harmonize. D: practice.

- 16. berceuse** *n.*—A: four-line verse. B: chant. C: anthem. D: lullaby.

Music Man

Composer John Williams, former conductor of the Boston Pops, has written dozens of movie soundtracks. Unscramble the titles of these block-busters he's contributed to. Answers on the next page.

NMAPERSU

WSJA

RTAS SWRA

DLS'ERNIHSC SILT

GIVNSA VTEPIRA NYAR

SIJSCUAR KAPR

ANSWERS

1. baton—[D] The wand-like tool a conductor uses to instruct musicians. As the crowd settled, the conductor raised his *baton* and faced the orchestra.

• **7. adagio** (ah-DAH-joh or ah-DAH-zhee-oh)—[D] Slowly; in a leisurely manner. The pianist played the waltz *adagio*, making it feel like a funeral march.

• **12. score**—[A] A printed piece of music with all the instrumental and vocal parts arranged. The violinist scrambled to secure his *score* as a breeze blew across the stage.

2. nocturne—[D] Musical work appropriate for night. Also a brooding piano composition. Chopin is known for his elaborate *nocturnes*.



3. flautist—[C] A flute player. The renowned *flautist* studied for years before her first solo recital.

4. impromptu—[A] Without preparation; also (n.) an improvised composition. The crowd went wild as the bass player began an *impromptu* solo.

5. encore—[A] Additional performance, often by audience demand. The rock group wowed their fans with five *encores*.

6. bridge—[B] A transitional passage of a musical composition, sometimes in a remote key. The jazz guitarist really dazzled during the intricate *bridge*.

8. timpani—[A] A set of kettledrums. A booming flourish from the *timpani* ended the concert. (From Latin *tympanum*, “drum.”)

9. vivace (vi VAH chay)—[B] In a lively or vivacious tone. The director told his chorus to sing *vivace* and show some energy.

10. venue—[C] The scene or locale for a performance. The band has appeared in such *venues* as the Hollywood Bowl and Madison Square Garden.

11. riff—[D] To play a repeated pattern. The saxophonist *riffed* lightly behind the vocal soloist.

15. woodshed—[D] To practice an instrument, usually with a goal. Also “shed.” He’s *woodshedding* for a national audition. (Probably from the former use of woodsheds for private practicing.)

16. berceuse—[D] Lullaby. The young father played a *berceuse* as he watched his son nod off to sleep. (From French *bercer*, “to rock.”)

VOCABULARY RATINGS

8-10 Good **11-13** Excellent

14-16 Exceptional

Music Man Answers:
Private Ryani: Jurassic Park.
Schindler's List: Saving
Superman: Jaws; Star Wars;
Music Man Answers:
Private Ryani: Jurassic Park.
Schindler's List: Saving
Superman: Jaws; Star Wars;

How fast is your *tempo*? Go to wordpower.com and find out.

Itching for a Fight

I'VE SUDDENLY become nostalgic for my old one-room, half-bath, 12-story walk-up in the city's hovel district. Let me explain.

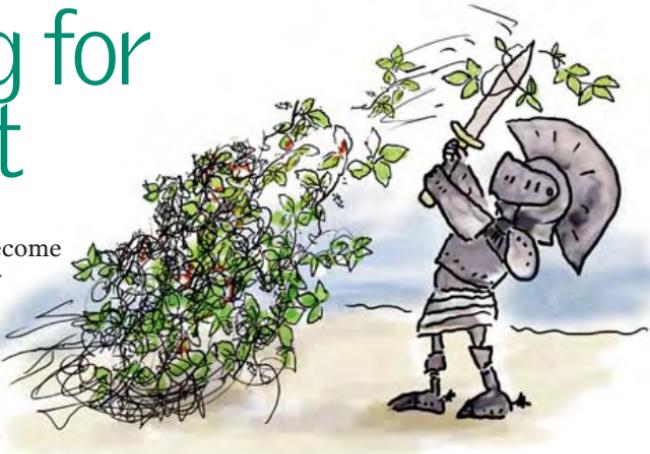
It all started simply enough. Soon after we moved to the country, my wife, Jennifer, decided that our backyard was sorely in need of some landscaping work. "What's wrong with it?" I asked. "Look at how fat and sassy our grass is. I bet we have the fattest, sassiest lawn in the neighborhood."

That's when Jennifer let me in on a little secret. There is no grass on our lawn. Only fat, sassy poison ivy.

I pointed out that unlike everything else in the yard, the ivy was thriving and maybe we should go after something else, like that malingered rosebush.

"Why evict the one thing that ac-

Andy Simmons is guest columnist this month while Mary Roach is on sabbatical writing her third book.



tually wants to be here?" I reasoned.

Here's why: Jennifer doesn't like poison ivy. Something about the word *poison* makes her think it can't be good for you.

So we called in landscapers to get estimates. The first took one look at our lawn, then called his car dealer and ordered a BMW, the one that comes with a chauffeur. The second charged by the blade of grass. That's when I drove into town looking for one of those cheap illegal aliens the media insists is on every street corner in America.

"Are you an illegal alien?" I asked the first man I saw.

"No, I'm the mayor," he said.

"Are you an illegal alien?" I asked another.

"No, I'm your neighbor."

"Are you an illegal alien?"

"No, I'm your wife, you idiot,"

said Jennifer, shoving a rake in my hand and telling me to take care of things myself.

One of the problems with poison ivy is you can't simply grab it by the

Armed with pruner and weedkiller, I went from homeowner to Knight of the Backyard Realm.

collar and toss it out like some drunk from a bar. You have to suit up for battle—rubber gloves duct-taped to a long-sleeved shirt buttoned to your neck. Long pants with the cuffs duct-taped over your socks and work boots. A scarf wrapped tightly around neck and face, duct-taped to goggles and hat, completes the jackass look. Armed with pruner and weedkiller, I was no longer simply a homeowner unable to find an illegal alien to do the work he didn't want to do. I was, in fact, a Knight of the Backyard Realm.

Since I had no idea what poison ivy looked like, I kept my plan of attack simple: Anything remotely planty goes. Ferns? Gone! Hosta? Gone! Rosebush? Gone! Trees? Gone! Mailbox? Gone! I was Sherman marching on Atlanta, laying waste to anything in my path. What the weedkiller didn't get, I ripped out by hand. What I couldn't rip

out, I ran over with my car.

"That's the Japanese maple!" screamed Jennifer.

"Now it's mulch," I said, grinning devilishly over the whirring engine of my '95 Oldsmobile Cutlass Supreme.

By the end of the day, I'd rid the yard of all the poison ivy save for one sorry little clump. Like the heads of the vanquished left on spikes outside medieval castle walls, it served as a warning to any of its kin that might dare to show their three shiny leaves around here.

Hot and tired, and feeling pretty damn good about myself, I unraveled the four rolls of duct tape that had adhered to my body and stepped out of my sweat-soaked clothes, 27 pounds lighter than when I entered them. The shrieks of horror from my 78-year-old neighbor spying my near-naked body startled me so, that I tripped down a small embankment—only to be saved by the soft, pillow-y embrace of the remaining clump of poison ivy.

As I bathed in calamine lotion, Jennifer figured out that all my tireless work had reduced our home's value by a third. So she hired one of the landscapers to return the yard to its previous state of disrepair. We went with the guy who charged by the blade of grass. With no lawn left, how expensive could it be? ■

Health IQ

GET SMART ABOUT YOUR BODY WITH DR. ROIZEN & DR. OZ

THE BUZZ

1 Nearly half of us would rather take a year off our lives than be obese.

2 Smokers are 70% more likely, on average, to need root canals than those who never smoked.



3 Heart attacks are the top cause of on-the-job death for firefighters.

4 Of those who've had knee or hip replacements, 82% are satisfied with their new joint.

5 Some 21% of all medicines are prescribed to treat conditions for which they're not approved, and some 73% of these uses lack strong evidence supporting their use.

SOURCE: OBESITY; JOURNAL OF DENTAL RESEARCH; CDC MMWR; CONSUMER REPORTS; ARCHIVES OF INTERNAL MEDICINE

I thought nuts were healthy!

I don't like the taste of raw nuts, so I snack on roasted. Will I get the same health benefits?

There are all kinds of nuts, and some are better than others. Nuts are certainly a healthier snack than chips or candy, but they may lose up to 10% of their healthy oils when roasted. And cooking at high temperatures may even cause the formation of chemicals that promote aging. Here's a guide to nut snacking, from most healthy to least:

- raw and freshly refrigerated
- freshly toasted or dry roasted (in your oven)
- roasted in their own fat and salted (in a package)
- roasted in partially hydrogenated fat, and even worse if they're sugared.

It takes only eight weeks to change your taste buds, so we urge you to give nuts another chance—especially since they're linked to a decreased risk of heart disease and cancer. Your best bet? Raw walnuts, almonds and hazelnuts: Walnuts rank highest in healthy omega-3 fatty acids.

Check expiration dates, since nuts can go rancid quickly, and store them in the fridge to keep them fresh.



HOW TO DEAL WITH INSOMNIA

ONE COMMON PROBLEM

THE SLEEP SPECIALIST

TRY BEHAVIOR CHANGES and proper use of medication. At night, keep away from bright light. In the a.m., open the shades and go out for a walk, to tell your brain, "This is the start of the day." You can try OTC sleep aids, but if you suffer for more than three weeks, see a doctor. Prescription drugs are safe when used judiciously, and better than the consequences of not sleeping.

NEIL B. KAVEY, MD,
Director, Sleep Disorders Center,
New York-Presbyterian Hospital

THE NUTRITIONIST

GO TO BED AND GET UP at the same time daily. Keep your room dark and quiet, and remove distractions (no working in bed). Have a cup of herbal tea, such as chamomile, to relax your body. And remember, people who eat a healthy diet of whole grains, fruits and vegetables, and low-fat protein feel better and sleep better.

LISA DEROSIMO, MD,
Owner, The Weight and Wellness Center, Jupiter, Florida

BOTTOM LINE

Don't underestimate the dangers of insomnia, including accidents from drowsiness. If you're overweight, sleep apnea could be the cause; even a 5% weight loss can reduce many symptoms. A combination of all the advice here offers the best chance to sleep robustly, but if you're still counting sheep, see a sleep-disorders specialist for a diagnosis and advice on wise use of medications.

FOUR EXPERT SOLUTIONS

THE ALTERNATIVE SOURCE

STRESS OFTEN PLAYS a role in insomnia, so try to change your reaction to it. Don't exercise or eat at the end of the day, and avoid or limit caffeine, alcohol and nicotine. Enjoying a warm bath can help. Also, try taking 1,000 mg of calcium (it may calm your muscles and nerves, helping you sleep).

Ask your doctor about melatonin supplements.

GERALD LEMOLE, MD,
Associate Medical Director, Christiana Care Center for Heart and Vascular Health, Wilmington, Delaware

THE MIND/BODY PRO

LYING IN BED, starting from your legs and moving up to your head, tense your muscles one at a time, then release. Your body will feel more relaxed, like a rubber band after it's been stretched. And try soothing alternate-nostri breathing. Exhale through one nostril, using your fingers to close the opposite nostril. Breathe in and out; then switch back and forth.

SANDRA MCCLANAHAN, MD, Medical Director, Integral Health Center, Buckingham, Virginia

DR. ROIZEN & DR. OZ



Talk Show

How I learned the art of listening

BY GAY TALESE
FROM "A WRITER'S LIFE"



IKNOW WHY I DID poorly in high school in chemistry and mathematics: I found them boring and confusing. But getting mediocre grades in English upset me because I was interested in the subject. My failure to excel in English gave impetus to my father's argument that my true talents might someday be realized as a tailor.

The only son of Joseph and Catherine Talese, I was the main hope as the inheritor of his business in Ocean City, New Jersey—as a follower in a craft that had been pridefully practiced by the elders in my father's family since Napoleonic rule in Maida, in southern Italy. As

schoolboy journalism continued to absorb most of my free time, and as my academic standing in my junior year fell below the level required to earn college-entrance consideration, my father became more insistent that I spend time in his workroom. He wanted me to learn to cut and secure a pair of trouser cuffs, to make buttonholes, to baste a jacket lining.

At the very least, he said, tailoring was “something I could fall back on.” He also tried repeating an offer that I admit held a modicum of appeal: “Wouldn’t you like to live in Paris after high school?” All that was required, I knew, was to occupy a guest room in the apartment of an

older cousin of my father's. This man had left Italy as a tailor in 1911 and owned a thriving shop on the Rue de la Paix, where I could work as an apprentice. I had been told that this cousin's clientele included Gen. Charles de Gaulle.

Still, I knew from watching my fa-

In my parents' shop, the customers tried on clothes while telling the stories of their lives.

ther work that tailoring was tedious, time-consuming and demanding. Stitch by stitch he made each suit, feeling the needle in his fingers as he penetrated a piece of silk or wool. If his work deviated from his definition of perfection, he would pull it apart and do it again.

I was never tempted to become a tailor, but I listened respectfully whenever my father alluded to Paris. This he did more than once after my diligence on a term paper about Adolph Ochs—owner of *The New York Times* and patriarch of his family—earned me a mere B-minus.

There was not a tailor in America more interested in Ochs than my father. As an immigrant in the 1920s, my father perused *The Times* every day and, with the aid of a dictionary, enlarged upon his vocabulary. So I tried to defend myself as he shared my disappointment with my grade.

Ochs himself had begun his career without encouragement from his English teachers—he, too, had been an average student, one whose talents became apparent later in life.

The B-minus was not the lowest mark I received from my teacher. I got mostly C's, sometimes D's, and once—after I'd misspelled Shakespeare's name in an essay on *Hamlet*—an F. She criticized me for sentences that were too "wordy" and "indirect." Sometimes she underlined things in red ink and wrote, "Syntax!

Syntax! Syntax!" I was never really sure how it related to my writing.

MY PARENTS AND I and my younger sister lived in an apartment above our store. While the apartment had an adequate kitchen and dining area, my mother was one of the few Italian American women of her generation who disliked being in the kitchen. Instead, she was a businesswoman, an entrepreneur whose best customers were her best friends.

She entertained them in her boutique (dispatching me to get them sodas, tea or ice cream from the drugstore) as if they were guests in her home. She held private conversations with them, earning their confidence and trust in a way that sooner or later inclined them toward buying most of the dresses she recommended.

My mother's merchandise catered

to decorous women of ample figures and means. These were ministers' wives, bankers' wives, bridge players. They were the white-gloved ladies who in summer avoided the beach to spend time along the main avenue in places like my parents' shop, where, amid the humming of the fans, they tried on clothes and discussed their lives.

The shop was a kind of talk show that flowed around the engaging manner of my mother. I began to learn much that would be useful to me years later when I started interviewing people for articles and books. I learned never to interrupt when people were having difficulty explaining themselves. During such moments, people often are very revealing. Their pauses, their sudden shifts in subject matter were likely indicators of what embarrassed them, what irritated them. In the decades since then, in fact, I've retained a clear memory of my eaves-



Talese and his role models, Joseph and Catherine, in New Jersey in 1992.

dropping youth and the voices that gave it expression.

Recalling my parents' relationship of more than 60 years and how it combined their love and compatibility—as well as their many talents—I realized I learned more from them than I did from any class or teacher. And thus I settled in to the life of a writer.

rd.com To buy a copy of *A Writer's Life*, visit rd.com/talese.



IT JUST SO HAPPENS I'M IN THE MARKET FOR ONE

Housewives aren't the only ones struggling in the suburbs. One nursery in my town advertised "Desperate Houseplants—25% off!"

Submitted by CHRIS TAGGART

"LOST," screamed the ad in *The Daily Standard* of Celina, Ohio.
"Female medium-size gray tiger cat. Answers to Lucy or Here Kitty,
Kitty, Kitty."

Submitted by RICHARD FLAUGHER

MONEY MAKERS

MARIA BARTIROMO



To Tell the Truth

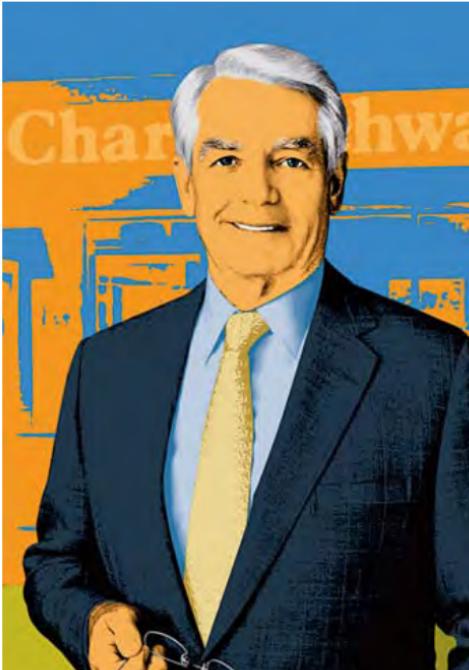
He wanted to do good business and make money. But could he do it the honest way?

TRUSTWORTHINESS can be underestimated when it comes to creating both success and wealth. But it is a critical trait in getting ahead. Just ask Charles Schwab, founder of the discount brokerage firm that bears his name.

The idea of never taking advantage of someone is a lesson Schwab learned early on from his father, then the district attorney of Yolo County, near Sacramento, California. "When I was young, my father taught me a lot about how important ethics are, about right and wrong, about doing the right thing and not compromising."

By his own admission, Schwab was "a hard-working kid." And for a long time he only dreamed of making money. "I've come out of a gen-

eration of parents and grandparents who lived through the Depression years, and all they talked about was not having money, the lack of money, the lack of resources, so from my



Maria Bartiromo is host and managing editor of the syndicated program *The Wall Street Journal Report*, as well as host of CNBC's *Closing Bell*.

earliest memories, I wanted to see if I could break out of that."

Schwab knew that education would be his escape route, but school presented inexplicable complications. "I got good grades in math and science, but in anything related to composition or reading, I was C-minus for sure."

"Most of that 'inside information' wasn't worth its weight in feathers."

The mystery would be solved decades later when his youngest son was diagnosed with dyslexia. Schwab says, "I realized that all of the difficulties he was going through, I went through too."

Schwab didn't consider the learning disability a handicap. "I worked harder to overcompensate," he says. "My SAT scores were pretty bad, but my enthusiasm, commitment and hard work were impressive. And because I had to work harder than the other kids, I had self-confidence."

That self-confidence asserted itself on the golf course, where he was a member of his public high school's golf team. When the school played Stanford University's freshman squad, Schwab shot 36 in his first nine holes. He won the notice of Stanford's coach—and eventually landed a college scholarship.

After completing his undergraduate degree in 1959, he stayed on to go to business school. "It cost \$335 a quarter. My dad helped, but I had to work. I worked after school, on weekends and during the summers." Schwab was employed by an insurance company, a bank, a financial-services firm. "They were a lot of junk jobs, but I made it a point to really understand the mechanics of the financial-services world."

He also learned the tricks that unscrupulous brokers used. "I saw the B.S. they gave clients to get the big, fat commissions," he said. Many followed the "363 banker" formula: They paid customers at a rate of 3 percent, loaned them money at a rate of 6 percent and were out of the office by 3 p.m.

Schwab says he "could see the nasty underpinnings at the very beginning. I had a spiral binder in which I kept all the stories of how they would pitch a particular stock. There was a great deal of 'inside information.' The broker would say, 'Well, I talked to this director and he said ...' Most of that 'inside information' wasn't worth its weight in feathers."

Within a year of graduating from business school and getting a job as a financial analyst, Schwab experienced his first stock market crash in 1962. He said to his boss, "All of our customers have lost a lot of money in this crash. We ought to be

sympathetic to their positions. We ought not to charge these people for this quarter."

Schwab's boss was silent for about 30 seconds, then said, "You're fired."

Married and with a young child at home, Schwab couldn't afford to be unemployed. "I came back the next day, tail between my legs, and said, 'Look, I really need this job.'"

His boss rehired him, but Schwab continued to struggle to reconcile the conflict between doing what was good for business and doing what was right for the customer. For him, the ultimate test was whether an offering was something he would have his parents invest in.

Schwab had also come to realize a simple truth: "Clients will pay you money even when things are bad, as long as you tell them the truth."

That determination to deal honestly with customers became Schwab's guiding principle when he started his own discount brokerage business in 1974. He had just four employees and \$75,000 in loans from family and friends. To this day, Schwab says, "some of my good friends still say to me, 'When you showed up, I was just wishing you weren't going to ask me for money!'"

Four years later, Schwab made a decision that was critical to the company's growth: He replaced the firm's boring, just-the-facts advertisements with those using his own image. "Putting my picture in the advertising put a face to the business. People felt there was a real person

behind the whole thing, someone they could trust."

Results quintupled, then quintupled again. With each development, from the mass marketing of mutual funds in the 1980s to the Internet boom of the 1990s, Schwab's company came up with innovations to further empower individual investors. But the basic impetus stayed the same: "I just wanted to lower the prices and get better outcomes for investors," he says.

"Deep in my heart," Schwab adds, "I knew if I got more people to invest, it would be part of the great American success story and improve democracy. If people don't participate in wealth creation, we lose them as major participants in the body politic. I still feel it today. The more I can do to bring new investors into the success tent, the better off we all will be."

Got a money question? Write to Maria Bartiromo at moneymakers@rd.com.

AND FYI ...

- The guru speaks. *Charles Schwab's New Guide to Financial Independence: Practical Solutions for Busy People* is a classic primer.
- Read *Make Money, Not Excuses: Build Wealth, Be Happy and Make Sure You're Set for Life*. A sassy guide for women by Jean Sherman Chatzky (due out September 2006).
- Track where your money goes with Quicken Deluxe 2006 personal finance software.



"At first it was just about catching sheep ... "

THE PREGNANT GUPPY in the science-room fish tank fascinated my seventh-grade class. We all anxiously awaited the arrival of her babies. But a lesson on human growth and development raised a question for one student.

"Mrs. Townsend," she called out, "how will we know when the fish's water breaks?" **DANA TOWNSEND**

WHAT WITH the crowded quarters in coach, I can't blame airplane passengers for asking flight attendants for free upgrades to first class. On a recent fully booked flight, a

passenger stopped me with hat in hand.

"Is there any way I can get bumped up to first class?" he pleaded.

I shook my head. "Not unless we hit turbulence."

SUZANNE RICKABAUGH

ONE OF OUR patients wasn't taking any chances. Prior to her operation, she taped notes all over her body for the surgeon: "Take your time," "Don't cut yourself," "No need to rush," "Wash your hands," etc.

After surgery, as I helped her back into her bed, we discovered a new note taped to her, this one from the doctor: "Has anyone seen my watch?" **ALBERTA ALLEN**

I recently ran into the woman who used to clean our house and was surprised to hear that she was still at it, despite her advanced age.

"How do you manage it?" I asked.

She explained her secret: "I just keep clients who can't see the dirt any better than I can."

MALCOLM CAMPBELL

AS A BUSINESS-WRITING INSTRUCTOR, I read lots of résumés. Inevitably, I run across some students with skills no employer could pass up, such as:

- The young paramedic who “makes life-threatening decisions on a daily basis.”
- A child-care worker who can “overlook up to 35 children at one time.”
- An enterprising young woman who is “flexible enough to perform in all manner of positions if the situation gets desperate.”

AUTUMN CAMPBELL

I spent 20 minutes explaining life insurance options to one of our employees. After reviewing the different plans and monthly deductions, he decided to max out, choosing \$100,000 worth of life insurance. But he had one last question.

“Now,” he said, “what do I have to do to collect the money?”

MICHELE CUNKO

DURING AN INTENSE DISCUSSION about the ethics and nature of human conflict, I posed this question to my 12th-grade class: “Sports are a reflection of our culture. What would sports be without conflict?”

One student raised his hand. “Golf,” he said.

GRANT LYNCH

WITH TALK of downsizing the U.S. Postal Service always in the air, our union steward passed the word to all the letter carriers that we needed to be proactive.

“Save our jobs,” he urged. “E-mail your Congressman.”

SUSAN KEMP

LIKE MANY attorneys, I have handwriting that's barely legible. After I scribbled instructions for one of my clients, he spent a minute trying to decipher what I'd written before declaring, “If I took this to a pharmacy, I bet I could have a prescription filled.”

DARRELL F. SMITH

You could earn up to \$300 for your own funny story. Go to rd.com/joke or see page 8 for details.

TRAVELING to my next sales appointment through an unfamiliar town, I suddenly found myself completely lost. Spotting a young man sweeping a parking lot, I pulled over.

“How do you get to Bowling Green?” I asked.

He sauntered over, leaned in through the passenger-side window, and said, “My uncle takes me.”

DAN FAGIN

Everyone's a critic. A poster in my local coffee shop reads “**We hang local artists.**”

ALICE GILL

“What should I do?” yelled a panicked client to the receptionist at our veterinarian's office. “My dog just ate two bags of unpopped popcorn!”

Clearly not as alarmed as the worried pet owner, the receptionist responded coolly, “Well, the first thing I would do is keep him out of the sun.”

BRENDA SHIPLEY

HUMOR IN UNIFORM®



IT TOOK FOREVER, but dog tags for my new chief petty officer arrived just days before we were shipping out. Trouble was, the tags listed him as Catholic, not Protestant.

"I really should get them replaced," he said.

"Don't bother," I told him. "It'll be faster and easier to convert."

LESTER E. STILLWELL

WE WERE IN the barracks when two guys threw down the gauntlet: 100 bucks to anyone who could do 150 push-ups. My friend disappeared into the latrine and returned minutes later,

saying, "I'll take that bet." He got down on the floor and reached 50 before collapsing.

"I don't get it," he said, gasping for air. "I just did 200 in the latrine."

STEPHEN BEDICS

You could earn up to \$300 for your own funny story. Go to rd.com/joke or see page 8 for details.

OUR NEW commander was the gung-ho type, determined to shake things up on the base. No detail was too small, not even the IN and OUT trays on his desk.

"Get rid of them," he told me. "I don't want them on my desk."

As the supply sergeant, I knew that the company clerks relied on those trays to process work. So I offered him an alternative, which he liked. After that, one tray read CHALLENGES and the other CONQUESTS.

ALAN ANDERSON

An annual survey

among my fellow junior officers indicated that lack of communication from our superiors was a big problem. The commanding officer, however, refused to believe the results.

"If communication is really so bad," he demanded of his department heads, "why am I only hearing about it now?"

RICKY RUFFIN

In a Class by Himself

My teacher knew I could do better.
I couldn't let him down.

BY TAMARA LAURIANO

THE FIRST DAY my new teacher walked into our school in Spanish Harlem, I burst out laughing. Ron Clark was this young white guy from North Carolina who talked with a funny Southern accent. He said he used to be a singing waiter. I thought, Who is this guy? He's a complete joke.

