

AUSTRALIA Reader's Digest

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AS PODCASTS

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LETTERS

*Reader's Comments
And Opinions*

Mood-Boosting Benefits

'The Surprising Benefits Of Owning A Pet' (April) came as no surprise to me. When my mother died two years ago, my siblings and I did not know how my father would cope as he was crippled by grief.

My brother suggested we get him a rescue dog. Dad has always loved animals and we hoped that having a pet to care for would nudge him back



to life. The effect was immediate. Humans need connection and Dad's energy, caring nature and love of life was rekindled with the arrival of Russell. My siblings and I think that Russell saved his life. LINDA DAVIES

Solving The Puzzle

I loved reading 'Get Clued-In On Crosswords' (April). While I do love a crossword, I'm one to give up quickly if I don't immediately find the word. I've done my best to remember the words suggested in point 8 and look forward to becoming a better solver!

JULIET JAMES

Cheese Heads

'Six Places Cheese Lovers Should Visit' (April) is a good article -

however, it missed a very important place - Wisconsin. Wisconsin is America's Dairyland and is a large producer of cheese. There are many small creameries producing very high-quality products.

The state is so cheese obsessed that people even wear them on their heads to sporting events and other functions. There is even a story about a cheese hat saving a man's life as it padded his head in a small airplane crash.

The University of Wisconsin has ►

Let us know if you are moved - or provoked - by any item in the magazine, share your thoughts. See page 8 for how to join the discussion.

EDITOR'S NOTE

Weight Stigma

IT'S NO SECRET that people with obesity can face serious health challenges, which can be ongoing and made much harder because of criticism and stigma lobbed from numerous directions. In 'Obesity, The Other Global Pandemic' (page 30), regular contributor and health journalist Helen Signy speaks with leading obesity experts to find out why it is now a global health problem and what new treatments are available.

This issue has a range of great reads. For travel buffs, 'Staying Healthy On Holidays' (page 66) offers helpful tips on being medically prepared for your next travels, and we also explore the beauty of the Croatian coastal town of Dubrovnik (page 114). For pet owners, we investigate the cause of those crazy night-time zoomies (page 18). We also look into the health benefits of Nordic walking ('Just Add Poles', page 92).

We hope you enjoy the stories in our June 2023 issue.



LOUISE WATERSON
Editor-in-Chief



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a dairy research centre and is famous around the dairying world. **BOB OTJEN**

New Admirer

I've only recently discovered a real appreciation for Reader's Digest. As an anaesthetist, I read with interest the article about the Thai Cave Rescue ('The Boys In The Cave', February 2022) in one of the back issues available from my local library. It really was one of the best accounts I've read (engaging, emotive and comprehensive, while also being very manageable to read in one sitting).

What I really love, though, is that in this world of online algorithms and curated content, Reader's Digest delivers genuine serendipity.

SCOTT POPHAM



WHY DID THE CHICKEN CROSS THE ROAD?

We asked you to think up a funny caption for this photo.

Now that's what I call
Le Coq Sportif!

CARMELLE CUANAN

These new joggers are as light
as a feather.

KATE PARSONS

Winner, winner, I'm not
YOUR chicken dinner!

MARIE MEDLIN

Ree-bok, bok, bok, bok.

LOUISE COMERFORD

Congratulations to this month's winner, Carmelle Cuanan.



CAPTION CONTEST

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MY STORY

REGIFTING

Straight From The Horse's Mouth

A gift that couldn't be given away

BY *Peter Strachan*

There's nothing new about 're-gifting' – and the same can be said of the practice of returning an unwanted gift to the shop where it was purchased.

As a young man growing up in South Australia in the 1940s and '50s, with a family involved in a country general store, I can vouch for a long and colourful history of both practices.

My mother and Aunt Florence ran the day-to-day operations of the store, with back up from my uncles Phillip, a commercial traveller, and Frank, a retired builder – and occasionally my less willing father, an engineering patternmaker.

Finding desirable stock for the

store in this post-war era was quite an adventure, as was arranging its delivery from Adelaide to our store in Port Pirie.

But perhaps the greatest challenge of all was being able to secure the items we and our customers wanted without having to take too many unwanted products 'paired' with them. This pairing usually resulted in a highly-saleable item being paired with something that had to be savagely discounted just to move it off the shelves – frequently at a loss.

One item I particularly remember was a remarkably ugly ornament of a horse's head framed in an unattractive horseshoe. It had a somewhat satanic look about it and



its red, fawn and black colouring defied description. My mother shrieked when she first saw it.

My aunt patiently explained she had to buy it to get some attractive crockery sets she knew would be in high demand. She had paid ten pounds for the horse head and hoped to get five pounds for it. After briefly pricing it at ten pounds, she dumped it on our bargain table.

The crockery would sell quickly and cover the loss on the horse,

Peter Strachan, 79, spent most of his working life as a journalist and editor. He is married and has five children, eight grandchildren and lives in Ballarat, Victoria. His interests are music and photography.

returning a reasonable profit on the combined purchase.

Several days later she sold the head for three pounds to a valued customer who planned to give it to a neighbour, also a customer, who loved horses.

The following Saturday, we were due to attend a 21st birthday party.

Because six of us were invited, my mother asked my father to get something appropriate from the jeweller in town. He agreed but decided to change the oil in the family car first. In due course, he returned with a wrapped present of reasonable size.

We arrived at the party and mingled with the other guests,

many of whom were also our customers, including the two women involved in the horse purchase and gifting.

All went well until it came time to open the presents. The adults in our family group were particularly interested to see what had caught my father's eye in the jeweller's extensive gift range. And Dawn, the birthday girl, was certainly anticipating something outstanding.

My mother had a relaxed arm around my shoulder as the paper wrapping was torn away. Then I felt her arm involuntarily tighten across my chest as the dreaded horse head went on full display.

Aunt Florence gasped. The recipient and her parents looked shocked. My mother, aunt and uncles appeared to be frozen where they stood. All eyes were on my father, who slowly appeared to realise there might be a problem.

"Where did you get that monstrosity," my mother demanded, in a loud whisper.

"Well, I was too late getting to the jeweller. The other shops had closed, so I looked for something we had in stock at about the right price," my father said. "I thought it looked unusual, but there was a ten-pound

sticker on it so I assumed it must be a collector's item of some sort."

My mother was clearly having difficulty coming to grips with the situation. In desperation she turned to my aunt. "I thought you sold that to Dawn's mother for three pounds, for a gift for Sheila," she said in disbelief.

"Sheila," Uncle Frank hissed. "She brought it back to me this

afternoon while I was unpacking freight in the storeroom. She said it didn't match her décor and I gave her a ten-pound refund."

My aunt, who always saw the best in my father, couldn't help herself. She burst out

laughing at the absurdity of the entire situation. My father looked as though he couldn't understand fully what was wrong.

I've often reflected on the entire event, including the subsequent coolness of the relationship between the two short-term owners of the horse head – and their decision to shop elsewhere afterwards.

I'm not sure exactly what I took away from it all, but maybe that's the reason why I give cash or gift cards.

HER ARM INVOLUNTARILY TIGHTENED AS THE DREADED HORSE HEAD APPEARED

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SMART ANIMALS

Some animals know how to look after themselves



Purrrfect Timing

CAROLE LAWRENCE

One morning in 1961, before going off to high school in Ouyen, Victoria, I called our pregnant cat Socky to be fed, but she didn't come. I thought she'd probably found somewhere to have her kittens and would turn up later. But when Socky didn't come at dinnertime, or the next day, I really started to worry.

Socky had a habit of having her kittens in strange places, so I checked all her hidey-holes but she wasn't in any of them. The next day was Saturday and I had the whole day to search for her. I rechecked under the house, then in the garage under and behind old books, but no Socky.

After lunch I took some food scraps with me in case I found her, then began searching the back shed, which was huge and filled with cardboard boxes full of junk and empty tea-chests. After about an hour of moving cardboard boxes from one place to another and back again, I was exhausted. I sat down on an upturned tea-chest to have a rest when I heard faint mewing.

I put my head up against each of the tea-chests, pressing my ear against the plywood so I could catch

You could earn cash by telling us about the antics of unique pets or wildlife. Turn to page 8 for details on how to contribute.

READER'S DIGEST

the faint sounds. I had to move each one carefully before I could look inside.

Finally, I found Socky and her three tiny kittens. As the tea-chests hadn't been neatly stacked, I imagine that when Socky jumped into one of the bottom tea-chests, it must have caused the higher ones to fall, shutting her in.

Socky was very pleased to see me and purred loudly, although she was so weak that she just flopped to ground. She did, however, manage to eat the scraps I brought her.

I named the three kittens, Taffy, Rusty and Sylvester, they all thrived and grew up to be great mouse catchers just like their mother.

Amazing Mother Nature

ELIZABETH RAEBURN

While visiting my sister last year on a windy October day, we heard an eastern spinebill chick chirping – it had been blown into her fernery. We kept watch for hours to see if its mother would find it, but she was a no show. The chick had very limited flying skills and got trapped between a bamboo and the Laserlite fence.

With my brother-in-law's help, we unscrewed the Laserlite sheet so we could rescue the chick from certain death. Then, we gave her honey diluted in water from an eyedropper. After ringing a now retired wildlife rescuer for advice, we added ground oats to the mix.



The chick survived the night, tucked up in tissues in a takeaway food container and continued to feed well. In the morning, I placed her in a cage outdoors. Her chirping attracted the attention of an adult male spinebill which started feeding her insects through the cage, and she readily accepted. He even landed on my head at one stage when I was taking photos of her.

She was now about 12 kilometres away from where she'd been found, too far away for him to be her father, yet he still fed her.

I am thankful for his assistance and believe her future, tucked under the wing of her handsome mentor after she flew off with him a week later, will be just rosy.

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PETS CORNER

Why Cats And Dogs Get The Zoomies

BY *Susan Hazel, Ana Goncalves
Costa AND Julia Henning*

Does your cat or dog suddenly get a burst of energy and perform athletic feats around the house? Welcome to the world of zoomies – intense periods of high-energy activity including running, spinning, jumping and rolling. All at top speed. A proposed scientific name is frenetic random activity periods (FRAPs). In rabbits these high activity periods are called ‘binkies’. But many cat and dog owners simply call them ‘zoomies’.

You might see post-bath zoomies, dog park-zoomies, midnight-zoomies and good ol’ out-of-

nowhere zoomies. The trigger may be excitement or a sudden increase in stimulation.

PART OF PLAY ROUTINE

Zoomies can be characterised as play as the two behaviours share many of the same characteristics. This would make zoomies intrinsically pleasurable – in other words, a whole load of fun.

If the zoomies are occurring as part of your animal’s regular play routine, this indicates your animal is happy and enjoying themselves.

While we don’t yet know if zoomies are more likely to occur at certain times of the day, or more in some breeds compared with others, we do consider them a general indication of a high level of excitement – and likely a pretty good mood.

Zoomies are mentioned a lot online, but there is a real lack of scientific research on what causes them, how often they occur, or even an official definition of what they are.

In dogs and cats, zoomies can include an invitation for others to join – in dogs this is most commonly a play bow – where the dog appears



Zoomies are generally thought to come from a high level of excitement

to ‘bow’ to another in an effort to signal it is keen to play – followed by a pause commonly seen in dyadic play (play between two or more individuals).

In cats, an invitation may include physically interacting with you or repeatedly rolling over. If this is the case, your animal is likely experiencing excitement and a desire to interact with you.

CONTEXT IS KEY

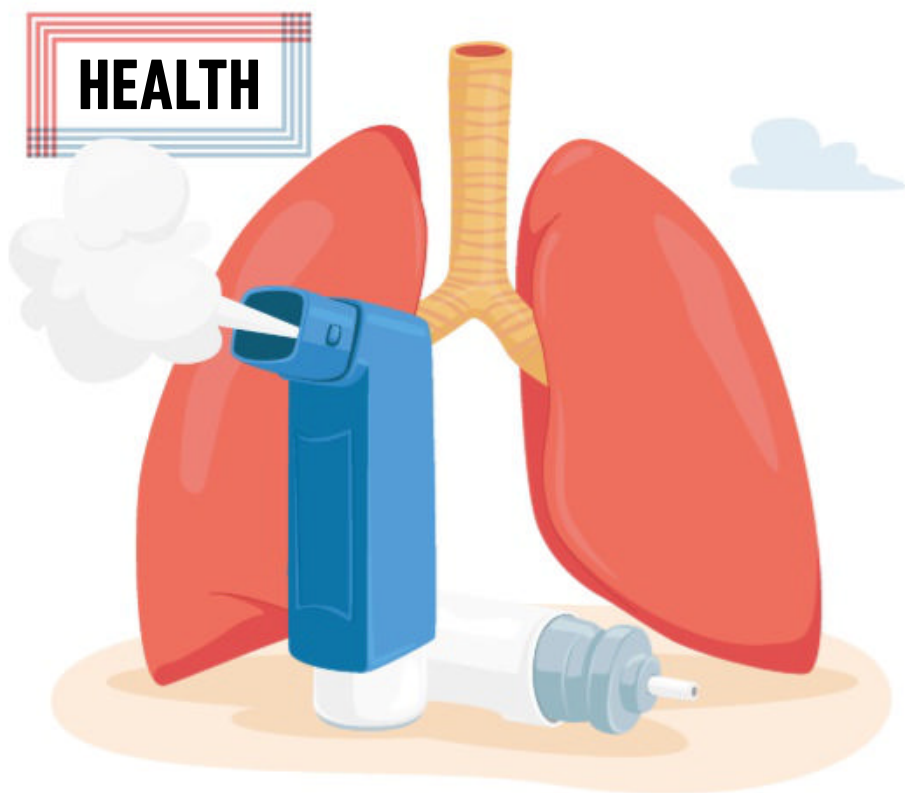
Sometimes, however, zoomies may be a symptom of either stress or an underlying medical condition. Context is key. You should consult with your veterinarian if your dog or cat is displaying the behaviour

for extended periods of time (in particular, spinning, or behaviours occurring during times of confinement). These might be signs of a repetitive behaviour disorder. If you struggle to distract or stop the behaviour, or if it is resulting in injuries, seek veterinary assistance.

Even if you don’t get the call of the zoomies yourself, take a moment to stop and enjoy your dog or cat having fun. Sometimes we all need to run wild.

SUSAN HAZEL IS AN ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR IN THE SCHOOL OF ANIMAL AND VETERINARY SCIENCE AT THE UNIVERSITY OF ADELAIDE. ANA GONCALVES COSTA IS A PHD STUDENT AND JULIA HENNING IS A PHD CANDIDATE, BOTH AT THE UNIVERSITY OF ADELAIDE. THIS PIECE FIRST APPEARED ON THE CONVERSATION.

PHOTO: GETTY IMAGES



6 Changes That Could Help Your Asthma

Some triggers for this common breathing condition may surprise you. But there are ways of coping with them

BY Susannah Hickling

EASE UP ON THE HOUSEWORK

It's well known that dust can bring on an attack, but so can the chemicals in cleaning products like bleach and detergents. The key to easy breathing is to keep dust down and windows open, while avoiding sprays and aerosols and opting for unscented products that are low in VOCs (volatile organic compounds).

PICK PAINKILLERS CAREFULLY

Up to 20 per cent of asthmatics are sensitive to aspirin and ibuprofen, which are NSAIDs (non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs). If you've got a headache or a bad back, it's better to reach for paracetamol. But, be warned, frequent use of paracetamol has also been linked

ILLUSTRATION: GETTY IMAGES

to asthma. Beta-blockers used to treat high blood pressure and other heart problems can set off asthma symptoms in some people, too.

BACK OFF FROM THE BOOZE

Do you get a tight chest and struggle to breathe after a few drinks?

Unfortunately, you might be allergic to the sulphites in cider, beer and wine. These are preservatives that occur naturally or are added to alcoholic drinks. You might get symptoms as soon as you start drinking or the following day. Alcohol also contains histamines.

These, too, can provoke an attack if you're sensitive to them. Try to narrow down which drinks affect you and stay away from them. It's possible to buy wine that's low in sulphites. If you're sensitive to all alcohol, it might be best to avoid it altogether.

PRACTISE ASTHMA-SAFE SEX

Bad news – there are several ways making love can bring on an attack. The most obvious one is the physical activity involved; your heart rate increases and you breathe faster. Heightened emotions play a part too and if scented products, such as perfume or scented candles, are

in the mix, these might also trigger symptoms. Some people have a latex allergy which can bring on asthma if you use condoms. Making sure your condition is well controlled and avoiding triggers will help ensure sex makes you feel good, not ill.

CALM DOWN

Stress and anxiety make many conditions worse, and asthma is no exception.

First off, make sure your asthma is well managed and you're taking your meds as prescribed. Then try to avoid stress. Easier said than done, we all know, but eating well, staying connected with friends and family, and exercising regularly will help.

**EXCITEMENT OR
EVEN LAUGHING
CAN SOMETIMES
PROVOKE AN
ASTHMA ATTACK,
BUT BREATHING
EXERCISES CAN
EASE THE WHEEZE**

Excitement or even laughing can sometimes provoke an asthma attack, but breathing exercises can ease your wheezing.

STAY GROUNDED

If there's a choice between travelling by train, car or plane, it's better to opt for rail or road travel if you suffer from hard-to-control asthma. There's less oxygen at high altitudes, which puts pressure on the lungs. Other triggers – such as dust or perfumes – in the air that's circulated in the cabin could also set you off.

HEALTH



Do Weighted Blankets Work?

BY *Diane Peters*

Sleep is supposed to be a natural thing, but if you wrestle with insomnia, you may be tempted to try gizmos that promise better sleep. One that might sound a little weird but that has been known to work is a weighted blanket.

“They’ve become the sleep tool to have,” says Alanna McGinn, a sleep specialist and author of *This Baby Loves Sleep*. About 62 per cent of adults around the world say they don’t sleep as well as they’d like, according

to the 2019 Philips Global Sleep Survey. Insomnia impacts as many as 35 per cent of adults from time to time, while ten per cent have chronic trouble falling and staying asleep.

Weighted blankets range between two and 14 kilograms; choose one that’s around ten per cent of your body weight. Inside is a layer of plastic, glass or metal pellets surrounded by filling.

McGinn says the blanket’s heaviness mimics a touch therapy called deep pressure stimulation. Just as swaddling babies can send them to sleep, these blankets help your heart and breathing rates slow and your body release feel-good hormones, including serotonin.

Are they effective? A 2020 review study in the US looked at eight previous studies and concluded that weighted blankets helped reduce anxiety – but not necessarily insomnia.

But other 2020 research tells a slightly different story. A randomised controlled study in Sweden looked at 120 people with insomnia and also depression, bipolar disorder, anxiety or attention-deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD). Those who used a weighted blanket had better sleep and were less tired, anxious and depressed in the day.

People with conditions such as diabetes, or breathing issues such as asthma or sleep apnoea, should check with their GP before using one.

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WORLD OF MEDICINE

FEAR OF VACCINES CAN CAUSE SIDE EFFECTS

People who are afraid of vaccines for any reason (including getting a needle) are more likely to feel light-headed when they get a shot, according to a study in *Applied Psychology: Health and Well-Being*. A possible explanation: for some, fear can cause nervous-system dysregulation and affect the flow of blood to their brain.

If you have this problem, try crossing your legs, then tightening the muscles in your thighs, abdomen and buttocks for five seconds, releasing for five seconds and repeating from the moment you're about to get your shot until you stand up from the chair. The idea is to temporarily raise your blood pressure, which should help to stave off dizziness by circulating more blood to your head.

HOW TO PREVENT RECURRING KIDNEY STONES

If you've had a kidney stone, your chances of reliving that excruciating experience within

five years are around 30 per cent. However, the right foods could reduce that risk, says new research from the Mayo Clinic.

By asking first-time kidney-stone patients about their dietary habits and monitoring which of them went on to form more stones, the authors found that consuming 1200 milligrams per day of calcium – found in dairy products and leafy greens – could be helpful for prevention. They also suggest getting more potassium. Meanwhile, people who want to avoid getting a stone in the first place should drink plenty of fluids.

YOUR BRAIN ON JUNK FOOD

Food that has been significantly transformed from its original state is known as 'ultra-processed.'

Examples include chicken nuggets, instant soup and ice cream. A recent Australian study found that seniors with a habit of eating ultra-processed products performed more poorly on a test of language and executive function.