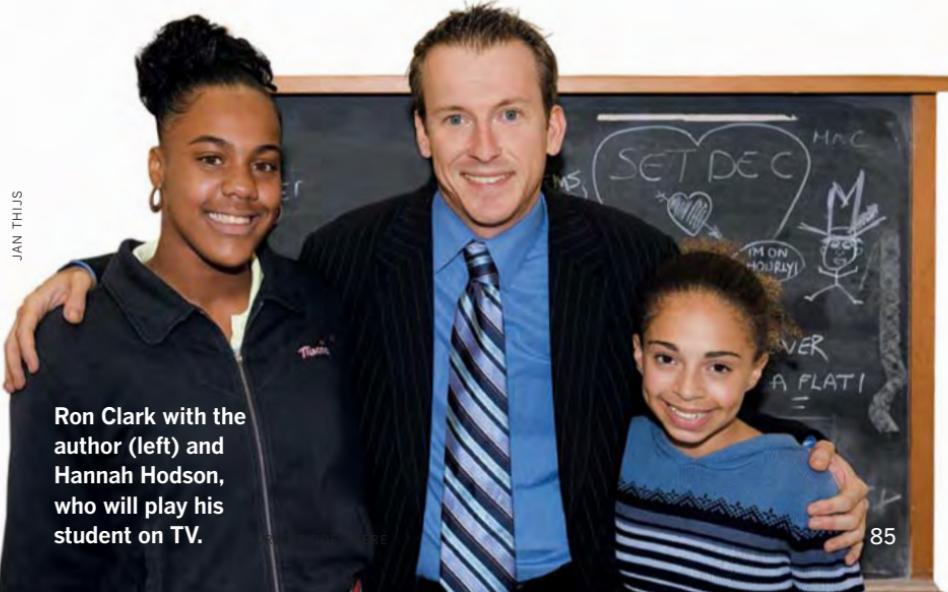
It was 1999 and I was in the fifth grade at New York City's P.S. 83. I figured I'd spend most of the year in

the principal's office. I'd always been a troublemaker. I'd get yelled at, and then the teachers would give up on me. I thought that's what would happen with Ron Clark.

I was wrong. That first week, I kept mocking him. He hauled me out to the hallway and said I'd better shape up. "Tamara," he said, "you're a smart kid. You can do better."

He told me I was a natural leader and that I'd go far in life if I started

JAN THIJSS



Ron Clark with the author (left) and Hannah Hodson, who will play his student on TV.

applying myself. I was mad at first, but then something happened: I began to respect him. There were 29 students in our class, and it didn't take long for us to realize that Ron Clark was no ordinary teacher.

He was only 27 and had the most unusual way of teaching. To help us

Mr. Clark flew all 37 of us out to Disneyland, something that amazed a lot of people.

learn the states and capitals, he changed the lyrics of a popular rap hit called "Thong Song" and had us sing and dance with him. When we read the Harry Potter books, he decorated our classroom like Hogwarts. And during the Presidential election, he put campaign posters on the walls and covered the room with 5,000 red, white and blue stars.

Like most teachers, he had lots of rules: Treat each other like family. Don't butt in line. But the real difference was how involved he was. Mr. Clark ate with us in the lunchroom instead of going to the teachers' lounge. At first, my friends and I were thinking, What is he doing?

He asked us what was going on in our lives. At recess, he came outside with us, and we taught him how to jump rope. When it snowed, Mr. Clark, who'd never seen snow before, pelted us with snowballs, and we pelted him back.

Before coming to P.S. 83, he taught at Snowden Elementary in his hometown, Belhaven, North Carolina. His parents were DJs at dance clubs, so he grew up with music and energy. He wanted a life of adventure, he told me, but his mom encouraged him to apply for a position at Snowden when one of the teachers passed away. Mr. Clark ended up loving it. He came to Harlem because he'd seen a TV show about our troubled schools and the lack of qualified teachers. He wanted a challenge. Boy, did he get one.

When I met him, I had a lot of anger inside of me. I've lived my whole life in Spanish Harlem with my mom, grandmother and little sister, Ivy. I never had a father, but in my neighborhood that's not unusual. You have to watch yourself. There are shoot-ups all the time. I know kids who have been shot or beaten up. I have friends who ended up in jail or pregnant. I could have ended up that way, too, but Mr. Clark and my mom wouldn't let that happen.

Mr. Clark worked long hours, making sure I did my work. My grades rose. In fact, our whole fifth-grade class's scores rose in math and reading. In sixth grade, I entered the gifted program, and Mr. Clark was the teacher. I felt so lucky to have him for a second year!

He took our class to see *The Phantom of the Opera*, and it was

the first time some kids had ever been out of Harlem. Before the show, he treated us to dinner at a restaurant and taught us not to talk with our mouths full—stuff you don't usually learn in the ghetto. He told us to say "Yes, ma'am" and "No, sir." We didn't want to let him down.

None of us were surprised when Mr. Clark was selected as Disney's 2000 Teacher of the Year. When he learned he'd won, he said he would draw three names out of a hat; those students would go with him to Los Angeles to get the award. But when it came time to draw names, Mr. Clark said, "You're all going."

He got donations to fly all 37 of us out to Disneyland in California and put us up at the Hilton. We were there for three days. People were amazed, but Mr. Clark really cared about us. There's no way I can imagine most teachers doing that. No way. But he saw something in us that nobody else saw.

On graduation day, there were a lot of tears. We didn't want his class to end. Was I ever surprised when Mr. Clark showed up at my new

junior high the first week of school, just to say hello. He's been a constant in our lives. In 2001, he moved to Atlanta, but he always kept in touch. He started giving speeches about education, and wrote a best-selling book based on his classroom rules, *The Essential 55*.

In 2003, Mr. Clark took some of us on a trip to South Africa to deliver school supplies and visit orphanages. It was the most amazing experience of my life. It's now my dream to one day start a group of women's clubs, helping people from all backgrounds.

I'm about to become a senior at Harlem Renaissance High School. My grades are beautiful now, and I'm hoping to go to law school eventually. This fall, Mr. Clark will be opening the Ron Clark Academy in Atlanta, a school for kids who have potential but aren't reaching it. Kids who are like I was—until Mr. Clark came along.

As told to CATHY FREE

"The Ron Clark Story," an original drama starring Matthew Perry, airs August 13 on TNT.

I'VE BEEN LOOKING FOR ONE OF THESE

I stopped by my church in time for Communion. As I left my pew to approach the altar, I spotted this sign on the wall: "Please don't leave your personal things unattended lest someone assume that these are the answers to their prayers."

BIENVENIDO GONZALEZ



ASK LASKAS

YOU'VE GOT QUESTIONS, SHE'S GOT ANSWERS

Q My four-year-old nephew is a terror. He hits kids, throws toys, defies and screams at adults. My sister shrugs it off as "typical boy behavior." Now he is testing the limits with his grandmother. I don't like to interfere, but this is where I draw the line. Should I get involved? What can I do to clue my sister in?

STERN AUNTIE



A Dear Auntie,

First of all, this is not typical boy behavior. Your sister may let her son act like a little monster, but you don't have to. Children need grownups to set boundaries for them. Start by standing up for Grandma. Tell him, "Stop it," whenever he shows disrespect or disobeys her. Say, "That's not allowed!" Maybe your sister will learn something, too, seeing you exercise reasonable authority. If not, go out and buy her a book on parenting.

Q My husband is the most negative person alive. It's driving me nuts. He can turn any situation or discussion into a disaster. If I disagree, that leads to an argument and he tries to prove he's right. If I try to change the subject, he gets angry. What can I do to defeat the defeatism?

EARACHE

Jeanne Marie Laskas is the author of *The Exact Same Moon* (Bantam).

A Dear Earache,

Sounds like Dr. No needs reassurance and an audience, so he picks a fight with a safe opponent—you. Try an experiment: Whenever he issues a prophecy of doom, agree with him. Say, "That's right, dear." He'll have to stop, or find another way to yank your chain.

Q Six months ago I moved from a small city to a rural town in the Midwest where the culture is different. Most of the kids are out smoking at lunchtime, drinking on Friday nights, and are hooked up sexually with someone. Teachers and adults are friendly to me—but no one my age. I've started hanging with a few bad characters, but I'm beginning to feel false to myself. What can I do? Go along, or be alone?

NONSMOKER

A Dear Nonsmoker,

Have you really met every kid in town? Listen, there must be

Question of the Month

Q I own a small business. Internet competition forced me to reduce staff from eight to three. The last to go was the father of a high school pal. Now my old friend is angry and won't return my calls. I'm upset, too, but I had to do it. Is there anything I can do?

BUSTED BOSS

A Dear Boss,
Your pal is acting like he's still in high school. You don't need to justify making a tough business decision to him. For auld lang syne, send him a note and say you want to discuss it face-to-face. Then if he doesn't call back or meet you halfway, I'm afraid old acquaintances must be forgot.

QUESTIONS ABOUT PETS, PARENTS, PARTNERS OR OFFICE POLITICS?
E-mail Jeanne Marie Laskas at advice@rd.com. Sending gives us permission to edit and publish.

plenty of guys your age who'll think you're cool. Be patient and don't waste your time with bad actors. Get involved in sports or other activities you enjoy where you can meet people who like what you like. Remember this life lesson: When you start feeling false to yourself, you are. It's time to get real.

Q When I bought my house ten years ago, I liked the privacy of its eight-foot stockade fence on three sides. Then a new person

moved in next-door and asked me to remove it. She says it's ugly and calls it a "hate fence." Now she's stirring up trouble with my neighbor on the other side. How can I handle this kind of attack?

FORT APACHE

A Dear Fort,
You and the fence were there first. She didn't have to move in. You can continue to ignore Nettle-some Neighbor, or ask her to show you the designs of a more attractive tall fence she'd like to put up—at her cost. You could also consider adding a flowering trumpet vine or a climbing rose to the stockade. A show of flowers is a way to win over neighbors.

Q After years of her pleading and crying, I finally gave in and allowed my teenage daughter to have a cat. I now regret my decision. As someone who needs to have a clean, tidy house, I no longer feel relaxed in my own home. If I tell her, Sorry, the cat has to go, she will be heartbroken. What can I do? FELINE PHOBIC

A Dear Phobic,
I confess! I'm an animal lover and on your kid's and the cat's side. Tell your daughter your problem. Ask her to help you come up with a plan. Perhaps you can agree to allow the cat only in certain areas of the house. This is a chance for your daughter to develop the sense of responsibility owning a pet requires. Clean the litter box. Save the cat!

When you're over the hill, that's when you pick up speed.

QUINCY JONES in Parade

My father always said,
“Education is the one cure-all
for insecurity.” HUGH JACKMAN in O

An hour of basketball
feels like 15 minutes.
An hour on a treadmill
feels like a weekend
in traffic school.

DAVID WALTERS in Esquire

Success is more permanent
when you achieve it without
destroying your principles.

WALTER CRONKITE
in Wisdom to Grow On (Running Press)

Each time history repeats itself,
the price goes up.

Quoted by
RONALD WRIGHT
in A Short History of Progress (House of Anansi Press)

WHO SAID IT?

Retire? I can't spell
the word. I'd play in
a wheelchair.

- a) Billy Joel
- b) Wayne Newton
- c) Keith Richards

FOR ANSWER, SEE BELOW

(c) Keith Richards



The mark of
a good book
is it changes
every time
you read it.

ANDERSON COOPER in O

I've got “Sometime[s].” Some-
times I remember and sometimes
I forget. SPIKE LEE in Newsweek

It takes
a genius to play
a fool.

MICHAEL RAPAPORT
on popentertainment.com

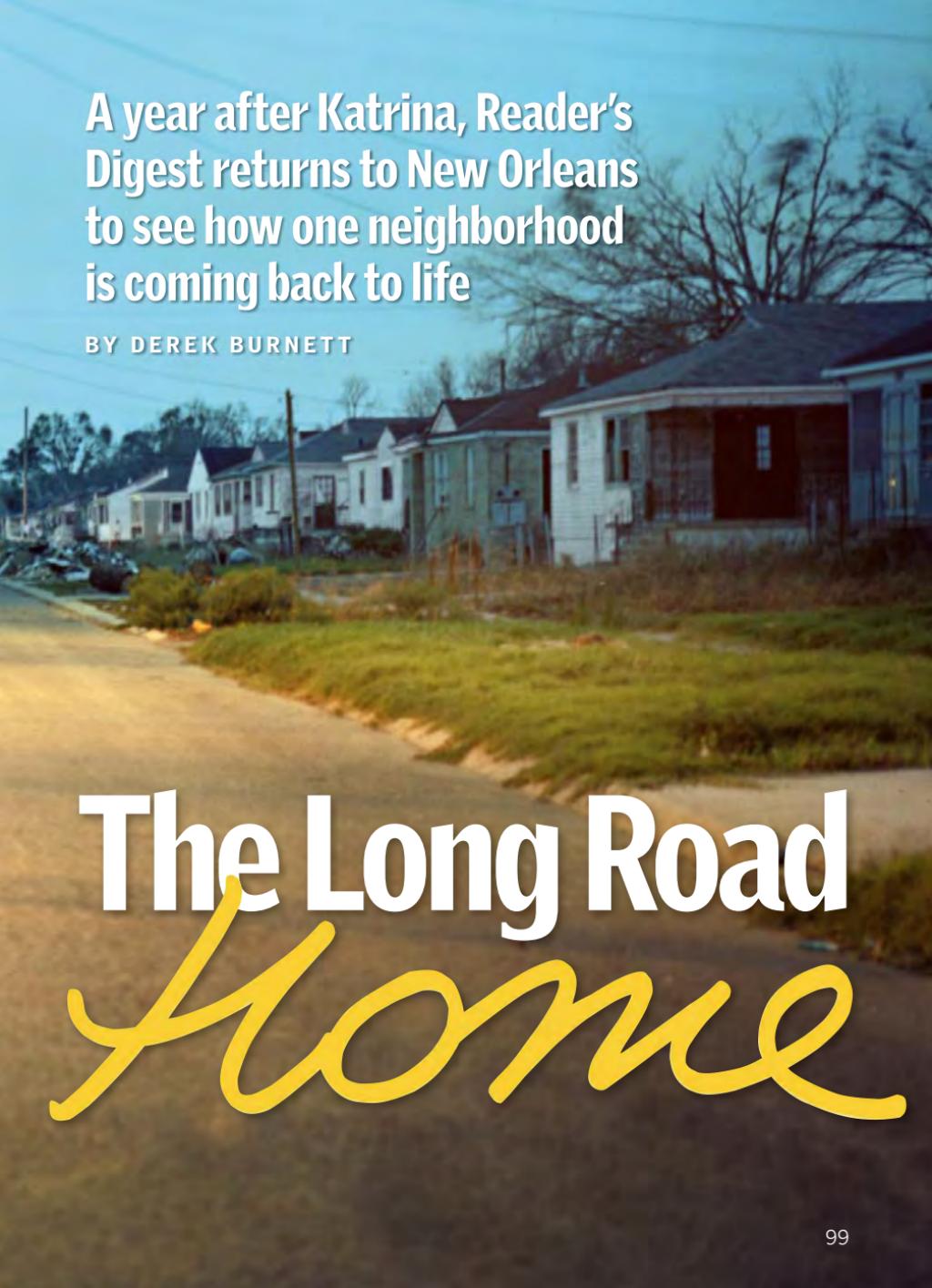
Cynics always say no. Saying yes
leads to knowledge. So for as long
as you have the strength to, say yes.

STEPHEN COLBERT

If you can do something with
your eyes closed, it's time to find
something new.

KATHIE LEE GIFFORD in USA Weekend

\$ We pay \$100 for the wit and wisdom of
famous contemporary people. See page 8.



A year after Katrina, Reader's Digest returns to New Orleans to see how one neighborhood is coming back to life

BY DEREK BURNETT

The Long Road *Home*

JANICE ROZETCKI points at a withered bush outside her storm-ravaged New Orleans home. "This was my beautiful lemon tree," she says. The house is marked with spray-painted symbols left by search crews, its interior stripped to the studs. In the yard, sunflowers she never planted have sprung up, the only sign of life.

For the past four years, Rozetcki, 51, had rented half her home to her close friend, a 49-year-old aspiring writer named Janice Mahaney. Before Hurricane Katrina, she and Mahaney fed

'New Orleans was a place that celebrated life.'

stray pets in this quiet neighborhood, had them spayed and neutered—even adopted a few. The women loved to have guests over for crawfish boils. Both were transplants to New Orleans, and neither wanted to live anywhere else. "This is a city where there was always something going on," says Rozetcki, a restaurant manager, originally from New York. "This was a place that celebrated life."

But that was before the storm. Rozetcki's neighborhood lies within the Gentilly district, but because it abuts Lakefront, residents call it Lakefront/Gentilly. It was built on marshland and, like much of New Orleans, is below sea level—in this case by some 13 feet. The London Avenue

Canal, designed to drain water from the city, is eight blocks west, and massive Lake Pontchartrain sits about a mile to the north.

Katrina caused flooding in more than 108,000 homes in New Orleans. Lakefront/Gentilly was among the areas hit hardest. A February report estimates that 81 percent of Gentilly's homes—nearly 14,000 properties—were damaged or destroyed. And little progress has been made since.

BEFORE KATRINA, Rozetcki's community was a model of racial and socio-economic harmony. Blacks and whites, working and middle class, occupied its well-kept cottage-style homes, built in the 1940s. On hot summer evenings, neighbors gathered in the grassy medians of Pasteur and Vermillion boulevards, sharing stories beneath the trees. Kevin Reed's house, next to Rozetcki's, was the designated spot to shoot hoops. "My sons had a backboard on wheels," says Reed, 42. "Kids came from all over to play."

As Hurricane Katrina approached—a Category 5 storm with winds of up to 175 miles per hour—most residents evacuated and have since shuttled between shelters, friends' homes, apartments and hotel rooms in strange cities. For many, that journey is not over.

Only a few, including Janice Mahaney, stayed behind to ride out the storm. Rozetcki pleaded with her to evacuate, but Mahaney, sick with the stomach flu, refused. "I can't do 16 hours in a car right now," she insisted.

By the time the storm, downgraded



Ten months after Katrina, there are few signs of life in the heavily damaged Lower Ninth Ward.

to a Category 3, passed, Rozetcki had made it to a friend's home a few hours away. She phoned Mahaney to check on her. "Everything's fine," Mahaney said. The wind and rain had caused extensive damage, but this didn't look like "the big one."

Six hours later, New Orleans was underwater.

A 10-foot storm surge whipped up by high winds had blown in off Lake Pontchartrain, traversed the London Avenue Canal and caused a 60-foot breach in its wall. Eventually, the 11-mile-long east-west residential corridor surrounding Lakefront/Gentilly was under 6 to 12 feet of water. It was one of 50 breaches that caused the flooding of 80 percent of New Orleans, a 120-square-mile area.

TEN MONTHS LATER, the streets are lined with vacant homes, each bearing a scummy yellow water line several feet off the ground. Dead grass and trees litter the yards and medians, where derelict cars and mounds of garbage rot in the sun. At every sixth or eighth property, there is some sign of life—a FEMA trailer parked out front, a team of workmen wielding sledgehammers, a family tentatively rebuilding. Of the 170 homes in the six-block area where Rozetcki lived, only one is currently inhabited by its owner.

It belongs to Ellis Mix, and has stood out in the neighborhood ever since he built it three years ago. Unlike the one-story homes that surround it, the Mix place, painted a bright coral color, has two floors.

After the hurricane, FEMA cut \$2,000 checks to help many displaced residents; Mix hasn't pursued anything else from the federal agency. "It's



Lorraine Craft (center) with children Bryan, Shakita and Gerald, and grandsons Tramain and Travis.

too much of a headache to bother,” he says. Co-owner of a successful collision shop, he has spent \$150,000 for repairs on his house—gutting and rebuilding the lower level. He moved back four months after the storm. “I didn’t care if I was the only one to come back,” says Mix. “I just wanted to be in my home.”

Surveying the silent street, he says he is confident that his neighborhood will rebound. “It might take a while, but it’ll happen.”

JANICE MAHANEY was caught off guard by the rising water. It was after dark, and the house flooded more quickly than she could have imagined. In chest-deep water, she watched snakes,

insects and lizards scramble up the walls. Suddenly, her home looked unfamiliar, and she swam from room to room searching for an exit. Outdoors at last, she found a floating sofa cushion and clung to it.

Unable to pull herself onto a roof, Mahaney bobbed in the filthy water for 16 hours. Helicopters swept the area but didn’t stop for her, even after the sun came up. “I never relinquished the idea that a Coast Guard guy was going to whisk me away like a damsel in distress,” she says. Once, a chopper hovered overhead for nearly 20 minutes, then left. “They were just looking down,” she says, “like prurient spectators at a grisly crime scene.”

As the hours passed, Mahaney sustained several cuts on her legs from banging into floating debris. She began to shake involuntarily, watching incredulously as a helicopter plucked

residents off a distant roof. She doubted she could last much longer, but hung on. “I just knew I didn’t want to die in that nasty water,” she says.

Finally, a couple of neighbors spotted her, hauled her into their fishing boat and dropped her at a nearby school, where dozens of fellow survivors had gathered to await rescue.

LORRAINE CRAFT does not share her neighbor Ellis Mix’s optimism about the rebuilding of Lakefront/Gentilly. She and her sister, along with three grown children and two grandsons, have been living in three FEMA trailers outside her gutted home since March.

The trailers are an improvement over the places where the family stayed after the hurricane—the too-crowded homes of Craft’s relatives in Louisiana, tiny Texas hotel rooms, and the cramped berth on a FEMA-contracted cruise ship on the Mississippi River. It’s nice to be home, even if home is an empty shell of its former self. “We lost everything that was inside,” Lorraine says of the residence she lived in for 20 years. “We don’t have a single picture, nothing.”

Two contractors have told her the flooding did so much damage to the structure that the home needs to come down completely. “It would be a waste of wood to fix it,” Lorraine says. But she doubts she’ll have the money to rebuild. Her two adult sons are autistic, and before the storm she cared for them full-time, living on their Social Security disability insurance.

Even if she qualifies for rebuilding

grants, she may be required to elevate her home, which would be prohibitively expensive. “And I’m worried about this hurricane season,” Lorraine says, fearing it could all happen again.

THE EXTENSIVE SYSTEM of levees and pumps in New Orleans was never meant to withstand a storm surge the size of Katrina’s. While design flaws will be corrected, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers spokesman Gene Pawlik admits the levees could still breach during a severe hurricane. “We have great confidence in our work,” he says, “but

‘I knew I didn’t want to die in that nasty water.’

everyone needs to understand that if we have another Katrina, there will be flooding in New Orleans.”

Another hurricane disaster could be the final blow to the city, which is nowhere near returning to what it once was. In January an estimated 181,000 people were living in “residential structures,” compared to New Orleans’s pre-Katrina population of nearly 485,000.

Norman Francis, PhD, chair of the Louisiana Recovery Authority (LRA), lost his own home to the storm. Still, he defends the slow rebuilding process, pointing out there is no benchmark for recovery from a disaster of Katrina’s magnitude. The LRA has had to work with an array of state, local,



Janice Rozetcki is determined to rebuild, but Janice Mahaney (right, in blue, with her sister, Nancy) remains in Oklahoma.

and federal agencies to create a recovery plan. "We'd like everyone who wants to come back to have the opportunity to do so," says Francis. "Housing is a big issue, but you can't have housing without schools or health care. And if nobody's back, you don't have grocery stores or jobs."

Still in question is whether parts of New Orleans will, or should, be rebuilt. The Lower Ninth Ward, a predominantly black, poor neighborhood, flooded during 1965's Hurricane Betsy, was nearly obliterated by Katrina, then re-flooded during the subsequent Rita, and is still in shambles. Its fate, and that of other neighborhoods where few residents have returned, is now in the hands of city officials who will



determine whether they can be rebuilt to withstand future floods.

JANICE ROZETCKI walks through what's left of the house she'd just paid off and renovated seven months before the storm. "We'd just installed hardwood floors," she says, "and my kitchen had all new appliances and custom-built cupboards." Though insurance will cover some costs, Rozetcki will have to borrow to rebuild, and start over paying another loan off.

Since the storm, she's been staying with friends who live half an hour away. She's back at her job at a French Quarter restaurant and heads to Lakefront/Gentilly whenever she can to rescue animals separated from their owners during the evacuation, and to

pull down Sheetrock and lug her rotted belongings out to the curb. Her house doesn't have to be leveled, because it's still sitting squarely on its foundation. "I know in my heart," she says, "that if my place needed to be knocked down, I'd have to leave. I couldn't afford to start from scratch."

As soon as she can find a contractor—they are, of course, in high demand—Rozetcki will oversee the construction. "I don't know if I'll have money for a refrigerator," she says, "but I'll at least have the house."

She believes the neighborhood will return, but wonders what it will be like if only some houses are rebuilt. "A lot of people are afraid to come back," she says. "Basic services are lacking." According to a recent estimate, only 60 percent of the city's utilities are running. And a recent RAND Corporation study estimates that only 272,000 people, a little more than half the pre-Katrina population, will be living in New Orleans in September 2008.

"This city has been very good to me," Rozetcki says, "so I'm staying and trying to rebuild. But if this place floods again, I'm leaving forever."

AT THE SCHOOL where Janice Mahaney awaited rescue, she ran into Tim Smart, 45, a neighbor who escaped the rising waters through his attic using a hatchet. He, Mahaney and dozens of others spent a sleepless night there. The next day, they were taken by boat to dry land, then walked a mile to the University of New Orleans, where hundreds more survivors had gath-

ered. They spent that night on the ground outdoors. The following afternoon, officials told them to walk to an airfield three miles away, where they would be flown to safety.

Helped along by Smart, Mahaney made the trek, and the following day was airlifted to the city's international airport. A day later, she and Smart boarded a commercial aircraft. Filthy and exhausted, they sat in the clean airliner; just before takeoff, a familiar-looking man walked up the aisle. "Don't I know that guy?" Smart asked Mahaney. It was Al Gore, who had chartered the jet to fly survivors out.

The pair, along with 138 others, were taken to Knoxville, Tennessee. (The next day, Gore would airlift out another 130 survivors.) After spending two days in a comfortable church shelter, Mahaney flew to her parents' home in Oklahoma to recover.

Now unemployed, she is dealing with lingering illness, the result, she believes, of being in the putrid water for so long. Her symptoms are mysterious: prolonged nosebleeds and sores that haven't healed. In April, her blood level was so low she required a transfusion. She suffers from night terrors, exhaustion, memory loss and post-traumatic stress.

Eventually, when she gets back on her feet, she would like to live "within an arm's length" of New Orleans. "That city was my heartbeat, the love of my life," she says. "It's still the city of my dreams, but I can't go back. I just can't."

rd.com See our video coverage of the Gulf Coast region at rd.com/gulf.

UN CAGED

Nicolas Cage takes on his roles with the same intensity he brings to his own life | BY MEG GRANT

WHEN HE WAS 17 and trying to break into Hollywood, Nicolas Coppola came to a fork in the road. After a series of rejections, he considered joining the Merchant Marine and abandoning his dream of acting, but decided to give it one more shot. He soon landed a part in *Rumble Fish*, directed by his uncle, Francis Ford Coppola, and his career took off.

To avoid charges of nepotism, the actor changed his last name to Cage. Now 42, he has practically done it all, starring in such movies as *Raising Arizona*, *Moonstruck*, *Leaving Las Vegas* (for which he won an Oscar in 1995), *Adaptation* and *National Treasure*.



In taking on his many different roles, Cage draws from personal experience. His father, a university professor, and mother, who was hospitalized for depression during Cage's childhood, divorced when he was 12. He has been married three times, once briefly to Lisa Marie Presley, daughter of Elvis. He has a 15-year-old son, Weston, from an early relationship, and a 10-month-old baby boy, Kal-el, with current wife Alice Kim, 20 years his junior.

This month Cage plays a character taken from recent history in Oliver Stone's *World Trade Center*. On September 11, 2001, Port Authority Sgt. John McLoughlin and Officer Will Jimeno rushed to the Twin Towers to help, only to be trapped under 30 feet of rubble when the buildings came down. They were among the last survivors pulled from the wreckage.

Cage, who portrays McLoughlin, doesn't view the film as entertainment and hopes that it can help heal a society still traumatized by the events of 9/11. In an exclusive interview with *Reader's Digest*, Cage talked about the movie, his family and his passions.



Cage's performance in *Peggy Sue Got Married* (left) led to *Moonstruck* (center).

RD: What made you decide to become an actor?

Cage: When I was 15, I went to see James Dean in *East of Eden*. I was so affected by his performance, how it made me feel about my life. It was more meaningful than anything I'd ever read or listened to, and I thought, That's what I want to do. Nothing is going to stop me.

RD: So you went into the business and it all went smoothly?

Cage: I was 17 and had gone on a lot of auditions; nothing had happened. I said, "If I try one more time and it doesn't happen, then I'm going to sea to join the Merchant Marine," because my other passion is the ocean.

RD: So how did it work out?

Cage: I got a part in *Rumble Fish*, then auditioned for *Valley Girl* and got that.

RD: You changed your name at around the same time. Why was that?



Cage: It was a time when there was a lot of prejudice because my name was Coppola. Certain actors made it clear to me that I couldn't act but was there as a figure of nepotism. I wanted to prove to myself that I could do this.

RD: What inspired the name Cage?

Cage: At a young age, I was interested in comic books, which was really how I learned to read. The name Cage came from a comic book character called Power Man. Later, I discovered John Cage, the avant-garde composer, and thought that he was interesting.

RD: How did your mother's hospitalizations for depression affect you?

Cage: I know it was painful for my mother, and it had to be extremely painful for me and my brothers. But oddly, at the time I didn't seem that affected by it. She's a very loving per-

son, very soulful, and I know that if I didn't have her as my mom, I would not be able to do the things I do. She gave me a sensitivity of feeling. She probably has the soul of an artist, and if she'd had the proper guidance, maybe she could have channeled that.

RD: How is she doing now?

Cage: I bought her a house in the Hollywood Hills, and she's very happy. She loves classical music, and the caretaker is an opera teacher, so there are always opera singers over.

RD: What is your father like?

Cage: He's a brilliant man. He's one of the greatest teachers in my life, because he exposed me to art at such a young age and tried to teach all of us to think in the abstract, which is not the most popular thing to do with kids.



Eight years later he won an Oscar for playing an alcoholic in *Leaving Las Vegas*. 09

RD: Does the extended Coppola family have regular reunions these days?

Cage: I would like to think of us all at the big table having spaghetti, laughing and listening to the opera, but everyone's off doing their own thing. It's a sad reality—sort of an American epidemic of family. Now, my wife comes from a Korean family that is so tight-knit. There's an understanding that you *will* have dinner together, at least once a week. I think it would be helpful if more American families spent more time together.

RD: Tell me about your marriage to Alice.

Cage: It's amazing marrying someone who wants absolutely nothing to do with Hollywood. She doesn't want to act, to make movies—she's interested in clothes and making her own jewelry, and she's very family-oriented.

RD: How is it having this little baby?

Cage: I'm much more relaxed this time. The first time, you haven't got a clue what you're doing.

RD: Has being a father changed you?

Cage: It's the most significant transformation in my life. When I had Weston at 26, I became less self-involved and more interested in others. Everything we do impacts someone else's life.

RD: Let's talk about *World Trade Center*. Tell us what happened to John McLoughlin and Will Jimeno.

Cage: They went to help get people

out. Then both towers came down. They were stuck at the bottom of all that debris.

RD: You re-create that in the film?

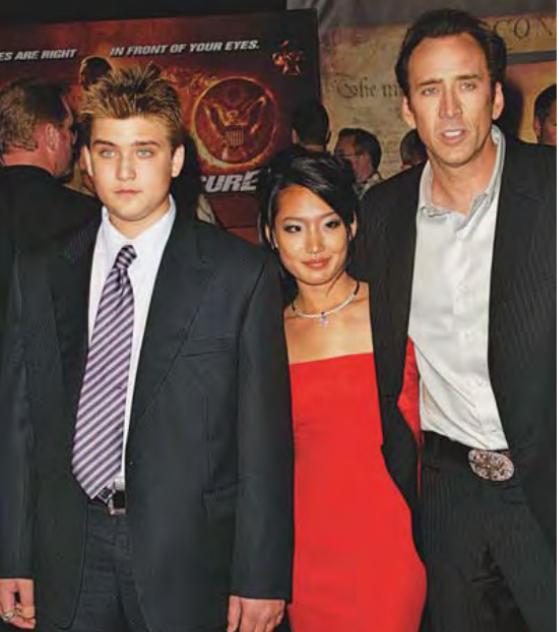
Cage: Oliver [Stone] cast real fire-fighters and cops who were there that day, rescuers who saved John's life after he'd been stuck for 24 hours. They were re-enacting the experience in a part of the film where I'm teetering between life and death. I was closing my eyes and listening to these men as they were touching me, and I felt like they were angels. It was so important to them to save this man. Yes, there was huge evil and tragedy that day, but there was tremendous love and goodness—and I felt it like an electric current.

RD: Was it a difficult role for you?

Cage: I felt like I was being called to represent John, and wanted to make sure I got it right. I felt that's how I could give back in some way what they had given to all of us.

RD: You spent time with John preparing for the role. Did he share with you what he went through psychologically?

Cage: The main thing that affected him was the feeling that in some way he'd let his wife and kids down by going into the building. We went to Ground Zero together, and that was very hard. At the memorial, there were letters from kids: "Daddy, I wish you were here. We could play ball." If there's any way that the departed could say to the kids, "I love you," it would happen in the movie.



Cage with wife, Alice Kim, and son Weston at *National Treasure's* 2004 premiere.

JIM SMEAL/BEIMAGES

RD: Why did you choose this role?

Cage: I was at a point in my career where I wanted to apply my abilities to something meaningful and not just entertainment. It's important to let people get their minds off their problems, but I'll never get the images of the planes going into those buildings out of my head. Actors have an opportunity to use storytelling as a way to solve pain.

RD: What about the criticism that this movie comes too soon after the real event, that people aren't ready?

Cage: I don't think it's too soon, because we're living in the age of technology, where everything is faster. And the most impressionable people who

saw this were children. How do they cope with what happened?

RD: So you would encourage kids to see this?

Cage: I think I would for kids over 12, with adult supervision, if they were asking a lot of questions about it.

RD: You've said you're happiest when you're working. Are you a workaholic?

Cage: I'm into creating. I'm not anywhere in the league of H. G. Wells, but when people say I work too much, I say, well H. G. Wells wrote a lot of books. Were people going to tell him to stop?

RD: Some people get to a point where they want to spend more time with family and work less.

Cage: I think that's very important. I'm blessed that I've married someone who's been supportive of my work and traveled with me, but there will come a time when I'm not going to be able to move around like I am now. That's part of the reason I'm doing more now.

RD: What makes you a good actor?

Cage: I care about the connection with the audience. Film is such a powerful medium. Movies can change the way people think. So when I go into it, I think, How can I do something with this and be helpful in some way?

RD: How are action movies helpful?

Cage: The world we live in is very



Cage as Sgt. John McLoughlin, who is still recovering from his 9/11 injuries.

violent. Maybe there's something we can learn from the violence itself to prevent people from doing it.

RD: What are you most proud of in terms of what you've done?

Cage: I try not to be proud. I try to actively attack pride. If I can get through a period of time when everything seems to be okay, when the people I care about aren't going through any major strife, I'm happy about that.

RD: Is that how you feel now?

Cage: I feel that things are good. I know that things tend to wax and wane, so I say that with a grain of salt.

RD: What do you do in your free time?

Cage: I spend as much time as I can with my kids. This weekend I'm going to take Weston on our boat to Catalina

for a couple of days. Being on the water really relaxes me, so any chance I get, that's where I am. I'm getting to the point now where I feel more comfortable on the water than I do on land.

RD: Where have you gone in the boat?

Cage: The Mediterranean, the Italian Riviera, the Mexican waters, which are loaded with all kinds of animals. And I've gone swimming with sharks.

RD: Where did you do that?

Cage: The Great Barrier Reef. And in South Africa, I'd heard you can dive in a cage with great whites. So we did that—Weston, Alice and I. My stunt man was also there, and he reached out of the cage and touched the shark. Of course the shark got angry and started ramming the cage. That was scary.

RD: Can they get in the cage?

Cage: No. The only thing is that the boat is going up and down, and the top of the cage is open, so I kept thinking the shark was going to get inside.

RD: So you're 42 now. Was turning the big 4-0 major?

Cage: I started needing glasses to read. But I don't mind wearing them, pulling them out. They're a great prop.

RD: Do you worry about growing old?

Cage: I kinda like it. I feel more relaxed. I'm not as volatile. I can do a lot more good in this stage than I could in my 20s. There's a grace that comes with age. You say the right thing at the right time as opposed to blurting things out. You can get your emotions to work for you rather than run you down. We all have fire in us. It just needs to be harnessed.

RD: Looking back at your life, do you have regrets?

Cage: No. I've made a lot of mistakes, but I've learned from them. Mistakes can be teachers too.

RD: You've done some pretty extreme things for certain roles, like swallowing a cockroach in one movie, for instance. Would you still do that?

Cage: No. One of the pluses of getting older is you set some limits.

RD: In the past, you've said that you've felt like an outsider in a lot of ways. Do you still feel that way?

Cage: I've changed my views. I'm feeling very much a part of—and one with—everybody. I'm hopeful about everything these days.

RD: You're not worried about what other people think anymore?

Cage: I'm not worried, and I'm not fearful. I'm happy to be here right now, and trying to enjoy every moment.

rd.com Listen to the Nicolas Cage interview at rd.com/cage.

IN OTHER WORDS, I HAVEN'T A CLUE

The following real student answers reveal why faculty members require long summer vacations.

Q: Where was the Declaration of Independence signed?

A: At the bottom.

JANIS ADAMS

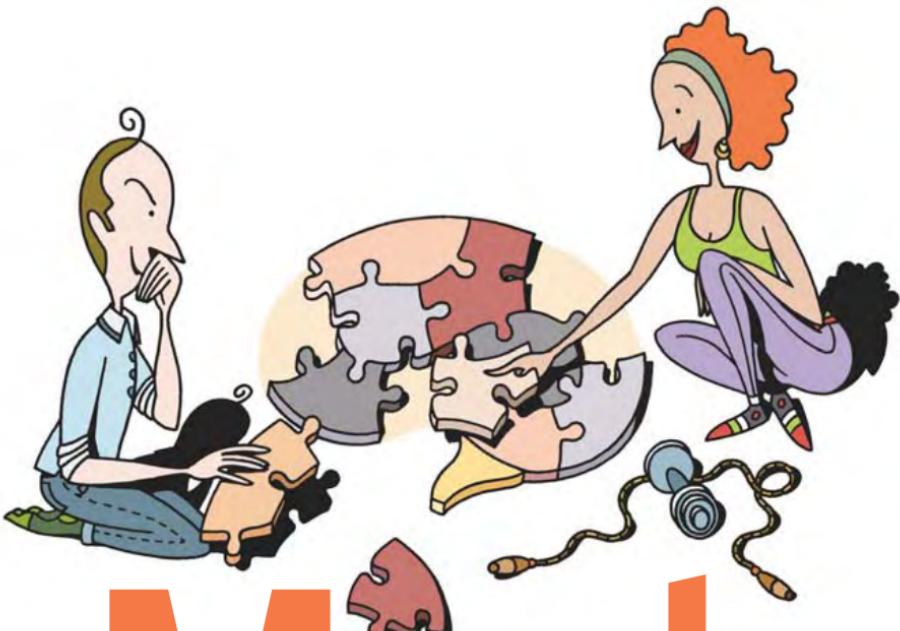
Q: In Shakespeare's *Julius Caesar*, what warning was given to Caesar about March 15?

A: The toothslayer said, "Beware the March of Dimes." HEATHER EMERY

Q: Who are the Aborigines?

A: They're the Native Americans of Australia.

ASHLEY TAYLOR



Mind Games

Seven ways to make your brain better,
faster, smarter | BY WILLIAM SPEED WEED

1 Move It

Quick—what's the No. 1 thing you can do for your brain's health? Differential calculus, you say? Chess? Chaos theory? Nope, the best brain sharpener may be ... sneakers? Yup. Once they're on your feet, you can pump up your heart rate. "The best advice I can give to keep your brain healthy and young is aerobic exercise," says Donald Stuss, PhD, a neuropsychologist and director of the Rotman Research Institute at Baycrest Centre for Geriatric Care in Toronto.

Mark McDaniel, PhD, professor of psychology at Washington University in St. Louis, agrees, but adds, "I would suggest a combined program of aerobics and weight training. Studies show the best outcomes for those engaged in both types of exercise."

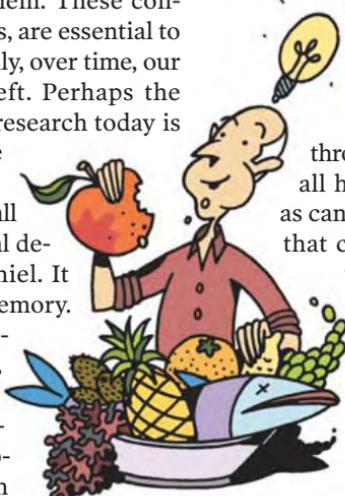
As we age, our brain cells, called neurons, lose the tree-branch-like connections between them. These connections, or synapses, are essential to thought. Quite literally, over time, our brains lose their heft. Perhaps the most striking brain research today is the strong evidence we now have that "exercise may forestall some kinds of mental decline," notes McDaniel. It may even restore memory. Myriad animal studies have shown that, among other brain benefits, aerobic exercise increases capillary development in

the brain, meaning more blood supply, more nutrients and—a big requirement for brain health—more oxygen.

The preeminent exercise and brain-health researcher in humans is Arthur Kramer at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. In a dozen studies over the past few years, with titles such as "Aerobic Fitness Reduces Brain Tissue Loss in Aging Humans," Kramer and his colleagues have proved two critical findings: Fit people have sharper brains, and people who are out of shape, but then get into shape, sharpen up their brains. This second finding is vital. There's no question that working out makes you smarter, and it does so, Kramer notes, at all stages of life. Just as important, exercise staves off heart disease, obesity, diabetes and other maladies that increase the risk of brain problems as we age.

2 Feed It

Another path to a better brain is through your stomach. We've all heard about antioxidants as cancer fighters. Eating foods that contain these molecules, which neutralize harmful free radicals, may be especially good for your brain too. Free radicals have nothing to do with Berkeley politics and everything to do with breaking down the neu-



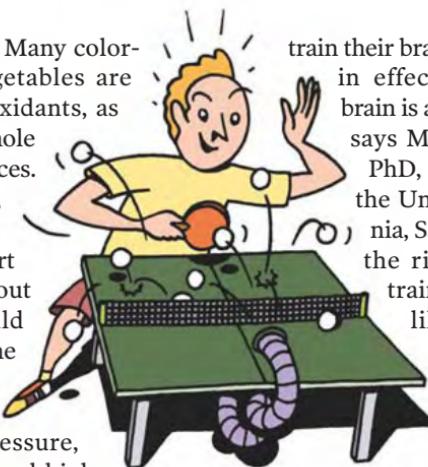
rons in our brains. Many colorful fruits and vegetables are packed with antioxidants, as are some beans, whole grains, nuts and spices.

More important, though, is overall nutrition. In concert with a good workout routine, you should eat right to avoid the diseases that modern flesh is heir to. High blood pressure, diabetes, obesity and high cholesterol all make life tough on your brain, says Carol Greenwood, PhD, a geriatric research scientist at the University of Toronto.

If your diet is heavy, then you're probably also heavy. The same weight that burdens your legs on the stairs also burdens your brain for the witty reply or quick problem solving. The best things you can eat for your body, Greenwood notes, are also the best things you can eat for your brain. Your brain is in your body, after all. Greenwood's recommendation is to follow the dietary guidelines from the American Diabetes Association (available at diabetes.org).

3 Speed It Up

Sorry to say, our brains naturally start slowing down at the cruelly young age of 30 (yes, 30). It used to be thought that this couldn't be helped, but a barrage of new studies show that people of any age can



train their brains to be faster and, in effect, younger. "Your brain is a learning machine," says Michael Merzenich, PhD, a neuroscientist at the University of California, San Francisco. Given the right tools, we can train our brains to act like they did when we were younger. All that's required is dedicated practice: exercises for the mind.

Merzenich has developed a computer-based training regimen to speed up how the brain processes information (positscience.com). Since much of the data we receive comes through speech, the Brain Fitness Program works with language and hearing to improve both speed and accuracy. Over the course of your training, the program starts asking you to distinguish sounds (between "dog" and "bog," for instance) at an increasingly faster rate. It's a bit like a tennis instructor, says Merzenich, shooting balls at you faster and faster over the course of the summer to keep you challenged. Though you may have started out slow, by Labor Day you're pretty nimble.

Similarly, Nintendo was inspired by the research of a Japanese doctor to develop a handheld game called Brain Age: Train Your Brain in Minutes a Day, which has sold more than two million copies in Japan. No software out there has yet been approved by

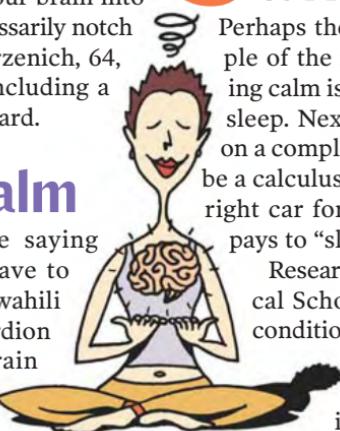
the FDA as a treatment for cognitive impairment, but an increasing number of reputable scientific studies suggest that programs like Merzenich's could help slow down typical brain aging, or even treat dementia. The biggest finding in brain research in the last ten years is that the brain at any age is highly adaptable, or "plastic," as neurologists put it. If you ask your brain to learn, it will learn. And it may speed up in the process.

To keep your brain young and supple, you can purchase software like Merzenich's, or you can do one of a million new activities that challenge and excite you: playing Ping-Pong or contract bridge, doing jigsaw puzzles, learning a new language or the tango, taking accordion lessons, building a kit airplane, mastering bonsai technique, discovering the subtleties of beer-brewing and, sure, relearning differential calculus.

"Anything that closely engages your focus and is strongly rewarding," says Merzenich, "will kick your brain into learning mode and necessarily notch it up. For his part, Merzenich, 64, has "4,000 hobbies," including a wood shop and a vineyard.

4 Stay Calm

So you may be saying to yourself, I have to sign up *right now* for Swahili and calculus and accordion lessons before my brain withers away! Stop! Breathe. Relax. Good.



While challenging your brain is very important, remaining calm is equally so. In a paper on the brain and stress, Jeansok Kim of the University of Washington asserts, in no uncertain terms, that traumatic stress is bad for your brain cells. Stress can "disturb cognitive processes such as learning and memory, and consequently limit the quality of human life," writes Kim.

One example is a part of the brain called the hippocampus, which is a primary locus of memory formation, but which can be seriously debilitated by chronic stress. Of course, physical exercise is always a great destressor, as are calmer activities like yoga and meditation. And when you line up your mental calisthenics (your Swahili and swing lessons), make sure you can stay loose and have fun.

5 Give It a Rest

Perhaps the most extreme example of the mental power of staying calm is the creative benefit of sleep. Next time you're working on a complex problem, whether it be a calculus proof or choosing the right car for your family, it really pays to "sleep on it."

Researchers at Harvard Medical School have looked at the conditions under which people come up with creative solutions. In a study involving math prob-

lems, they found that a good night's rest doubled participants' chances of finding a creative solution to the problems the next day. The sleeping brain, they theorize, is vastly capable of synthesizing complex information.

6 Laugh a Little

Humor stimulates the parts of our brain that use the "feel good" chemical messenger dopamine. That puts laughter in the category of activities you want to do over and over again, such as eating chocolate or having sex.

Laughter is pleasurable, perhaps even "addictive," to the brain.

But can humor make us smarter? The jury is still out and more studies are needed, but the initial results are encouraging. Look for a feature on exciting new research about humor and intelligence in the September issue of *Reader's Digest*.

7 Get Better With Age

In our youth-obsessed culture, no one's suggesting a revision to the Constitution allowing 20-year-olds to run

More Ways to Stay Sharp

Don't Smoke Smokers perform worse than nonsmokers in studies of memory and cognitive function. No one knows whether smoking directly impairs memory or is merely associated with memory loss because it causes illnesses that contribute to poorer brain function. In addition, smoking increases the risk for stroke and hypertension, two other causes of memory impairment.

In any case, if you smoke, it pays to quit. Research shows that people who stop smoking have less mental decline than those who continue to smoke.

Drink in Moderation While heavy drinking can harm your memory, moderate consumption of alcoholic beverages may be beneficial. Research

suggests that drinking up to one drink a day may reduce the risk of dementia. But excessive consumption of alcohol is toxic to neurons and is the leading risk factor for Korsakoff's syndrome, a disorder that causes sudden and irreversible memory loss.

If you're a heavy drinker, cutting back can prevent further memory loss and will usually lead to some recovery of damaged memory function.

Be Social Close ties with others can improve the cognitive performance of older people, according to a MacArthur study on aging and other research. Social support can come from relationships with friends, relatives or caregivers.

A Canadian study published in 2003

for President. The age requirement remains at 35. You've heard about the wisdom and judgment of older people? Scientists are starting to understand how wisdom works on a neurological level.

When you are older, explains Merzenich, "you have recorded in your brain millions and millions of little social scenarios and facts" that you can call upon at any time. Furthermore, he notes, "you are a much better synthesizer and integrator of that information."

Older people are better at solving problems, because

identified a lack of relationships with friends and family as a risk factor for cognitive decline. The study, which followed people over age 65 for four years, found that the probability of maintaining good cognitive function was highest among people who socialized often and had strong social ties; the probability of losing cognitive function was highest among people who had the least contact.

Social engagement often goes hand in hand with intellectually stimulating activities, which in turn promote good memory function. Social relationships can also help support you during stressful times, reducing the damaging effects that stress can have on the brain.

they have more mental information to draw upon than younger people do. That's why those in their 50s and 60s are sage. They're the ones we turn to for the best advice, the ones we want to run our companies and our country.

As Barry Gordon, a neurologist at The Johns Hopkins School of Medicine and author of *Intelligent Memory:*

Improve the Memory That Makes You Smarter, puts it, "It's nice to know some things get better with age."

rd.com How do you keep your brain young? Share your tips and read others at rd.com/brain.



Watch Your Head

Head trauma often results in memory impairment, which is a risk factor for future development of dementia.

You can prevent head injury by using the appropriate gear during high-speed activities and contact sports.

Car accidents are by far the most common cause of brain injury, and wearing seat belts greatly reduces the injury risk. Use a helmet when bicycling, riding on a motorcycle, in-line skating and skiing. And you can lower the risk of concussion by wearing a mouth guard, which deflects the force of a blow to the chin, during contact sports such as football, hockey, soccer, basketball, rugby and martial arts.

SOURCE: Improving Memory, www.health.harvard.edu/IM

WHAT HAPPENS IN VEGAS...



All starts with its flamboyant mayor,
Oscar Goodman | BY LYNDON STAMBLER

ONLY IN LAS VEGAS could a mass wedding be held right next door to a coroners convention. "I call it 100 weddings and a funeral," jokes the mayor, toastmaster at the Once Upon 100 Weddings gala.

Welcome to the zany, never-boring world of Oscar Goodman, the mob-lawyer-turned-mayor of Sin City. "I don't take myself too seriously," he says. "And I do everything to excess." He gambles daily, downs premium gin and speaks his mind—not exactly the m.o. of a successful politician. Despite his unorthodox ways, he gets results. Since his 1999 election, Goodman, 67, has brought life to Vegas's seedy downtown. He hopes to "Manhattanize" the area with residential and office towers, a performing arts center, a new city hall, a medical research center, and a Major League ballpark—his very own Jewel of the Desert. His critics don't bet against him.

Former mob attorney Goodman with two of his favorite things: gin and a show girl.

Goodman, a one-time germophobe, shakes

With 5,000 new residents and 1,500 homes built each month, Clark County, where Las Vegas is situated, is booming. Goodman will do almost anything to fuel that growth. He travels the country touting the allure of Vegas and helps arrange creative financing for willing investors. His wheeling and dealing has resulted in the development of a successful premium outlet mall and huge furniture mart. And the city signed a deal last December with Newland Communities, a multibillion-dollar developer, to convert 61 barren acres of the downtown area into Goodman's Jewel. "It's my legacy," he says.

BEHIND THE WHEEL of his silver Mercedes, Goodman, acting as a tour guide, points to an art-deco condo project and a block-long creek dubbed Oscar's River. "There hadn't been a new office building downtown for 25 years. Now they're popping up all over the place," he says. Like a modern-day P. T. Barnum in a pinstriped suit and a red show-girl-patterned tie, he is a walking ad for the city—and himself. He hands out casino chips with his face on them, and his office is lined with Oscar bobble-head dolls and photos of himself with everyone from Robert De Niro to Michael Jackson. He's had cameo roles in *CSI* and *Las Vegas*.

"He may be the best actor in politics," comments *Las Vegas Sun* columnist Jon Ralston. "He is an incredible booster for the city, but he

doesn't always set the best example."

When Goodman announced his candidacy in 1999, the *Las Vegas Review-Journal* declared, "Anybody but Oscar," calling him "a barrister to butchers," a reference to his days defending mobsters. Still, voters gave him landslide victories in 1999 and again in 2003. "Oscar is a great character who has great character," says pal Donald Trump. "He cuts others to ribbons in terms of personality."

"I'm not a phony," says Goodman. His biggest nemesis, he admits, is his own mouth. Last year, when a fourth-grader asked what he would take to a deserted island, he created a furor by responding, "A bottle of gin."

"The kid asked a question. I gave him an answer," Goodman explains. A few months later, he raised eyebrows again by photographing and posing with Playmate Irina Voronina for playboy.com. "My wife says, 'As long as you're happy, that's all I want.' She knows I would never cheat."

Carolyn Goodman, 67, advises her husband to keep his mouth shut but knows better than to rein him in. "The serious side of him is very serious," she says. "He is well read and artistic, but he loves to push the limits."

Goodman grew up in West Philadelphia, the son of a prosecutor and a bohemian artist. In his early 20s, he considered becoming a rabbi. He met Carolyn when she was at Bryn Mawr and he was at Haverford College; they married in 1962. After graduating from

every hand and kisses every baby.

the University of Pennsylvania law school, Goodman worked for then-Philadelphia Assistant D.A. Arlen Specter (now a U.S. Senator). While preparing a case, he interviewed a pair of Las Vegas cops who convinced him that Sin City held great promise for a young lawyer. So in 1964, with \$87 between them, Oscar and Carolyn moved to the desert, where they raised four adopted children, now grown.