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A Writer's Measure

*Bestselling author Ian McEwan on
alter egos and happiness in life*

BY *Ulrich Lössl*

As a writer of modern literature, he himself is a modern classic. Since the 2001 release of *Atonement*, Ian McEwan's international blockbuster, each new novel by the British author has gone on to become a bestseller. His latest work, *Lessons*, is being touted as his most comprehensive book to date. The autobiographically tinged novel tells of love, art, loss and reconciliation – against the backdrop of the crises that have kept the world in suspense over the past 60 years.

Reader's Digest met Ian McEwan in Munich, Germany.

READER'S DIGEST

READER'S DIGEST: *In your new novel, **Lessons**, you mixed autobiography and fiction for the first time. Why?*

IAN MCEWAN: For many years, I made up all my stories and novels. They sprang entirely from my imagination. In my mid-70s, it made much more sense to me to mix autobiographical material into the novel. In addition, I had never before followed my characters throughout their lives. When you do that, it does give them a whole other dimension and depth.

You say the main character, Roland Baines, is your alter ego. If you hadn't become a writer, you might have just drifted along like he does. What saved you from this fate?

Writing. That was my way out, my salvation. As a teenager, I was completely lost. At the age of 18, I really had no clue about what to do with my life. Then, in my early 20s, I tried writing short stories. Fortunately, I was successful with that. From there it just went on and on.

Ian McEwan won the 1998 Booker Prize for his novel *Amsterdam*



How much does a person's character shape their life?

A person's personality certainly makes up a large part of their life. How it turns out – or doesn't. We all move on a scale of risk. Some people are good at dealing with the conflicts in their lives, and some are terrible at it.

How often have you shed your skin?

Many times, but it doesn't happen the way a snake sheds its skin. With humans, it's a very slow process. Sometimes you try out different versions of yourself. And if it doesn't work, you change it again. I also don't believe that we can really change ourselves profoundly. At the age of two, our personality is already set.

That early?

(Ian McEwan pulls out his phone and shows a photo of his four grandchildren. The youngest is two years old.)

Do you see the youngest there? He's two, and everything is already here. Isn't that fantastic? As parents, you never know what kind of child you've brought into the world. You can give them a good and loving start in life and help them to develop healthily and well. But that's about it. You definitely have no control over their character. And how could you? Just a few seconds later, and of the 200 million sperm, a different one would have won the race and fertilised the egg. And a completely different child would have come out of it.

Your novel's character, Roland, seeks comfort in literature, music, travel, sex, drugs ... What comforts you in life?

All the things you just mentioned – and writing, of course. There are moments when I'm writing when I'm in an extremely good mood. The world around me then no longer exists. When this lightness of being sets in, I'm happy. And don't we all long for such moments of self-forgetfulness?

Is there anything you would trade for the two or so metres of shelves of books you wrote?

Well, I'm really very happy to have a metre or two of books to show and have a happy life. I'm married to a wonderful woman. And, like most people, the second marriage is the better one. I have a wonderful family life. So I have both. That in itself gives me a sense of satisfaction.

But I'm also very concerned about the future of my grandchildren, who live in a world where climate change is becoming more and more apparent.

You preface your book with a quote from Finnegans Wake by James Joyce: "First we feel. Then we fall." Are you moving more and more into the falling stage?

(McEwan laughs) Only when I am standing naked in front of the bedroom mirror. **R**

IAN McEWAN FAST FACTS

- Ian McEwan was born in Aldershot, southern England, on June 21, 1948.
- Over his almost 50-year career as a writer, McEwan has received almost all the major prizes in English-language literature, including the Booker Prize in 1998.
- In 2020, he was awarded the Goethe Medal (an annual prize honouring non-Germans who have performed outstanding service for the German language and international cultural relations).
- McEwan has two sons from his first marriage. He was married for the second time in 1997.
- The author lives in London with his wife, writer and journalist Annalena McAfee.
- Many of his novels have been adapted into films, such as *Atonement*, *Enduring Love*, *On Chesil Beach* and *The Children Act*.



Obesity

The Other Global Pandemic

It's time to rethink how we treat the seriousness of obesity, removing the blame and shame that people with this complex disease suffer

BY Helen Signy

Andrew Wilson was always a big kid. During his 20s and 30s he kept his weight at bay by playing sport, but when his family hit a crisis and he was under pressure in his financial services job, he stacked on the weight.

“Mate, what are you doing to yourself?” his doctor asked him. Andrew was so ashamed, he did not see another medical practitioner for ten years.

The thing was, he was trying to lose weight. He watched what he ate and exercised. Still, his weight ballooned to 200 kilograms and he developed a range of health complications.

He tried many diets. He would lose ten to 20 kilograms, but then the weight would return, and more. He was always hungry; all he could think about was the next mouthful of food.

“It's like the time I





tried intermittent fasting. By the evening I'd be ravenous. I would be preparing the evening meal for my family and I would be so hungry I'd be eating the ingredients," he says.

"Most people have a feeling of having finished a meal, but I never had that satiated feeling. And it wasn't just physical. Mentally, I wanted more."

Andrew is certainly not alone. Obesity affects all areas of society; in every classroom, in every shopping centre and street, people everywhere are living with excess weight or obesity.

In Australia, more than two thirds of adults and at least one quarter of children are now considered above a healthy weight. Many children are above a healthy weight before age five and, according to research, this means they're likely to continue to be overweight throughout their lives.

People with obesity can experience serious health problems. Despite the fact it's so commonplace, those living with obesity still tend to attract blame for their condition.

"The worst thing is the stigma," says Andrew, who now is in his late 40s. He supports other people living with obesity through the Weight

Issues Network, an organisation that addresses weight stigma.

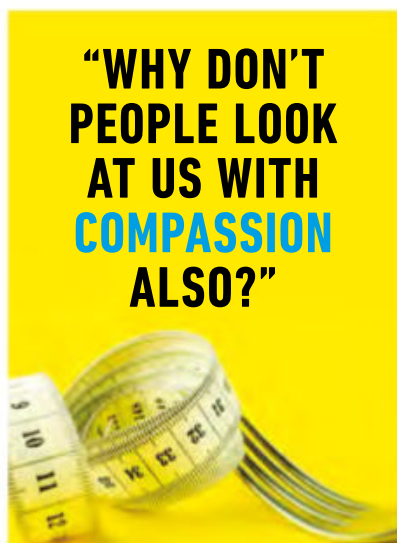
"I remember when the parents at my son's kindergarten didn't want to talk to me outside the classroom. Some wouldn't even look at me because of my size. That impacted my son, he was teased.

"We all feel compassionate about someone who has anorexia and feel there must be some mental health issue going on there. It's the same for those of bigger sizes - there is usually a mental health component. Why don't people look at us with compassion also?"

It's true that most of us - including policy makers and health-care professionals - tend to blame people for putting on weight.

But there's increasing recognition that obesity is caused by a complex set of factors outside an individual's control, such as illness, genetics, childhood trauma, the environment and society. In Andrew's case, he turned to food at a very young age as a coping mechanism for physical and mental abuse.

Paediatrician Professor Louise Baur says when she trained as a medical student in the 1970s, the subject of obesity was covered in a one-hour



Obesity: The Other Global Pandemic

lecture during the entire six-year course. It was also not seen as an issue concerning children.

But then something happened. From the 1980s, doctors started to see more young patients who were becoming dangerously overweight. Today, in her clinic at The Children's Hospital at Westmead in Sydney, Professor Baur sees a succession of children with moderate to severe obesity – and it's making them very sick.

"I never ever used to see kids in the 1980s with type 2 diabetes, now we see them every day," says Professor Baur, who heads The Centre of Research Excellence in Translating Early Prevention of Obesity in Childhood.

"I'm seeing a lot of kids with fatty liver disease, and others with obesity-related major orthopaedic problems that mean they need major orthopaedic surgery. There's been a rise in obstructive sleep apnoea

in children, meaning we're putting kids on CPAP machines; there are now many children with pre-diabetes and diabetes who need to be on medications."

Obesity is no longer a first-world problem. International experts who gathered at the International Congress on Obesity in Melbourne recently heard from countries all over Asia, South America, the Pacific Islands and Africa that their populations are experiencing a pandemic of obesity.

According to the World Health Organization (WHO), more than one billion people worldwide are living with obesity – 650 million adults, 340 million adolescents and 39 million children. This number is still increasing, and the WHO estimates that by 2025, approximately 167 million people will live with overweight or obesity and related health issues.



READER'S DIGEST

What's going on? Has the whole world turned to overeating in the last 40 years? Or are there other factors at play?

The problem is that in recent decades the way we live has changed dramatically. Most people in the world are eating diets full of high-energy foods – like takeaways, chips and sugary drinks – and at the same time we're moving less as we grow increasingly reliant on cars.

Many developing countries are now awash with ultra-processed foods and soft drinks. People are choosing instant noodles and soft drinks over vegetables and grains. At the same time, everyone is sitting much more. Think of a photo from Asia in the 1970s – everyone was on a bicycle. Today they're on mopeds or riding in cars.

Humans aren't meant to live in an environment like that. Our bodies are hard-wired for fat preservation. As hunter gatherers, it was the ones who carried a few extra kilograms who were able to survive famines, while the skinny people would die.

More than 100 genes have been identified that are partly responsible for obesity. Identical twins put on fat in exactly the same way, on the same parts of their bodies, even if they do not live together.

"I'd say that around 60 to 80 per cent of overweight and obesity can be attributed to genetics," says Professor Brian Oldfield from Monash University, editor-in-chief of *Obesity Reviews*.

But here's the rub. Once we start to put on weight, our biology changes to make it harder and harder to lose it again.

One study followed a group of overweight people on a low-carbohydrate diet for ten weeks. For the whole of the next year, the dieters' hormones that control appetite and cravings for food were abnormal.

"The hormones that would normally promote hunger were exaggerated and the hormones that would promote feeling full were reduced," Professor Oldfield says.

Another study followed contestants from the TV programme *The Biggest Loser* in the US. While all of them achieved profound weight loss, for years after the show they didn't use as many kilojoules as everyone else when they exercised. The contestants' bodies were desperately trying to adapt to weight loss and bring their weight back to the starting point. The result? All the contestants put on most of the weight they'd lost.

Worryingly, these biological problems can start even before we're born. For example, mothers who eat high-fat diets during pregnancy predispose their infants to prefer high-fat foods, says Professor Oldfield. As a society, we're setting up our children to get fatter and fatter.

Developing obesity can change our relationship with food, too. Every time we eat, our brain is flooded with feel-good hormones. These

hormones become dysregulated in people with obesity. For some people, eating can become more like taking a drug – something they are compelled to do to get the next hit.

“It’s different to a person who is slightly overweight and who can potentially just cut down and lose a few kilograms,” says Andrew Wilson. “If you are bigger, after that initial loss of ten to 15 kilograms, your body just slows down your metabolism and makes you hungry.”

For people who are permanently hungry, our environment makes it next to impossible to make healthy choices.

Obesity Policy Coalition executive manager Jane Martin says much of what we

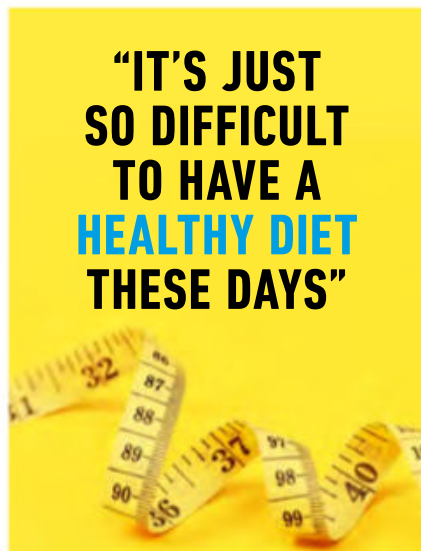
eat is being shaped by multinational companies, who have extraordinary power and influence in many countries.

Like the tobacco industry before it, the food and drink industry is promoting unhealthy ultra-processed foods as being healthy, aligned with happiness, or linked to sporting success.

“A lot of what is on supermarket shelves is highly processed. It’s heavily marketed and is readily available and very well priced. Our social norms have been shaped to make

these products a normal part of our diet, for example through marketing, which creates a strong desire for those products,” says Martin.

“You see people in the supermarket trying to decipher the nutrition panel but they can’t. What individuals can do is relatively limited because it’s just so difficult to have a healthy diet these days.”



Obesity has serious consequences for health. It’s a risk factor for a range of chronic diseases, including heart disease, cancer, asthma, diabetes and liver and kidney disease.

Most of the world’s population now lives in countries where overweight and obesity kills more people

than being underweight. Thirteen per cent of the world’s adult population had obesity in 2016 – nearly three times the number than in 1975.

‘Malnutrition’ – or ‘poor nutrition’ – used to conjure up images of children in developing countries without enough food to eat. The problem in most countries is that while high-fat, high-sugar, high-salt, high-kilojoule processed foods are cheap and filling, these foods are to blame for poor nutrition, as they don’t contain the nutrients people need for good

health. That means the same person can be overweight and undernourished at the same time.

“Globally, there are more people who are obese than underweight – this occurs in every region except parts of sub-Saharan Africa and Asia,” says WHO spokesperson Dr Margaret Harris.

“Many low- and middle-income countries are now facing a ‘double burden’ of malnutrition. They continue to deal with the problems of infectious diseases and undernutrition, while they are also experiencing a rapid upsurge in risk factors for long-term diseases, such as obesity and overweight, particularly in cities. It’s not uncommon to find undernutrition and obesity co-existing within the same country, the same community and even the same household.”

The problem is getting worse. The explosion of obesity that started from the 1980s has gathered pace since the COVID-19 pandemic. Countries everywhere are reporting solid evidence that their populations put on weight during lockdowns, and that weight has not yet come off. Ironically, people who have obesity are also more likely to die or become

very unwell if they catch an infectious disease or have surgery. During COVID, high body mass index was one of the major risk factors for severe disease and death.

That’s because obesity causes chronic inflammation, subtly changing the immune system. Extra body fat can make it harder to move the airway and the chest wall, putting people

with obesity at greater risk of breathing problems.

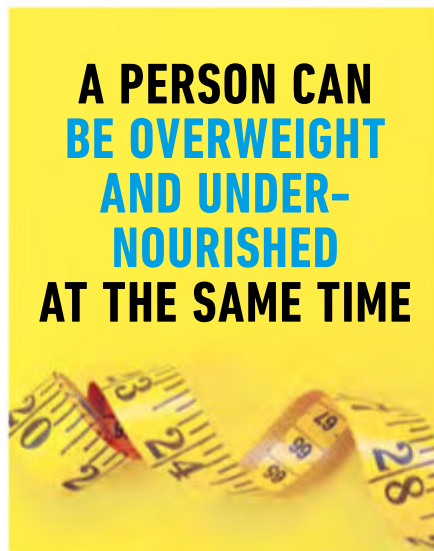
“Hospital systems all over the world are really struggling at the moment under the double burden of COVID and obesity-related health problems,” Professor Baur says.

The good news is, there’s plenty that can be done. Telling

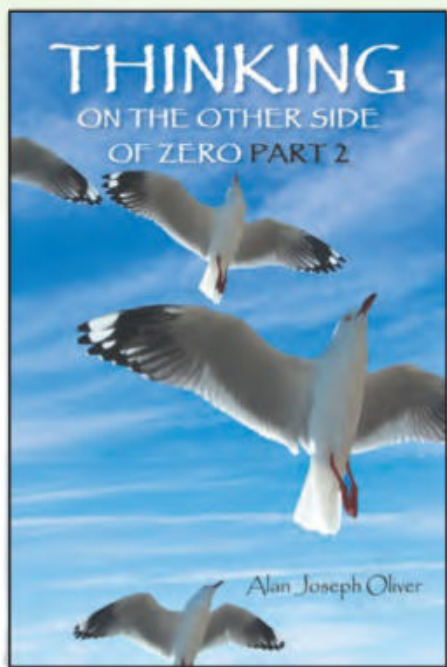
people to eat less and exercise more has not worked – but, like many other health conditions, obesity can be addressed with healthier environments and evidence-based treatments.

While the main treatment for obesity is still bariatric surgery, new medications are available that can achieve similar results. Soon, obesity experts predict, obesity will be commonly treated with regular injections or pills, just like diabetes or high blood pressure.

There are also ways of improving



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The Adventures of a Train Trekker

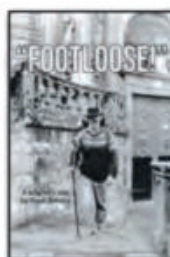
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READER'S DIGEST

the environments we live in. Governments can make it easier for us to do physical activity, for example, by planning towns with green open spaces, and providing safe footpaths and plenty of public transport to lure us away from our cars. The food supply can be improved by regulating marketing of unhealthy foods, especially to children.

One solution that has proven very successful overseas in reducing sugar consumption is to introduce a tax on sugary drinks. In the UK, for example, a health levy on drinks containing more than eight grams of sugar per 100 millilitres saw the population reduce the amount of sugary drinks that they bought even before the tax came into force.

“The price of traditional soft drinks went up and people drank less of them. The companies’ profits didn’t decline but much less sugar was consumed by the population,” says Jane Martin.

Professor Baur, who is also President

of the World Obesity Federation, says perhaps the most important thing is for us all to be a little kinder to the people we all know living with overweight and obesity. “Obesity is a biological disease, not a behaviour. It’s not something over which an individual has sole control. It’s a problem that

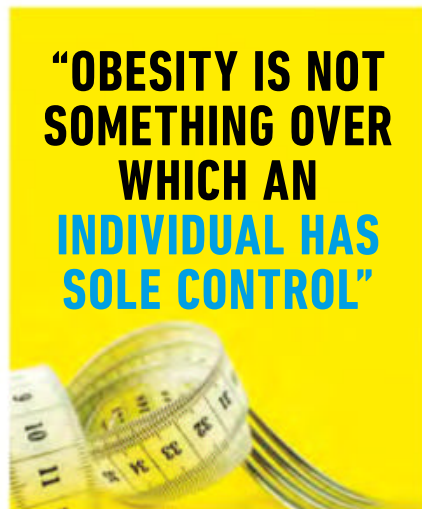
the whole system needs to address.”

Andrew finally summoned the courage to go to an obesity treatment clinic. By this time, his blood pressure was through the roof. “The clinician said if it wasn’t for the fact I was walking around she would have admitted

me to the ICU.”

Since then, with the help of a team including an endocrinologist, dietitian, physiologist and psychologist, as well as weight loss surgery, he has lost more than 50 kilograms and is still losing.

“My medication has more than halved, my breathing has improved and I’m active. My mental health is also a lot better,” he says. **R**



Hash Over

The real name for a hashtag is an *octothorpe*. The ‘octo’ refers to the eight points in the symbol but, according to the Merriam-Webster dictionary, the ‘thorpe’ part is a mystery.

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**“I HAVE NO IDEA
HOW TO FLY
THIS
PLANE!”**

A passenger gets an emergency flying lesson when his pilot passes out 3000 metres above the ocean

BY *Robert Kiener* ILLUSTRATIONS BY MARIE BERGERON

THE SELFIE DARREN HARRISON HAS JUST TAKEN

shows him dressed casually, in white shorts and a T-shirt, with his bare feet propped up on a plush grey leather seat. He is the lone passenger in the roomy six-seat cabin of a single-engine Cessna 208 turboprop, some 3600 metres above the Atlantic, off the east coast of Florida.

He sends the photo to his wife, Brittney Harrison, who is six months pregnant with their first child. Harrison, a 39-year-old flooring-sales executive, is returning to his home in Florida after taking part in an off-shore deep-sea fishing tournament in the Bahamas.