In their new hometown one night, Oscar and Carolyn were at a blackjack table when a call came into the pit. "Does anybody know the best criminal lawyer in Vegas?" the pit boss shouted.

"I don't know if he does criminal work, but Oscar Goodman is a helluva nice kid," responded a dealer, who was one of his bankruptcy clients.

Thus Goodman began representing a series of mobsters, including Meyer Lansky, Natale "Big Chris" Richichi, and Anthony "The Ant" Spilotro, an "enforcer" suspected of some 25 murders. He was so jittery during his first mob trial that he threw up on the courthouse steps. He won acquittals for Spilotro on numerous charges, including the notorious M&M murders, in which a Chicago gangster's head was clamped in a vise. Now, from his City Hall office, Goodman looks out at the former courthouse and talks of converting it into a mob museum.

Martin Scorsese cast Goodman as himself in *Casino*, his 1995 film about Spilotro. Goodman got his SAG card but couldn't memorize his lines.

"Scorsese went bonkers," Goodman recalls, so he ad-libbed. Now four producers are vying to create a reality show about the mayor's life.

The joy went out of Goodman's practice after Spilotro and his brother were beaten to death in 1986. Still, he continued to represent some notorious mobsters and take on what his biographer calls "strange but lucrative cases." Then, on a 1998 Caribbean vacation, Goodman asked his family if he should run for mayor. Carolyn abstained; the four children were opposed. That didn't stop him.

Now Mayor Goodman, a one-time germophobe, shakes every hand and kisses every baby. He rarely turns down an appearance—or a bet. Last year, he placed a large wager that the Detroit Pistons would upset the San Antonio Spurs in the NBA Finals. They didn't. "It's not a gamble if it doesn't hurt a little if you lose, and you don't smile a little if you win," he says.

He doesn't drink before 5 p.m., but claims to regularly knock back a couple of gins before his 9 p.m. bedtime. In 2002, he signed an endorsement deal with Bombay Sapphire. And this year he donated his \$50,000 fee to a think tank for Alzheimer's disease research. "He loves to have a drink," Carolyn says, "but overstates it when he says he drinks as much as he does. Everything is to sell Vegas."

Even Goodman has trouble separating glitz from reality. As he puts it, "I couldn't be mayor anyplace else." ■



Gambling With Your Life

Millions of medical mistakes happen in the lab. Here's how to protect yourself.

BY PAMELA F. GALLIN, MD, AND JOSEPH K. VETTER

LENORE JANECEK WAS HEADED toward her Chicago home on a September afternoon in 2000 when she received a call on her cell phone that would change her life forever. It was her doctor. He told her that the test results from her routine colonoscopy two weeks earlier revealed she had intestinal cancer. Stunned, Janecek, 61, pulled over. "There must be a mistake," she insisted. But the doctor, a gastroenterologist, assured her there was no

mistaking the diagnosis. Janecek would need immediate surgery.

There are few things more dreaded than a cancer diagnosis. But for Janecek, the news was doubly traumatic: She had been successfully treated for intestinal cancer ten years earlier, so the thought that the disease had come back was terrifying.

On September 26, in a procedure that lasted three hours, the surgeon made an incision running the length of

Janecek's abdomen and removed about two feet of her small and large intestines. The surgery was an ordeal, but at least, she thought, the worst was behind her. In the weeks that followed, however, Janecek, a mother of two who ran her own health insurance consulting firm, became concerned that her recovery was not going well. The pain and digestive troubles were worse than she'd expected. She wondered if they'd gotten all the cancer.

Then, at her six-week checkup with the gastroenterologist, Janecek received ominous news: She might have been the victim of an error at the hospital lab. A genetic test later confirmed that the tissue sample her diagnosis was based on had been contaminated with cancerous cells from another patient's specimen. Janecek did not have cancer. Her surgery had been unnecessary. "I was in total shock," she recalls. "First shock, then anger."

It turned out that the gastroenterologist had questioned the initial lab result, but the lab's review of its procedures still failed to uncover the error. Janecek sued the hospital for negligence and won a \$3 million award from the jury. But six years after her ordeal, she continues to suffer bouts of severe abdominal pain and other digestive symptoms stemming from the surgery. "It's like some-

one punched me as hard as they could right in my abdomen, and I didn't see it coming," she says. "And I will have that for the rest of my life."

Behind Closed Doors

When most people think of medical errors, they think of the sensational cases—the surgeon who removes the wrong organ, or the patient who dies because he was prescribed the wrong drug. In fact, it's been estimated that medical errors may cause up to 100,000 deaths each year in this coun-

**Weeks after
surgery, she
learned
she didn't
have
cancer
at all.**

try. But stories like Janecek's highlight a problem that hasn't gotten as much attention: errors that occur in pathology labs, where tens of millions of blood samples, biopsies and tissue specimens are analyzed every year, and radiology labs, where a mislabeled MRI or a misinterpreted x-ray or CT scan can have dire consequences for a patient.

No one knows for sure how many lab errors happen annually. Most mistakes are reported on a voluntary basis, and many are never reported at all. Experts are quick to emphasize that the vast majority of medical tests are error-free. But errors do add up, given the huge volume of testing nationwide. For example, a typical large medical center does some 5 million clinical pathology tests each year.

It's not just the amount of testing

that makes mistakes inevitable. It's also the complexity of the process. Testing starts in the doctor's office or at the lab, where a specimen is drawn and labeled or an image is taken and ID'd. It then is analyzed and interpreted by the experts. Finally, the results are sent back to the doctor to aid diagnosis and treatment. Errors at any step along the way can threaten your health—or even your life. Paul N. Valenstein, a pathologist at St. Joseph Mercy Health System in Ann Arbor, Michigan, knows of a case in which a patient died when a lab did not get his test results to the right doctor in time, even though the results were accurate.

Are Lab Errors Common?

While the accidental contamination of one patient's tissue with another's, as happened to Janecek, is relatively rare, other more common mistakes can be just as serious. Identification errors occur when specimens are mislabeled or incorrect patient data is entered into laboratory computer systems. A new study of 120 clinical pathology labs, where blood, urine and other fluid tests are done, estimates that each year in the United States, more than 2.9 million of these errors occur, and more than 160,000 patients are harmed in some way as a result. The harm ranges from the stress and anxiety caused by an incorrect diagnosis that's later reversed, to far more dangerous, though less common, outcomes, such as delayed treatment, transfusions of the wrong blood type, even unnecessary surgery.



Because of a pathology error, Lenore Janecek had unnecessary surgery.

"This is a serious problem," explains Dr. Valenstein, the study author. And "our error projection is undoubtedly an underestimate."

When it comes to cancer, diagnostic mistakes can be catastrophic. Based on an analysis of reported errors in patients tested for cancer or precancerous lesions at four major hospitals, Stephen Raab, chief of pathology at the University of Pittsburgh Medical Center, and his colleagues estimate that at least 305,000 specimens are wrongly diagnosed each year. And some 40 percent of these errors, or nearly 128,000 cases, result in harm to the patient. In rare instances, mistakes in cancer diagnosis can lead to unnecessary organ removal or even death. More often these errors cause less serious but still troubling harm:

the fear and stress of being told you have cancer when you don't, the trauma of having to be retested and, perhaps most significantly, delays in diagnosis and treatment when signs of cancer are missed in an initial test.

Trouble With Images

Like their counterparts in pathology, the radiologists who perform and analyze everything from old-fashioned (but still common) x-rays to high-tech CT scans are largely unseen players

in the medical process. But though less visible to you than your family physician, their role in ensuring your health is just as vital—and their mistakes can be just as costly.

When Elaine Thomas,* a petite 42-year-old social worker, had her annual mammogram at a local hospital in July 2002, she didn't think she had anything to worry about, since neither the radiologist nor her gynecol-

* Name altered to protect privacy.

Advice From an Insider

BY PAMELA F. GALLIN, MD

I'M A SURGEON. So when I needed surgery on my right hand, the one I operate with, I chose one of the best hand surgeons in the world. The procedure went well, and I went home with a large cast on my arm and lots of narcotics. But the pain was excruciating. The next day I called the surgeon. "You're fine," he assured me. "Return in six weeks." I thought I was being hysterical. Would my doctor dislike me if I pushed too hard?

But I knew I wasn't fine. So after three more days of politely calling and being ignored, I demanded to be seen. By

this time, my fingers had swollen up like sausages. My surgeon wasn't available, so the doctor on call saw me. When he examined my arm, his face turned red with anger. The cast was much too tight. He literally ripped it off and discovered that the swelling had forced the incision to open. It had to be restitched and another cast put in place. Months later, I needed two plastic surgeries to improve the unsightly scar, and each time, my arm was in a cast for six weeks. I couldn't operate, my kids were young, and it was a very difficult time. If my surgeon had seen



me on day 1, these complications would have been avoided.

My experience made me wonder: If even I, a surgeon, was too intimidated to confront my doctor when my gut told me something was wrong, how much more difficult must it be for the average patient? We all need to take charge of our own health. That's especially true when it comes to the invisible doctors responsible for the tests and images that shape our diagnosis and treatment. My advice:

ogist contacted her about the results. "No news is good news," she says. "If you don't hear anything, you assume it's okay."

Thomas had to delay her next mammogram. But with no history of breast cancer in her family and having just had a physical breast exam, she wasn't concerned. That changed suddenly one morning in May 2004 when she felt a lump under her left breast. Thomas, mother of an eight-year-old son, called a local radiology

clinic as soon as it opened, and scheduled a mammogram for later that day. After analyzing the image, the radiologist told her there was a clearly visible concentrated white area—a dense mass that was cause for concern. "Even I could see it," Thomas says. An ultrasound exam and biopsy confirmed it was cancer.

Thomas, daughter of a plastic surgeon, knew the importance of getting other opinions. After looking at all of her mammograms and the reports,

Trust your instincts.

If you have questions about a lab result, diagnosis or treatment, speak up. And be persistent. After you have a lab test or diagnostic image, call your doctor to make sure he received the results. Don't worry about hurting your doctor's feelings. This is about you.

Choose wisely. The doctor you pick is only the first member of a team of specialists involved in your care. She'll likely assemble the rest of the team, so finding the right doctor is doubly important. So, too, is the hospital you choose. There are no guarantees, but usually, the better the hospital, the better the team.

Read the label. Many lab mix-ups start in your doctor's office. When giving a blood or other specimen, ask the nurse, politely, to show you the identification sticker to make sure it's accurate.

Do it again. If a lab result is unexpected or alarming, your doctor may have you retested. If he doesn't, ask him about a do-over.

Carry a medical passport. A summary of your vital health information is a must. It should list diseases, medications and doses, food and drug allergies, and phone numbers of your physician and nearest relative. Take it with you to every doctor you see—even the radiologist.

Be a pack rat. Keep copies of all lab reports, x-rays, MRIs and CT scans, plus names and addresses of your MDs.

Get a second opinion.

It's crucial to your health. If a diagnosis requires surgery, chemotherapy or medications with side effects, find another specialist (call the hospital's referral service for help), and send him all your pathology and radiology lab work for review, both the images and reports. When you get the second opinion, make sure you understand it. If not, talk to the doctor until you do.

Dr. Gallin is director of pediatric ophthalmology at New York Presbyterian-Columbia Medical Center.

three different surgeons agreed that she would need immediate treatment for breast cancer. But there was something else. All three told her that the worrisome mass that appeared in her most recent mammogram was also visible, though in a less developed stage, in the 2002 mammogram. It was something that should have been followed

Can We Fix It?

HOSPITALS THAT IMPLEMENTED a six-step error-reduction plan saved an estimated 122,000 lives over 18 months, according to a recent study. More than 3,000 hospitals participated, sharing their data in a groundbreaking cooperative effort known as the 100,000 Lives Campaign. (For more information, visit ihl.org.)

This spring, Senators Hillary Rodham Clinton and Barack Obama co-wrote the Medical Error Disclosure and Compensation (MEDiC) bill. Its goals:

- promote open communication between patients and providers;
- reduce the rates of preventable medical errors;
- ensure patients access to fair compensation for medical injury, negligence or malpractice;
- reduce the cost of medical liability insurance.

"Organizations that have put disclosure programs into practice have been effective in resolving disputes in a less adversarial manner," they wrote in *The New England Journal of Medicine*, "providing fair compensation, and improving patient care."

up on right away, they said, with additional mammography or ultrasound. Yet although the radiologist's report from the earlier exam indicated that dense breast tissue had made evaluation difficult, it recommended only routine follow-up. On hearing this, the normally upbeat Thomas recalls, "I was pretty ticked off."

By now, Thomas had invasive breast cancer. She underwent surgery, chemotherapy and 35 radiation treatments. She is now cancer-free, but she will never know whether her treatment might have been less traumatic if the radiologist had recommended more urgent action nearly two years before her disease was discovered.

There are three main stages in the imaging process where errors can occur: recognizing an abnormality, accurately diagnosing it, and communicating the result to the physician and patient. Freya Schnabel knows the importance of getting it right the first time. As chief of breast surgery at Columbia University Medical Center, she depends upon mammograms and other imaging tools to help ensure she gives patients the care they need. And she knows that when labs make mistakes, patients pay. Not being informed about abnormal mammograms is "a huge danger," says Dr. Schnabel. "I hear about these cases all the time." In fact, delay in the diagnosis of breast cancer is the most common reason for malpractice lawsuits in the United States.

Patients can be harmed by the mishandling of other radiology proce-

dures as well. A recent study by U.S. Pharmacopeia found that 12 percent of radiology-related medication errors, including incorrect dosing of sedatives or contrast agents, resulted in harm to the patient. That's seven times the percentage of all medication errors combined that were harmful. The American College of Radiology challenged these findings, arguing that drug errors occur in only a small fraction of imaging procedures. Still, the findings are "a call to action for hospitals, radiological centers, health care practitioners and patients," says study author John P. Santell.

Reducing Mistakes

As health care providers struggle to improve patient safety, Dennis O'Leary, MD, president of the Joint Commission on Accreditation of Healthcare Organizations, says they need to change the way they think about errors. "The fact is, people make mis-

takes," he says. "That includes doctors, nurses and lab technicians. The challenge is designing internal systems that catch human errors before they reach the patient. And most health care organizations are still in their infancy in understanding how to do that."

A key first step would be for diagnostic labs to institute double checks. For example, have multiple pathologists examine slides so cancer cells don't go undetected. And have two radiologists analyze every scan. Another step would be to create ways to ensure a surgeon doing a biopsy sends a properly diagnosable tissue sample to the lab. These and other measures might increase costs, but to Dr. O'Leary, it's a no-brainer: "What's more important, building a new heart catheterization lab or making sure you've got enough personnel to keep errors from reaching patients? There's money in the system. It's just a matter of priorities."

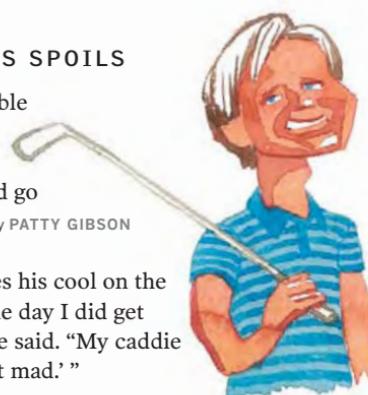
A GOOD WALK'S SPOILS

"Most people work all their life to be able to retire and play golf," Jack Nicklaus told the Associated Press recently.

"I've played golf all my life to retire and go to work."

Submitted by PATTY GIBSON

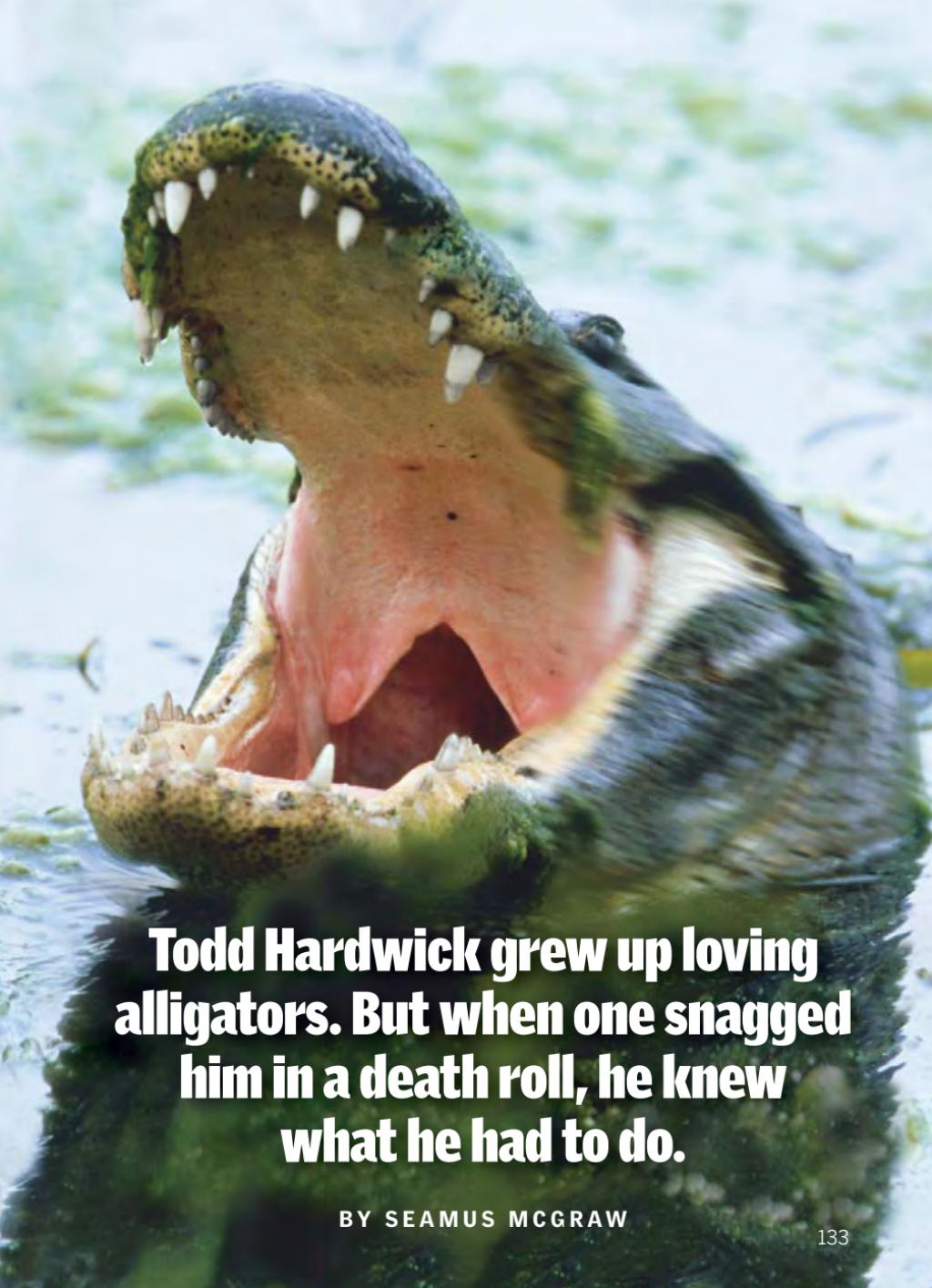
Actor Samuel L. Jackson no longer loses his cool on the green, thanks to some sage advice. "One day I did get angry with myself and threw a club," he said. "My caddie told me, 'You're not good enough to get mad.'"



Golfer Craig Stadler was once asked why he'd started using a new putter. "Why?" he replied. "Because the other one didn't float."

JAWS

PHOTOGRAPHED BY KELLY LADUKE



Todd Hardwick grew up loving alligators. But when one snagged him in a death roll, he knew what he had to do.

BY SEAMUS MCGRAW

THE WATER was roiling. Blood gushed from Todd Hardwick's left arm. Just then, the gator—eight feet of murderous muscle—rolled once more, a death roll, dragging Hardwick out toward deeper water. With his good arm, the right one, the 5'7" Hardwick had the beast in a headlock. But how long could he hold on?

Hardwick, 41, was fighting for his life. Based on his 20 years of hunting alligators, he knew that if he showed even a hint of fear, the people on the banks of the canal might panic. So he chose his words carefully. He only had time and air enough for two—two he hoped would bring paramedics to gather whatever was left of him when the fight ended.

"Roll rescue," he gasped.

Then he went under.

AS A BOY GROWING UP in Florida, Hardwick always had a soft spot for the American alligator. He could remember feeling a deep sense of loss when a grammar school teacher told him that the animal was endangered, and might not live to see the 21st century.

That teacher turned out to be wrong. Over the past 35 years, the gator has made a roaring comeback in Florida. There are now some one million living in the state—about one for every 17 people—according to Steve Stiegler, a biologist with Florida's Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission's alligator management program. And with that population growth has come an increased threat to people.

In May, gators were blamed for killing three women in three separate incidents. Before that, there had been just 17 confirmed fatal attacks in 58 years.

With all those reptiles swimming around, there's plenty of work for the state's 40 licensed alligator hunters, including Hardwick, the owner of Pesky Critters animal removal service. And while he and his fellow exterminators mostly earn their living plucking possums out of garages, they've also earned a place in local lore by chasing down deadly reptiles. In 2004, they responded to some 18,000 gator calls, and caught 7,352 in all.

Making those catches isn't always easy, though, and during his years of hunting gators in and around Miami, Hardwick always believed one would someday get the better of him. Two scenarios in particular would run through his mind: In one, he was overpowered by what he called a "psycho gator" that plunged him to the bottom of a murky canal, then bashed the life out of him. In the second, the end came with him dragged to the bottom of a canal, tangled in his own lines.

He'd never envisioned both things happening in the same mortal battle.

FROM THE START, April 7, 2005, seemed sure to be a bad day. It began with Hardwick spending more time than he wanted chasing a four-foot gator that, to him, wasn't much of a threat.

As soon as he'd thrown the pint-size pest into the back of his pickup, another call came in: An eight-foot gator

was cruising the canals not far away.

By the time Hardwick arrived at the scene, a crowd had gathered on the banks of the canal. A pair of police officers stood front and center.

Trying the easy way first, Hardwick got a rotten pig's lung—one of the nastier tools of his trade—from his truck. The blackened organ smelled so foul, it almost caused one cop to vomit. Hardwick tossed the lung out into the canal, but the gator ignored it.

So he moved to Plan B. Returning to his truck, he pulled out his Ugly Stik, a heavy-duty fishing pole built

of energy, as if he'd switched over to auxiliary batteries, and Hardwick found himself staring straight into the reptile's open jaws.

As the gator lunged, Hardwick pivoted out of the way. Just then, the grappling hook flew into the air. It caught Hardwick in the forearm, and sank down to the bone. At first, he didn't feel pain, just pressure. Then he looked down and saw blood pouring from the open wound.

The gator began to roll, wrapping himself in the grappling hook's rope and pulling Hardwick into the canal.

HARDWICK KNEW THAT IF THE GATOR BEGAN TO DRAG HIM DOWN, HE'D HAVE 90 SECONDS TOPS TO ESCAPE.

to withstand huge amounts of abuse. He attached a three-prong treble hook to the line, and sized up the situation. If he could cast out past the alligator, snag him in his thick, leathery hide and hang on for a good 30 minutes, he might be able to wear the creature down.

But it took longer than that just to snag the gator. With the hook in, the battle was on. As the pole bent with the weight of the fierce fight, the line began to peel off the reel. Hardwick tightened the drag. Finally, the gator appeared to tire, and Hardwick started to pull him in. His other tools—an aluminum pole with a noose attached, a huge grappling hook with a heavy rope, a roll of industrial-strength electrical tape—waited nearby.

Suddenly, the gator got another jolt

The more tangled the creature became, the closer he pulled Hardwick to him. That's when the hunter put the hunted into a headlock.

By now, the pair were rolling out to the deepest part of the canal, where the bottom dropped off to 20 feet. Hardwick knew that if the gator began to drag him down, he'd have 90 seconds tops to escape. That's how long he figured he could hold his breath.

“ROLL RESCUE!”

Moises Rojas heard Hardwick's two-word cry as he watched the incident unfold. It was Rojas, 36, who'd first alerted authorities about the gator.

“When you see a professional like Hardwick, you're confident about it,” Rojas says, “but when you see a person with the experience he has ask-

ing for help, you really get shocked."

Reacting to Hardwick's call, Rojas clambered to the water's edge, and as Hardwick and the gator rolled by, he shouted, "What can I do?"

"Grab the lines!" came the answer.

So Rojas grabbed on. Unfortunately, the line he grabbed was the one attached to the grappling hook, still sunk into Hardwick's arm. That's how Rojas dragged man and beast to shore.

Later, Hardwick recalled the look on Rojas's face: "He saw the hook, and I saw it in his face: He was disgusted. This monstrous hook in my arm and all the blood, but he reached out and just torqued it sideways. And the hook popped out of the arm."

WITH THE HOOK OUT, Hardwick swung into action: "I felt like Popeye after he just ate a can of spinach. It was like, 'You're mine!' And bam, I slammed the gator down to the bank. I reached in with my right arm for my tape and started to tape his mouth shut, and I realized that the left arm felt like a spaghetti noodle. There just wasn't any strength in it."

The taping finally done, Hardwick had authorities help him get the bound carnivore into the back of his truck. Then, he says, he drove to the doctor, who greeted him with a mixture of antibiotics and awe.

HARDWICK SURVIVED the encounter, but the gator wasn't so lucky. And that bothers Hardwick. "Early on after the incident, I said, 'I'm going to spare this gator.'" He brought the animal back to his five-acre homestead, a man-made tropical rain forest that he keeps as a refuge for displaced gators, pythons and tortoises. Still, he wanted to find this gator a good permanent home to live out the rest of his days.

"I respected him for being such a good adversary, so I found a fantastic facility," Hardwick says. But before the operators could collect him, the animal died from acidosis, a buildup of lactic acid often suffered by large gators after a long struggle.

Hardwick buried the gator in his own backyard. To him, it seemed like a fitting resting place for such a formidable foe.

WHEN IRISH EYES AREN'T SMILING



A friend was touring Ireland by car. Stopping at a red light, she took the opportunity to gaze at the lush scenery, and was oblivious to the light changing to green and back to red again.

The driver behind got out of his car and unleashed the Irish equivalent of road rage: "Would it be a particular shade of green you are looking for?"

DAVID JOHNSON



Boy Wonder

Once we stopped trying to "fix" our autistic son, we started to appreciate the world as he saw it | BY CAMMIE MCGOVERN

IT WAS A MOMENT I'd been dreading, and still, it managed to take me by surprise. When Ethan, the oldest of our three sons, was diagnosed with PDD-NOS, at first it sounded almost as though the neurologist, who had a few missing social skills himself, was speaking

a foreign language. Then I realized that he was using a clinical term: "Do you mean autism?" I said, staring at the three-year-old boy I'd spent the whole morning prepping for this trip to the doctor's office: making sure he was well-rested, well-fed, boned up on his limited vocabulary—all to es-

cape this exact, life-ending diagnosis.

"That's it!" the doctor said excitedly. "PDD means he hasn't got every trait of classic autism, but it's still very serious. Basically you'll hope he can one day write a check, hold a simple job, things like this."

It took all my concentration not to cry in front of this man. I asked if there were any books he could recommend.

He thought for a while, as if he'd never heard the question before. Finally he said, "*Rain Man* is a good movie. Have you ever seen that one?"

ETHAN WAS NEVER a typical baby. He was colicky and allergic, beset from the start by skin rashes and a chronic runny nose. Ethan was also late to the milestones first-time parents anxiously wait for. He smiled at nine weeks, crawled at nine months and walked at 16 months. "The late end of normal," our smiling, bow-tied pediatrician said. But as time passed, the list grew: He had words by two years, but didn't combine them. He didn't point, didn't wave bye-bye, and blinked stupefied at a knot of doting adults clustered around him. Worse still, he seemed happiest playing alone, dribbling sand through his fingers. The more I read, the clearer it was: The *Rain Man* doctor may have been an oaf, but he wasn't wrong.

While scientists can't say definitively what causes autism—genetic and environmental factors are both suspected of playing a role—the incidence of the disorder has seemingly

exploded overnight in this country. It's now estimated that 1 in 166 children are diagnosed somewhere along the autistic spectrum—a rise of about 1,000 percent since 1990. The cause of the increase is a hot topic of debate. Lately, that debate has focused on the possible role of thimerosal, a mercury-containing preservative. Thimerosal was first added to vaccines in the 1930s, but children's exposure to it rose sharply in the early 1990s, when the mandatory vaccine schedule included more shots at an earlier age. (Most, but not all, vaccines given here are now thimerosal-free.) The federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and other public health agencies have so far ruled out a vaccine-autism link, but some doctors and many parents believe one exists. More studies are planned.

It's hard for anyone coping with autism not to be drawn into the debate. But for us, agonizing over what may have caused Ethan's autism was far less critical than researching the daunting array of therapies, all bearing the same urgent caveat: The sooner you start, the better the outcome; the more you do now, the further your child will go later in life. With autism, "wait and see" is not an option. And so the battle begins.

Some doctors estimate that up to half of autistic children like Ethan have gastrointestinal problems because they can't digest common proteins found in wheat and dairy. An aggravated, permeable intestine may allow these proteins to seep into the bloodstream and

onto the brain, where they have an opiate effect. There are no extensive scientific studies yet to back this theory, but anecdotal evidence is so strong that many parents at least try a gluten- and casein-free diet to see if it will help. In Ethan's case, diet changes have made a big impact on his ability to digest and absorb food, grow properly and function better.

what works. For Ethan, the ABA format helped his brain start to organize itself. He began to learn how to learn.

Over time, his therapy became more like play sessions that tapped into his great passions: music, instruments, machines. In the frantic push to check off tasks mastered, we didn't want to lose sight of the ultimate goal—a boy who played with other children, could

All the families I know who wage this war come to a point where they lay down their arms.

Other therapies we've tried have helped too. At three, Ethan had few words and even fewer play skills, so we started with a modified form of applied behavioral analysis (ABA), a one-on-one approach in which vocabulary, games and compliance are taught by a therapist who breaks down learning into basic components. Words are taught in a simple format without distractions. Three pictures are laid out. "Point to truck," the therapist says. Later, the words get more abstract: "Point to big," or "Point to long." Eventually the child says them himself.

The approach baffles some parents. How can it help a child learn play skills or how to relate to other children? In the end, there are arguments for and against any therapy. The answer, always, is that each child is different. You try what you can and see

tell us what he needed, and was interested in more than dribbling sand. We tried many therapies: floor-time play, sensory integration, auditory integration, music therapy. The good news is that these therapies do work, and autism today is far less often a life sentence of withdrawal and self-injury than it was in the past. For Ethan, that's meant an end to long, mysterious crying jags and tantrums that ruled much of his early life. He's happy now, delighted by countless peculiar pleasures, like leaf blowers, motorcycles and Thomas Edison.

Here's the other side of the story: We've fought this battle for nearly seven years, and we haven't—in all honesty—won. We don't have a boy anyone would say is a miraculous example of recovery or even of particularly high-functioning autism. When you start down this road, you read

about kids who recover enough to enter first grade showing no signs of autism. You dream of one day telling such a story yourself. Is it sad to admit you can't? In truth, less and less so.

All the families I know who wage this war come to a point where they lay down their arms. Sooner or later, battling the disorder starts to feel like battling the child. When your son has enough words to tell you he likes dribbling wood chips because it makes him feel calm, that it's a way for him to sing inside his head, you think, Huh. Okay. Fair enough. When he laughs at the same intersection whenever you go through it, and says, "I don't know, I just love that traffic light," you think, Well, there are worse things to love. He is who he is. Autism is part of it.

You also come to see how autism is a cloud with its own silver lining. Ethan's passions and room-pacing joy at the prospect of a concert, of Halloween, of a stay in a hotel with a pool are so total, it's impossible for those around him not to be infected by it. I know families who plan trips around train rides and planetarium visits, who cover their walls with pictures of the 43 U.S. Presidents or the four Beatles. They do it because their child's interests are so precise, so absolute, that—

while laboring to teach them the skills they need to function in the world—these parents learn something too: the pure joy of arbitrary passions.

E THAN IS TEN NOW, and it takes all of three minutes to spot his differences, in the way he rocks slightly when he's excited, or buzzes in a circle around someone he's just met, repeating the last thing they've said to him ("Hello, Ethan! It's nice to meet you!"). He attends a regular public school, with the help of an aide, and has friends, though those he loves most are Daryl and Stu, the custodians who let him help with vacuuming, and "Mama," the dishwasher who lets him scrape trays after lunch. He loves these people because they're kind, gentle souls and also, I think, because they work with interesting machines. Waging this battle has taught us to be grateful for all these people and the small but immeasurable acts of kindness we witness daily. It's also taught us to celebrate modest victories, to see and count the smallest blessings, and to adopt a new perspective on defining success for all of our children.

rd.com To learn more about autism, go to rd.com/autism.

THIS'LL CHEER YOU UP

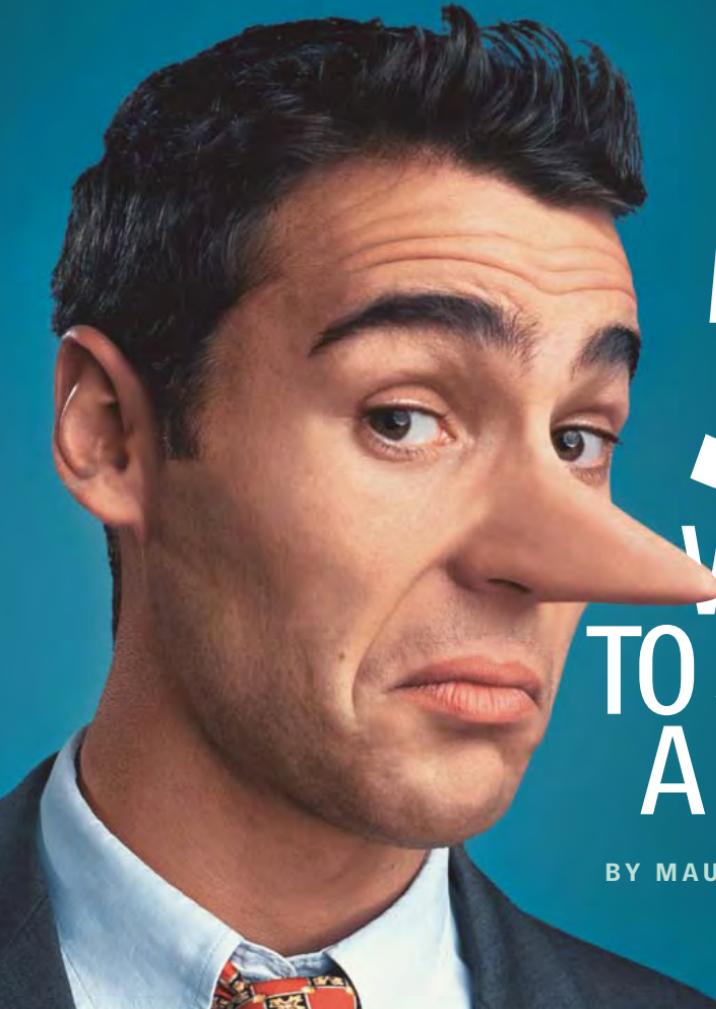


"The FDA approved the first-ever transdermal patch for the treatment of depression," Tina Fey announced on *Saturday Night Live*. "Simply remove the backing and press the patch firmly over your mother's mouth."

AFRIEND SAYS a gift is in the mail when it isn't. A neighbor swears she loves your new fence when she really can't stand the sight of it. A salesclerk claims his store is offering big savings on everything in stock, when only a few select items, as it turns out, are marked down.

Little white lies (of all sorts) are tossed our way daily, and getting to the truth of the matter can be frustrating, time-consuming, even upsetting.

"Lies occur between friends, between teacher and student, doctor and patient, husband and wife, witness and jury, lawyer and



5 WAYS TO SPOT A LIAR

BY MAUREEN MACKEY

client, and salesperson and customer," says Paul Ekman, professor emeritus of psychology at the University of California, San Francisco. Ekman has been studying deceptive behavior for more than four decades and is the author of several books on the subject. "Lying is such a central characteristic of life," he says, "that understanding it better is relevant to almost all human affairs."

How can we spot the lies we're told, both the little white ones that don't matter a whole lot and the real whoppers that do? Try these compelling tips from the experts.

Hear the Voices Ever notice the pitch of someone's voice change from its norm? Hear a voice crack when it isn't the cracking type? Pay attention to voice changes like these; they may well indicate deceit.

When Paul Ekman teamed with Maureen O'Sullivan, professor of psychology at the University of San Francisco, to test 509 people for their ability to spot liars, the results were telling. The group included Secret Service, CIA and FBI personnel, as well as psychiatrists and college students. They were shown a videotape of ten individuals who were either lying or telling the truth.

On the tape, one woman described the lovely flowers she was supposedly looking at. Though she was smiling as she spoke, a few keen observers detected an odd hesitation in her voice. Her words lacked joy, and her hands seemed tense, not relaxed. One of the

Secret Service agents labeled her a liar, and he was right. She wasn't looking at flowers at all, but rather at a graphic film the evaluators were showing. (The Secret Service employees, by the way, nailed the liars 86 percent of the time, better than others in the group.)

Though other important behaviors need to be considered as well, vocal changes that deviate from the norm can indicate deception. "There may also be a change in speech rate, either too fast or too slow, and a change in breathing pattern," says O'Sullivan.

Watch Those Words How about written material? Can we spot misleading behavior in letters, documents, e-mails and even résumés? At the University of Texas at Austin, psychology professor James Pennebaker and colleagues have developed computer software known as Linguistic Inquiry and Word Count (LIWC), which analyzes written and verbal content for lies. Deception can reveal itself in two significant ways, explains Pennebaker.

First, liars tend to use fewer first-person pronouns—words like *I, me, mine*—than truth tellers. It's as if they're putting psychological distance between themselves and their stories; they don't "own" their message. "The paperwork was sent yesterday" is an example, as opposed to the direct and personal "I sent it yesterday." Second, liars use fewer exclusionary words—*but, nor, except, whereas*. They have trouble with complex thinking, says Pennebaker, and it shows.

Look Past Shifty Eyes While most people tend to interpret darting, unfocused eyes as a classic sign of lying, what's vital to consider is the context of the behavior. (Experienced poker players, of course, are careful not to make too much of eye "tells.")

"If people look away while trying to think of something difficult, that is not important," says O'Sullivan. "But if they look away while answering something that should be easy to answer, you should wonder why."

And what is the conversation about, anyway? The subject matter is critical. "If people are lying about something they're ashamed of, they'll have difficulty maintaining eye gaze," notes O'Sullivan. "For white lies, though, or lies that aren't shameful, people may actually increase their eye gaze."

Get Better at Body Language No single part of the face or body, such as the eyes, nose, ears or hands, can tell us the whole story when it comes to lying. It's not that simple. "There is no Pinocchio's nose," says Ekman flatly. Instead, "you must consider the fit among face, body, voice and speech to reach high levels of accuracy."

That means observing the "total person" whenever possible. "Clues must always be interpreted in light of the usual behavior," explains O'Sullivan. "Changes in small hand movements, changes in the amount of hand gestures, shrugs that are inconsistent with what's being said"—these are worth homing in on, she suggests. So

are changes in body posture at particular points in a conversation.

Watch for "a change in the baseline," says O'Sullivan. "For instance, a quiet person who talks a lot, or a person who talks a lot who is now quiet. It doesn't necessarily mean someone's lying, but it's a hot spot to evaluate."

Check for Emotional "Leaks" The micro-expressions that flit across people's faces often expose what they're truly feeling or thinking, as opposed to what they'd like us to believe, explains Ekman. But these ultra-brief facial movements, some lasting a quarter of a second, aren't a cinch to spot. Even professionals trained in the art of lie detection—police personnel, judges, attorneys—can't always isolate them. And deliberate liars tend to layer on other expressions, like smiling, to further disguise a lie.

Still, there are giveaways. "It isn't the frequency of a smile that matters, but the type of smile," says Ekman. "There are smiles of true enjoyment, which involve not just the lips but the muscles that orbit the eyes. And there are masking smiles, which are made to cover fear, anger, sadness or disgust. If you're a good observer, you can see a trace of one of those emotions leak through."

So here's hoping the next time someone lobs a lie our way, we'll know just how to catch it.

Reporting by NANCY LONG TAFOYA

rd.com Can you spot a liar? Take the quiz at rd.com/liar.



An Iranian mob,
incited by a
senior cleric's
anti-American
harangue, in
summer 2004.

IRAN

Our Next Crisis?

We're on a collision course
with this radical regime—unless
we play just the right card

BY KENNETH M. POLLACK

AMERICA IS THE “world oppressor.” Israel “must be wiped off the map.” The Holocaust “is a myth.” A world “without America and Zionism” is “attainable and surely can be achieved.”

The hateful pronouncements of an Al Qaeda leader? No, they come from someone whose prominence makes the words especially chilling: Iran’s recently elected president, Mahmoud Ahmadinejad. While Ayatollah Ali Khamanei has the last word on Iran’s policies, Ahmadinejad has growing support from the masses and, for now at least, the backing of Iran’s ruling clerics. He is the public face of a

regime that is one of the leading state sponsors of terrorism. And his rhetoric is deeply disturbing for one reason above all others: The Islamic Republic of Iran, an avowed enemy of America and the West, may well be on a path toward building nuclear weapons.

The Iranians insist their nuclear program is peaceful, to be used only to generate electricity. But Iran has lied in the past about nearly every aspect of its nuclear program, including secret facilities the regime acknowledged only after they were revealed by opposition groups. In another instance, the Iranians were

Kenneth Pollack was director for Persian Gulf affairs on the National Security Council under President Clinton.

caught experimenting with a substance called polonium-210, which is used only in deep-space exploration and nuclear weapons. Iran, of course, has no deep-space program.

Now, the United States and several other major powers are offering Iran economic and diplomatic incentives to forego its quest for nuclear arms. Success will hinge on Iran's response—not in words, but in verifiable actions. Unless we succeed in convincing Iran to halt these efforts, it will probably join the nuclear club sometime in the next decade.

What might Iranians do if they add nukes to their arsenal? They could make the world far more dangerous, though probably not in the ways some fear. There's little reason to think Iran would launch a nuclear strike out of the blue at Israel, at the Saudi oil fields, at Europe, or at some other key enemy target, because the retaliation from the West would be crushing. It's also unlikely that the Iranians would give these weapons to terrorists. The

regime knows that terrorist groups are impossible to trust or control, and could use those weapons on targets not of Tehran's choosing.

But once Iran went nuclear, it could be bold in other ways, knowing no country would dare retaliate for anything short of a full-scale military attack. One way it could flex muscle would be to step up the terrorism it's long used against us—acts that include bombing our embassy and Marine barracks in Beirut in 1983, and the 1996 bombing of the Khobar Towers apartment buildings in Saudi Arabia, which killed 19 U.S. airmen.

Iran could also try to coerce the United States and other nations by threatening the flow of Persian Gulf oil through the Strait of Hormuz, though Tehran's dependence on oil exports might make this move too risky for the regime.

So what should the United States and its key partners do? There are only a few viable options and, in my view, only one that really makes sense.

BETTMANN/CORBIS

46% of Iranians believe America is dangerous and seeks control.

SOURCE: RD/ZOGBY POLL

History of U.S.-Iran Relations

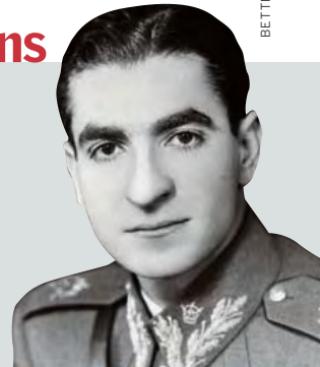
1942 Iran welcomes U.S. aid during WWII, including supplies and advisors.

1946 President Harry Truman is lauded for forcing Russians out of Iran.

1953 CIA overthrows Iran's leader, putting Shah back on throne.

1964 Khomeini emerges as voice against U.S. military presence in Iran.

Shah Reza Pahlevi



Option #1: Military Strikes

Back in 1981, when Saddam Hussein was openly building a nuclear program, a nervous Israel took action: It obliterated Saddam's nuclear facilities with air strikes. Today, you'll hear pundits suggest we do the same thing to Iran's program, with an American air campaign.

But Iran is not Iraq.

Iran's program is large, dispersed across a country the size of Alaska and, in some cases, well protected—even buried underground in heavily fortified locations. To cripple the program would take several hundred air sorties and possibly an equal number of cruise missile strikes.

The United States could mount such an operation, but might set Tehran's nuclear program back by only two to four years. The one sure thing is that our attack would be seen as an unprovoked, all-out war by the Iranians. What could they do to hit us back?

Start with Iraq. We don't like to admit it, but the United States is heavily dependent on Iran's cooperation in Iraq. The Iranians have a great deal of influence with Iraq's Shia leaders, many of whom don't like the Iranians

but rely on them for money and weapons. Even though they were serving their own interests, Iranians were instrumental in persuading the Iraqi Shia to take part in the U.S.-led reconstruction.

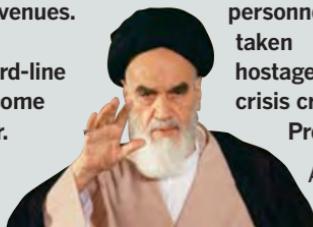
Iran also has several thousand soldiers and intelligence operatives in Iraq who, presumably in case of civil war, have reportedly established a clandestine warfare network that includes safe houses and arms caches. So it's unnerving that Iranian leaders have warned that if the United States goes after their nuclear facilities, they will retaliate in Iraq. Most likely, they would order or encourage the Shia groups they supply to attack our forces. In the same way, they could turn to their terrorist minions, such as Hezbollah, and urge them to strike American targets in the Middle East, Europe, Southeast Asia, South America, and possibly within the continental United States.

Weighed against the damage the United States could suffer from ter-

(LEFT) AP/WIDE WORLD PHOTOS; (RIGHT) KAVEH KAZEMI/CORBIS

1973 Shah jacks up oil prices, quadrupling Iran's revenues.

1979 Hard-line clerics come to power.



1979 U.S. embassy personnel taken hostage in Tehran; crisis cripples Carter Presidency.

Ayatollah Khomeini



American hostage in Iran

1980–88 United States gives Iraq economic aid in its war with Iran.

rorist attack and chaos in Iraq—and not to mention international condemnation, since few other countries would support us—a military strike against Iran makes very little sense at this point.

Option #2: Regime Change

Some observers say the United States should push for regime change in Iran by backing dissident elements that might try to topple the clerical leadership. It's a seductive idea, mainly because analysts are convinced that many—if not most—Iranians would like to have a more democratic government. Last November, for instance, Tehran University students protested the regime's crackdown on campus activists, braving reprisals. So it's logical to think there's a base of support for deposing the government, if the United States can just get to it.

It's more complicated than that, however. Many Iranians may dislike their government, but they virulently oppose the slightest hint of American interference in their affairs. The United States has a long and sordid history with Iran, punctuated by events like the CIA's overthrow of the popular Iranian prime minister

Mohammed Mossadeq in 1953. This was a defining element of the revolution that brought the radical clerics to power. Today, no Iranian dissident group will risk its legitimacy by accepting help from Washington.

Also, while many Iranians want change, they aren't ready to incite a new revolution. They remember too well the summer of 1999, when university students tried to start just such a revolution. Iran had a new president, Mohammad Khatami, who seemed determined to reform (if not replace) the Islamic Republic. So the students took to the streets in protest, and waited. They waited for President Khatami to lead them and for the people of Iran to pour out in support of them. But Khatami backed down. The people of Iran stayed home. And the regime moved in its thugs and beat the students into submission.

Afterward, the Iranians told Western governments that while they wanted a different government, they did not want another revolution to



AP/WIDE WORLD PHOTOS (2); (RIGHT) Morteza Nikoubazl/REUTERS/CORBIS



1997 Iran's reformist leader, Khatami, tries to open "dialogue" with West; hard-liners resist.

What Iranians Believe

Telephone poll of 810 adults inside Iran, conducted by Zogby International, 5/18-6/1/06; margin of error, 3.5%

We polled people inside Iran and got results that were often surprising or unsettling. While more than one-third admire America for its values and freedoms, almost half also see America as dangerous and aggressive. A surprising number say they want an even more religious and conservative government, yet a huge majority wants greater rights for women. As for Israel's right to exist ... well, that's a view that barely exists.

Here is a sample of our poll results. For the complete poll, go to rd.com/iranspeaks.

- 1. Which of these statements comes closest to reflecting your point of view?**
 - America is a model country for its values and freedoms **37%**
 - America is a dangerous country that seeks confrontation and control **46%**
 - America is no better or worse than any other country **14%**
 - None of the above **3%**

- 2. Do you agree or disagree with this statement? "The state of Israel is illegitimate and should not exist."**
- 3. Would you like to see Iran's society become more secular and liberal, more religious and conservative, or just stay as it is?**
 - More secular/liberal **31%**
 - More religious/conservative **36%**
 - Stay as it is **15%**
 - Not sure **18%**
- 4. How important is it to increase rights for women?**
 - Strongly agree **52%**
 - Mildly agree **15%**
 - Neutral **21%**
 - Mildly disagree **5%**
 - Strongly disagree **4%**
- 5. What should be the most important long-term goal for Iran?**
 - Developing an arsenal of nuclear weapons for defense **27%**
 - Reforming the economy so it operates more efficiently **41%**
 - Expanding the freedoms of Iranian citizens **23%**
 - None/Not sure **9%**

get it. They were sick of revolutions.

So regime change may someday come to Iran, but there is little reason to think the United States can make that happen soon. As Gen. Tommy Franks once famously remarked, "Hope is not a strategy."

2001 Iran cooperates with America to defeat the Taliban, a Sunni foe, in Afghanistan.

2003 U.N. nuclear watchdog agency IAEA

confirms Iran is enriching uranium.

2006 Iran's new president,

Mahmoud Ahmadinejad

Ahmadinejad, dismisses threat of U.N. sanctions, and vows to pursue nuclear program as an "absolute right."



Option #3: Carrots and Sticks

What's left? The diplomatic option—which, fortunately, is the best option of all.

This strategy has one big thing

going for it: Iran's economy. Simply put, it's a mess: high inflation and unemployment, low investment, decrepit infrastructure, large gaps between rich and poor, and massive corruption. Iran's economic woes are the No. 1 grievance of the Iranian people, and that anger is our trump card.

To play it, we need a policy of carrots and sticks that can convince Iran to give up its nuclear ambitions. This seems to be the path we're now on, but the United States and its big power partners haven't gone nearly far enough. We should say to the Iranians, "If you will give up your nuclear

Who's Got the Power?

President Ahmadinejad may grab most of the headlines, but he is simply the leader of one of three groups jostling for power in Iran.

First, there are the *pragmatists*—so-called because they're very practical about what the regime must do to stay in power. They know the greatest problem is public anger over the economy. To fix it will take trade and investment with the West, and the pragmatists seem willing to sacrifice the nuclear program for better relations.

Not so the *radical hard-liners*, who still believe in Ayatollah Khomeini's dream of an Islamic paradise on earth. To them, the economy is trivial next to Iran's epic struggle with "the Great Satan," America. They also want nuclear weapons so Iran will no longer fear America's (and Israel's) nuclear arsenal.

Between these factions are the *mainstream conservatives*. This group is wary of letting the economy get out of hand for fear of losing even more public support. Yet they seem to want a nuclear weapon—at the very least, to make the hard-liners happy. They've steered a middle course over the past 15 years, supporting terrorism and pursuing nuclear weapons, while moderating these courses just enough to allow feckless European and Asian governments to pretend that Iran is not dangerous.

	Pragmatists	Mainstream Conservatives	Radical Hard-Liners
Faction Leader	Former President Rafsanjani	Supreme Leader Khamanei	President Ahmadinejad
Priority: Fix Economy	High	High	Low
Priority: Improve Ties to U.S./West	High	Moderate/Low	Low
Priority: Nuclear Program	Moderate	High	High
Power Centers	Bureaucracy, Economic Ministries	Office of Supreme Leader, Supreme National Security Council	Presidency, Parliament, Judiciary, Revolutionary Guard
Current Status	Hanging On	First Among Equals	Gaining Ground

program and your support of terrorism, and do so in a manner that we can inspect and monitor, then we'll lift the U.S. economic sanctions, unfreeze the Shah's assets, integrate Iran into the global economy, sell you properly safeguarded lightwater reactors for nuclear energy, give you access to nuclear technology (without actually providing the facilities or the fissile material), provide you with security guarantees that we would not attack, and begin an arms control process in the Persian Gulf so you can feel more secure."

As for the sticks, Iran should be told that as long as it continues to pursue nuclear weapons, the international community will impose ever harsher economic sanctions. This threat puts the Iranian regime on the horns of a dilemma: Either it has to give up its nuclear program and support for terrorism or, by refusing the West's offer, it has to acknowledge to its people that the regime cares more about nuclear weapons and terrorism than it does about Iran's economy, its energy supply, and its relationship with the rest of the world. That is a decision the Iranian leadership is desperately trying to avoid.

For this option to work, the United States must be willing to offer up the bigger carrots that might clinch a deal, and the Europeans need to be willing to wield the big sticks. The Europeans and Japanese have been doing a fair

amount of trading with Iran, and if they were willing to cut those ties, it would be a heavy blow to Iran's economy. The Europeans have been good at regularly threatening to impose serious economic sanctions, but they have yet to put their money where their mouth is.

Meanwhile, the United States is offering to provide airplane parts for Iran's civilian fleet, back Iranian efforts to join the World Trade Organization, and support Europe's sale to Iran of lightwater reactors. That's not the full range of concessions that the Europeans, Russians and Chinese want to see before signing on to heavy

sanctions if Iran does the wrong thing.