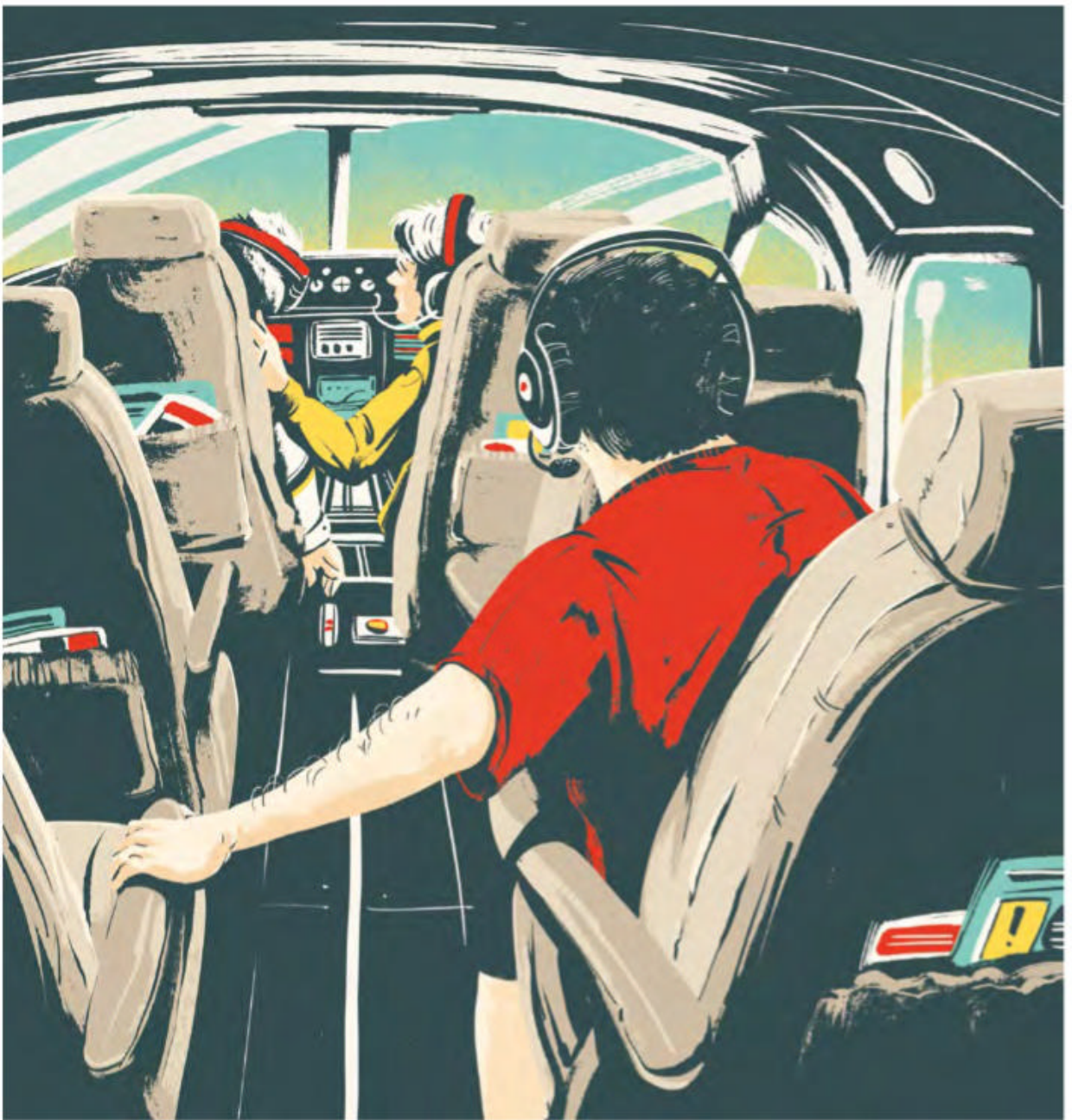
It's around noon. The weather on this early May morning in 2022 is perfect, and the views – brilliant blue skies and crystalline ocean below – are captivatingly beautiful.

The plane is being flown by Ken Allen, a 64-year-old veteran pilot. To Allen's right, in the co-pilot's seat, is his friend Russ Franck, 70. Franck's no pilot, but he does enjoy going along for the ride.

Some 45 minutes into their scheduled 75-minute flight to Treasure Coast International Airport in Fort Pierce, air-traffic controllers in Miami clear Allen to begin his approach, which is now some 110 kilometres to the west. They instruct him to descend to 3000 metres. "November 333 Lima Delta. Roger, Miami Center," says Allen, using the plane's call sign.

A few minutes later, as Allen continues his descent, the right side of his head starts pounding: Boom! Boom! Boom! Every time his heart beats, Allen feels as if his head is being hit with a hammer.

What the heck...? Allen wonders as he winces in pain. Out of his right eye, he begins seeing bright blue lights flashing.



“Guys, I don’t feel good!” he tells Harrison and Franck. The pain is severe. The pounding intensifies. His voice shaking, he says, “Everything is fuzzy!”

Harrison answers immediately, “What does that mean?”

“I don’t know. My head is killing me! I don’t...” Allen suddenly stops

talking and Harrison watches him slump back in his seat. The plane is now careening towards the sea without a pilot.

Harrison manages to undo his seat belt and, fighting G-forces that want to pin him to his seat, stumbles towards Allen. He and Franck try to rouse him. No response. The pilot is unconscious

READER'S DIGEST

and the plane is out of control, plummeting in a 550-kilometre-per-hour dive to the ocean below.

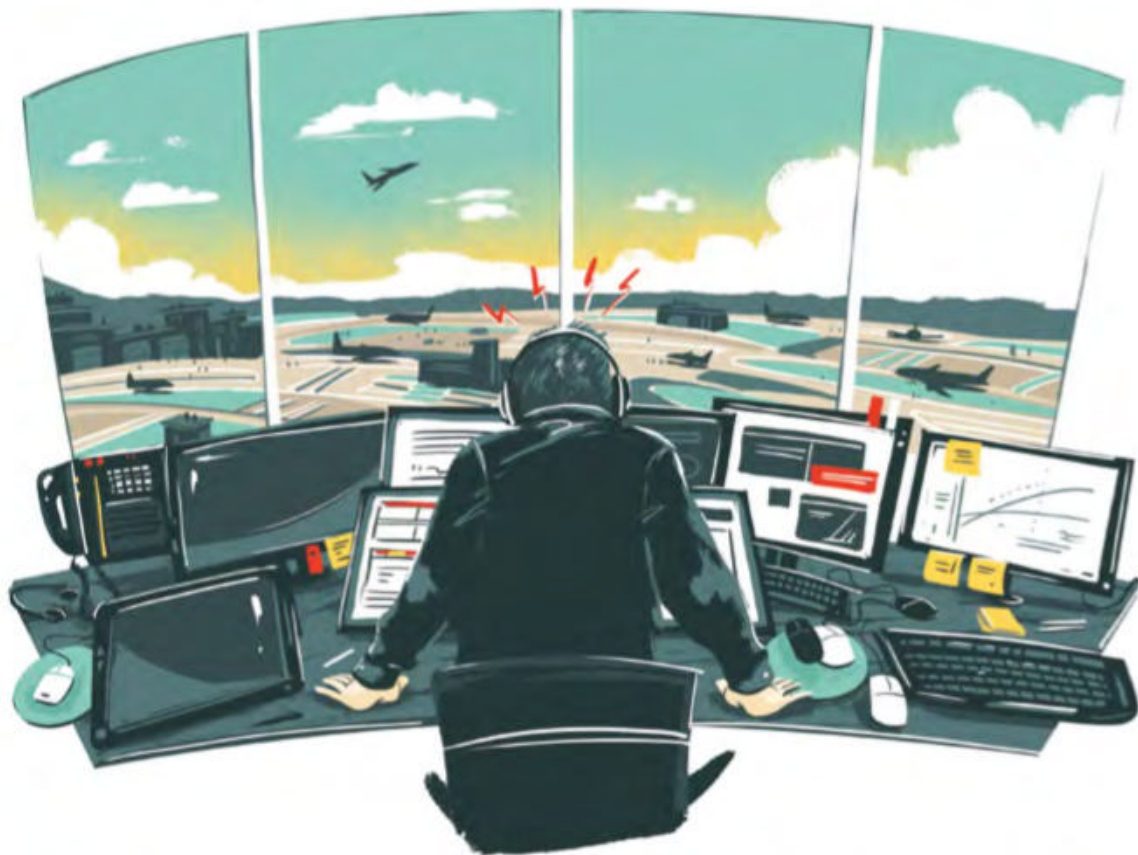
Instead of blue sky, the two men see whitecaps on waves that are getting bigger and bigger as the plane continues to drop to 2700, then 2400, then 2100 metres.

The Cessna Caravan's emergency alarms are wailing. Although he's never taken a flying lesson, Harrison has flown on enough small planes and observed enough pilots to know that he has to pull back on the plane's yoke to bring its nose up. But he has to do it slowly or the motor could stall, or the wings may be ripped off. Squatting behind Allen's seat, he reaches over the

unconscious pilot and grabs the yoke while Franck grabs the co-pilot's yoke.

As the plane falls, both Harrison and Franck struggle to level off the aircraft, which has dropped more than 1200 metres in 30 seconds. Soon, the plane's nose levels off and turns up, before climbing back to 2750 metres.

"Can you hold this steady?" Harrison asks Franck. While holding the co-pilot's yoke, Franck helps Harrison unbuckle Allen's seat belt. Harrison pulls him off the seat and gently lays the unconscious pilot on the floor of the cabin. Harrison quickly climbs into the pilot's seat and takes stock of the situation.



“I Have No Idea How To Fly This Plane!”

First and foremost, they are alive. But they are a long way from home. And neither man has ever flown a plane before.

Air-traffic controller Chip Flores has been on duty in the control tower at Fort Pierce’s airport since 7 am. Because the winds have recently picked up, many of the student pilots who would normally be flying have been grounded, and Flores is thankful for the low traffic.

Flores then asks Harrison, “What’s your position?”

“I have no idea. I see the coast of Florida in front of me and I have no idea.”

Flores takes a deep breath. What he doesn’t know is that somehow the Cessna’s display screens have gone blank. Harrison must have hit a switch that turned them off when he tugged Allen from his seat. The only instruments that are still operation-

HARRISON TAKES STOCK OF THE SITUATION. FIRST AND FOREMOST, THEY ARE ALIVE. BUT NEITHER MAN HAS EVER FLOWN A PLANE BEFORE

The quiet is interrupted when Flores gets a call on his headset. It’s Harrison: “Traffic. N Triple 3 Lima Delta. Come in,” he says, using the plane’s call sign the way he’d heard Allen say it.

Flores responds, “Caravan 333 Lima Delta, Fort Pierce tower.”

“I’ve got a serious situation here,” says Harrison. “My pilot...uh...has gone...incoherent. I have no idea how to fly the plane.”

Flores jumps from his seat and hits a button on his console that broadcasts the radio transmission through the control tower’s loudspeakers. Alerted to an emergency, everyone in the tower drops what they are doing and listens to the call.

al are the altimeter, a basic compass and the attitude indicator, which shows whether the plane is level.

What Flores does know is that he may lose radio contact with Harrison at any minute because the plane is flying south and will soon be beyond the airport’s radio-transmission limits. Flores is also concerned about those first words Harrison said: “I have no idea how to fly the plane.”

Harrison, Flores decides, needs a quick flying lesson. He radios Harrison and calmly tells him, “Try to hold the wings level and see if you can start descending for me. Push forward on the controls and descend at a very slow rate.”

READER'S DIGEST

Flores and the entire tower team await Harrison's response.

"Yeah, we are descending right now at 550 feet a minute." Then he asks which direction he should be heading.

But Flores never gets the chance to tell him. He's lost contact with the plane as it flies out of the airport's radio-transmission zone. Flores radios Harrison: "This is Fort Pierce tower. Are you on the frequency?"

No answer.

Harrison nods and makes a gradual turn towards the coast.

Franck instinctively reaches down to where Ken Allen is lying on the floor and taps his feet. The stricken pilot moves ever so slightly and Franck whispers, "Hang in there, Ken. Hang in there, my friend."

As the plane flies into Palm Beach International Airport airspace, air-traffic controllers there take over from Flores. Their main mission:

AIR TRAFFIC CONTROL'S MISSION THAT DAY: TO TEACH A PASSENGER WHO HAS NEVER FLOWN BEFORE HOW TO LAND A PLANE

Inside November 333 Lima Delta, Harrison and Franck realise they have lost contact with the tower. Flores's voice becomes static, then nothing.

Once again, Harrison and Franck are on their own. While Harrison holds the plane steady, Franck tries to figure out where they are and if they are even flying in the right direction. Franck had ceded control of the plane to the younger Harrison under the mistaken belief that he may have had some flight-simulator experience because he seemed so focused.

Franck peers out his window and says, "Look, there's the coast over there." He looks at his compass to double-check his bearings. "We need to go west to get to the airport."

find someone to teach a passenger who has never flown before how to land a plane.

Greg Battani, an air-traffic-control specialist at the Palm Beach airport, pages Robert Morgan, who is sitting outside reading a book on his break. Morgan, an experienced air-traffic controller and flight instructor, hears the page: "Morgan! Come to the radar room immediately." He slips on his shoes and rushes inside.

The airport's operations manager, Mark Siviglia, meets him at the door and quickly briefs him: "We have passengers flying a plane, a Cessna 208. The pilot is unconscious. Can you help land this plane?"

Morgan's eyes widen and he

thinks, *Is this really happening? This sounds like a movie!*

He sits down at a radar scope in the darkened radar room and thinks, *What am I going to tell this guy?* Gathering his nerves, he radios Harrison, who is now about 32 kilometres to the south and flying west towards the Florida coastline. “This is 322 Palm Beach approach. What we are going to do is get you to Boca Raton Airport.”

Harrison responds, “I am not a pilot. My screens are black.”

“No problem. I want you to make a shallow turn to the north and hold steady at 3000 feet.”

Morgan and the other controllers follow the Cessna on their radar screens as it turns slightly to the north, on a path for the airport at Boca Raton. Morgan radios Harrison, “That’s great. You look good.” Then, because he knows it’s important to keep in radio contact with a trainee pilot, he adds reassuringly, “Don’t worry. I’m here for you.”

Standard practice in an aviation emergency is to get the plane on the ground as soon as possible. In this case, that would mean landing at the Boca Raton Airport. But Boca Raton is a congested area, and the airport has only one runway. So Morgan



decides to reroute Harrison further north, to his location at Palm Beach airport, with its three massive three-kilometre-long runways and a host of emergency services.

“Maintain your height at 3000 feet and start a shallow turn to the right.” Shallow turns are key. If an untrained flyer makes them too steep, it could cause the plane to spiral to the ground.

As soon as Morgan radios the change, staffers at Palm Beach International Airport swing into action. Air-traffic controllers man the radios, stop all departures and place incoming flights into holding patterns. Emergency responders are ordered into positions along the runway, and all vehicles and planes are moved away from the airport’s three runways.



Harrison and Franck are glued to their headsets, listening to Morgan's instructions. Franck scans the ground for familiar landmarks. He sees the I-95 freeway and nudges Harrison. They follow it north to Palm Beach International Airport.

As they do so, Harrison practices controlling the Cessna's altitude, pushing the yoke forward to descend a bit and pulling it back to go up again. He also makes some small turns to the right, then to the left.

The plane is now approximately ten kilometres south of the Palm

Beach airport. "You should see the airport straight ahead," Morgan tells Harrison. "I want you to start descending to 2000 feet."

Morgan soon grows concerned that Harrison is still flying too fast for a safe landing. He's also worried that the strong crosswinds swirling around the runway could force the plane off course on landing. Morgan tells him to make a slight turn to the west.

"We're going to bring you out to the west and give you more time to get lower and perfectly lined up with the runway," he says.

Harrison follows each of Morgan's instructions and is now turning the plane back

to the airport to make his approach to the massive runway 10L.

"Let's slow you down," says Morgan. "See that black throttle control in front of you? Pull that back a little bit. Keep your speed above 110 knots."

Harrison throttles back and lines up the runway, which is five kilometres away. The radar room is quiet; everyone's eyes are fixed on the radar screens, watching this final approach.

"Your speed looks fine," Morgan tells Harrison. "As you get closer,

the runway will get wider, and once it gets really wide, I want you to pull the power back to you and also pull back on the controls.”

“Hey! I don’t know how to use the brakes. What do I do when I land?”

“When you get to the ground just put your feet on the top of the pedals and apply a bit of pressure.” Morgan quickly adds, “Gentle! Be very gentle when you press on the pedals.”

What he doesn’t mention is that putting too much pressure on the brakes too early can blow a tyre, causing a pilot to lose control of

controllers in the blacked-out radar room stare at the blank screens.

Three seconds...four seconds...five seconds...six seconds...nothing. Seven seconds...eight seconds... nine seconds. Then the room’s loudspeaker crackles to life. It’s Harrison. “I’m on the ground. How do I stop this thing?”

Morgan hits the radio call button: “Use the toe brakes – nice and gently!”

Harrison, still barefoot, gently presses the pedals and brings the plane to a stop, in the middle of the runway, 25 minutes after taking the controls.

The radar room erupts in cheers.

SHALLOW TURNS ARE KEY. IF AN UNTRAINED FLYER MAKES THEM TOO STEEP, IT COULD CAUSE THE PLANE TO SPIRAL TO THE GROUND

the plane, possibly crashing on the runway.

As the Cessna nears the airport, Morgan reads out the plane’s altitude to Harrison, “600 feet ... 500 feet ... 400 feet. You’re doing great!” Harrison, now less than two kilometres from landing, descends to 90 metres and is on target to land on runway 10L. The airport’s radar cannot pick up planes under 90 metres, and November 333 Lima Delta disappears from Morgan’s screen.

“Are you still there?” Morgan shouts.

Tortuous silence follows. Morgan swallows deeply as he and the other

Exhausted but flushed with adrenaline, Morgan stands and blinks back tears.

Harrison, feeling comfortable now at the plane’s controls, radios Morgan, “Hey, do you want me to taxi this off the runway?”

Morgan chuckles. “Amazing,” he says to himself. “That guy is amazing.” **R**

Editor’s note: Ambulances rushed Ken Allen to hospital where he was diagnosed with an aortic dissection, a tear in the inner layer of the aorta that is often fatal. Doctors operated and he made a full recovery.

TIME TO GO SLOW ON AI?

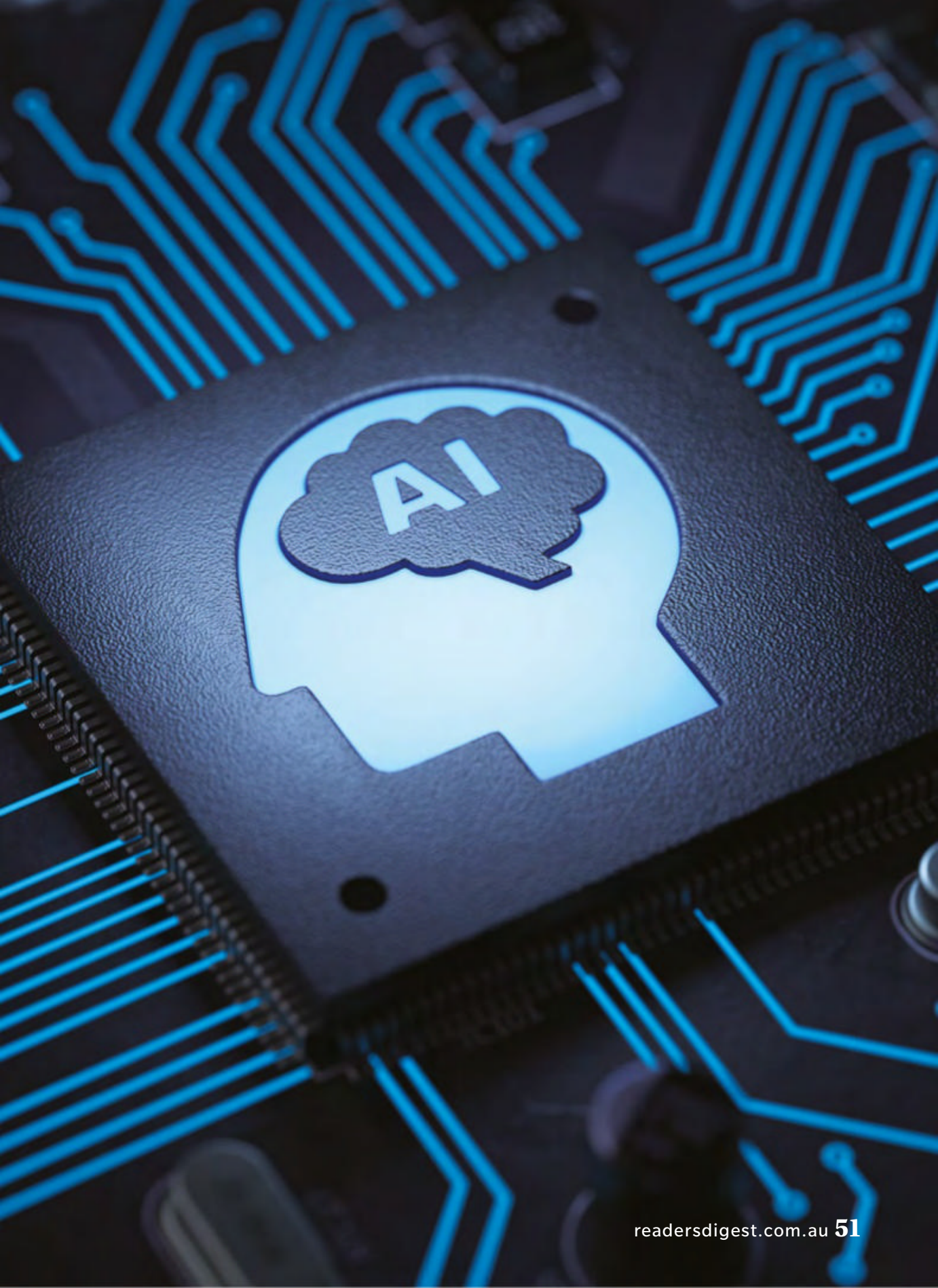
ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE IS MOVING FORWARDS AT A RAPID PACE, BUT MANY SCIENTISTS ARE ASKING FOR A PAUSE FOR REFLECTION AND REVIEW

BY *Rodolfo Ocampo*

FROM **THE CONVERSATION**

IS IT TIME TO PUT THE BRAKES on the development of artificial intelligence (AI)? If you've quietly asked yourself that question, you're not alone.

In late March, a host of AI luminaries signed an open letter calling for a six-month pause on the development of more powerful models than GPT-4; European researchers called for tighter AI regulations; and long-time AI researcher and critic Eliezer Yudkowsky demanded a complete



shutdown of AI development in the pages of *TIME* magazine.

Meanwhile, the industry shows no sign of slowing down. In March, a senior AI executive at Microsoft reportedly spoke of “very, very high” pressure from chief executive Satya Nadella to get GPT-4 and other new models to the public “at a very high speed”.

I worked at Google until 2020, when I left to study responsible AI development, and now I research human-AI creative collaboration. I am excited about the potential of artificial intelligence, and I believe it is already ushering in a new era of creativity. However, I believe a temporary pause in the development of more powerful AI systems is a good idea. Let me explain why.

WHAT IS GPT-4?

The open letter published by the US non-profit Future of Life Institute makes a straightforward request of AI developers: “We call on all AI labs to immediately pause for at least six months the training of AI systems more powerful than GPT-4.”

So what is GPT-4? Like its predecessor GPT-3.5 (which powers the popular ChatGPT chatbot), GPT-4 is a kind of generative AI software called a ‘large language model’, developed by OpenAI.

GPT-4 is much larger and has been trained on significantly more data. Like other large language models, GPT-4 works by guessing the next word in response to prompts – but it is nonetheless incredibly capable.

In tests, it passed legal and medical exams, and can write software better than professionals in many cases. And its full range of abilities is yet to be discovered.

GOOD, BAD AND PLAIN DISRUPTIVE

GPT-4 and models like it are likely to have huge effects across many layers of society.

On the upside, they could enhance human creativity and scientific discovery,

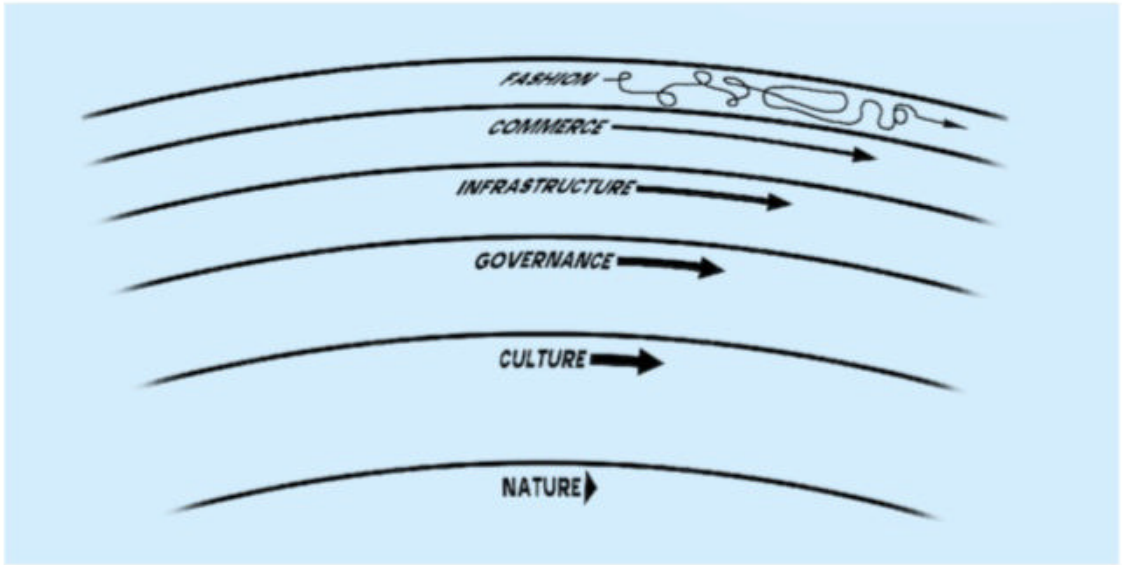
lower barriers to learning, and be used in personalised educational tools. On the downside, they could facilitate personalised phishing attacks, produce disinformation at scale, and be used to hack through the network security around

computer systems that control vital infrastructure.

OpenAI’s own research suggests models like GPT-4 are “general-purpose technologies” which will impact some 80 per cent of the US workforce.

The US writer Stewart Brand has argued that a “healthy civilisation”

ON THE UPSIDE, AI MODELS LIKE GPT-4 COULD ENHANCE HUMAN CREATIVITY AND SCIENTIFIC DISCOVERY



According to Stewart Brand's 'pace layers' model, different layers of a healthy civilisation move at different speeds, from the slow movement of nature to the rapid shifts of fashion

requires different systems or layers to move at different speeds: “The fast layers innovate; the slow layers stabilise. The whole combines learning with continuity.”

In Brand's 'pace layers' model (see diagram above), the bottom layers change more slowly than the top layers. Technology is usually placed near the top, somewhere between fashion and commerce. Things like regulation, economic systems, security guardrails, ethical frameworks, and other aspects exist in the slower governance, infrastructure and culture layers.

Right now, technology is accelerating much faster than our capacity to understand and regulate it – and if we're not careful it will also drive changes in those lower layers that are too fast for safety.

The US sociobiologist E. O. Wilson described the dangers of a mismatch in the different paces of change like so: “The real problem of humanity is the following: we have Paleolithic emotions, medieval institutions and god-like technology.”

MAINTAINING THE RATE OF DEVELOPMENT?

Are there good reasons to maintain the current rapid pace? Some argue that if top AI labs slow down, other unaligned players or countries will outpace them.

However, training complex AI systems is not easy. OpenAI is ahead of its US competitors (including Google and Meta), and developers in China and other countries also lag behind.

READER'S DIGEST

It's unlikely that "rogue groups" or governments will surpass GPT-4's capabilities in the foreseeable future. Most AI talent, knowledge and computing infrastructure is concentrated in a handful of top labs.

Other critics of the Future of Life Institute letter say it relies on an overblown perception of current and future AI capabilities.

However, whether or not you believe AI will reach a state of general superintelligence, it is undeniable that this technology will impact many facets of human society. Taking the time to let our systems adjust to the pace of change seems wise.

SLOWING DOWN MAY BE WISE

While there is plenty of room for disagreement over specific details, I believe the Future of Life Institute letter points in a wise direction: to take ownership of the pace of technological change.

Despite what we have seen of the disruption caused by social media,

Silicon Valley still tends to follow Facebook's infamous motto of "move fast and break things".

I believe a wise course of action is to slow down and think about where we want to take these technologies,

**WE CAN CHOOSE
TO STEER THIS
TECHNOLOGY,
RATHER THAN
ASSUME IT
HAS A LIFE
OF ITS OWN**

allowing our systems and ourselves to adjust and engage in diverse, thoughtful conversations. It is not about stopping, but rather moving at a sustainable pace of progress. We can choose to steer this technology, rather than assume it has a life of its

own that we can't control.

After some thought, I have added my name to the list of signatories of the open letter, which the Future of Life Institute says now includes some 50,000 people. Although a six-month moratorium won't solve everything, it would be useful: it sets the right intention, to prioritise reflection on benefits and risks over uncritical, accelerated, profit-motivated progress. **R**

Rodolfo Ocampo is a PhD student, Human-AI Creative Collaboration, UNSW Sydney. Published under Creative Commons licence.



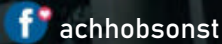
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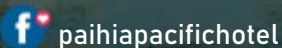


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Ambling over, he said, "I saw you."

SUBMITTED BY BARBARA HONIG

Not A Keeper

Been dating this guy for four months and today he asked me why I don't have a boyfriend.

@pallnandi

A Grand Old Age

"I think I'm getting grey hairs," I told my husband. "But I can't be sure because my eyesight isn't what it used to be."

My eternally optimistic spouse replied, "Sounds like it's all working out fine!"

SUBMITTED BY CINDY SMITH

Long Arm Of The Law

Helplessly lost in a small town, I waved down a passing police officer. Turns out the address I was looking for was in the opposite direction.

"Is it OK if I make a U-turn?" I asked.

"If I don't see you," he said, walking back to his car.

I quickly did a U-turn and got about a block before he came up behind me and pulled me over.

Mum's The Authority

My mother has a medical podcast where she self-diagnoses her ailments. It's called my voicemail and it happens every morning at 9am.

@KimmyMonte

Moving Along

We asked my Great-Aunt Luella how long it took for her and Uncle Campbell to drive the 200 kilometres

from their home to ours. “With no traffic, it takes about two and a half hours,” she said. “But if there is a lot of traffic it’s only two hours, because Campbell has to pass everyone.”

SUBMITTED BY CAROL PARKER

Leaf Me Waiting

Visiting a local art gallery, I noticed a middle-aged couple paused in front of a life-size painting depicting a beautiful naked woman with a cluster of leaves strategically placed around her body. The wife stated that the picture was in bad taste and moved on. Not her husband, who stood gazing at the painting.

“What are you waiting for?” his wife demanded.

He replied, “Autumn.”

SUBMITTED BY YEFIM M. BRODD

JOINING THE COLLECTIVE

A group of hippopotamuses is called a bloat. I think I’ve found my people. @heatinblack



ILLUSTRATIONS: GETTY IMAGES



THE GREAT TWEET-OFF: KIDS IN THE KITCHEN

**Kids can be remarkably funny
– when it comes to food.**



My 11 year old made a grocery list and the only item on it was cake. I have so much to learn from her.

@MOMMAJESSIEC

ME: Don’t open the oven door.

MY SEVEN YEAR OLD: I just want to see.

ME: Those are meringue cookies.

If you open the oven door for anything, they will crack.

MY SEVEN YEAR OLD: What if the cat opens the oven door with his paws, gets inside, closes the door behind him and is trapped? Can we open the oven door to save him?

@MICHAELVOGEL1

Last night, I hid the Oreos under my son’s folded clothes in a basket and asked him to put it away... which he SWEARS he did. Now he’s standing in front of the pantry freaking out that the Oreos are gone.

Who wants to tell him?

@IDONTSPEAKWHINE

“UGH, WHAT IS THAT AWFUL SMELL?!” my six year old yells as she walks into the kitchen. My cooking. The smell was my cooking.

@LIZERREAL





SEE THE WORLD...
turn the page →

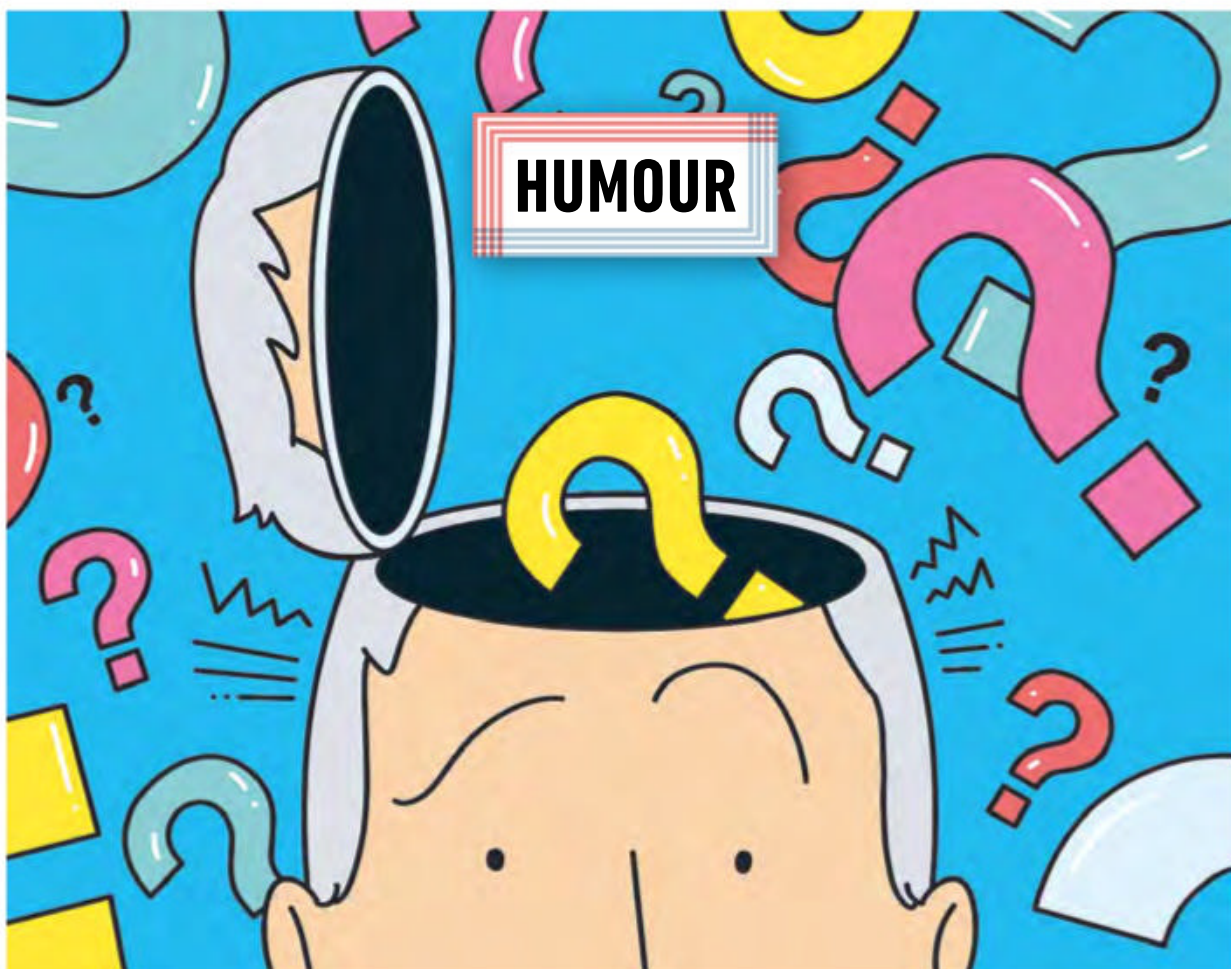
...DIFFERENTLY

Farm To Fork

Fish farming has been around longer than some might think. In 475 BCE, a man from China known as Fan Lai wrote a book called *The Classic of Fish Culture* to teach others how to raise fish. Modern aquaculture began with a German scientist who, in the 18th century, succeeded in collecting fish eggs, fertilising them and then raising the fish. Today, farmed fish live mostly in floating enclosures near coastlines. In Scotland, many farms specialise in salmon. It takes two to three years to raise the fish before they end up as a delicacy on plates all over the world.

PHOTOS: (PREVIOUS PAGE) RICHARD JOHNSON/ALAMY/STOCK PHOTO;
(THIS PAGE) GETTY IMAGES/ IMAGESOURCE/MONTY RAKUSEN





I Forgot To **Remember**

BY *Richard Glover*

They talk about the straw that broke the camel's back, but really it should be the password that completely wiped out my memory bank. My world is now in ashes. Let this be a warning to others.

I was going along fine - with instant recall of my bank PIN, my mobile number, my Facebook log-in. Then I joined a petrol station rewards scheme.

The sign-up form on the company's website asked me to create a

ILLUSTRATION: SAM ISLAND

password. When I typed in “petroll,” it was rejected for not being complex enough. I needed to add at least one upper case letter and one symbol.

I tried again: “I Hate Heartless Oil Companies @#\$% Prices Never Stop Going Up.” But that was too long and didn’t include “at least one numeral”. It may also have been defamatory.

Following my usual custom, I used an obscure fact about my favourite singer, Elvis Presley: “Garon1935” – a reference to the middle name of Elvis’s sadly stillborn twin brother.

This was accepted even though I was drawing on a tragedy in a way that should make us all feel uncomfortable. My excuse: I’d used up all other Elvis references, including but not limited to GladysPresley1912, Priscilla1945 and TomHanks2022.

But here is the thing: as soon as I inserted this fresh password into my memory, I instantly forgot all the others. My brain had hit its limit for passwords.

I now know nothing. I cannot complete the simplest of transactions: no banking, no streaming service subscriptions.

Facebook? They no longer trust me. Ditto, my frequent flyer account. It was the same story with *The Dubai Journal of Home Economics* (we

all have strange online preferences).

I had entered some passwords in my Book for When I Die, a notebook in which I’ve recorded vital information for my wife and kids after my demise. In case the Book for When I Die ever fell into the wrong hands, I disguised them in a way that only a family member could figure out.

For example, I combine my banking PIN with our postal code, then add it to a list of phone numbers alongside the name Johnny Cash. It’s a stratagem that would fool even Albert Einstein.

The book also contains passwords that relate to events in history but are described in such a cryptic fashion I’ve forgotten what

**MEMORY IS
SUCH A WEIRD
THING. MARCEL
PROUST
CALLED IT A
“GAME OF
HIDE AND
SEEK”**

I intended.

Memory is such a weird thing. French writer Marcel Proust called it a “game of hide and seek.” You might have no idea where a memory lies – it seems impossible to locate – then suddenly it’s there in front of you. As Proust said, “We see nothing, then suddenly the name appears in its exact form.”

That’s fine for Proust; all he had to remember were the names of Parisian socialites. He didn’t need a password for every human action.

Maybe we need a system like the one we use to remember people’s

READER'S DIGEST

names. You know, when you form an association between a person's attributes and their name by chanting the mnemonic "Skinny George, Skinny George" after meeting them. The risk is that, upon seeing him, you'll blurt out the phrase. "Skinny George" might not mind, but it's possible "Boring Beatrice" will.

As for remembering passwords as you change them, you could go through the books of the Bible or

military ranks, although I can never remember whether a colonel is above or below a lieutenant. Or you could simply use the first and last letters of Elvis's greatest hits, together with the year of their release.

Maybe I'll try that one out - but only after cryptically describing the system in the Book for When I Die. Then I'll hide the book in a place so obscure I'll never remember where it is. **R**



There's A Buyer For Everything

The notion of spending A\$59,560 on a piece of used gum might really burst your bubble. But it is not just any piece of polymers and resin flavoured with sweeteners — it's straight from the mouth of actor Robert Downey Jr. An eBay user claims to have got ahold of Downey's used gum when the Marvel star appeared at Jon Favreau's Hollywood Walk of Fame ceremony earlier this year. The chewed-up chunk of gunk will be sent to the lucky bidder in a plastic container — and no, they can't return it.

Here are some more weird things that have been auctioned:

Britney Spears' Chewed Gum: Yes, a piece of chewing gum that pop star Britney Spears once chewed on and spat out, was sold for A\$20,950 on eBay.

Scarlett Johansson's Used Tissues: Apparently, a couple of tissues on which the film star had blown her nose, sold for A\$7890, again, on eBay.