If America and these other nuclear powers are able to consummate their own strange courtship, they will likely catch the Iranians in a vise, just as they did when they adopted a similar approach with the Libyans a decade ago. And there's every reason to believe that, like the Libyans, the Iranians would come to see it's in their best interests to accept the carrots to get rid of the sticks.

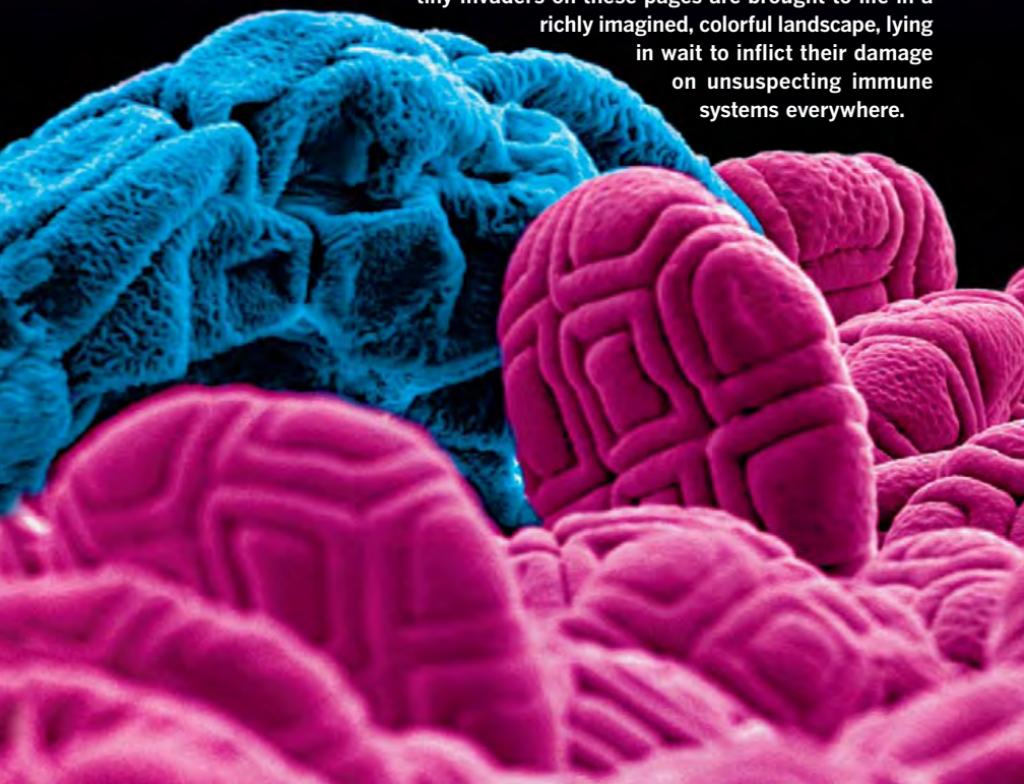
However, if the United States and its partners refuse to take these final steps together, it is very likely that the Iranians will once again slip through the gap between us. And that means, not too far down the road, we will all discover what it's like to live with a nuclear Iran. ■

52%
strongly
agree that
Israel is
illegitimate
and should
not exist.

SOURCE: RD/ZOGBY POLL

nothing to sneeze at?

Looking like plush, velvet-upholstered pillows in a psychedelic living room, these mod little shapes are really pollen particles—the kind that cause the agonies of itchy eyes, runny noses and uncontrollable sneezes for seasonal-allergy sufferers. Shot with a scanning electron microscope by *National Geographic* photographer Bob Sacha, the tiny invaders on these pages are brought to life in a richly imagined, colorful landscape, lying in wait to inflict their damage on unsuspecting immune systems everywhere.





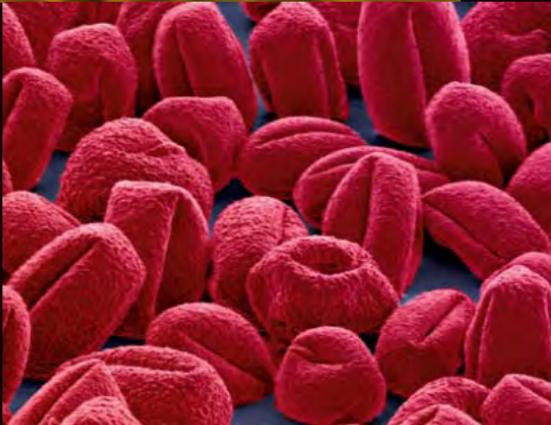
ACACIA TREE POLLEN When you inhale the proteins on the surface of a pollen grain (there are hundreds of types), they summon histamines, which cause you to sneeze and itch.



▲ **RAGWEED** Got fall allergies? This is the likely culprit, the most prevalent type of pollen. Each variety has its own aerodynamic design; here, spines capture wind currents, sending the little puffs aloft for miles.

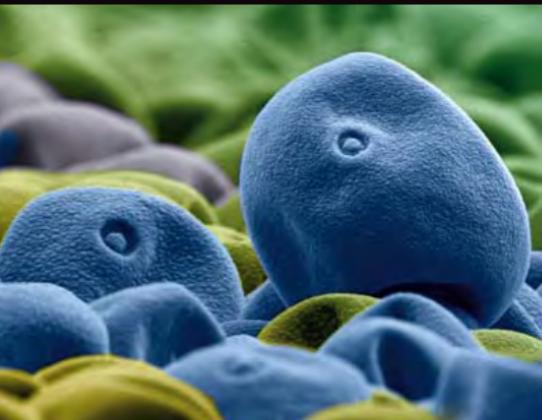
► **RED OAK** To get a pollen count, experts look at closeups like this and manually tabulate how many particles cling to a sticky glass slide.

rd.com To receive daily e-mails of your area's pollen count, go to rd.com/pollen.



► **TIMOTHY GRASS** Sniffling from grass pollen lasts about six weeks beginning late spring, ending when it gets hot and dry. Most allergists go on vacation in July.

▼ **MOLD SPORES** That nasty fuzzy stuff doesn't just thrive in your bathroom or basement, but also outside. When its host dries, flecks break free and find their way to you. Ahchoo!



The Accidental Doctor

After a gymnastics fall shattered his Olympic dreams, he found his true calling | BY GAIL CAMERON WESCOTT

ROBERT LEE'S dream of Olympic gold imploded on a gymnastics mat in Allentown, Pennsylvania. It happened in a split second on July 4, 1983, two days before his 18th birthday. The Los Angeles Games were still a year off, but Lee was working to master a risky move. He had done it hundreds of times—360-degree somersault, midair twist, two-hand landing and roll. But on this evening, as his fellow gymnasts watched in horror, he failed to gain enough

height and crashed to the ground on his chin.

"It felt as if someone had dumped a ton of sand on me and just my head was sticking out," Lee remembers. "I didn't know where my body was." The impact crushed his spinal cord at the seventh vertebra, causing paralysis of both his legs and arms. In an instant, he went from being an elite athlete to a quadriplegic.

A decade earlier, Robert Seung-bok Lee had emigrated from South Korea with his mother, father, brother and sister. "My parents



Since working with Dr. Lee, Lily Wilkinson, 5, who was paralyzed in a car accident, has regained some movement in her legs.

wanted us to have a bigger and better life in America," he says, "but it was tough." Leaving a spacious house behind in Seoul, the family squeezed into a one-bedroom apartment in Flushing, New York. Lee's pharmacist father, unable to get licensed in the United States, found work mopping floors at Jamaica Hospital, an hour's ride away by carpool. His mother, who had always stayed home to care for her children, took a job at the nearby Swingline stapler factory.

Lee knew no English; he thought if he spoke slowly and loudly in his native language, the other kids at school would understand him. When he unpacked the lunch his mother had made him—rice, tiny dried fish and spicy fried vegetables—his classmates screamed, "What is he *eating*?"

Frantic to fit in, Lee hurried home each day and copied words he didn't understand from the dictionary. He bought a skateboard and clothing with American labels, but he still felt like an outsider. "I had this emptiness inside me," he remembers, "and I didn't know how to fill it."

ONE SUMMER DAY IN 1976 while watching the Montreal Olympic Games on his family's small TV set, Lee found the answer. When Romanian gymnast Nadia Comaneci scored seven perfect 10s, Lee thought, That's me. "I wanted to wear all those gold medals and show the kids who belittled me that I was a proud South Korean."

He began sneaking through the back door at the Flushing YMCA to attend

open gymnastics workouts. "I had a passion for it from the beginning," he says. When he'd saved enough to enroll in classes, he began training on the pommel horse, rings and parallel bars. After, he would practice floor exercises on the grass in the botanical garden across from his apartment.

At age 15, Lee earned a spot at an Olympic training center in Allentown, Pennsylvania. His parents begged him not to go. He was their eldest son, they said, and it was his duty to focus on academics and go to college. "You're just going through some teenage phase," his father snapped. But Lee couldn't be stopped.

In the early '80s, he won two gold medals at the junior-level U.S. Nationals. On the day of his catastrophic injury, Lee, who had maintained his South Korean citizenship, qualified for his native country's national team and was on track to be named to its 1984 Olympic squad.

AFTER HIS ACCIDENT, Lee was rushed to Lehigh Valley Hospital where doctors surrounded him, inserting tubes everywhere. He remained conscious, though scared and woozy. "Don't do that," he shouted when an attendant began cutting off his favorite gym shorts. "I was still thinking about the big Olympic dream," he says. "I didn't believe it was over."

When his family arrived several hours later, his mother and sister broke down in tears. His father, with



Lee jokes with a patient (above left) and an occupational therapist. Using a device, he can keep chart notes.

a look that Lee has never forgotten, said, "See, this is what happened because you disobeyed your parents."

Lee spent the next three months immobilized with a metal halo screwed into his skull to prevent further injury to his neck. What hurt most was that his doctors didn't talk to him about his prognosis. "They'd poke and prod, talk among themselves in their jargon, then leave," Lee remembers. "I felt like a medical experiment." His anger and frustration sparked his own interest in medicine. "I decided that one day I was going to become a caring doctor who offered hope."

Shortly before Lee was discharged,

a doctor finally gave him the grim news—the accident had rendered him a quadriplegic. "My Olympic dream ended that day," Lee says. "The thing I had given my life to was over."

He spent most of the next year at Manhattan's famed Rusk Institute of Rehabilitation Medicine. He hated it. "I felt degraded doing piddling little exercises with three-pound weights attached to my wrists when I'd once been training for the Olympics," he says. But, through rigorous physical therapy, he regained minimal movement in his arms. He learned to write using a gadget fitted over his hand to stabilize a pen. His therapist worked with him on the streets of Manhattan, helping him master getting on and off buses and navigating crowds. By the end of his stay, he had learned to manage on his own.



Lee puts in eight miles a day training for the 2008 Paralympics in wheelchair racing.

not to abandon medicine. So, in 1993, Lee applied and was accepted at Dartmouth Medical School, where he became its first student in a wheelchair.

During New Hampshire's winters, Lee's chair got stuck in the snow; when it was stormy, he missed lectures. Impressed

That summer, he watched the 1984 Olympics at his parents' house. "Here I was, the first son who was supposed to make a name for my family, in a wheelchair, like a broken trophy," he says. "My dad never verbalized his disappointment, but I felt it. I wanted to reverse it with my accomplishments."

That fall, Lee enrolled at New York University. He adjusted well despite inevitable challenges—like falling out of his chair getting on a bus. "It freaked out the passengers," he says, laughing, "but I was a rambunctious college guy, and it didn't faze me at all."

What did faze him was the dean's refusal, during Lee's senior year, to recommend him for medical school. "He kept asking, 'How are you going to do this in a wheelchair?'" Lee recalls. For once, he gave up.

He decided instead to go to graduate school at Columbia University, and earned a master's in public health. While there, fellow students urged him

with his perseverance, classmates nicknamed him "S.B."—short not for his given name, Seung-bok, but for Super Boy. The moniker has stuck.

His parents, who returned to South Korea in the mid-'90s, didn't attend his 2001 graduation. "That was one of my biggest disappointments," Lee says. "I had worked so hard toward that day."

LEE KNEW HE WANTED to work in physical rehabilitation, but wondered how patients would react to him. At Johns Hopkins School of Medicine, where he served as chief resident in Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation, senior physicians noted that Lee provided a sense of hope to spinal cord injury patients that no able-bodied doctor could.

More than 20 years after his accident, Lee completed his residency in 2005 and began receiving job offers from around the country. He chose to

work at Baltimore's Kennedy Krieger Institute in a newly opened state-of-the-art spinal cord injury center with John McDonald, a pioneering neurologist who worked with Christopher Reeve before he died. "In the past," explains Dr. McDonald, "people with spinal cord injury received acute care followed by rehabilitation—then nothing." McDonald advocates patterned exercise and electric stimulation, which can awaken dormant nerves.

Today Lee, who became a U.S. citizen in 1984, lives alone in a two-bedroom Baltimore apartment. He drives himself to Kennedy Krieger each morning in a van equipped with hand controls and an automatic ramp. Lee develops therapeutic plans for roughly a dozen patients a week. "He knows exactly what the patients are feeling," says Dr. Cristina Sadowsky, the center's clinical director. "They open up to him with questions they would never ask otherwise, about

things like sexual function and bladder problems."

Lee no longer dreams of walking again. "If there were an opportunity, I'd be one of the first to want it," he says. "But I'm useful doing the work I'm doing, and I'm finding my life rewarding." He hopes one day to return to South Korea and work with spinal cord injury patients there.

Last January, Lee's parents traveled from South Korea to attend a conference where their son was speaking. At the hotel that night, Lee's father said the words his son had long been waiting to hear: "I'm so proud of you."

At a rally at Kennedy Krieger last May, a five-year-old boy perched in a small motorized wheelchair pointed at Lee. When his mother told him the man was a doctor, the little boy couldn't contain his delight. "Hey, look!" he shouted. "That doctor can't walk either!" Dr. Lee wheeled over and gave the boy a great big hug.

CALLING REWRITE!

Going to Charleston? Take a tour bus. One company promises to show you everything. Its brochure even boasts "See places that no longer exist."

Submitted by PERRY PRIEST

Very little will offend your senses more than three million gallons of liquid manure spilling from a dairy farm. But one resigned resident of Lowville, New York, wasn't at all disturbed. He described the odor to the *Rome* (New York) *Daily Sentinel* this way, "It's your typical dairy air."

Submitted by JANET FINN

Do you know what's on your buns? According to Reuters, "Quaker Maid Meats said it would recall 94,400 pounds of frozen ground beef patties."

America's Worst Judges

Talk about injustice! How do these people stay on the bench? **The 2006 Broken Gavel Award winners.**

BY DALE VAN ATTA

ONE HAD A HABIT of viewing pornography on his office computer. Another spread a nasty rumor with an eye toward damaging a rival's career. A third is accused of callously ignoring a desperate woman's pleas for help.

Bad as that behavior sounds, it's worse when you consider that the ones doing the misbehaving are judges. That's right—people we pay to know the difference between right and wrong. When judges cross the line separating the two, they undermine one of the bedrock institutions of our democratic society, and we all lose. Introducing this year's Broken Gavel Award winners—three judges who've truly earned the dishonor.



Brandt Downey

6TH CIRCUIT COURT, FLORIDA
SALARY: \$139,497

Last year, technicians in Downey's Clearwater courthouse weren't surprised when viruses infected the computer in his chambers. It had already happened once because of his visits to pornographic websites. He'd been warned not to surf such sites again.

The first offense had remained his dirty little secret, but this time word got back to Chief Judge David Demers. Downey met with De-

mers, then took a leave and agreed to see a psychologist with expertise in treating "addictive behaviors." The psychologist ruled out any disorder and, within days, Downey was back at work. But his problems weren't over.

After Downey's return, Florida's Judicial Qualifications Commission (JQC), which had begun an investigation, accused him of sexually harassing two female lawyers. In 2003 and 2004, the panel alleged, Downey had "displayed an inordinate interest" in one of the women—going out of his way to watch her work, making embarrassing comments about her looks, and at least once asking her on a date.

In the case of the second woman, the JQC backed up its harassment charge with e-mails the agency says



DOWNEY

>Admitted to viewing pornography on a government-owned computer. Offense became public after viruses infected his computer.

he'd sent her, one of which read "U LOOKED GOOD ENUF TO—OH WELL, WISHFUL THINKING—C U SOON I HOPE."

Downey denied harassing the women, and both signed affidavits to that effect. The JQC did not disclose the original source of the allegations.

Meanwhile, the JQC hit Downey with another charge—the undermining of one man's right to a fair trial. When lawyers for a murder defendant heard last year that a juror had dozed off during the trial, they raised the issue with Downey. He dismissed

their complaints, saying he couldn't be sure the man's napping hurt his ability to deliberate. But the judge allegedly knew about the man's sleeping before the lawyers did; another juror had sent him a note about it early in the trial. The JQC charged that Downey didn't share the note; he destroyed it.

In May, Downey and the JQC struck an agreement that keeps him on the bench until his term ends in January. He admitted viewing pornography on his computer, but denied the other charges. His pension: \$100,000 a year.

Dana Fortinberry

52ND CIRCUIT COURT, MICHIGAN
SALARY: \$138,272

They say justice is blind. When it comes to Fortinberry's feelings about

fellow Republican judge Kelley Kostin, it appears hatred is blind too.

The bad blood between the two began to flow in 2002, when they faced off for an open district-court seat in Oakland County. Fortinberry was better known, having run before in the wealthy suburban area north of Detroit. She seemed to treat Kostin's campaign as a personal insult, never once shaking her foe's hand. And even after winning the seat, Fortinberry harbored a nasty grudge against Kostin.

"You might think that having won, Dana could afford to be gracious," says Oakland County Executive L. Brooks Patterson, a Republican who urged Fortinberry to shed her hard feelings and back Kostin for the next open judgeship. Fortinberry's answer: She'd do what she could to see that Kostin never got elected.

And that's just what she did. When Kostin ran in 2004, Fortinberry backed another hopeful—one rated "not qualified" by the local bar association. (Kostin was rated "well qualified.")

The race turned ugly when the county's deputy sheriffs' union endorsed Kostin. Fortinberry responded with a lengthy letter in which she implied that Kostin may have been connected to the death of her husband's first wife. Fortinberry claimed that

in 1989, Kelley Ott (Kostin's maiden name) began an affair with lawyer Robert Kostin; that Robert's wife, Judith, learned about it; that shortly afterward, Judith Kostin was found dead at her White Lake home; and that the inquiry into her death was hushed up because the local police chief was Robert's friend. (Judith Kostin did die in 1989. Police ruled the death a suicide by carbon monoxide poisoning.)

It was later alleged that this wasn't the first time Fortinberry had made such claims. The state's Judicial Tenure Commission (JTC) charged that four months before she wrote the letter she'd told a similar tale at a police union meeting.

The Kostins were stunned. "I feel like a stalking victim," Kelley Kostin said.

Stung by the attack on its credibility, the White Lake Police Department asked that the state police conduct an independent investigation into Judith Kostin's death. That probe confirmed suicide as the cause of death, and Kelley Kostin went on to win a district-court seat.

In May 2005, the JTC charged Fortinberry with two counts of misconduct. The judge admitted to spreading the rumor about the Kostins without making any ef-



FORTINBERRY

>Admitted to spreading a scurrilous story about a political rival, in the process suggesting that the rival and her husband had some connection to the death of the husband's first wife.

fort to find out if it was true, but denied airing the matter at the police union meeting. Her punishment for that admission: a simple Michigan Supreme Court order of "public censure." Fortinberry never missed a day on the bench in connection with the case, and, according to Robert Kostin, never apologized for her behavior toward the victims of her rumormongering. She is up for reelection in 2008.

Richard Palumbo

5TH DISTRICT COURT, MARYLAND
SALARY: \$118,502

Five years ago, when Yvette Cade, 32, married Roger Hargrave, 34, he was already a heavy drinker with a criminal record that included convictions for drug possession, robbery and firearms charges. Still, she believed she could help him lead a clean life.

As the marriage went on, though, Hargrave became more and more physically and verbally abusive. Eventually, Cade decided that she'd had enough. In December 2004, she separated from Hargrave. When he kept harassing her, she sought and received a protective order that required him to stay away. Palumbo issued that order.

Cade was shocked when she was notified months later of a hearing called at Hargrave's request. He wanted the

order to be amended so the two could seek counseling.

On the day of the hearing, Cade showed up in the Prince George's County courthouse. Hargrave failed to, and sent word that he wanted to drop his petition. But the matter didn't end there. Cade asked to present evidence of Hargrave's recent harassment. "Your Honor, he's violating the [protective] order," she pleaded, offering photographs to make her case. "He's contacting my family. He's contacting me. He's intimidating my daughter and he's vandalizing other people's property. I want an immediate absolute divorce."

Instead of examining whether Hargrave had violated the order—and then taking action—Palumbo responded with stunning insensitivity: "Well, I'd like to be six-foot-five. But that's not what we do here. You have to go to divorce court for that."

True enough, but Palumbo did have the authority to enforce protective orders. Instead, he abruptly announced,

"This case is dismissed at the request of the petitioner [Hargrave]."

Amazingly, Cade wasn't even going to get a chance to argue that her husband was still harassing her.

"He was trying to force me to go to



PALUMBO

>Accused of mistreating women who came before him seeking protective orders in domestic-abuse cases, and using his status as a judge to sway police and another motorist in two traffic incidents.

marriage counseling," Cade argued.

"It might not be a bad idea," Palumbo said, "if you want to save the marriage."

"I don't want to, because ..." Cade continued.

Palumbo interrupted again, saying: "Get a lawyer and go to divorce court. This petition is denied—or dismissed. I mean, it's silly."

With that, though he blames a clerical error, Palumbo effectively dismissed the protective order standing between Cade and Hargrave's abusive behavior.

Three weeks later, Hargrave entered the mobile-phone store where Cade worked, and doused her with gas. She tried to flee, but he set her ablaze outside the store. He then walked back inside, got his car keys and drove off. (In April, he was convicted on attempted murder and assault charges.)

Speedy medical assistance spared Cade's life, but she wound up with burns on 60 percent of her body.

The furor over Hargrave's vicious attack eventually led the Maryland Commission on Judicial Disabilities

(CJD) to investigate Palumbo and make formal accusations that his insensitive treatment of Cade was not an isolated incident.

The CJD also alleged that Palumbo's bad behavior extended beyond the courtroom walls. When he was caught speeding one day last year, he mentioned his position to the state trooper writing him a ticket. The trooper later voided the citation. Another time, the CJD alleged, Palumbo tried to dodge responsibility for a traffic accident by telling the other motorist and a police officer at the scene that he was a judge.

Palumbo, who declined to speak to *Reader's Digest*, has been limited to administrative duties since October. In April, the CJD filed formal misconduct charges against him, alleging a series of lapses in his handling of protective orders. In a 14-page response, Palumbo denies all charges, saying they are "without merit and should be dismissed." An August hearing is set.

Among the cases cited by the commission is that of Yvette Cade, whose recovery continues. So far, she has undergone more than a dozen surgeries.

BREAK OPEN THE ENGLISH-TO-WORLD DICTIONARY

Not sure how to find an exit in southwest Namibia? Just read the sign: "Go back toward your behind."

If you're in Mexico and thirsty, this sign seems to suggest tourists should stick with the *cerveza*: "Warning! Water for the toilet is not drinkable."

A language barrier in Thailand? No way! One sign assures Americans "Of Clouse We Spoke England!"

From Signsighting by DOUG LANSKY (Lonely Planet)

LAUGHTER, THE BEST MEDICINE



"Well, yes, I am happy, but I could be happier."

TWO SURGEONS and a dermatologist were having lunch in the hospital cafeteria when the first two doctors began to laugh hysterically.

"What's so funny?"

the dermatologist asked, confused.

"Sorry, you wouldn't understand," one of the surgeons said. "It's an inside joke."

Submitted by ANDREW HARGADO

More bad news for pessimists. According to a new Dutch study, optimists live longer.

BEN WALSH

SOME NEW YORKERS were on a safari in the jungles of a little-explored faraway country when they were captured by cannibals.

"Oh, yes!" the chief of the tribe exclaimed. "We're going to put you all into big pots of water, cook you and eat you."

"You can't do that to me," the tour leader said. "I'm the editor of *The New Yorker!*"

"Well," he responded, "tonight you will be editor-in-chief!"

Submitted by HERM LONDON

Shiver Me ...

Funny

How much do pirates pay to have their ears pierced?

A buck-an-ear.

Funnier

How did the pirate stop smoking?

He used the patch.

Funniest

Where do pirates go for breakfast?

IHOP.

A Freudian slip is when you say one thing, but mean your mother.

Submitted by KAITLIN BELLAMY

Why do black widow spiders kill their mates after mating?

To stop the snoring before it starts.

Submitted by ARLANA LOCKETT

VISETING THE psych ward, a man asked how doctors decide to institutionalize a patient.

"Well," the director said, "we fill a bathtub, then offer a teaspoon, a teacup and a bucket to the patient, and ask him to empty the tub."

"I get it," the visitor said. "A normal person would use the bucket because it's the biggest."

"No," the director said. "A normal person would pull the plug."

Submitted by JOSH ROBERTS

THIS NEW TV series called *Big Love* is about a guy with three wives in Utah. You know what the penalty is for having three wives? Three mothers-in-law.

JAY LENO

on The Tonight Show (NBC)

I AM A YANKEES FAN," a first-grade teacher explains to her class. "Who likes the Yankees?" Everyone raises a hand except one little girl. "Janie," the teacher says, surprised. "Why didn't you raise your hand?"

"I'm not a Yankees fan."

"Well, if you are not a Yankees fan, then what team do you like?"

"The Red Sox," Janie answers.

"Why in the world are you a Red Sox fan?"

"Because my mom and dad are Red Sox fans."

"That's no reason to be a Red Sox fan," the teacher replies, annoyed. "You don't always have to be just like your parents. What if your mom and dad were morons? What would you be then?"

"A Yankees fan."

Submitted by TOM ZAHN

Can You Top This?

Q: What did the cherry tree say to the farmer?

A: *Quit picking on me.*

Now that we've established that cherry trees can talk, can you come up with a better answer? E-mail your funniest original punch line to us at comedy@rd.com, subject: August, along with your home city and state. If your line is the best (and the first of its kind), you'll win fame and riches. Well, not really, but you'll get a cool \$100.

Anyone know why our dinosaur friend crossed the road? June's winning punch line is from Tom Barbrick of Zionsville, Indiana: To get to the cave, man.

Looking for more laughs? XM Satellite Radio's Laugh USA channel features clean comedy 24/7. Wanna hear? Tune in to xmradio.com.

THE NEIGHBOR FROM **HELL**

What would you do if your family and your home became a target? | BY MELBA NEWSOME

EDWARDSVILLE SITS ON THE LOW NORTH BANK of the slow-flowing Kansas River west of Kansas City. A small, quiet town on the outer edge of the urban sprawl with six churches and two baseball diamonds, a shopping mall a few miles down the interstate. It's about as Middle American as towns come these days, with family businesses, local political squabbles—a place where everyone knows everyone else.