A Jar Containing The Air Brad Pitt Had Breathed Out: Some enterprising person 'trapped' a breath of air that Hollywood celebrity Brad Pitt exhaled, in a jar. And a fervent fan actually bought it in an auction, for A\$506, so enabling them to breathe the air of the rich and famous. WWW.MENSXP.COM, *THE NEW YORK POST*

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It is the best birthday gift I have ever received!” *(Sylvia Ross).*

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STAYING HEALTHY ON HOLIDAYS

Roam if you want to – but don't forget these items if you have pre-existing medical issues

BY **DR JEAN MARMOREO**
FROM **CANADIAN GEOGRAPHIC**

ILLUSTRATIONS BY HAYDEN MAYNARD

“IS THERE A DOCTOR ON BOARD?”

No doctor wants to hear these words while flying, but this time I was already primed by the frantic sounds of a female passenger in distress. We were over the North Atlantic, and my husband and I were on our way home after a European holiday. The cabin was darkened for the inflight movies when pleas of “Wake up! Oh, help!” rang out.

I was out of my seat, fast. The flight attendant and I arrived together to see a frightened elderly woman clutching the hand of her husband, who wasn't responding to her. His head was back, mouth open. He may have been asleep, except that he couldn't be roused.

I did a quick examination: irregular but steady pulse, colour good, no evident pain, breathing regularly without effort. I sat on the arm of the seat across the aisle, still monitoring his pulse, and asked the woman about her husband. At 80 years old, he had a clean medical history and took no medications. The couple had travelled to Scotland to celebrate their 60th wedding anniversary, and they were on their way home. It had been a good holiday, she said, but tiring.

Suddenly her husband opened his eyes, looked at me, smiled and said, “Hello. What's happened?”

“Well, you lost consciousness for a few minutes,” I said. “Your heartbeat isn't quite right, and that may have

caused this.”

Soon after, looking down on the expanse of snow over Greenland from the cockpit, I reported to the pilot that there was no other plausible explanation for the man's episode.

“We can put the plane down in 20 minutes in Gander,” he told me, “or carry on for two hours and land in Toronto. What do you want me to do, doc?”

“Put it down,” I said. It wasn't worth taking any chances, and the safest thing was to get him hospital care quickly.

Three weeks later, I received a lovely thank you note from this kind gentleman, who will hopefully remain in good health for years to come.

I don't know for certain what caused the man's troubles that day on the plane. Maybe he overexerted himself in Scotland; maybe he didn't rest enough; maybe he was dehydrated. The truth is, travel for seniors can be daunting and stressful, and there's enormous potential for medical complications, especially for people with pre-existing health issues. But it can also be very exciting and fulfilling.

Though COVID-19 is likely to be part of our lives for the foreseeable future, people are travelling again, and the key to things going smoothly – beyond getting travel insurance – is preparation. Here are steps you

can take to enjoy your holiday with minimal stress.

CREATE A PORTABLE MEDICAL HISTORY

Thanks to mobile phones and tablets, it's easy to bring your medical history – consultations, test results, imaging reports – with you on your travels. You can take advantage of the available phone apps and digital tools (which vary according to your jurisdiction) that allow you to access your health records. That means you will have this vital information with you no matter where you are.

Even with these details on your phone or tablet, you should still create a written record of your medical history. Include any surgeries you've had and the medications you take (by name, dosage and the time of day you take them).

Put the information in your wallet along with your boarding pass, vaccination record and credit cards. Knowing it's there is very reassuring. Why? Phones can fail or run out of power. If something goes wrong during your travels and you can't speak for yourself, your medical summary will provide caregivers with the information they need.

And if you end up receiving medical care while travelling, make sure you get printouts of all the tests you were given so you can show them to your doctors back home. They will be

a key component of your follow-up care and will help you avoid retaking tests.

SHARE YOUR TRAVEL ITINERARY

Send your itinerary to close family or friends, and be sure to include addresses and phone numbers for each destination. This allows your loved ones to keep in touch if you do experience medical problems while you're away.

And if you, the traveller, are leaving elderly parents at home, make sure whoever is caring for them can reach you if there is a health crisis.

What if a loved one passes away at home while you're travelling? Frankly, unless you belong to a religion that requires a quick burial, I believe there is no need for you to race home. This advice assumes that funeral arrangements have already been made



READER'S DIGEST

for your loved ones, which is simply smart planning. The pandemic has taught us that in the absence of a bedside vigil, it's the celebration of life that matters.

STAY COMFORTABLE WHILE FLYING

Flights are physically demanding. The combination of being sedentary and enduring high cabin pressure at altitude can take a toll on our bodies.

So, in addition to donning masks as a precaution against airborne illnesses like COVID-19, my husband and I wear knee-high compression socks on lengthy flights. They reduce or even prevent uncomfortable foot swelling caused by sitting for hours crammed into a small seat. As well, we never take off our footwear while flying. We know that if we do, we'll be struggling to stuff our swollen feet back into our shoes or boots at the end of the flight.

Compression socks support your legs' veins and allow better blood

flow. This helps prevent swelling and the pooling of blood in the veins, reducing your risk of deep-vein thrombosis, when clots form that can cause a pulmonary embolism.

It's also very important to get up and walk the aisle during the flight. I recommend taking a stroll every two to three hours. Even if you have to crawl over fellow passengers and risk blocking the food trolley in the aisle, it's worth it for your health's sake.

BRING ALONG THE BASICS

Pack a reusable water bottle. Parents today send their kids off to school with water bottles, but rarely do we see seniors carrying them – and they should.

If you're part of a tour group, some excursions at your destination may offer fixed lunch times and rest periods, but many travellers find themselves out all day, often inadequately fuelled and watered.

Be sure to drink regularly throughout the day – staying hydrated can reduce headaches and body aches, which helps you stay focused and, crucially, reduces your chances of falling. I like collapsible lightweight bottles because they're easy to tuck into small bags; one that holds 750 millilitres of water is enough for a day's outing but won't make you desperate for the toilet. Aim to drink around two litres per day in total.

When you do head out for the day,



don't carry too much. It's well known that the 'asymmetrical loading' of shoulder bags stresses the neck and upper body. A small backpack, squarely set on both shoulders, will make all your outings more comfortable.

Put only the necessities into your daypack: water, medications, your medical-history document, sunscreen, hat, credit card and cash. Depending on the weather, you may want to add a jumper, raincoat or umbrella. And wearing a mask, especially in crowded places, just makes sense.

DON'T BE SHY ABOUT BRINGING A CANE OR WALKER

My patients who travel tell me they struggle navigating the cobblestone paths, steep roads and narrow stairs they encounter at some destinations. Holidays often include visits to museums, gardens and ancient sites, and that can add up to a lot of walking - often more than ten kilometres, or about 12,000 steps, a day. It can take a toll on tricky knees, stiff hips or a sore back.

Many tourist attractions that cater to older travellers offer canes for walking tours and poles for hikes. Some may even provide straps for your ankles and braces for your knees, but it's better to have your own equipment that you've already tried. Consider packing a knee guard (a neoprene sleeve with the kneecap

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READER'S DIGEST

area exposed) or a soft ankle brace. Either could be invaluable, as mild pressure on a tender joint can reduce swelling.

To avoid over-exerting your body before you even reach your destination, it's fine to ask your doctor for a letter requesting the use of a wheelchair for transiting through airports (though airlines wouldn't typically require a doctor's note). Some airports even provide large golf carts in lieu of wheelchairs. Ask your airline in advance about the options for your journey.

DON'T FORGET OTHER ESSENTIALS

You've got your passport, reading glasses, sunglasses, money, contact details, medical information, itinerary, phone, power adapters and small bottles of your preferred toiletries. Other all-important basics are sunscreen with an SPF of 50 or higher and a hat to protect your scalp, ears and the back of your neck (areas that never seem to get enough sunscreen).

Don't forget antibacterial wipes; we're all now accustomed to hand sanitiser, and the wipes are handy for cleaning surfaces around you, in planes and on buses, for example. And if you want to be super prepared, add an antihistamine to your luggage.

Always pack prescription meds in your carry-on bag, not your checked

luggage; replacing them could be difficult if your bags are lost or delayed. And if you are travelling with prescription opiates for chronic pain, bring a letter from your doctor that declares exactly what you're carrying.

Likewise, if you have diabetes, put your glucometer (to measure your blood sugar) in your carry-on bag. If you are on blood thinners, don't forget to bring your INR testing kit (which monitors the risk of blood clotting).

Anyone planning to hike should pack tweezers for removing ticks; you don't want to get Lyme disease, a serious illness that can dramatically affect the quality of your life. If you're going walking in wilderness areas or tall grass, wear a long-sleeved shirt and trousers tucked into your socks.

THE WORLD IS WAITING

Don't forget that no matter where you go, you can often rely on the kindness of strangers. I am forever impressed at the trips my elderly patients undertake, and they tell me that part of their confidence comes from knowing that, if they need help, they can ask for it from locals. People are generally good.

I find that travel is good medicine for my soul, and it may be good for yours, too. With the world opening up again, don't shy away from seeing the world. Embrace it. **R**

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Golden GIRL

*My mum's
80th-birthday
tattoo is just the
latest example of
her wild newfound
independence*

BY *Mark Angus Hamlin*

FROM **THE GLOBE AND MAIL**

WHEN YOUR MOTHER ENTERS HER ninth decade, you make a point of being a little extra vigilant for any signs of decline – memory loss, bouts of repetition, a general acceleration of age-related deterioration.

Thankfully, my mother has been blessed with good health, and her mental faculties seem to have remained largely intact. But when she got tattooed after turning 80 two years ago, I had to wonder.

To celebrate Mum's landmark birthday, we were planning a large party – but then, of course, everything had to



READER'S DIGEST

be cancelled because of COVID-19. After all, her entire social circle is high risk, composed as it is of septuagenarian and octogenarian friends from her book (wine) club, her garden (wine) club, and her church. Instead, we arranged an outdoor family lunch at a nearby lake.

My mother looks just like many grandmothers. She is short, plump and white-haired. She's rosy-cheeked and jolly, and when she laughs her eyes almost seem to disappear behind those chubby cheeks. She comes from a traditional Catholic family. She was a career civil servant. In short, she didn't do crazy stuff.

That all changed a few years ago. She began to surprise my older brother and me with bouts of what she described as "independence". At the time, we merely saw them as examples of irresponsibility and possibly age-related questionable judgement.

IN EARLY 2015, the year she turned 75, she informed us she'd booked a seven-night trip to Turkey. Alone. Because she had never been there.

Of course, that was absurd. No way could my brother and I allow that. A vulnerable old lady wandering the streets of Istanbul on her own, not speaking a word of Turkish, with no knowledge of the laws and customs of the land – it was out of the question!



She paid no attention to us. Off she went. When she returned she told us it had been a wonderful success.

As it turns out, she had barely spent any time alone after hiring a taxi driver to show her around Istanbul for a few days. He took her to the souks, mosques and restaurants. He introduced her to a rug vendor, "a lovely fellow", and she bought some rugs. The vendor had taken her address and promised to ship the rugs home. The vendor and my mother apparently struck up quite a friendship and she had told him to please drop by if he were ever in town. My mother beamed as she told this story.

We couldn't believe how naive she had been and sat her down to explain that she had been duped. The vendor had her money. She neither had nor would be receiving any rugs. And, of

course, she had no possible recourse.

Some weeks later, her rugs arrived. As did a lovely note from Mustafa. To our even greater surprise, the following year Mustafa himself arrived, and promptly called our mother to inform her of that fact.

“He came by for a cup of tea. They drink a lot of tea in Turkey,” my mother told my amused brother and me.

At 77, she did a similar thing while on a Caribbean cruise with her younger sister. Upon disembarking in Cuba, she wandered off on her own, flagged down a motorcycle rickshaw and had the driver “show her around the island” for several hours.

Of course, she neglected to inform her sister of her plans (“she would have worried”), causing my aunt to spend the entire afternoon searching for our mother. My aunt didn’t find her until Mum returned just before the ship was due to depart. She had been sampling a local drink with “some very nice Cubans” at a bar “somewhere off in the forest – just a shack of a place, really.”

Still, her 80th birthday was when she really outdid herself. Sitting on the deck for her lakeside birthday lunch with her family, Mum informed us that she decided she had to get a tattoo. Her first. It would be her 80th-birthday present to herself.

**MY MOTHER AND
THE TURKISH RUG
VENDOR STRUCK
UP A FRIENDSHIP.
WE COULDN'T
BELIEVE IT**

My brother and I eyed each other. Was she joking? What does Mum know about tattoos? She goes to church, not to tattoo parlours.

It seemed so absurd we didn’t believe it.

Six days later, she had a tasteful butterfly on the outside of her left ankle. My brother and I wondered: had she become addlebrained?

But Mum proved that she was thinking straighter than most of us.

Her streak of independence seems to be thoughtfully based

on a realisation that life is to be lived, and when there’s relatively little of it left, it needs to be lived now. This philosophy reminded me of the line from the movie *The Shawshank Redemption*: “Get busy

living or get busy dying.”

As happened with most of us, the pandemic kept her cooped up, away from loved ones and fun. The tattoo was her way of showing everyone who was boss. And we couldn’t be prouder.

I don’t think Mum has decided what her next big ‘thing’ is. Yes, she’s prone to folly, but maybe that’s what we all need. Some pointless, wonderful folly. **R**

FROM *THE GLOBE AND MAIL* (JANUARY 5, 2021),
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THEGLOBEANDMAIL.COM

LAUGHTER

The Best Medicine



One In The Eye

A traffic policeman stops Maggie and asks to see her driving licence. "Lady, it says here that you should be wearing glasses when driving."

"Well, officer," explains Maggie, "I have contacts."

"Lady, I don't care who you know, you're still going to get a ticket."

SUBMITTED BY GILLY HOLLANDS

Playing Tribute

A musician hears of a loner who dies with no friends or next of kin.

Touched, he decides to go to the funeral and play his bagpipes as a tribute. Lost on his way to the graveside, he finally arrives an hour late to find two men shovelling dirt back into a hole in the ground. The musician jumps out of his car, pulls on his bagpipes and proceeds to play 'Amazing Grace'. It's so beautiful that the two men wipe away a few tears.

"That," says one "is the most fitting tribute I have ever witnessed to the installation of a septic tank."

SUBMITTED BY ROGER SIMMONS

Queue This Way

While shopping in a toy store, I came across a long line of people waiting for a promised shipment of dolls from Mattel. As I scanned the line, I noticed a friend waiting. I knew my friend had no daughters or young relatives, so I figured he must like the dolls himself.

"Bill, I didn't know you were a collector!" I said.

"I'm not," he replied.

"Oh, you're buying a gift," I said.

"No, not at all," my friend responded.

"If you don't mind my asking then, why are you standing in this line?"

"Oh that," he answered. "I've never been able to resist a barbie queue!"

bestcleanfunnyjokes.com

Give Him A High Five

A 55-year-old man who was born on May 5 had been married five years, had five children and made \$55,555.55 a year. Of course, his lucky number was five. A friend tells him that a horse named Lucky 5 will be running in the fifth race at the Melbourne Cup. The man withdraws \$5555 cash from his bank account, goes to the races and bets on Lucky 5.

Sure enough, the horse comes in fifth.

irishroversbooks.com



CAP-TIVATING JOKES

Try these on for size.



Why are hat jokes the hardest to understand? Because they always go right over your head!

I just bought a new cap... with a built-in fan that keeps my head cool during hot weather. It really blows my mind.

What does a hat salesman drink to get him going in the morning? A cappuccino.

What did the hat say to the tie? You hang around and I'll go a-head.

Did you know you can wear any boat as a hat? You just have to turn it upside down to make it cap sized.

What do you call a turtle in a chef's hat? A slow cooker.

What do we call a car that wears a hat? A hat-chback!

Sources: mytowntutors.com;
gloryofthesnow.com;
<https://heresajoke.com/>



PHOTO: GETTY IMAGES

Should You Check Your DOG'S DNA?



If your dog is a bitza (a bit of this, a bit of that) and you've ever wondered exactly which bit was which, a doggy DNA test can tell you. Some pedigree dogs may also benefit from one

BY *Helen Foster*

When Amanda Platts' dog Prince was five months old, the Pilates teacher from Sydney and her partner decided to get his DNA tested. The rescue pup, believed to be an English staffy, was already the same height as the couple's previous, much older staffy, Diesel. "There was something about Prince's face that made me think he wasn't pure staffy," says Platts. "But as he started to rapidly grow, I really began to wonder." The test, taken with a simple and painless mouth swab, revealed that although one of Prince's great-grandparents was indeed an English staffy, he's mostly American staffy, a much larger dog breed, with some whippet, terrier and Hungarian Vizsla.

DNA testing for dogs first appeared around eight years ago. Since then it has become quite popular with 2019 figures revealing more than 700,000 of Australia's 4.8 million dogs have been checked. It's routinely conducted by dog breeders and owners alike to verify an animal's parentage, to help manage disease and to prepare for or protect against hereditary diseases or traits. Testing is done either at a

vet clinic or by purchasing a home testing kit online. Once collected the tests are sent to a pathology lab that specialises in veterinary services.

There are now around 400 recognised pure dog breeds in the world. According to the Australian National Kennel Council, today around half of domestic dogs are crossbreeds, bred deliberately for the appealing traits of both parent breeds. A crossbreed has parents of two distinct (pure) breeds, or is a mixture of several distinct breeds all of which are known. A mixed-breed dog's parentage is unknown.

A crossbreed's parents come from two distinct pure breeds, while a mixed-breed's parentage is unknown

While all of these breeds originally descended from wolves, over time each breed – both pure and mix – has developed its own genetic traits.

Dog DNA tests identify what breeds of dog are in a dog's genetic ancestry. Genetic traits

common among a breed might play a role in factors such as how much fur the dogs shed, how nervous the breed is – and whether the breed has a higher risk of developing any medical conditions.

"Knowing this allows the owner to potentially adjust the care they give them to reduce the animal's risk of developing issues," explains Dr David Lee, President of the Australian Small Animal Veterinarians special

Should You Check Your Dog's DNA?



If your dog has Labrador in them, you may want to keep an eye on its food intake

interest group of the Australian Veterinary Association. For example, Labradors are prone to weight gain, joint diseases and arthritis, he explains, so, if you find out your dog has some element of Lab in them, you might want to keep an eye on their food intake to ensure they don't start getting too tubby.

German Shepherds and Border Collies can be a bit more prone to anxiety, so you might want to adapt their training for this. Even the propensity for howling was found to be related to a dog's genetics in a recent US study.

But as well as behavioural quirks, tests might pick up genetic variations

associated with medical concerns – for example, the impact of a gene called MDR1. Dogs that carry a particular variation of this can be made very sick by some types of anti-parasite medication. “This gene variant affects dogs from the collie breed which include Border Collies, Kelpies and Australian Cattle Dogs and so, if you have such a dog, or think your dog might have collie in their background, it's a good idea to get them checked as it might change the way your vet treats such problems in the future,” says holistic veterinarian Dr Edward Bassingthwaight who practises in Melbourne.

While this all might sound like a

positive and proactive way to help manage your dog's health, DNA testing is not something you should rush into without any thought.

Dr Lisa Moses is a veterinarian and bioethicist at Harvard University in Boston, USA. Recently she and two colleagues wrote to the scientific journal *Nature* expressing a number of concerns about home genetic testing for pets.

"My main concern is that most dogs (and most people) have variations in their genes that are probably just variants of normal, even if they do occur in genes associated with disease – and we don't have enough information yet to know which are concerning," she told Reader's Digest. "I worry that people will see these test results and over interpret how much information they are giving you about the actual risk of your dog getting sick in the future."

This has already been the case for one dog, a pug that Dr Moses wrote about in her *Nature* correspondence. The dog developed issues with walking and bladder control and a DNA test showed it carried a mutation for a rare neurological condition. Only one in 100 dogs who have this mutation actually develop the disease, and it wasn't confirmed that the pug was one of these, yet her owners had her

put to sleep, worried that it was the cause of her symptoms and that she was only going to suffer further.

"The most important thing to do if you are having your dog tested is to talk through the results with your vet when you receive them," says Dr Lee.

"Even if you just find out your dog's ancestry, do not go on Google and look at all the traits or issues that breed might have, as that can easily lead to over interpreting what

things actually mean. Remember that having a genetic tendency for a condition only means that your pet might be at higher risk of that issue, it does not mean they have it or will ever get it."

In fact, when it comes to behaviour, recent findings from a team of US researchers suggest a dog's genes only determine about nine per cent of their behaviour, with age and gender far more important predictors of how they'll behave.