So when Donna Ozuna and her daughter Carmen moved to 94th Street, Stephanie Eickhoff, who lived across the way in an 80-year-old white A-frame house, remembers baking a batch of Valentine cupcakes in February 1999 to welcome them. Ozuna, a short, stocky woman with intense eyes and



The fear and trauma have finally ended for Jim and Stephanie Eickhoff and their kids.

black hair streaked with gray, was neither rude nor friendly. She thanked Stephanie for the goodies but didn't invite her inside. Ozuna claimed she had moved to town to escape the noise and kids from the school near her home in Kansas City. But it didn't take long for people to get the feeling that she was different—more guarded and easily riled than most folks in the neighborhood.

Ozuna seemed obsessive about her privacy and her property, cranky when kids played in the street, set foot in her yard or rode their bikes too close to her lawn. She guarded her brick ranch house as if it were a castle under siege. Over time, neighbors say, rela-

'IT WASN'T A FEUD. IT WAS ONE-SIDED. HER AGAINST EVERYONE.'

tionships went from cool to downright frosty, and small encounters escalated into rows. They claim she complained to authorities about their dogs, shouted obscenities when someone cut through her yard, and routinely yelled at neighborhood children.

Trouble started, Lesli Trout says, almost as soon as she and her husband, Jesse, a heavy-equipment mechanic, moved into a house nearby. One day their 13-year-old son, Jeremy, came home looking scared and upset. He'd been out riding his bike and stopped at the edge of the Ozunas' yard. At that point, the Trouts say, Carmen stormed out of the house, told Jeremy to keep out of their yard and threatened him.

When a visibly upset Jeremy told her what happened, Lesli thought there must be some misunderstanding. "I walked over to apologize for him." Instead, she says, she encountered a still-agitated Carmen, who told her to keep Jeremy off her property or she'd sic her dogs on him.

Jesse would later try to smooth things over with the Ozunas as well. "I want to be friendly with my neighbors," he said. "I met Donna halfway in the street and apologized for anything my children may have done. She never spoke to me or looked at me the whole time." Things deteriorated and recriminations flew back and forth.

At first, folks around town charac-

terized the tension and bad feelings as "a neighborhood feud." It happens from time to time in neighborhoods everywhere, and usually runs its course into a silent standoff. But Lesli Trout says that's not what happened here. "It wasn't a feud. It was one-sided. Her against everyone else."

And, indeed, Ozuna's relationships with her neighbors were becoming more strained and hostile.

Fourth of July barbecues at Jim and Stephanie Eickhoff's home are legendary in Edwardsville. The county lawman and his wife had always been active in local affairs, and had a wide circle of friends. On Independence Day, 2001, about 70 people—family,



The Eickhoffs at home; the Ozunas once lived in the house in the background.

friends, city officials—gathered on the five-acre property for the annual celebration. Adults and kids alike swam and played games in the 26' x 14' inground pool, danced to tunes played by a local DJ, and dined on Kansas City barbecue. Just after sundown, the night lit up with sparklers, firecrackers, bottle rockets and Roman candles.

The Ozunas had not been invited this year, and perhaps that perceived slight set the stage for what happened next. When sparks from a Roman candle landed on her side of the street, party-goers say Ozuna charged out and began screaming. People tried to cool her down, but failed.

"Donna, it's the Fourth of July," Jesse Trout told her. "Can we give it a break for just one day?"

Ozuna's response, neighbors say, was to threaten to get a gun and shoot

him. She then turned and headed back to her house. The police were called—and Ozuna and her daughter were arrested for making criminal threats.

Once they were released, however, the conflicts escalated. According to the Trouts, Ozuna phoned police with an endless string of complaints: The Trouts played music too loud; their children walked in her yard; they left a light on in the garage. She called animal control, the Trouts say, to come destroy a mad dog she claimed had tried to attack her. The dog turned out to be the Trouts' docile Dalmatian, which was firmly secured in their backyard.

Someone called the Department of Social and Rehabilitation Services (SRS) to investigate allegations that the Trouts' children were being neglected and abused.



Lesli and Jesse Trout eventually left the neighborhood for good.

"They claimed my kids went around begging for food and that I would leave them alone all weekend," recalls Lesli. The SRS keeps the source of complaints confidential, but the Troutts knew whom to suspect. Each time, the allegations proved false.

It took nearly five months, but in December 2001, the district attorney charged Donna and Carmen Ozuna for the Fourth of July incident.

In addition to witnesses who were at the party, people from the neighborhood where Ozuna had lived prior to moving to Edwardsville testified at the April 2002 trial. They told the court that they, too, had endured verbal threats and baseless complaints lodged with police, animal control and code-enforcement authorities.

Two former neighbors even testified that Carmen had pulled a gun on

the mother of schoolchildren who cut through her yard.

The jury deliberated for less than eight hours before reaching their verdict. Not guilty.

The neighbors on 94th Street were stunned. For the Troutts, the acquittal was the last straw. "I knew this would give her more reason to be a bully," Jesse says. They moved out of town.

Once they were gone, a conflict began with the Eickhoffs. Soon they were on the receiving end of police visits. SRS caseworkers began knocking on their door, saying someone had reported them for beating and starving their children.

"Caseworkers went through my cabinets to see if we had food," recalls Stephanie. "Our kids had to strip and be checked for bruises. The SRS interviewed them, asking terrible ques-

tions. I was angry and humiliated."

Alvin Doty, the local police officer who took charge of the case, says of all the false charges and allegations, "It was mental warfare, and the reports were generated simply for retaliation."

For her part, Ozuna claimed she was the target of harassment.

In March 2002, when Stephanie decided to run for mayor, Ozuna put up a "Vote Eickhoff Mayor" poster in her yard. Next to it she placed two handwritten signs. One read "Now, It's My Turn." The other "U R NEXT."

Like the Trouts, the Eickhoffs and their three kids—Arthur, 6, Lillian, 8, and Ashley, 14—began to feel they were prisoners in their own home.

After getting her side of the story, the FBI apparently dropped the case. Stephanie never heard about it again.

AN HOUR AFTER SUNRISE on April 21, 2004, Jim Eickhoff turned into his long, concrete driveway. He, Stephanie and the kids had been away for a night of fun and relaxation. They'd stayed at the Great Wolf Lodge, a hotel and spa with an indoor water park in Kansas City. Jim had dropped Ashley off at school about 15 minutes earlier.

On the front porch, he found a package wrapped in brown paper and masking tape. The parcel had been sent from Lenexa, the neighboring town, addressed to "James and Steph-

'A STRANGE PACKAGE CAME IN THE MAIL. DON'T TOUCH IT.'

The children were no longer allowed to play in the yard or the pool—or even go out on the school grounds during recess. Stephanie slept downstairs to keep an eye on the house across the street where Donna and her new husband, Ralph, lived.

When Stephanie Eickhoff won her race for mayor, an FBI agent turned up at her home on inauguration day. According to Stephanie, the FBI had received a civil-rights complaint alleging that the Eickhoffs were racists, intent on running Ozuna out of the neighborhood because she was Hispanic. The charge seems strange given the fact that the community is racially mixed.

anie Eickhoff and Family." Inside were a box of glazed doughnuts, a Bavarian-cream coffeecake and a two-liter bottle of Vess root beer.

There was also an unsigned card congratulating Stephanie on being elected mayor. Jim immediately suspected something was wrong. Stephanie had been mayor for more than a year. Why would anyone be sending congratulations now?

Looking closer, he could see that the seal on the soda bottle had been broken and it had a slightly green tinge. He called Stephanie, who was still at the Lodge. "A strange package came in the mail," he told her. "Don't touch it. Don't even go inside the



**Investigating officer Alvin Doty;
Donna Ozuna at a news conference.**

house. Call the police and have them meet you here."

An hour later, Stephanie arrived, followed by two police officers. They took one look at the contents and removed them to send to the Kansas Bureau of Investigation (KBI) for testing. A couple of days later, investigating officer Alvin Doty phoned. "We have reason to believe that this was an attempt on your life," he said. "Perhaps you should leave your house until we get this straightened out."

The Eickhoffs spent the next six weeks staying with friends and relatives. They returned home in mid-June determined to stand their ground. "This is our home," says Stephanie. "Running is a bad message to send your kids."

In the meantime, the KBI deter-

mined that the doughnuts and soda contained lethal amounts of lye and antifreeze. The Edwardsville police found evidence in Ozuna's garbage linking her to the package contents. And a postal worker in Lenexa identified her as the sender.

On July 1, police arrested Ozuna and husband Ralph for attempted first-degree murder. The two made bail and were released. They held a news conference on the steps of the Wyandotte County courthouse proclaiming their innocence and again accusing the Eickhoffs of racially motivated harassment. Ozuna insisted that she and her

family had always minded their own business and had never bothered their neighbors.

From July until March, the couple was free on bail, living across the street from the

Eickhoffs. Then on March 31, 2005, someone reported to the police that Ozuna had once again threatened the Eickhoffs. A judge ordered her back to jail.

TRIAL WAS SET FOR JULY 25, then postponed until September 19. Facing up to 20 years in prison, Donna Ozuna pleaded to two lesser felony counts of criminal threat. Her husband, who faced up to 16 years, pleaded to one misdemeanor count of assault.

Ozuna received 18 months probation, her husband six months. They

had moved from Edwardsville and were ordered to stay out of town.

Plea bargaining seems outrageous to many citizens, but often offers a means to expedite the judicial process, get quicker relief for the plaintiffs and reduced terms for the accused. Though people in their neighborhood feel Ozuna got off easy, Stephanie and Jim Eickhoff are thrilled that they got their lives back—that their children can go outside to play and go to school without fear, that their neighborhood is peaceful and friendly once again.

Bonnie Jacobson, a clinical psychologist and adjunct professor at New York University, says that feuding behavior is common among people with fragile personalities. “They feel easily invalidated and react with rage at the smallest infraction. So if a person crosses a boundary into their ‘territory,’ it’s not like a tap on the shoulder; it’s like a punch in the back. If a

family member doesn’t side with them, they feel betrayed. Trying to make peace with them often doesn’t work, because it makes them feel justified, and their behavior escalates. You have to be firm and tell them, ‘That’s over the line.’”

Sitting in her living room with the wistful sound of a freight train passing west down the Union Pacific line, Stephanie Eickhoff shudders at the prospect of what could have happened if the children had somehow come home first that day. If they had unsuspectingly opened the package and eaten the doughnuts and taken a drink.

With her family’s ordeal behind her, Stephanie Eickhoff can begin to relax in her home again. And at last report, Donna Ozuna has moved on to another neighborhood in Kansas.

rd.com Go to rd.com/neighbor for more tips and to share your own strategies for dealing with difficult neighbors.

ACTUALLY, I FEEL PRETTY GOOD

During a recent visit, my usually stoic mother was plagued with a cough so bad she agreed to let me take her to my doctor. As she was filling out the new patient form, I noticed that she seemed to get cheerier and cheerier as she ticked off “no” to any family history of cancer, diabetes, kidney disease, asthma, etc.

The mystery was solved when she handed the completed form back to the nurse and said, “I’m so glad no one in my family died of anything serious.”

BILLEE STALLINGS

My fun-loving friend came back from the hospital with some bad news: He had diabetes. “The doctor told me to change my diet and stop drinking wine,” he said.

“I’m sorry to hear that,” I said. “What are you going to do?”

He shrugged. “Change doctors.”

JAMES BLACK

Greetings From Outer Space

For a vacation that's really out there, book now for a voyage to the stars

BY SACHA ZIMMERMAN

I AM FLOATING peacefully up to the ceiling. Below me, my teammates somersault and drift, their blue flight suits twisting in a web of acrobatics. Bubbles of water float by my face, taunting my dry throat; I try to soar toward the drops, mouth agape, but the water is quicker than I am. We are all grinning from ear to ear, when



we hear our flight coach shout, "Feet down! Coming out!"

I push off the ceiling and aim for the cabin floor. I tumble into the others as we laugh all the way to the mat. Once there, I lie down flat and gaze at the very ceiling my spine brushed against just moments before. The lead-blanket pressure I've come to expect falls over my body. But soon I feel my limbs lifting on their own, and I can fly again.

This is not science fiction, or a hallucination. I have flown—so will you.

The teams at ZERO-G and its parent

What may start as hourlong suborbital flights **could** finish with retirement homes on Mars.

company, Space Adventures, are ready to fly you into weightlessness and let you discover what it's like to float through outer space. Forget everything you know about Isaac Newton's lessons and the apple that falls to the ground. In zero gravity, you are not tethered to Earth. Instead, you are the Bionic Man, a gold-medal Olympic gymnast, the star of *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon*. The slightest touch, jump or push propels you into flight.

So how do we get not just an elite group of astronauts and scientists, but a group of ordinary citizens who

are mesmerized by the heavens, into the great beyond? Well, it starts small.

When I experienced weightlessness, it wasn't while hovering over the stars. Rather, I was hovering over a particularly bland swath of Tampa, Florida.

ZERO-G, a private space-tourism group, has reconfigured a Boeing 727 cargo plane into a safe cabin for wannabe astronauts. The ZERO-G plane leaves the Fort Lauderdale, Florida, airport and heads for a tract of private airspace. Once there, the plane repeats a series of parabolas, movements similar to going up and down one hill after another (imagine an 8,000-foot roller coaster). At the tip of each parabola, the entire plane dips into weightlessness for approximately 30 seconds at a time.

This pattern is repeated about 15 times, giving the passengers roughly four and a half minutes of altered gravity: two Martian-gravity parabolas (one-third your weight), two lunar-gravity parabolas (one-sixth your weight) and 11 zero-gravity parabolas (complete weightlessness). Amazingly, the flight feels straight, and motion sickness was never on my mind. Floating was actually relaxing; one of the flight coaches even encouraged us to "Zen out"—as opposed to practicing our Spider-Man impressions—for one parabola.

Currently, a gravity-defying trip will

run you about \$3,750, but that price is apt to come down. With a second ZERO-G team already at the Kennedy Space Center in Florida, and a third planned for Las Vegas, experiencing weightlessness may become as ordinary as going to Disney World. In the future, a trip to suborbital space and even the moon may be a reasonable alternative to a vacation in Maui or Paris.

Peter Diamandis, chairman of the foundation that awards the Ansari X-Prize for space exploration, and founder, chairman and CEO of ZERO-G—believes that a ticket to view Earth from a suborbital rocket, now more than \$100,000, will cost only \$10,000 or less in a decade.

The public demand for space tourism already seems to be in place. According to Eric Anderson, president and CEO of Space Adventures, the company has a \$3 million trust composed of deposits from clients waiting for their chance at a suborbital space flight. And it has several clients willing to pony up \$20 million for trips from Kazakhstan to the International Space Station (where the first official space tourist, millionaire Dennis Tito, famously spent a week). And now Space Adventures is developing a commercial spaceport in Singapore, and another near Dubai. The United

Floating free inside a plane at it soars and plunges into weightlessness.



Arab Emirates has granted airspace clearance for suborbital space flights, which will contribute to the UAE's rapidly expanding luxury tourism market.

With committed venture capitalists putting up extraordinary cash prizes for engineers to create rockets that can easily and affordably go in and out of space, it won't necessarily be the government or NASA that funds the next big leap in space exploration. The \$10 million Ansari X-Prize went to Burt Rutan, creator of *Spaceship One*, which exceeded a 100-kilometer threshold twice in two weeks, and which cost \$20 million, about as much to make as a luxury yacht.

Working with Rutan and the *Spaceship One* prototype, billionaire Sir

Richard Branson has started Virgin Galactic. Branson expects space flights on Virgin to begin around 2007 at \$200,000 per seat.

Branson isn't the only billionaire space enthusiast. Jeff Bezos, founder of Amazon.com, is heading a company known as Blue Origin, which plans to offer competing suborbital space flights. Currently, the secretive project is housed at a launch facility in west Texas. Meanwhile, video game magnate John Carmack is leading a team called Armadillo Aero-

space to create a computer-controlled spacecraft.

LIKE ANY MAJOR TASK, space travel is an evolutionary process. What may start as hourlong suborbital flights could finish with retirement homes on Mars. In the meantime, rocketing into space still means enormous costs, violent re-entries and very real dangers. That's why Buzz Aldrin, who in 1969 became the second man to walk on the moon, is an adamant supporter of a cooperative space-tourism

Earth View, Please

Robert Bigelow knows how to build hotels. The Las Vegas mogul is the founder of Budget Suites of America and an outer-space enthusiast. So it's not surprising that one of his future hotels won't be in glitzy Vegas but hovering over planet Earth. After buying the rights to TransHab, a canceled NASA development project, Bigelow put together a group of advanced space engineers and built what has been dubbed the CSS (Commercial Space Station) Skywalker. This inflatable hotel is made of polymers that would expand once the hotel is shot into space, where its life-support

system would also kick in and fill the light structure with breathable air. Using lightweight inflatable technology is a crucial component of keeping down costs; shuttling metal structures into space has proved prohibitively expensive.

Mike Gold, corporate counsel for Bigelow Aerospace, says that tourism is just a starting point. The company hopes to create mixed-use facilities where tourist money will aid scientists' work with advanced material fabrication, microgravity experiments and biotech applications.

But for those mainly interested in space leisure,

Howard J. Wolff is happy to help. As senior vice president of the architecture firm Wimberly Allison Tong & Goo, Wolff has been working on unique hospitality designs for years.

His dream for a hotel of the future? He wants to recycle the external fuel tanks from the space shuttle, connecting them all in a ring. Then, inflatable compartments would fill out the rings where, Wolff says, there would be zero-gravity viewing decks, areas for weightless three-dimensional sports, and even a honeymoon suite where couples could experience, ahem, romance while weightless.

project between the government and the private sector.

While private efforts have had some success creating suborbital rockets, it's the government that has the expertise to go farther into space, Aldrin says. "The novelty of suborbital flights may wane—like bungee jumping." The real attractions, he says, are the moon and Mars. With NASA-built rockets, top scientists and paying customers, it's a combination, Aldrin believes, that can be competitive in a tourist market. "If we don't do it," he explains, "others will, and we'll have to play catch-up."

Another reason why a new era in space exploration is dawning derives from a survivalist instinct. Stephen Hawking has argued that one day Earth will no longer be habitable due to war, a cosmic or human accident, or a dearth of existential resources. The human race may need new places to settle. What more American way to

start a new civilization than with brave explorers settling in uncharted territory?

Rocketing into space seems as natural as Vespucci exploring new worlds. Our curiosity compels us to reach beyond the known, catch a glimpse of infinity or look back at our favorite planet from the stars. Today, we might glimpse a few hours and several sunrises and sunsets with suborbital flights; tomorrow, we may be drinking "cosmos" politans and taking in views of Earth from the Moon Motel.

After flying weightless 30,000 feet over Florida, I couldn't help thinking, What if I were even higher? What if I were at the edge of space? What if I were on the moon? What if I could be weightless for hours instead of seconds at a time? I was left wanting more. As John Glenn said when he emerged from his space capsule in 1962, "Boy, that was a real fireball of a ride!"

FAT CHANCE



The mayor of St. Louis wants his constituents to slim down. And for good reason, said Conan O'Brien, on *Late Night With Conan O'Brien*. "The people of St. Louis knew they had a problem when someone got stuck walking through the Arch."

On *The Tonight Show*, Jay Leno revealed that researchers have found an enzyme in the brain that can control obesity. "They said if it wasn't for our brains, we would all be thin. That's why supermodels are so skinny."

Submitted by SHARON KANSAS





BOOK BONUS

My mother and
I were cruelly
separated when
I was four.

reunion



It took years for
us to find each
other again.

By Mary A. Fischer

FROM "STEALING LOVE"

1

MY MOTHER HAD BEEN GONE from my life for a year when my father took my sister, Kate, and me to visit her. It was about an hour from our home in the San Fernando Valley, near Los Angeles, to Camarillo State Hospital, where my father had committed her in 1955. But it might as well have been halfway around the world for how seldom we saw each other. A heavy curtain had fallen when Mom left. Sitting on the grass under a magnolia tree waiting to see her again, Kate and I, eight and five years old, were silent, subdued by the unsettling prospect of what condition Mom would be in. What would she look like? How would she act?

Reports from the doctors indicated she'd been going through some tough times, especially the first six months, my father said. She cried a lot, and at night, when she called out for Kate and me, the doctors tranquilized her.

Suddenly, walking toward us in the distance, we saw her, or who we thought was her. But this woman seemed old and unsteady on her feet as she shuffled along, holding the arm of a man in a white uniform.

I felt goose bumps springing on my arms.

Yes, it was Mom. But her red hair, once so thick and shiny, was now dry and choppy, all the natural waves gone. Once so attentive and full of life, Mom seemed listless, her eyes sad, searching. Her face frightened me most. Webs of ruptured blood vessels crisscrossed her skin, providing a map of the violence she had endured. It would be years before I understood better what had happened to her: She and many other patients had been subjected, against their will, to paralyzing electroshock treatments.

Sitting down on the blanket, Mom pulled us close, first Kate and then me. I had longed for this moment, figured everything would return to normal once I fell into her embrace. She would bake again and take care of me; she would play the piano as she loved to. We would be a family again.

She tried her best to make small talk. How grown-up we looked! she said. How pretty my hair was. And Queenie, how was the little devil? I began chattering on and on about our beagle's habit of digging holes under the fence, and Mom smiled, seeming genuinely interested.

As the sun slipped behind the mountains and a light breeze blew, we gathered our things to leave. We promised we'd come back soon.

That's when Mom blurted out, "I don't belong here. Really, I don't."

Her words froze in the air. Kate and I looked at each other, trying to de-



"This Christmas photo is proof that we were once an ordinary family. Here I am as an infant in my dad's arms."

flect the moment's awkwardness. As Mom started to cry, Daddy told her, "Now, now, Dorrie. No more tears."

She wiped them away, knowing that her husband didn't like emotional displays. She brushed her hands over her dress, as if smoothing the wrinkles would straighten out her life. "There, all better," she said. "Good as new."

And then Mom was led off while we turned our backs, walking away to freedom. I was haunted by that. On the way home, the three of us hardly spoke. "When will we go and see her again?" I asked Daddy.

"We'll see, honey," he said. "We'll see."

But we never returned, not for the nine years my mother was kept there. It would be a long time before I ever considered her feelings about it.

2

BORN IN DETROIT IN 1910, my mother, Doris, used to say she was a natural mother. She loved caring for her husband, Gordon, and her two girls. I wasn't very coordinated and often fell down. Mom was always cleaning dirt and gravel off my knees.

Her dream of family was shattered when Daddy said he wanted a divorce. Soon after, the death of her own mother, who lived with us, sent her into a deep depression. Nanna and Mom were very close, more like best friends, and my mother just lay on her bed, staring at the ceiling and crying. Shortly after this, Daddy took Kate and me next door to the Shellers to spend the

day. I sensed that something important was up, otherwise why would Mrs. Sheller offer us cookies so early in the day?

I sat out by their pool, periodically excusing myself to use the bathroom. It was a ruse so I could look out their living room window and try to figure out what was going on at home. On my third trip through the living room, that's when I saw them. Daddy was guiding Mom by her arm toward his car. She kept turning toward him with an imploring look, crying. Finally

Neighbors told us, “Don’t be sad, girls. You still have your father.”

she got in the passenger seat and Daddy locked the door. He climbed into his seat and drove away. Through the window, I watched them move slowly down the street, getting smaller and smaller.

Late that night, Kate and I were asleep when Daddy returned. I vaguely remember him leaning over me, and as he kissed my forehead, I smelled his breath mixed with alcohol and tobacco. In the morning, he explained to



dELi

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us that Mom wasn't well and that he'd taken her to a hospital to recover.

"When will she be coming home?" I asked.

"Not for a while," he said. I never got to say goodbye.

Overnight, it seemed, Kate and I slipped into a strange new category: motherless children. The mom who stroked my hair off my forehead when I was sick, who played the piano passionately, who loved to set a beautiful table for her family, was now gone. Just like that. It didn't seem fair at all, and Kate and I were never sure who was responsible for our feelings of sadness, of aloneness. To our faces, neighbors said things like, "Such strong little girls. Everything's going to be fine." Or, "Don't be sad. You still have your father." When they thought we were out of earshot, their tone changed. "Poor little things," we'd hear. "What will become of them now?"

In those days it was rare for a man to have sole custody of his children. "Stuck" is how my father described his situation. Bound to him now by need, fear and love, I began twirling my hair and sucking my thumb.

Daddy hired a series of housekeepers to look after us, but none lasted very long. Then, one day, my father was suddenly shipping Kate and me off to a convent boarding school. We'd live there for seven years, going



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"Looking at this, I'm reminded how Mom was drawn to Daddy's irresistible good looks, charm and style."

home once a month and for holidays. "This is the best thing," I heard him say on the phone. It all happened so fast.

It was 1957. Mom was in her prison 75 miles away, and I now entered mine.

In my childhood narcissism, I thought that Kate and I were the only victims. I didn't realize that my mother didn't have a choice about what happened to her. The '50s were the dark ages when it came to understanding emotions, and many conditions, now treated with medication and counseling, got labeled as mental illness. And the legal system in those days, I learned as a journalist, was stacked against people like my mother. They were subject to "involuntary commitment," the practice that allowed almost anyone to be put away on the say-so of a family member and a judge. My mother was just 45 when it happened, in the full bloom of life.

Mom's friends, when they talked about it, suggested that my father simply got tired of her. A loner with a wild streak, it's a wonder he got married in the first place—four times in all (my mother was his second wife). Born in Covington, Kentucky, in 1910, he'd hitchhiked across the country to California and never really settled down, even after marrying Mom in 1945, working in real estate, and having two children. For much of his life, his center of gravity was outside the home, at a bar, sipping martinis, smoking cigarettes and flirting with every good-looking woman who walked by.

According to Daddy and the doctors, though, Mom had a nervous break-

down; both the deterioration of her marriage and the loss of her mother devastated her. Once, after an argument, when my father was heading out to a bar at night, my mom begged him not to leave her. She had two young children to care for; she needed him. He didn't change course. Feeling desperate, she ran down the street after him in her nightgown, crying.

Were Mom's problems due to her sensitive nature? Or was my father's inability to deal with emotion and monogamy the issue? I was so young; I didn't know the truth. And now, raised by my father, my wires got crossed. It became easier to blame Mom, since she was the one who had left me.

My father must have believed I'd share her fate, because if I'd cry over something, he'd say, "Be careful or you'll end up like your mother." Another time he said, "Get hold of yourself. Be more like me. I don't need anyone."

Sometimes, when Mom's friends first met me, they couldn't get over how much she and I looked alike. "Like mother, like daughter," they'd tell me.

They meant it as a compliment. But back then, I hated every word. Convinced I'd end up like her, I got rid of every trace of her I could.

3

WHENEVER I SEE A MOVIE with a scene of an inmate walking out of prison after serving a long sentence, I think of my mother and the day she was released from Camarillo in 1964. I didn't know she was getting out and thus couldn't be there to greet her, but I like to think it was a beautiful day, warm and bright.

She was 54. She had no house, no job. Her parents were dead, her husband gone—my father had divorced her by now—and her daughters all but gone in terms of how little we'd communicated with her lately.

When she tried to get a job, what could she put on a résumé? That she'd spent nine years in a mental institution? All she had were a few folded photographs of her parents and Kate and me when we were little, and two small suitcases that held all of her worldly possessions.