But if you do still want to get your dog tested, what do you need to do? While a dog can be tested at any age, Dr Lee says it's best to test when they're a puppy as this allows you to tailor training, and other elements of their care, to any enhanced risk as soon as possible. "However, if a genetic tendency is found, it might affect your ability to get pet insurance if you don't have it already," he cautions.

Recent findings suggest a dog's genes only determine nine per cent of their behaviour

Should You Check Your Dog's DNA?

Pick your test carefully. There's no set standard for what tests offer or how accurate they might actually be, but the bigger the database of breeds the test claims to check, the more useful information it's likely to provide. If your vet offers a test, using this might be a better option than choosing one randomly online.

Don't rule out testing for pedigrees. While you might think only mixed breed dogs need testing, a 2018 study that examined over 100,000 samples for 152 genetic variations, found that while mixed breed dogs were more likely to carry mutations than pedigrees, pure bred dogs were more likely to actually develop the conditions, so it might be just as important to get them tested.

The tests use saliva to collect DNA and most of the time getting

the sample is very simple – you just need to gently brush their cheek, “but some dogs don't like things going near their mouth. In this case, you might need to build up to taking the swab and you should ask your vet's advice on how to proceed,” says Dr Bassingthwaighte.

“It's a good idea to try and work on this behaviour anyway, as it makes it easier for your vet to check their teeth.”

Once you get your results, make an appointment with your vet to chat about what they actually mean and if you need to adapt your dog's diet, exercise or elements of their veterinary care to handle any increased risks identified.

Now 13 months and 24kg, Prince is heavier than Diesel ever was, and is already enjoying a bigger bed. **R**



Tuning Into Trash

In a creative bid to raise environmental awareness, a group of musicians from Paraguay belted out familiar tunes at a hilltop concert outside Bolivia's capital city earlier this year, overlooking a not-so-scenic and sprawling garbage dump.

But the garbage was the point. The young musicians who made up the orchestra used recycled materials to make their own instruments, “transforming trash into music,” according to Fabio Chavez, one of the performers.

Playing songs from Coldplay to John Lennon, the musicians entertained local garbage workers who were impressed by the sound of cellos, violins and horns fashioned out of large cans, pipes and other discarded materials. REUTERS

► **One World Trade Center** is the world's most expensive building in what is – jointly with Singapore – the world's most expensive city: New York. Construction started in 2006 and was completed in 2014, at a cost of US\$3.9 billion. The centre stands on what is known as Ground Zero, where the famous twin towers of the original World Trade Center collapsed during the terrorist attack on September 11, 2001. The new building soars 541.3 metres into the sky and houses offices as well as a café and restaurant.

PHOTO: SIR FRANCIS CANKER PHOTOGRAPHY / GETTY IMAGES



PHOTO FEATURE

The Sky's **THE LIMIT**

*For these creations,
special has its price*

BY *Nicole Lewen*



▲ **This Mercedes-Benz 300 SLR Uhlenhaut Coupé** was bought at auction by an anonymous collector in 2022 for 135 million euros (more than A\$220 million). It is one of only two prototypes of a racing car manufactured in 1955. Neither one ever saw a race.

► **Whether Salvator Mundi was** actually painted by Leonardo da Vinci has been disputed. One thing is certain: in 2017 it sold for the record price of US\$450.3 million at auction. Officially the identity of the buyer is unknown, but it is said to be Saudi Arabian Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman. *The Wall Street Journal* reports that for a while the painting adorned bin Salman's luxury yacht.

▼ **Pirates of the Caribbean: On Stranger Tides** from 2011 cost a record US\$410 million to make. In the fourth instalment of the *Pirates of the Caribbean* film series, Johnny Depp and Penélope Cruz search for the Fountain of Youth.





▲ **This stealth aircraft** comes with a US\$2-billion price tag, making the Northrop B-2 Spirit the most expensive military aircraft in the world. The US Air Force owns 20 of the long-range bombers. Their shape and surface texture help them evade detection by radar.

◀ **This unique wedding gown** was worn by Victoria Swarovski when she married Werner Mürz in 2017. Fashion designer Michael Cinco's creation cost more than 500,000 euros (A\$815,000). The dress was set with half a million crystals – manufactured, of course, by the company whose name the Austrian pop singer bears and which one of her ancestors founded in 1895. **R**

PHOTOS: (CLOCKWISE FROM LEFT) CHRIS SINGER/CUEX GMBH/ GETTY IMAGES; STOCKTREK / GETTY IMAGES; ROBERTHARDING / ALAMY STOCK PHOTO

◀ **One night at the Burj Al Arab** will set you back by almost A\$16,000. That's what the hotel charges for one of its 670-square-metre suites. In return, guests can land on the hotel's private heliport. The 'Tower of the Arabs' in Dubai is one of the most expensive hotels in the world. Its striking sail shape was designed by architect Tom Wright.



Just Add Poles

Nordic walking is a boon for mobility and overall health

BY Katherine Ashenburg

I'm a walker, logging an average of 9000 steps a day several times a week around my neighbourhood. One of walking's great charms for me is that you don't need equipment. But on recent trips to Copenhagen and Stockholm, I noticed tall, fit Scandinavians striding along on city streets with poles, as if they were cross-country skiing without any snow.

It was a revelation to learn that the addition of the poles makes it a more vigorous, full-body exercise than simply walking – and, as a 76 year old looking to stay healthy while enjoying the outdoors, I decided to give it a try.



There's plenty of help online for the novice Nordic walker: stand tall, swing your arms out as if to shake hands, and plant your poles with vigour. Then there's the little matter of the strap on the pole. This allows the walker to grip the pole when thrusting forward and then relax that hand as the other hand pushes forward – a feat of coordination that builds stronger muscles.

For a warm-up, I started slow: Nordic walking down the hall that extends from my front door to the

deck. In case you're tempted to sneer, that measures 19 good strides and it wasn't easy. As I struggled to propel the right arm out while the left leg stepped – all while gripping and releasing properly – I was reminded of 'The Centipede's Dilemma', a 19th-century poem about a poor arthropod which, when asked how she walked, had no idea what to answer.

Coordinating the movements wasn't my only problem. As someone who can walk eight kilometres briskly without apparently raising my heart rate, the novel use of my arms and upper body was surprisingly strenuous. After half an hour, my heart was pounding and I was sweating, but I still wasn't much good.

I pressed on, because there's no arguing with the exercise's benefits. Nordic walkers' upper-body exercise increases their heart rate significantly more than walking without poles. A 2009 study published in the *Journal of Strength and Conditioning Research* found that there's up to 23 per cent more oxygen delivered to the tissues. And according to cardiologist Dr Aaron Baggish, with poles "you're engaging 80 to 90 per cent of your muscles, as opposed to 50 per cent, providing a substantial kilojoule-burning benefit."

Cross-country skiers in Finland were early practitioners of Nordic

walking as a way of training off-season. In the early 1990s, it was adopted in North America as a rehabilitation tool. Physiotherapist Peter Burrill, head of the Nordic Pole Walking programme in Toronto, Canada, says he's seen the exercise speed up the post-surgical recovery of patients with new hips and knees.

It also helps people with Parkinson's, says Burrill. "We put poles in their hands and it's amazing because they start walking with real rhythm."

Meanwhile, out on the winding path near my house, I was still advancing three steps and falling back two. But after a few more clumsy days of being convinced I would never succeed, suddenly everything clicked. Not only was I able to coordinate the movements, I was

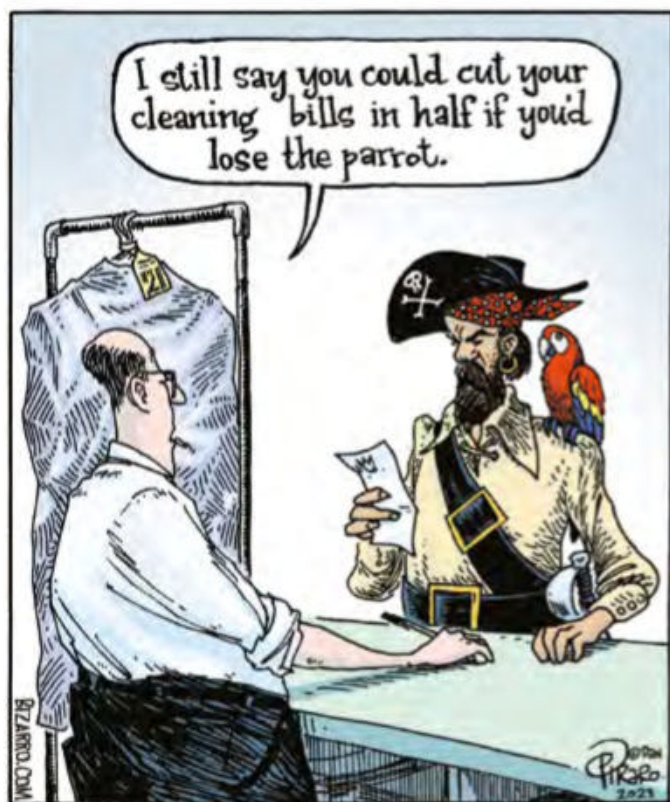
aware that my heart, arms and core were getting a workout.

Thinking back on those confident Nordic walkers I saw in Europe, I wish I could report that participating in the sport for 45 minutes a few times a week has made me tall and blonde – but something even better has happened. I found a form of exercise that adds an upper-body, aerobic component to my love of walking, and it's one I expect to enjoy for years to come. **R**

SWING YOUR ARMS OUT AS IF TO SHAKE HANDS, AND PLANT YOUR POLES WITH VIGOUR

ALL IN A DAY'S WORK

Humour On The Job



Signing Off

When only two people showed up at a book signing event for her debut novel, *Crowns and Legends*, author Chelsea Banning tweeted that she felt “a little embarrassed.” Soon, fellow authors responded with their own horror stories.

Margaret Atwood shared, “I did a signing to which nobody came except a guy who wanted to buy

Scotch tape and thought I was the help.”

Jodi Picoult wrote, “I have sat lonely at a signing table many times only to have someone approach ... and ask me where the bathroom is.”

Irish author Sheila O’Flanagan told of the time a woman handed her a John Grisham novel. “When I pointed out it wasn’t written by me, she asked if I was signing books or not! So I signed it with love from me and John Grisham.” RD

Never Too Late To Learn

These actual answers to test questions show why teachers need long holidays.

Q: Would you rather be stuck on an island all alone or with one person you hate?

A: I would rather be on an island with someone I hate so I have something to eat.

Q: What ended in 1896?

A: 1895.

Q: Rachel has 16 chocolate bars.

Tracey takes four from her and asks for the remaining quarter. What would Tracey end up with?

A: A slap. boredpanda.com

Wrong Side Of The Freeway

A hotel that wanted our corporate business invited us to attend a luncheon. In calling to get directions, I asked if the hotel was on the east side of the freeway or the west side.

The employee responded, "Well, that depends on which direction you're coming from."

I decided to use my GPS.

SUBMITTED BY GLORIA BRUTSCHER

Lacking Something

The best one-liner in a student paper this year: "The analysis is severely limited by my lack of understanding what I am doing." @shaferpr

All The Better To See You

After my class read *Little Red Riding Hood*, I asked the young students what lesson we might learn from the fairy tale.

I was looking for "Beware of strangers." But one student's response worked as well: "Know what your grandmother looks like."

SUBMITTED BY SANDRA STEELY



TRUE LIFE DETECTIVE

Before creating the private detective character Sam Spade, author Dashiell Hammett was himself a Pinkerton detective. The Sunday Long Read website recently ran a listicle Hammett wrote in 1923 for the magazine *The Smart Set* detailing some of the odd things he encountered on the job:

- ✦ A man whom I was shadowing went out into the country for a walk one Sunday afternoon and lost his bearings completely. I had to direct him back to the city.
- ✦ I know an operative who, while looking for pickpockets at a race track, had his wallet stolen.
- ✦ A chief of police once gave me a description of a man, complete even to the mole on his neck, but neglected to mention that he had only one arm.

WACKY

*Birthday
Traditions*

*Around the world, it's not always
about cakes and candles*

BY *Stéphanie Verge*

Arousing rendition of 'Happy Birthday', blowing out candles on a cake, and giving gifts are common in many places across the globe. But in some countries they celebrate loved ones in unique ways. Here, the editors of our international editions share some unique traditions reserved for counting yourself one year older.

MEXICO

An emblematic Mexican birthday-party tradition - one that has spread across the globe - is the smashing of a piñata. Blindfolded, stick-wielding celebrants whack a brightly coloured container hanging from a string until it bursts open, raining down lollies. Now usually made from papier mâché in a range of forms that includes animals and





celebrities, piñatas are traditionally composed of clay and spherical in shape (with protruding spikes).

AUSTRALIA AND NEW ZEALAND

Down Under, birthdays usually involve a barbecue and having family and friends over for celebratory food and drink. “A child’s first birthday is often celebrated with balloons and what we call ‘fairy bread’ – slices of white bread spread with butter and adorned with Hundreds and Thousands (coloured sweet sprinkles),” says senior editor Diane Godley.

Fairy bread is replaced with beer and bubbly on a person’s 18th birthday, when they are allowed to drink legally for the first time. Because people used to officially become adults at the age of 21, some families in New Zealand and Australia mark that

birthday with a keepsake ‘key to the door’, representing the young adult’s privilege to come and go from the family home as they please.

PHILIPPINES

For Filipinos, birthdays aren’t just about celebrating the big day – they’re about spending time with family. Traditionally, anyone living within a day’s travel must be invited, or involved in the planning, and each guest is assigned a dish to bring. Central to the celebration are ‘longevity noodles’ (symbolising a long, healthy life), a cake ideally made from taro or purple yam, and karaoke.

LITHUANIA

“In my native country, it is customary for the person whose birthday it is to sit in a decorated chair that is then lifted up by the party guests,” says editor Eva Mackevic. “How many times the chair is raised will correspond with the age of the guest of honour.”

THE CHINESE DIASPORA

Birthday traditions vary quite a bit across the regions and countries with significant Chinese populations. In China’s southern Fujian province and in parts of **Taiwan**, for example, a person’s 16th birthday marks their passage into adulthood. This belief harks back to the Qing Dynasty and the age at which a labourer went from having a half-wage to a full one.

Wacky Birthday Traditions

In **Singapore**, younger people in the Chinese community celebrate their big day according to the Western calendar, and the older generation opts to mark it according to the lunar calendar. There is one thing everyone can agree on, however: a bowl of 'longevity noodles'. Sometimes made as a single strand, this is a common birthday food in Chinese communities, says editor Simon Li.

"Noodles are supposed to bring health and a long life, which is why it's wise to keep them as intact as possible on your birthday," Li explains. "Care should be taken not to break them while eating with chopsticks."

INDIA

For many Indians, the majority of whom are Hindu, birthdays involve religious rituals. The day usually starts with a visit to the temple, where prayers are offered and blessings are received. The person celebrating also

seeks the blessings of their family's elders by bowing down and touching their feet. "Some people also perform charitable acts or make donations to help those less fortunate than themselves," says editor Ishani Nandi.

A birthday is also an occasion to wear new clothes and to enjoy one's favourite dishes prepared by family members. In return, the guest of honour gives the first piece of their cake to the oldest person in their family.

NETHERLANDS

The 'circle party' is a typical birthday gathering in the Netherlands. The extended family gets together and sits in a circle to talk and eat cake, followed by drinks and a buffet-style dinner. It can be a lengthy process for anyone entering the room at these gatherings, says editor Paul Robert.

"People congratulate not only the person whose birthday it is but also everyone else in attendance by going around the circle and shaking each person's hand," he says. "The fastest method is to walk in, wave at the whole circle and shout, 'Congratulations, all!' But that's not considered very polite."

When someone turns 50, friends or relatives will place a large doll in the birthday person's garden or by their front door; men have an 'Abraham' doll, women a 'Sarah'. The dolls refer to a Bible passage from the Book of John in which



READER'S DIGEST

Jesus is asked how he could have seen Abraham when he's not yet 50 years old; it also refers to the advanced age at which Sarah, Abraham's wife, had their child Isaac.

BRAZIL

After blowing out the candles and making a wish in South America's biggest country, the guest of honour cuts the cake and offers a piece to someone who is important to them – for children, that's often a parent. But for adults, this time-honoured tradition can rate high on the awkward scale. "It's often uncomfortable, since you have to choose one person and disappoint others," says editor Raquel Zampil.

JAPAN

In Japan, celebrating a person's birthday on the anniversary of the day they were actually born became a tradition only in the last century; in the past, everyone celebrated on the new year. But regardless of when birthdays took place, there have long been milestone celebrations, ranging from a first birthday to a 60th.

When a child turns one, they take part in a ritual called *erabitori*, where the birthday child chooses from a selection of items spread out around them that represent their potential future. If a baby opts for a calculator, they could succeed in business; if they grab a pen, they might become a prolific writer.

On November 15 of the year children turn three, five and seven, their parents dress them in traditional dress and take them to a shrine. This celebration is *shichi-go-san*, which literally means 7-5-3 – all lucky numbers in Japanese culture. Parents often wish for their children's continued health and longevity by offering them a long string of soft *chitose ame* ('thousand-year candy') in a bag adorned with images of a turtle, a crane and bamboo – all harbingers of good luck. In Japanese culture, a person officially becomes an adult when they turn 20, with a coming-of-age celebration held on the second Monday in January.

CANADA

Depending on how vindictive a Canadian family and friends are, the 'birthday bumps' can be a dreaded ritual or a gentle joke. The guest of honour lays on their back, and partygoers grab their arms and legs and lift and lower the birthday person to the ground until their bum lightly 'bumps' against it. Alternatively, a guest grabs the birthday person by the shoulders and 'bumps' them on the backside with one knee, up to the number corresponding with the person's age – plus an extra bump for good luck. (This tradition is usually only practised with children.)

Regional particularities in parts of the country's east coast include kids being surprised by someone dabbing

butter or grease on their nose, a tradition reputed to help them 'slip away' from bad luck.

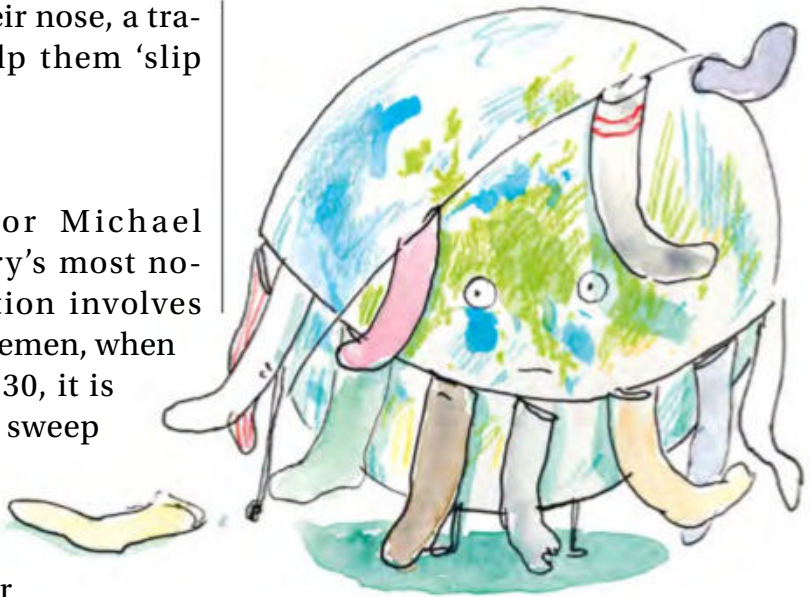
GERMANY

According to editor Michael Kallinger, the country's most notable birthday tradition involves sweeping stairs. "In Bremen, when unmarried men turn 30, it is customary for them to sweep the stairs of the local church or town hall," he says. "Women have to clean the door handle." This public act of sanitation is meant to embarrass the person and motivate them to marry.

In other northern regions of the country, if a man is still single on his 25th birthday, his front door gets decorated with a garland made of socks, labelling him as an 'old sock'. An unmarried woman turning 25 gets a garland of boxes, because she is now considered an 'old box' (like 'old sock', it's an ironic term for the elderly).

UNITED KINGDOM

Birthday parties are very popular in Britain and when children are involved there is almost always a game of 'pass the parcel'. The rules: a birthday present that has been wrapped multiple times is passed in a circle from child to child until the music stops. When that happens, whoever is holding the parcel unwraps a layer and completes



whatever 'forfeit' or request is written on the piece of paper inside the wrapping.

"Forfeits can range from 'show off your best dance move' to 'do your best impression of the birthday kid'," says former editor Anna Walker. The child who reaches the final layer of the parcel, which is usually sweets or a toy, gets to keep the gift.

Older Brits turning 100 receive their own special present: the ruling monarch sends them a letter of congratulations.

MALAYSIA

Malaysians mark their birthdays with a family gathering over lunch or dinner the night before the big day and wrap up the celebration by taking stock of their blessings and thanking Allah for giving them life and good health. **R**

QUOTABLE QUOTES

You can learn techniques, you can memorise recipes. But to me, the one thing that makes food memorable is when you cook with heart.

NOBU MATSUHISA, CHEF



I WENT TO AFRICA AS A SCIENTIST. I LEFT THE JUNGLE AS AN ACTIVIST.

JANE GOODALL, PRIMATOLOGIST

You're never too young to start an empire and never too old to chase a new dream.

MANJIT MINHAS, ENTREPRENEUR

Just go to the next step. You don't have to go to the final step. Just the next.

WYNONNA JUDD, MUSICIAN



WHETHER IT'S BEAUTY OR FASHION, THERE'S AN OBSESSION WITH YOUTH. BUT IF WE'RE LUCKY, WE'RE ALL GOING TO GET OLD.

LAUREN HUTTON, MODEL

Just give yourself credit for even the smallest steps.

TIG NOTARO, COMEDIAN



Creativity lies in the everyday. The great ideas come when you are washing the dishes.

JIM PARSONS, ACTOR



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*On
Becoming A
Flâneur*

*Cath Johnsen explores the romantic
French notion that you don't really know
a city until you've been lost in it ...*

ALL ILLUSTRATIONS: GETTY IMAGES



ART OF LIVING



I t's mid-morning on a Monday,

and I'm strolling along an inner-city street in Brisbane, with no particular destination in mind. Men and women stride past me, power-suited, heads bent over phones, hands clutching steaming takeaway coffees. As I near the end of the street, an old building with two wooden doors catches my attention, showing its age in a city that has demolished many of its original buildings in favour of newer, shinier, taller monoliths of concrete, steel and glass.

A sign above the entrance beckons me in with the promise of 'one million books' inside, and so I push through the heavy timber doors, away from the sounds of crawling cars and tradespeople wielding jackhammers, and into the cocoon of this musty-smelling, second-hand bookshop. Thousands of well-thumbed tomes reach from floor to ceiling along narrow aisles, with some only reachable by ladder, others locked away behind glass, but all the collective pages seeming right at home in this creaky-floored, heritage-listed building.

I'm sure Charles Baudelaire would approve of this use of my time, the French poet who coined the idea of the *flâneur* – an idle, urban ambler who strolls the streets observing society, attentively soaking up the

vignettes of metropolitan life. In fact, I may even be lucky enough to find some of Baudelaire's writings in a place like this.

But while the original concept of the *flâneur* belongs to times past, the practice of *flânerie* is very much still in use today.

Tracey Zielinski, a clinical psychologist and author, says she regularly takes a leaf from the *flâneur's* book, both when she's at home and on holiday, but especially when she's in the birthplace of the *flâneur*: Paris.

"I've been to Paris at least a handful of times," Zielinski says. "I've never done the Eiffel tower, and I never will. I want to be amongst the real Parisians, I want to eat where they eat, and I want to explore.

"Like the time we were walking down this narrow little street in the Latin Quarter in Paris, and all of a sudden this vista opens in front of us, and there's a staircase leading to an amazing courtyard with flowers and cobblestones."

But Zielinski explains that one clear distinction between the *flâneur* and the tourist is that you must not be following a guidebook or a map, either in hardcopy or on your phone.

"Technology is such a big part of our lives, so it's easy to live your life



vicariously through your phone and miss out on so much, but life is happening around you, it's not happening in your phone," she says.

The idea of the flâneur is not about simply following directions and finding the next tourist attraction, she says. "It's about finding something that people don't see in general, because they stick to those major routes. It's about getting away from the crowds and exploring the hidden gems."

Dr Joe Hardwick, a lecturer in French language and culture at the University of Queensland, explains that when the flâneur emerged in the 19th century, it was during a time of rapid change due to the industrial revolution, the influence of modernity, and the introduction of timetables

IT'S ABOUT *GETTING AWAY FROM THE CROWDS AND EXPLORING THE HIDDEN GEMS*

and scheduling. Baudelaire's flâneur, he says, spent time walking through the streets of Paris to bear witness to this change.

"The flâneur is somewhat anachronistic, belonging to another time period

and not fitting in with modernity in some ways," Hardwick says. "Because the very slowness of what the flâneur does is out of practice, out of whack with the speed of modernity. I think that's probably even more the case now than in the 19th century... It's about being deliberately out of step with the fast pace of modern life."

It certainly feels out of the ordinary, indulgent even, to be wandering my own city on a weekday without a to-do list, or a purpose such as a work meeting to attend. Instead, I emerge from the bookshop where I

have spent an indeterminate amount of time lost in its aisles and let my feet choose their path. As I walk, I notice the city's frenetic workings all around me, including an inordinate number of cranes and construction sites. Clearly, Brisbane is shrugging off its 'big country town' label for good as it busily prepares to host the 2032 Olympic Games.

A few hours and blisters later, I realise that my time spent as a flâneur has slipped away more pleasantly and quickly than I could have anticipated. According to Zielinski, the art of flânerie is not just fun, it can be helpful in managing or preventing anxiety and stress, thanks to the employment of mindfulness.

"Flânerie allows you to be creative, it allows you to just immerse yourself in something completely different, and take notice of what's around you," she says. "When you're ambling, you've got the time, you've got the space, and you've got the intention of just noticing what's around you.

There'll always

be something new to observe, whether it's the architecture or the flowers, Zielinski says. And it's not just a visual thing - "you're listening and you're smelling and you're feeling the sun on your skin, and the texture of the road under your feet."

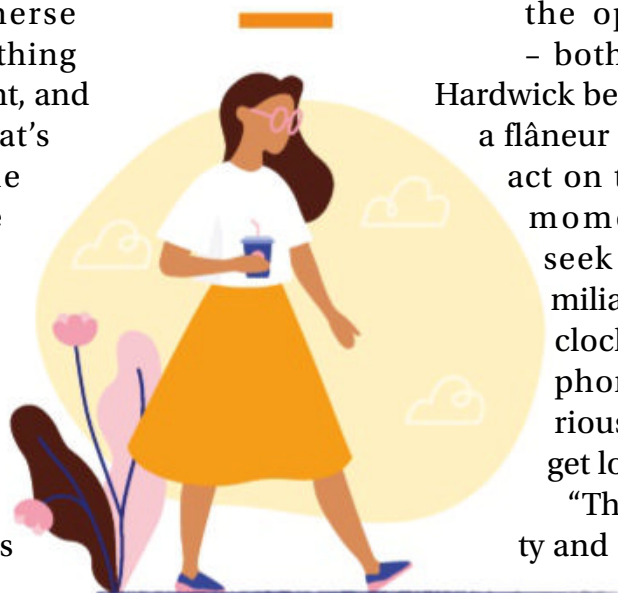
Zielinski says that mindfulness is about exploring your senses one by one, or even sometimes in combination. "It's about being in the moment with what's around you, and noticing it and sensing it and experiencing it."

I notice that my feet have carried me to the city's botanic gardens, and I ponder how I seem to be inextricably drawn to my two favourite things - books and nature - even on an unplanned outing in a large city.

And unplanned is the operative word - both Zielinski and Hardwick believe that being a flâneur requires you to act on the spur of the moment, explore, seek out the unfamiliar, not watch the clock or check your phone, and be curious. Perhaps even get lost.

"There's that novelty and excitement and

**FLÂNERIE
ALLOWS YOU TO
BE CREATIVE,
*IT ALLOWS YOU
TO IMMERSE
YOURSELF*
IN SOMETHING
COMPLETELY
DIFFERENT**



interest that just ambling through somewhere you're not familiar with allows you to experience," Zielinski says. "And there's so much joy in just stumbling across a little treasure."

I discover a little treasure myself in the far reaches of the gardens – a quiet café in the historic groundskeepers' cottage, serving coffee that I don't have to slurp hurriedly from a takeaway cup, but can instead take the time to sit and sip and watch the rest of the world go by.

Slipping my phone into my bag to avoid temptation, I instead watch people: joggers rush past, some with personal trainers haranguing them from behind, and couples stroll along with pampered pooches straining at their leads. There are academics from the nearby university seated at tables near me, hunched over laptops. I look up at the palms that dot the gardens, and I'm amused to see a lone ibis bird sitting atop one, gazing serenely at the cityscape before her. Driven out

of her natural environment of inland wetlands due to drought and habitat degradation, the ibis now calls the city home. She appears to enjoy people watching, too.

My attention is then caught by an avenue of jacaranda trees flushing purple. A sign explains that jacarandas first arrived in Australia in 1864 on a ship from South America that docked at the Brisbane wharves across the river. Like the ibis, the trees have seemingly flourished in their new environment.

I am a witness to all of this, I realise. I observe the changes and notice that some things never seem to change. I watch as modern life rushes by, as people jostle to get to work, as the city swells in size, and as nature changes and adapts to anything humans throw at them. Tomorrow, I will be just as they are – scheduled, busy, preoccupied. But today, today I am a flâneur. Perhaps I'll order another cup of coffee. **R**



Musky Scent

One of the world's richest men, Elon Musk, reportedly scented a new opportunity to capitalise on quirky products, launching a 'repugnant-smelling' perfume called 'Burnt Hair' that he claims sold 30,000 bottles to earn a million dollars in just a few hours. "With a name like mine, getting into the fragrance business was inevitable – why did I even fight it for so long!?" Musk asked on Twitter. Previous brainwaves have included Tesla's own-brand tequila, and a pair of 'short shorts' to signify Musk's victory over stock investors who bet against his electric vehicles. REUTERS

QUIZ

SCOUNDRELS GALORE

Curtain up for the big Movie Villains Quiz

BY *Ann-Katrin Fett*



QUESTIONS



1 In *Joker*, viewers learn what Batman's antagonist is all about – Arthur Fleck dreams of a career as a stand-up comedian. In reality, he works as a party clown and is ostracised – until he goes crazy.

As the 'Joker', he plunges Gotham City into chaos. What is his trademark? He ...

- a)** starts laughing in inappropriate situations.
- b)** spits when he is angry.
- c)** picks his nose.
- d)** wears bright face makeup.

2 In *Misery*, nurse Annie Wilkes is obsessed with a series of novels by author Paul Sheldon. When he has an accident on her doorstep, she takes him in to nurse him back to health.

Soon, however, she begins to torment him after she finds out that Paul ...

- a)** is not the author at all.
- b)** lets his main character die.
- c)** does not want to finish the book series.
- d)** plans to give up writing altogether.

3 In *Nosferatu*, the vampire Count Orlok spreads fear and terror by bringing the plague to the port city of Wisborg. On which novel is the film based?

- a)** *The Historian* by Elizabeth Kostova.
- b)** *Twilight* by Stephenie Meyer.
- c)** *Dracula* by Bram Stoker.
- d)** *The Haunting of Hill House* by Shirley Jackson.

4 Hannibal Lecter is highly intelligent, a serial killer and loves to eat human flesh. What is the villain from *The Silence of the Lambs* by profession?

- a)** a hunter.
- b)** a teacher.
- c)** a psychiatrist.
- d)** an anaesthetist.

5 Lord Voldemort, the greatest black magician of all time, is the arch-villain in the Harry Potter films. Bellatrix Lestrange, one of his most fanatical followers, is particularly cruel, but in the end she receives her just punishment. She ...

- a)** is turned into a rat.
- b)** becomes a dragon.
- c)** loses her magic powers.
- d)** is killed by Molly Weasley in a duel.

6 When Norman Bates commits murders, he wears a grey wig and the clothes of his mother, who became his first victim. In which horror classic by Alfred Hitchcock is Bates the main character?

- a) *The Birds*.
- b) *Psycho*.
- c) *Vertigo*.
- d) *Rear Window*.

7 James Bond hunts bad guys on behalf of the British crown. In *Casino Royale*, the legendary secret agent has to deal with an unscrupulous banker. What is his name?

- a) Le Chiffre.
- b) Auric Goldfinger.
- c) Doctor Julius No.
- d) Money Bags.

8 In the animated film *The Little Mermaid*, the sea witch Ursula causes nothing but mischief. She once tried to seize power over Atlantica and was banished by King Triton. But she gives no one any rest, instead, she ...

- a) poisons the sea.
- b) steals the souls of souls.
- c) capsizes ships.
- d) brings on a tsunami.

9 For hundreds of years, the Ring of Power was in the possession of Gollum, an important character in the *Lord of the Rings* trilogy. When he loses it, he desperately tries to recover his prized possession. What does Gollum call the ring? My ...

- a) darling.
- b) treasure.
- c) sweetie.
- d) precious.

10 The clue is in the name: Dr Evil incessantly plots to take over the world. He also carries around a white cat and sports a large scar on his face. As power-hungry as he is cranky, Austin Power's Dr Evil is the perfect parody of villains from which film series?

- a) Star Wars.
- b) Indiana Jones.
- c) James Bond.
- d) Dr Who.

11 The title character in *Frankenstein* wants to create a being – and uses human remains to do so. His creature turns out to be repulsively ugly and at the same time sensitive. It only becomes evil through the rejection it experiences. How does Dr Frankenstein bring the creature to life?

- a) a magic spell.
- b) a lightning strike.
- c) a kiss.
- d) an injection of secret acid.

12 In the horror classic *A Nightmare on Elm Street*, a character named Freddy Krueger stalks teenagers in a small American town.

The villain, covered in burn scars, uses an unusual method to do so. He ...

- a) comes out of TV sets.
- b) appears in dreams.
- c) crawls out of the sewers.
- d) appears on wet nights.

ANSWERS: SCOUNDRELS GALORE QUIZ

1 a Since childhood, Arthur has laughed in the most inappropriate situations due to stress.

2 b When Annie discovers that Paul is letting her favourite heroine Misery die, she forces him to write a new book in which the protagonist lives on.

3 c The 1922 silent film is an adaptation of Bram Stoker's novel *Dracula*. The film, made without the permission of Stoker's heirs, was one of the first horror films and is considered an expressionist masterpiece with its play of light and shadow.

4 c As a forensic psychiatrist, Hannibal Lecter helps the FBI hunt down criminals. He likes to prepare his patients according to exquisite recipes.

5 d In the decisive battle for Hogwarts, Lestrange attacks Ginny Weasley. Her mother Molly defeats her in a duel to the death.

6 b Norman Bates from Hitchcock's film *Psycho* suffers from a split personality and at times

thinks he is his domineering mother. He commits the murders that follow the killing of his mother in this state.

7 a Le Chiffre is a banker to the underworld. When he loses a client's money on the stock market, he organises a poker tournament to make up for the loss. But Bond gets in his way.

8 b Ursula stages herself as a beacon of hope for desperate water people, to whom she proposes questionable deals. When the supplicants can't fulfil their end of the bargain, Ursula robs them of their souls.

9 d Gollum's thoughts circle incessantly around the ring he affectionately calls "my precious", which drastically changed Gollum's appearance and character over the years.

10 c Dr Evil is a parody of James Bond villains, especially Ernst Stavro Blofeld, who is frequently seen with his white Angora cat.

11 b Through a lightning strike, Dr Frankenstein manages to bring his creature to life.

12 b Freddy Krueger appears in his victims' nightmares. Everything that happens to them in their dreams also happens in reality.



Fort Lovrijenac in
Dubrovnik, Croatia,
dates back to the
11th century

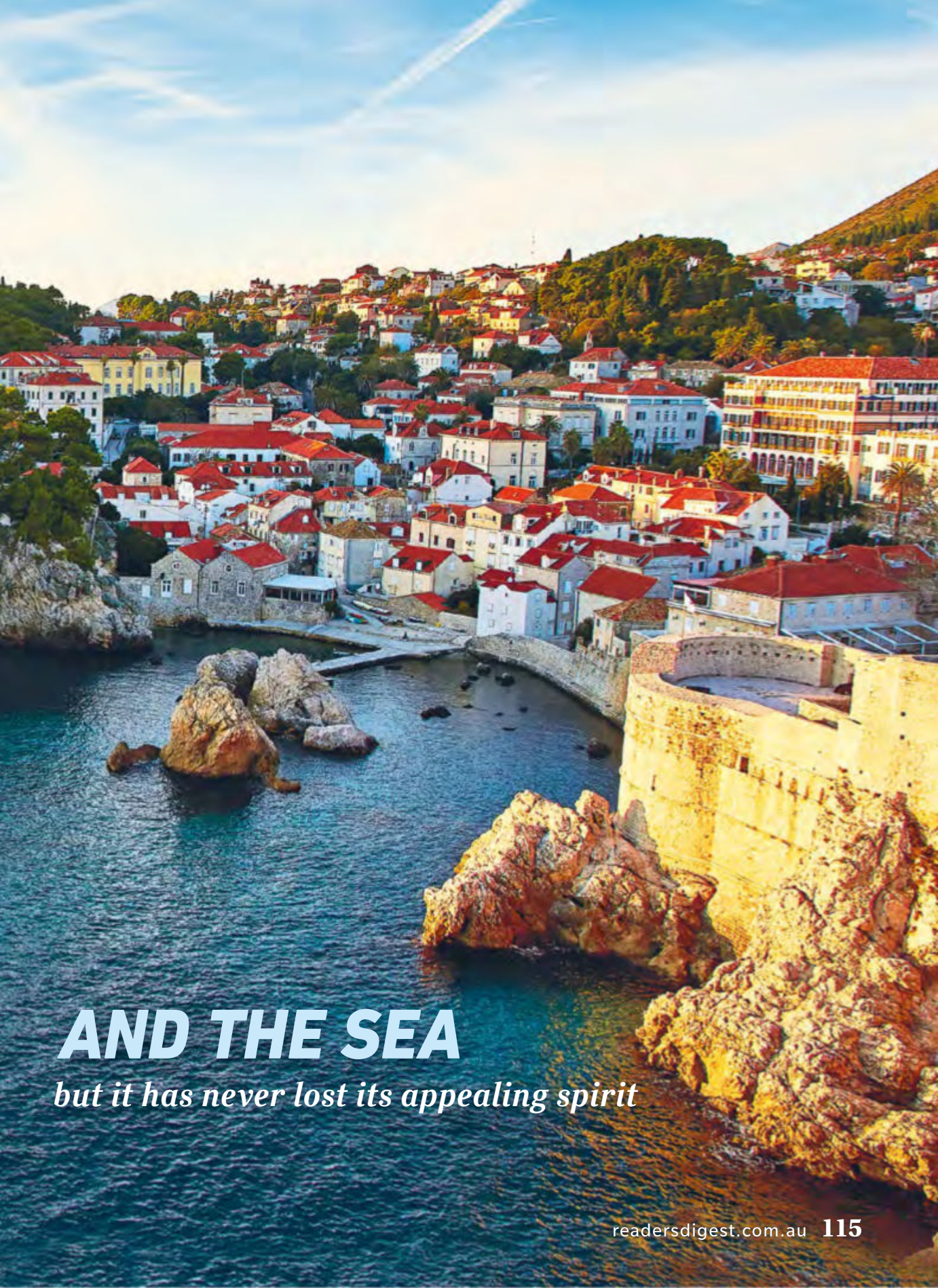


Paradise

BETWEEN THE MOUNTAINS

Dubrovnik has seen more than its share of calamities,

BY *Chris Wright* FROM **HEMISPHERES**



AND THE SEA

but it has never lost its appealing spirit

Standing on my hotel balcony on my first morning in Dubrovnik, I can see that the city hit the jackpot in terms of physical appeal.

To my left is the green nub of Lokrum Island; to my right, a surging mountainside; and, straight ahead, the craggy coastline of the Adriatic Sea, culminating in the fortified walls of Old Town.

That physical appeal perhaps explains why, in spite of all manner of historical calamities – a 17th-century earthquake, Cold War Communist oppression, the Croatian War of Independence of the 1990s – the 40,000 people who live in this Croatian city burst with good humour, hope and resilience, a sense of belonging. Irish playwright George Bernard Shaw once described it as “paradise on Earth”.