Much later, Mom told Kate and me that she might not have been released for several more years had not Dr. Goodman, a Camarillo psychologist, taken an interest in her. The irony of his name didn't escape her. The first doctor to pay her real attention, this "good man" watched her interact with patients and staff around the pool, at picnics. Everyone liked her. She had a gentle, healing effect on others, often making them laugh.

My father told a different story. Mom, he said, started "to snap out of it"



"Here's Mom shortly after her release from the hospital—ready to make a fresh start in life."

only after he filed for divorce. He had held off because a California law made it illegal to divorce a spouse who had been committed to a mental institution—a protection against one-sided legal proceedings. But once the law changed in 1964, he filed. That gave Mom a dose of reality, he theorized, finally cracking her illusion that she might be able to hold on to him if she stayed in the hospital.

Mom needed someone to take responsibility for her until she got on her feet. When Dr. Goodman asked my father to do it, he declined. It was time to cut the cord, he said. Instead, he offered to give her some money and to contact her cousin, Marshall McCoy, in Kansas.

Mom wanted to be close to Kate and me, and live in Los Angeles. But after talking with Marshall, she chose the small town of Oxnard, California, right near Camarillo, to get her bearings, renting a motel room for \$37 a week. The flicker of a once-bright light—nearly extinguished by heavy medication, neglect and trauma—still burned in her. She looked for office jobs. She listened to the radio and practiced shorthand.

Applying at the Kelly Girl temp agency, Mom tested well enough to land a secretarial position. For the next few months, she worked two jobs, finally accumulating enough savings to buy herself a used car and rent a room in a private house. Any day now, she would be ready to invite Kate and me for a visit, and then everything would be as it once was with us, she hoped.

By now, my sister and I had graduated from the convent boarding school and were living our high school years with a single father who picked up women as easily as most men picked up the morning newspaper. There was a constant parade of his girlfriends through our home. He provided the basics for us—food, shelter, clothing, presents at Christmas and on birthdays—but beyond that, he had no clue how to raise children.

He got rid of our beloved dog, Queenie, when we weren't home one day. He padlocked his bedroom door so we wouldn't disturb him. During our teen years, he had two pieces of advice for his daughters: "A woman can never have too many black cocktail dresses" and "Don't just get married and have a family. Look what happened to your mother. Find a good career."

By that time, Mom was a stranger to me; she'd missed so many years of my life. No wonder that when my father arranged a weekend visit for Kate and me in Oxnard to see her for Easter 1966, I threw a fit. It would be forced, artificial. I didn't need a mother anymore. That's what I told myself, anyway.

"You're going and that's all there is to it," said my father firmly.

And then, in the Greyhound bus station, there she was, rushing toward us, her arms open wide. She appeared old for her years, and her left eye drooped. She took my face in her hands and kissed me. Unsure of how to respond, I said, "How nice to see you." Even stiffer, Kate pulled away.

As Mom loaded our suitcases into her faded blue Ford Fairlane, I remember thinking what a clunker it was compared to Daddy's classy Cadillac, and how embarrassed I'd be if anyone I knew saw me in her run-down car in this cow town. Much of the weekend is a blur except for Mom's eagerness to jump through hoops and make us happy. "I still think of you as my little girls," she told us, anguished. But for us it was too little, too late.

All these years later, I still shudder at how I treated her.

4

OUR VISITS WITH MOM became more regular over the next few years, once every month or so in either Oxnard or Los Angeles. I felt myself softening. She continually told us she loved us. She took us to the movies, to miniature golf, to the beach, to stores. She let Kate date, wear makeup and lie out by the pool in a two-piece bathing suit (something Daddy forbade, saying it was "much too risqué").

When we visited her, I felt like I was on vacation. "I want you girls to relax," she'd say. She bought me books, and knowing how much I liked an-

imals, she gave me a baby chick for Easter one year. Sometimes on Sunday mornings, she would quietly pull back the covers and crawl into bed next to me, gently stroking my hair as she did when I was a little girl. At first I wasn't used to such care, and it somehow repelled me. Pretending to be groggy with sleep, I pushed her out of the bed.

She never hesitated to revisit the past; she had been a good wife and mother, she told us. "I never wanted to leave you girls," she said.

"This is your home too," Mom said when Kate and I would visit her.

In time, Mom met Harold Hanson, a kind, simple man whom she enjoyed riding bikes with and picnicking on the beach. Their wedding was in 1981, in a lovely garden in a Presbyterian church in Oxnard. Mom looked radiant, the best I'd ever seen her, in a green silk dress and a corsage of gardenias. Those of us who knew her history cried that day. After so much loss and sadness, she had come so far. At the age of 71, she had found love again.

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As the years passed, the center of our family gradually shifted away from Daddy toward Mom. "This is your home too," she'd say when we visited. Kate and I would sit out by the pool as Hal grilled steaks; Mom made margaritas and baked mushrooms, our favorite.

One day I found an ad in the paper for a used piano, and called. Bargaining with the owners, I got them to bring the \$600 price down by \$100. Mom was thrilled. Now she could play again. She and Hal moved the piano into their condo. The past was gone, and in its place was a brand-new life.

5 IN 1984, AT AGE 74, my father collapsed on the floor of a restaurant. Kate and I were there, and thought he was having a heart attack. The bartender called the medics, but Daddy refused to go to the hospital. "I'll be all right," he said. "Just take me home." He began popping nitroglycerine pills.

A few months later, he had a stroke. "No fried foods and no cigarettes!" his doctor ordered. "This is serious." Daddy didn't listen.

"Oh, you know how your father is," said Maureen, my father's new wife, when I worried. "He doesn't like being told what to do."



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A few months later he had another stroke. When I visited him in the hospital, he was sleeping and his mouth was open. He had only sparse gray hair around his temples now, and deep, puffy folds under his eyes. I tried to remember the man who had held such power over me as a child.

He never regained his health. After he got out of the hospital, Daddy asked to see Kate. We were stunned. Following a series of arguments, they hadn't seen or spoken to each other in five years.

"Maybe it's worth a shot," I told my sister. "He's not going to live much longer." At his apartment, he smiled and hugged her. They tried to make small talk. Finally, Kate asked to speak with him in private.

When they came out 20 minutes later, I saw tears in my father's eyes. "Come on, Mary," Kate said. "It's time to go."

She explained what had happened. Wanting to rid herself of the angry feelings that had festered in her for years, she finally confronted him. "We were your children, but you were selfish and cruel," she told him. "You caused so much pain in our lives and in Mom's life."

She said he bowed his head as tears filled his eyes. And then he looked up at her and said in a small, childlike voice, "I'm sorry."

That was the last time Kate ever saw him. She refused to visit him in his final days, saying she'd already buried him. By then, I had undergone several years of therapy in an effort to understand the unhappiness and loneliness I had felt for decades. Something inside me, maybe the same flicker of light that had guided my mother, made me think that life could be better.

I went to see my father a few days before he died. I held his hand.

He was cremated, and his ashes were scattered over the ocean, as he wished. There was no memorial service. He had no friends anymore.

6

IN 1985, ON EASTER SUNDAY, Kate and I weren't prepared for how bad Mom looked when we visited her. Two years earlier, she'd been diagnosed with uterine cancer, but with surgery and chemotherapy, it had gone into remission. Now it was back. Still, her spirits remained optimistic. "I'm going to beat this thing," she would say, and we believed her.

Until we saw her that day. She had lost over 20 pounds and her hair was thinning, but she had gone all out, as usual, in preparing for our visit.

The table was decorated with fresh-cut flowers and a basket filled with



"Mom looked radiant on the day she remarried. I loved helping her celebrate that happy occasion."

colored eggs, and she had dressed in a yellow organza dress. When we were seated around the dining room table, Hal served the ham, but Mom ate only a few bites.

Seeing our tears, she said, "Don't be sad, girls. It's a part of life."

After lunch, she sat down at the piano and played like old times, her fingers dancing gracefully over the keys. She was half-singing, half-humming. She knew she was dying, but she didn't show any fear. She was weak and emaciated, but I thought she never looked more beautiful and at peace as she sang the last song for us, "The Impossible Dream."

I began sobbing. Through my tears, I finally told her of my shame for having treated her so callously in the years after her release from Camarillo. "Can you forgive me?" I asked her.

Smiling, reaching her hand toward mine, Mom said, "There's no need, honey. I understand why you were that way."

Late one evening in September, the call came from her doctor: "She's terminal." It took a few minutes for his words to sink in.

Hal met Kate and me at the hospital, and we went to Mom's room. I stood beside her bed, watching life fading from her thin body. Overcome by the prospect of losing her again, I crawled into the bed and lay beside her.

We had come full circle. We needed no words to acknowledge that.

As I held her frail hand, she gave me some last-minute advice. "Your only

problem, dear," she said, "is that you don't know your own worth. If you could just see what I see. And don't be alone. Life is hard enough."

Soon after that, her hand slipped from my grasp. She drifted off to sleep.

Kate and I took a short break for dinner. When we returned 30 minutes later, she was gone. Her connection to us was so strong that she could let go only when her daughters weren't near her.

Mom had asked to be cremated and her ashes buried next to her mother's grave in a cemetery in the San Fernando Valley, near where we used to live. When I went to the office to retrieve her ashes, the man at the desk returned with a brown box. It was still warm.

Many of Mom's friends and former co-workers came to the memorial at her condo. It was so crowded, some people had to stand outside in the front yard. Hal, my mother's dear Hal, cried as he passed around appetizers.

Mingling with everyone, I was struck by how differently the lives of my parents had ended—one with almost no one beside him, the other surrounded by an outpouring of love. After living through the darkness, my mother left behind an example of how one human being, with goodness and strength of character, could find her way out into the world again. She showed what a parent could be, giving me a legacy of love that has guided my sister and me since then.

When I noticed people looking at me intently that day, I knew they were thinking how much I resembled my mother. And I smiled, proud to be Mom's daughter.

rd.com To buy a copy of *Stealing Love*, visit rd.com/fischer.



CART BLANCHE



Coming out of the supermarket the other day, I saw a scary sight. As a woman loaded groceries into her trunk, her shopping cart began to roll away. The scary part? It was heading for my car.

She ran after it, but was too late—the cart slammed into my driver's-side door.

"How bad is the damage?" I called out, running toward her.

"Bad," she said, gathering her groceries. "I broke at least a dozen eggs."

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wrinkles. The analysis and advice are free at Glaxo-SmithKline events nationwide (way2quit.com). Or, if the threat of skin cancer isn't scary enough to keep you out of the sun, ask a dermatologist about the Visia system. It takes pictures of your face to show sun damage and wrinkles, and prints a report comparing your skin to that of others your age.

CYNTHIA DERMODY

ILLUSTRATED BY MARK MATCHO

Dance Your Butt Off—at the Gym

LACE UP your dancing shoes and get toned just in time for the upcoming return of ABC's *Dancing With the Stars*. To learn new steps, head to a gym instead of a dance studio. At clubs across the country, you'll master the moves while getting a fun aerobic workout. What's out there (classes vary by location):

24 Hour Fitness Shimmying is so hot, they've created a workout room with clublike lighting and sound systems, disco balls and a stage for classes such as 24Boogie (set to pop, hip-hop and Latin music), Dancer's Workout (a mix of jazz and ballet) and many more.

Bally Total Fitness Try Cardio Funk (a mix of dance moves and aerobics) or belly dancing. Kukuwa (a low-impact African dance) is taught in Florida locations.

Gold's Gym Body Jam, a hip-hop class, is taught at most clubs; in Venice, California, try Red Hot Salsa or Funky Bizness (hip-hop/jazz).

Crunch Fitness Take an Indian hip-hop class, or learn the two-step in Country Line class.

C.D.



Flying Makes Me a Better DOCTOR

How lessons learned in the cockpit also apply in the operating room—and may save lives

DOCTORS are known to be terrible pilots. They don't listen because they already know it all. I was lucky: I became a pilot in 1970, almost ten years before I graduated from medical school. I didn't realize it then, but becoming a pilot made me a better surgeon.

I loved flying. As I flew bigger, faster planes, and in worse weather, I learned about crew resource management, or CRM, a new concept to make flying safer. It means that crew members share the responsibility to listen and speak up for a good outcome, regardless of rank or seniority.

I first read about CRM during my surgical residency in 1980. Not long after that, an attending physician and I were flying in bad weather. The controller



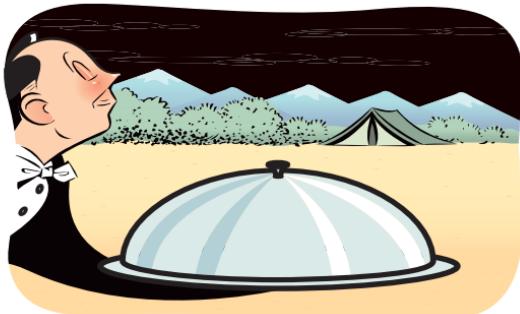
had us turn too late to our final approach. The attending physician was flying; I was safety pilot. He was so busy because of the bad turn, he had forgotten to put the landing gear down. He was a better pilot—and my boss—so it felt odd to speak up. But I had to: Our lives were at stake. I put aside my intimidation and said, "We need to put the landing gear down now!" That was my first real lesson in the power of CRM, and I've used it in the operating room ever since.

CRM requires that the pilot/surgeon encourage others to speak up. It further requires that when challenged, the doctor doesn't overreact, which might prevent colleagues from voicing opinions again. So when I'm in the OR, I ask for ideas and help from others. Sometimes they're reluctant. But I hope that if I continue to encourage them, someday someone will keep me from "landing gear up." Maybe you'll be the one to benefit.

RICHARD C. GROSSMAN, DO
Facial plastic surgeon, Colleyville, Texas

LET'S EAT!

WITH MOLLY O'NEILL



Campfire Cuisine

CAMPERS TODAY want fresh, local food, such as buffalo in Montana and conch in the Florida Keys, says Mike Gast of KOA Kampgrounds. At some sites, you can even have restaurant meals delivered to your tent, and campsite convenience stores offer gourmet foods for your grill or RV kitchen. Grab some corn and try this recipe, from Boston chef Daniel Bruce in *Cooking on the Road With Celebrity Chefs*.

Barbecued Sweet Corn on the Cob

½ cup tomato purée	1 tsp. chopped garlic
2 tbs. molasses	2 tbs. balsamic vinegar
1 tsp. kosher salt	3 tbs. olive oil
¼ tsp. ground white pepper	1 tsp. finely chopped fresh oregano
3 tbs. soy sauce	8 ears corn, shucked

Preheat grill to medium high. Place everything but corn in mixing bowl. Whisk together until blended. Brush marinade over corn and place on grill. Mark all sides, turning until cooked, about 3 minutes per side. Remove from grill; brush with extra sauce. Serves 8.

From *Cooking on the Road*, edited by Anne de Ravel (Woodall's)

GRILL GUIDE

Tom Ryder, chairman of the Reader's Digest Association and co-owner of The Cookhouse restaurants in Connecticut, just returned from a tour of Texas barbecue joints. His tips to better your barbecue:

- Brine pork, chicken and turkey for better flavor and juiciness.
- Know when to use direct and indirect heat, to avoid overcooking or burning meat outside and undercooking the inside.
- Don't brush on sauce until the last few minutes of cooking.
- Pre-smoke fast-cooking meats, and use good charcoal briquettes and hardwood chips for smoky flavor.

Visit rd.com/bbq for more tips, Tom's top barbecue joints, photos and video of his trip.



Homegrown FLAVOR

FOR MICHEL NISCHAN, chef, restaurateur and father of five, the good life is *Homegrown Pure and Simple*. That's the title of his new cookbook, an ode to family and a blueprint for eating local, organic food.

Nischan convinced others of the superior flavor of organic ingredients in the decade he ran restaurants in Manhattan. He began studying food chemistry after learning that his son had diabetes. He kept at it when another child was also diagnosed. "With diabetes," he says, "they can't afford empty calories." He wasn't surprised to find that the freshest produce tended to be the most nutritious.

"I always suspected there was a connection between flavor and nutritional value," says Nischan, who grew up near Chicago and played in a rock band before trading his bass guitar for an apron and the certainty of at least one good meal a day. As a family man, he acknowledges that getting ingredients that haven't been sullied by pesticides and antibiotics is tough on a family budget.

"It's easy to eat organic if you're willing to pay \$20 a pound for lettuce," he says. "Otherwise you have to make choices." Nischan and his



wife, Lori, chose to plant a garden. As he prepped the earth in his yard, Nischan was carried back to summers on his grandparents' farm, and the simple cooking his mother had taught him bubbled up from beneath decades of arty cuisine.

Tending the garden together made his family closer, gave his kids a greater appreciation of food, made them more open to new flavors, and helped them see the connection between good flavor and good-for-you. Nischan is convinced that eating close to the source can transform communities. The buzz surrounding The Dressing Room, the restaurant he's opening this month with Paul Newman near the Westport Country Playhouse in Connecticut, suggests he may be right.

MOLLY O'NEILL

What's Behind That \$3 A GALLON?

TODAY'S GAS PRICES have a lot of us wondering what's behind the costs and who's making money off our woes. Tom Kloza of the Oil Price Information Service offers details on how your \$3 per gallon (on average) is divvied up.

AMOUNT	WHO GETS IT	WHY
0 1.65 	People who drill, transport and sell crude oil (the raw ingredient of gas), including Middle Eastern companies, but also American firms like ExxonMobil and Chevron	It costs these folks 12 to 24 cents to produce a gallon of gas. So why do they get \$1.65? It isn't because they set the price. They don't. Oil is traded like any commodity in the financial markets. So oil companies, investment fund managers, banks, airlines—anyone who has an interest in oil—are behind the pricing. "All commodities are up, particularly gold and silver, but we don't get so fired up about them because they don't really impact us," says Kloza. There's plenty of oil, but not enough refineries to turn it into gas (many were damaged by Hurricane Katrina). This year's hurricane season and other world events will help determine whether prices rise even more.
.60 	Refineries	It's what they charge to thermally heat and molecularly crack the oil, turning it into gas.
.45 	Governments, which tax 30-70 cents a gallon, based on where you live	The feds get 18.4 cents for every gallon; your state and local governments get the rest to pay for roads, bridges and clean-air initiatives. For instance, California state laws demand only the cleanest gas, so those residents pay more.
.14 	Gas station owners	Most stations with big names like Mobil are actually owned and run by individual owners, not the companies whose names they bear.

CYNTHIA DERMODY

IT'S MY DRIVE

Breakneck Speed,
Anyone?

BY MARTINA NAVRATILOVA

FEW THINGS will ever be as thrilling as the time I drove a 959 Porsche on the autobahn in 1986, pushing 200 mph. This 959 was among the first made—at the time it wasn't even allowed in the United States—and Porsche let me drive it during a tennis

tournament in Stuttgart. The rolling hills on the drive to Munich were a blur of green. It was pretty fun passing a cop at 150 mph and not having to slow down.

You can't do that on the autobahn anymore; there's just too much traffic. So now I compete in celebrity races.

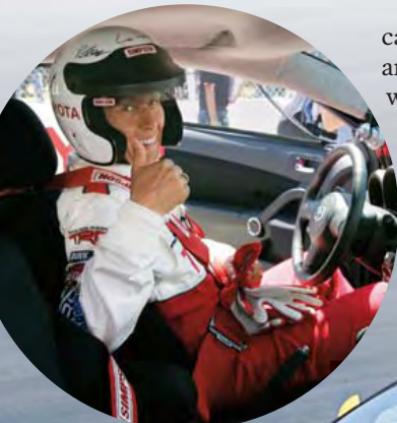
As far back as I can remember, I had an affinity for speed, whether it was a bicycle, car or tennis serve. It's all about controlled aggression. It's calculated risk and going all-out. Of course, in ten-

nis if you miscalculate, you lose a point; behind the wheel you can hurt somebody or yourself.

Luckily I've never been in a serious accident, despite owning many Porsches. I sold my last one because my dog Tuli, a Rhodesian ridgeback, kept hitting her head on the ceiling—she's just too big. But it's okay because I'm more in the cruising mode right now. Back home in Florida with my 1986 Mercedes convertible, I've got the top down 95 percent of the time. It's sweet.

As told to CYNTHIA DERMODY

PAUL SPINELLI/GETTY IMAGES; (INSET) AP PHOTO/MARK J. TERRILL



WITH AGE COMES WISDOM ... AND NEW MAKEUP

A mature woman's skin is different from a young girl's, so cosmetics companies are offering products to cater to beauties of a certain age. New makeup helps battle the wrinkles, discoloration and dryness that often come with aging. Revlon's Vital Radiance for women over 50 offers foundation with more color density to fill pores, and eye shadow that's easier to blend on dry lids. Maybelline, L'Oréal and Cover Girl also have new lines. "Older women will get better results than from cosmetics designed for younger users," says Wilma Bergfeld of the American Academy of Dermatology. The products won't turn back the clock 20 years, but the added ingredients will help you look your best.

CYNTHIA DERMODY



No Time for a Manicure?

INNOVATIVE NEW PRODUCTS can make your nails look as good as they do after a professional manicure. Our favorites:

With **Avon Instant Manicure**, there's no waiting for polish to dry. Place the colored strips over your nail bed, smooth with your fingers, fold over the tip of your nail, and break off the excess. You get a straight-from-the-salon look that won't chip as fast as bottled polish (avon.com; \$4.99 a set).

A French manicure is easier than ever with **Sephora's French Tips & Toes Manicure Pen**. It's like whiteout for your nails. Apply a base coat, then run the pen over the tips of nails. Let dry for 10 seconds, and top with clear or light polish. In a rush? Skip the top coat, and go (sephora.com; \$8).

Take it off just like they do at the salon, with **Cutex Essential Care One-Touch Pump Nail Polish Remover**. Just place a cotton ball on the top of the pump and press (drugstores; \$2.99).

PATRICIA CURTIS

Cool, Cool Kitty

SWELTERING temps raise your pet's risk of heatstroke. Keep your cat or dog cool:

- Watch out for hot pavement, which can burn paws. If it's too hot for you to walk barefoot, it's too hot for your dog, says Laguna Hills, California, veterinarian Bernadine Cruz.
- Let cats bat around an ice cube.
- Reward your dog with Polar



Pups or Frosty Paws frozen treats; give cats Cool Claws, or simply freeze a treat inside an ice cube.

- Try a Body Cooler Pet Mat for pooches (drsfostersmith.com).

Copolymer crystals keep pup cool (but watch him if he's a chewer).

- Never shave a dog (skin tends to

burn). For a pet with light skin, rub a sunscreen with SPF 15 or more on ears and nose.

NANCY COVENY



DOG TRAINING 101

Dogs should know these five key commands, says Amy Breton, a veterinary technician in Massachusetts. To teach your pup, pick up *The Power of Positive Dog Training* by Pat Miller.

COMMAND	USE IT...	TRY IT WHEN...
Come	to call your dog away from anything at any time	he's tempted by small children with food
Sit-Stay	to keep your dog stationary for short periods of time	she's overly excited by arriving visitors
Down-Stay	to keep your dog stationary for longer periods of time	the family sits down to dinner
Drop It	to prevent your dog from eating or picking up something he shouldn't	he gets into food scraps in the trash
No	(sparingly) to get your dog's attention when she does something seriously wrong or is in potential danger	she's chewing an electrical cord

ROXANNE HAWN

LIFE IN THESE UNITED STATES®

I DOUBT if there's a state where my friend's parents, Bud and Beth, haven't traveled in their camper. They bought a new RV, and to celebrate, their son-in-law gave them a plaque to hang on the outside.

It reads "Bud, Beth and Beyond."

KAREN MANSOR,
Hatboro, Pennsylvania



FANTIC WHILE getting ready for a party at home, I asked my husband to run out for a quart of milk. When he returned empty-handed, I asked, "Where's the milk?"

"All out," he said. "They only had pints."

Did I mention that he has a PhD? In statistics?

LOUISE WEISS, New York, New York

Our Sunday school

speaker had riveting stories to share with the kids: He was working near Mount St. Helens when it erupted. He was in Florida when Hurricane Andrew hit and was visiting friends in New Orleans as Katrina struck.

One child raised his hand. "Staying long in Tucson?" MARGIE DORAME,
Oro Valley, Arizona

ON THE LAST night of our childbirth classes, our teacher took us to see the maternity center. We were gathered by the door when a mom, clearly in labor, and her nervous husband came rushing down the hall.

When he saw our group of pregnant women, he screamed, "Oh, my God. Look at the size of that line!" RACHEL ZEBOSKI,
Arlington, Texas

THE ESCALATOR was broken, and the only way out of the airport was up a flight of stairs. I had a big suitcase and a sore knee.

I began dragging my bag and was making a loud thud on every step when a man behind me grabbed the suitcase and carried it to the top.

"That was so chivalrous," I gushed, thanking him.

"Chivalry had nothing to do with it," he said. "I've got a splitting headache."

MEGAN SICLARI,
Nashville, Tennessee

No generation gap

between me and my younger college classmates, I thought. Wrong. When a teacher used the expression "broken record," a young man next to me asked, "What's that mean?"

"Endless repetition," I explained. "If a record were scratched, the needle would skip and play the same piece of music over and over."

His face brightened. "Like a corrupted MP3 file?"

CHRISTINA LINDSEY,
West Point, Virginia

WHILE I WAS wandering around my hardware store, a young clerk came up to me. "Can I help you with something?" he asked.

"Where's the WD-40?"

"Between the WD-39

and the WD-41," he replied with a straight face, then broke into a grin. "Sorry," he apologized. "I've been waiting a long time to say that to someone."

JAN PITMAN, Babson Park, Florida

MY FRIEND'S GRANDMOTHER was in the hospital and was fading fast. When he visited her the next day, he was delighted to find her alert and on the mend. "You really gave us a scare," he said. "We thought you were going to buy the farm."

"I'm fine," she reassured him. "I was just checking out the property."

RICK HOSMER, Spokane, Washington

AS SOON AS we boarded the plane home from Florida, my two toddler daughters began fussing and fighting. This continued on through the flight attendant's safety speech.

"In case we lose pressure, masks will drop from above," he said. "Place one on yourself and then help those with you who need assistance." Looking at my girls going at it, he added, "If you have more than one child, choose who you like best and help them first."

TIFFANY DAVIRRO, Goodyear, Arizona

You could earn up to \$300 for your own funny story. Go to rd.com/joke or see page 8 for details.

Surfing the Net,

I came across a movie poster of a man and woman kissing passionately in the pouring rain. I called my husband over. "How come you never kiss me like that?"

He studied the sodden couple. "Because we haven't had that much rain."

SERENA S.,
Mesa, Arizona

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RDCHALLENGE

BY GUNNAR JOHNSON

You've Got Mail. Or maybe not, if any of the stamps below wound up on the envelope. We added one mistake to each of these enlarged—but otherwise authentic—postage stamps. See if you can spot the goof.

1.



2.



5.



3.



4.



Answers: 1. Mount Rushmore is in South Dakota; 2. Babe Ruth, shown batting right-handed, was a lefthy; 3. The steering wheel is on the wrong side; 4. The "Boxer" is actually a Boston terrier; 5. The moon landing was in 1969.

OUR AMERICA



"TAN LINES" BY C. F. PAYNE EXCLUSIVELY FOR READER'S DIGEST

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