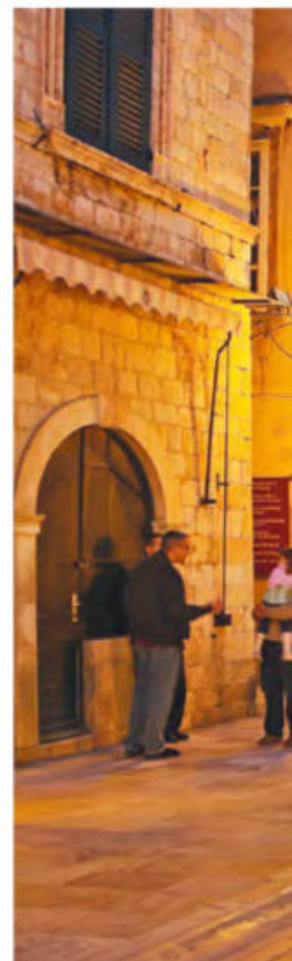
I descend the tree-shaded terraces and plop into the sea, enjoying the sense of seclusion before the scurry that lies ahead. Today, I’m exploring Old Town, a concentration of churches, palaces, fortifications and family homes hemmed in by the battlements and turrets of the City Walls. Even before I got here, I had a mental image of all this thanks to *Game of Thrones* (Dubrovnik was one of its major filming locations). But there’s more to Old Town than what was presented in the TV blockbuster.

I enter the walled section via the medieval Ploče Gate, overseen by a statue of Sveti Vlaho, the city’s patron saint, also known as St Blaise. The real story of Dubrovnik (formerly Ragusa) begins in the seventh century, the plot line threading through years as an independent republic and thriving trading hub, occupations by foreign powers, plagues and palace intrigues. For all the seeming might of its fortifications, Old Town (a UNESCO World Heritage Site) has seen its share of devastation: a 1667 earthquake levelled the ancient city, and artillery fire rained down in the 1991–92 Siege of Dubrovnik.

The blocky limestone used in the post-quake rebuild is both sturdy and lovely to look at – luminous in the daytime, sepia-toned at night. But be warned: the stones on the main street, Stradun, are slippery when wet. At one point, I catch the eye of a pigeon as it slips and falls on a damp patch; it’s an awkward moment for both of us.

Old Town’s historical hodgepodge comes to a head in Lua Square, which is skirted by Baroque, Gothic and Romanesque structures. Two of the city’s most dazzling churches are

PHOTO: (PREVIOUS SPREAD) SIMON.BETTERIDGE/GETTY IMAGES



here – the Church of St Blaise and Dubrovnik Cathedral – along with the grand Marin Drić Theatre, whose namesake author sits outside, cast in bronze.

At the entrance to the 15th-century Rector's Palace, one of the few buildings to have survived the quake, I make my way past a profusion of cherubs and vaulted arches. Beyond the courtyard is a crypt containing an exhibition of photographs of the Siege: burning houses, kids playing in the rubble, boarded-up storefronts daubed with images of angels, boats and birds.

Crisscrossed by narrow alleys, which invariably lead to a precipitous flight of steps or a cockeyed square, Old Town is not easy to navigate – which is fine when you're having a stroll, but not so great when you're late for lunch. Finally, I find Taj Mahal, a cozy Bosnian eatery known for its hearty traditional fare, and order *buredike*, meat-filled pastries topped with sour cream, followed by *hadijski cevap*, a beef and vegetable stew.

At the end of Stradun, near the 15th century Pile Gate, is the Large Onofrio's Fountain, whose ornate spigots have trickled since 1438. I take a sip

Stradun, the main street of Dubrovnik's Old Town



and cross Stradun to the Franciscan monastery, which is home to an order that dates back to the 1300s, along with an apothecary museum that displays the scales, pipettes and cauldrons the friars used while dabbling in medicine.

I could use a restorative tonic myself, so I head for Bua Bar. Hewn into cliffs below the City Walls, it invites guests to perch on tiny vertiginous terraces, suggesting a lax approach to health and safety but a staunch dedication to social media accounts like Instagram. I totter onto one and

manager, waves away the idea that I try something light. “Carbs,” she says, delivering a *porki makaruli* (pasta in beef sauce). “We also serve it with croquettes – because if you can fry carbs, even better.” Then come capon (cockerel) stewed in a porcini mushroom sauce and served with forest berries, a platter of baked peppers and a refined peasant-food dessert of egg custard, oranges and cookies.

“People here have a love of comfort,” Bitanga notes. “Thank God for all the stairs.”

OLD TOWN'S WALLS SEEM TO BE SUSPENDED BETWEEN SEA AND SKY, LIKE SOMETHING OUT OF A FAIRYTALE

order an Aperol spritz with a splash of vertigo. “People sometimes jump in,” the waiter tells me, nodding at the frothy waves below, “but not everybody likes that.” You don’t say.

I later put Google Maps to the test as I search for my dinner destination among the alleys, some lined with gift shops and bars, others draped with laundry and potted plants. Eventually I find the Jesuit Stairs, which were modelled on Rome’s Spanish Steps. At the top stands the wildly ornate St Ignatius Church; beside this is Kopun, whose menu puts a modern spin on Croatian standards.

Ana Bitanga, Kopun’s affable

Back at the hotel, I take in the view from the terrace. Old Town’s glowing walls seem to be suspended between sea and sky, like something out of a fairytale.

The next morning, I take the 15-minute ferry ride to Lokrum. There are dozens of islands around Dubrovnik, but Lokrum is especially popular – partly because of its proximity to the city, partly because of its staggering beauty. A kilometre long, the island bristles with a continent’s worth of plant species. It also has fantastic beaches, a salty lake known as the Dead Sea (not to be confused with the one in the Middle East) and a lush botanical garden.



Clockwise from the top: a vineyard in the Dubrovnik region; one of the cruise boats that ply the coast around Dubrovnik; Sveti Vlaho, the city's patron saint; bathing in the Adriatic Sea; the cable car on Mount Srd





Clockwise from above: A peacock in Dubrovnik; a woman in medieval garb performs in front of the Church of St Blaise; the historic City Walls; a bustling evening in Old Town



Bands of assertive peacocks, descendants of birds brought here in the 1850s by Austria's Archduke Maximilian, roam the ruins of an 11th-century Benedictine monastery. A bracing climb up a nearby hill leads to the stocky turret of Fort Royal, from where Napoleon's occupying troops trained their sights on Old Town's terracotta roofs.

After returning to Old Town, I take a half-hour drive up the coast to Brsečine Harbour, where I board a motorboat and hurtle towards Sipan, the largest of the Elaphiti Islands. The boat docks at BOWA, a family-run restaurant set on a secluded, wooded

sea and sipping white wine, it's hard to think of a finer way to spend a sunny afternoon.

I head out the next morning to Gru, a hip industrial neighbourhood a few minutes north of Old Town. My first stop is Urban & Veggie, a snazzy vegan restaurant across from Luka Gru harbour. "This is a city of meat lovers," says owner Ivo Dadić, seated on the vine-draped back terrace, watching as I devour a splendid vegan kebab. "People thought I was mad when I opened, but we are changing minds."

It's a short walk to TUP, a complex that's the centrepiece of the neighbourhood's revival. Among the enterprises

THE RED HISTORY MUSEUM HOUSES A BEGUILING CLUTTER OF ARTEFACTS FROM THE CITY'S TIME UNDER COMMUNIST RULE

beach. At this cluster of stilted cabanas and a dinky old stone building that doubles as the kitchen, I tuck into platters of seared tuna belly, swordfish ceviche and grilled octopus. Even the salt is diligently curated, crystallised from local pools.

My extended lunch continues up the coast in Mali Ston, a medieval town known for defensive walls that snake into the hills behind it. I join a small group aboard another boat and head out to a floating platform, where a crew member hauls up a rope festooned with shellfish. Bobbing on the bay, slurping oysters right out of the

that have set up in a former carbon graphite factory are a music studio, a brewery and a ceramics workshop.

There's also the Red History Museum, which houses a beguiling clutter of artefacts from the city's decades under Communist rule, including a vintage Yugo car and a series of rooms set up like a typical 1970s Croatian household. Visitors are encouraged to nose through the cabinets, listen to a Beatles cover band on headphones or tap messages on a clunky typewriter. At one point, I thumb through a magazine that has American actress Linda Evans on the

**Tourists explore Old Town,
near St Saviour Church**



cover. Apparently socialist workers watched *Dynasty*.

After lunch, I take a quick detour to the waterfront Cave Bar More, where you can sip fancy cocktails in a troglodytic setting. I can't help but try the *Game of Thrones* cocktail, made with pink gin, golden falernum, blue Curaçao, tonic and something called 'magic mix'.

On my way back to Old Town, I catch the Dubrovnik Cable Car, which trundles to the peak of Mount Srd, 412 metres above sea level. The

the vines, too," Vlaić tells us. "My father says that the only reason they eat the grapes is because they've never tried the wine."

Back at Old Town, I take a final sightseeing foray: a walk atop the City Walls, a two-kilometre loop that provides an intimate perspective of the historic quarter. At one point, I turn my attention away from Fort Lovrijenac and lock eyes with a man standing at his window. The moment serves as a reminder that Dubrovnik is more than a conglomeration of

DUBROVNIK IS MORE THAN DOMES OR POSTCARD-PRETTY RED ROOFS. AS A LOCAL ARTIST TOLD ME: "THIS IS HOME"

journey up is a nail-biter, but it's a small price to pay for what has to be the best view in town.

Later that afternoon, I meet Ivica Vlaić, who drives me to his family's vineyard ten kilometres east of the city. Nestled in the foothills of Malatica mountain, Vardia is not the largest vineyard around, but that's part of its charm. "We do everything ourselves," Vlaić says, leading a small group along a steep trail. "At harvest time, friends help – each chooses a row to pick, and at the end we have a barbecue."

The wine – a crisp, citrusy white – is fantastic, as is the spot where we're drinking it, surrounded by olive, fig and cherry trees, overlooking mountains and sea. "The birds enjoy

domes or a postcard-pretty sprawl of red roofs. As a local artist had told me earlier: "This is home. I belong here."

Dinner is at Restaurant 360 Dubrovnik, a Michelin-starred standout built into the City Walls, and I take my seat overlooking the old port as the Bell Tower clangs. The food is wonderful, as is the wine, not to mention the view. I can't recall the last time I felt so thoroughly happy. I say this to the guy clearing my table.

He smiles, and says, "Dubrovnik will do that to you." **R**

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In The Shadow

An aerial photograph of a long, straight dirt road stretching across a vast, arid, red landscape. The road is the central focus, leading the eye from the bottom right towards the horizon. The terrain is a mix of reddish-brown soil and sparse, low-lying green and brown vegetation. The sky is a clear, pale blue. The title 'In The Shadow' is overlaid in large, bold, orange-brown letters at the top, with a dark shadow cast below it.



BONUS READ



Of The Fence

AUSTRALIA — HOME TO UNIQUE ANIMALS AND ECOSYSTEMS — IS ALSO HOME TO THE WORLD'S LONGEST FENCE. IT IS AIMED AT KEEPING OUT DINGOES. THE 'DINGO' FENCE HAS ALSO TRANSFORMED THE ENVIRONMENT IN SURPRISING WAYS

BY Zoe Kean

FOR AUSTRALIA'S WILD ODYSSEY

The dingo fence starts in the green fields of Queensland's Darling Downs and stretches through New South Wales and South Australia before it abruptly ends on a high cliff's edge above the Great Australian Bight.

It traverses the traditional lands of 23 language groups, over Channel Country, scrub land and deserts. It is more than 5600 kilometres long. If you know what to look for, you can see its effects from space.

"It's longer than the Great Wall of China, but not as well built," says ecologist Mike Letnic. "Its purpose is to keep dingoes out."

The ancestors of today's dingoes arrived on the Australian continent between 3000 and 5000 years ago – most likely with people from Asia who travelled over the ocean on water craft.

In fact, the very existence of dingoes hints at a distant past, of human contact between Asia and the

Australian continent, long before the dates in our history books.

The nature of those interactions is a mystery. But the new species stayed and became important to life and culture for many Aboriginal peoples.

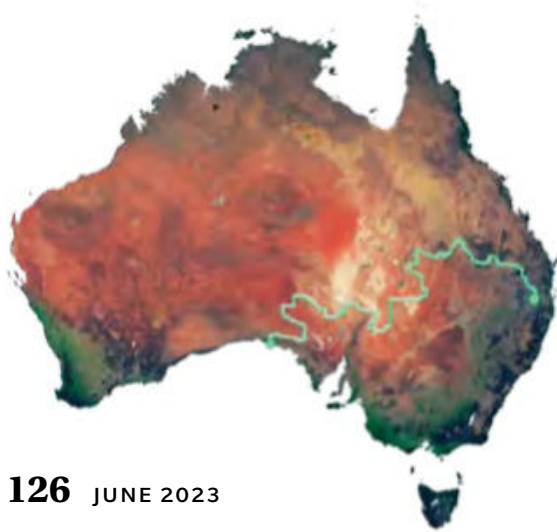
The new 'top dog' was disruptive at first. Besides humans, dingoes were the largest predator on the land and are suspected of contributing to the thylacine's disappearance from mainland Australia.

However, over millennia, the environment adapted to the dingo just as the dingo adapted to Australia's deserts, grasslands, forests and beaches. They are now a vital part of the ecosystem.

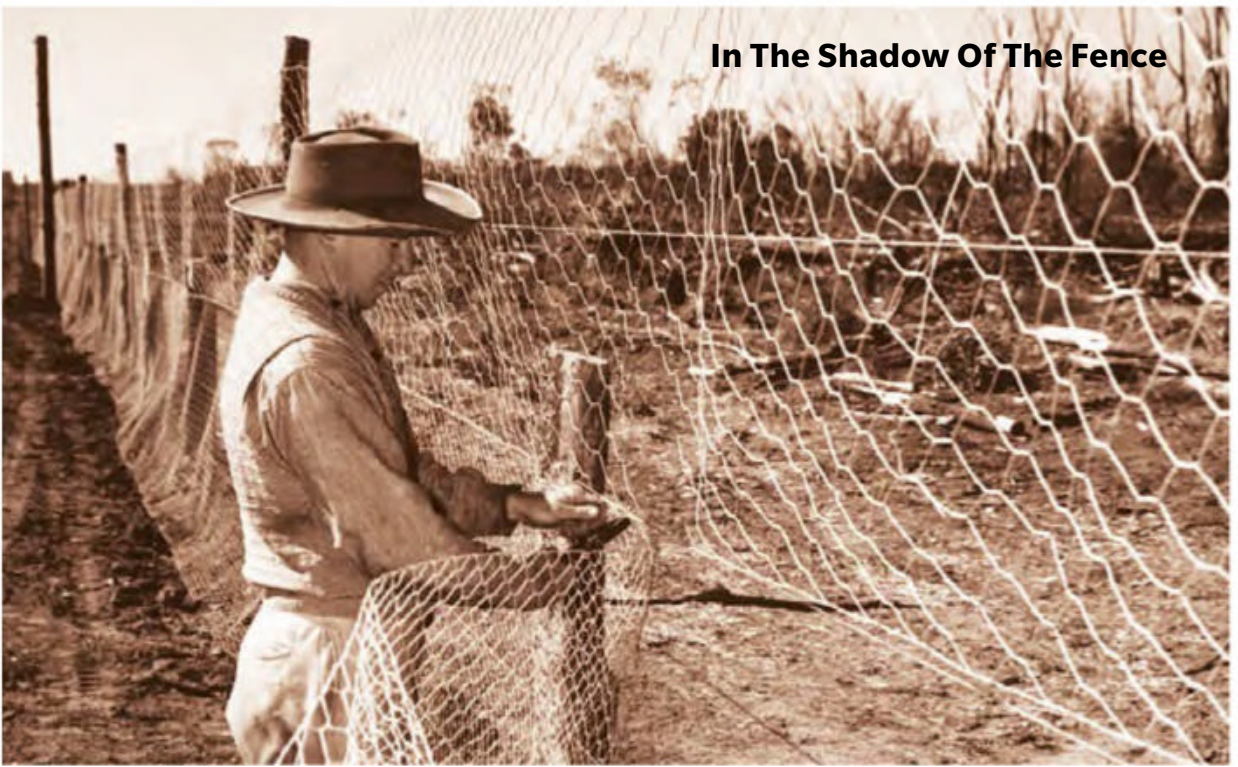
The freshly minted colony rode on the sheep's back and dingoes became an enemy to farmers and graziers.

As farming spread across the country, so did fences. Rabbit-proof barriers sprung up to stop the spread of that small, hungry, invasive species. Those structures also did a great job of deterring dingoes.

In the early 20th century, sheep



**“IT’S LONGER THAN THE
GREAT WALL OF CHINA,
BUT NOT AS WELL BUILT.
ITS PURPOSE IS TO KEEP
DINGOES OUT”**



Erecting dingo-proof fencing in western Queensland in the 1960s

graziers proposed an ambitious scheme to keep their flocks safe: the barriers would be joined to create a single long fence that would keep dingoes out of sheep country altogether. By the 1950s, around a third of the continent was ringed by the wire fence.

Dingoes were not tolerated inside the fence. To this day, graziers in New South Wales are legally obligated to exterminate dingoes on their lease. Within the fence and a buffer zone around it, dingoes are routinely shot and poisoned. The fence varies in height, but much of it reaches 1.7 metres. Although dingoes can scale it, they tend not to. Instead, they trot along the barrier looking for weak spots or holes, a quest that often leads to lethal encounters with poison baits

or traps. Although a few dingoes remain within its bounds, the fence has achieved its aim.

Dingoes are kept at bay.

Cascading effects

Removing dingoes has changed life inside the fence significantly – and not just for the sheep and their owners. When it rains, the land on the dingo side of the fence stays greener for longer. Dingo country is more biodiverse and has more small native mammals. Even the sand dunes are shaped differently on either side of the barrier.

For 20 years, Professor Mike Letnic of the University of New South Wales has been returning to study sites on both sides of the fence, trying to unpick exactly how the absence of dingoes has led to these differences. “The

INSIDE THE FENCE, WOODY SHRUBS DOMINATE OVER THE DIVERSE ARRAY OF DESERT PLANTS THAT ARE GOBBLED UP BY KANGAROOS

dingo fence has been a remarkable natural experiment into understanding the effects that apex predators have on ecosystems," he says. "Dingoes have not been present in great numbers in New South Wales for at least 80 years. And you can see the differences everywhere."

Those differences begin with animals that are comparatively easy to spot: there are "many, many more kangaroos" inside the fence, Professor Letnic says. That's because,

as well as having a taste for sheep, dingoes love to hunt kangaroo. Fewer dingoes means more roos. When times are good, roo populations boom, but when the rains dry up, they face mass starvation. With no large four-legged predators to worry about, kangaroos also have time to nibble away at sensitive plants. Inside the fence, this has led to woody shrubs dominating over the diverse array of desert plants that are more quickly gobbled up.



PHOTOS: WILD PACIFIC MEDIA



Opposite: In the almost-dingo-free zone, kangaroo numbers are higher than outside the fence. This page (top): Dingoes live for up to ten years in the wild. Above left: All the moisture hopping mice need comes from their food. Above right: Flowers in this part of the desert spring up after winter rains but are short-lived

And it's not just kangaroo numbers that are boosted by the absence of dingoes: inside the fence, feral cats and foxes prowl in larger numbers. These introduced predators played a large role in hunting 29 species of small native mammals to extinction. Professor Letnic says the problem is particularly bad in desert areas and

even worse inside the fence, where there are few dingoes to keep the cats and foxes in check.

“One of the things that makes me really sad when I come out to places like this in the desert is that I know that I've only got the opportunity to see a small fraction of the animals that once lived here.”



Satellite image of the dingo fence near Whitecatch house on the border of South Australia and New South Wales

The small mammal species that have survived the past 200 years are far more common on the dingo side of the fence. These include species like the seed-eating hopping mouse and the mulgara – a tiny but ferocious predator in its own right.

While dingoes may occasionally snack on these creatures, Professor Letnic says the influence of dingoes on cat and fox numbers makes a bigger difference, improving the environment for small mammals. And

that, in turn, makes a difference to the vegetation – and the sand dunes themselves.

Outside the fence in dingo country, Professor Letnic says hopping mice eat shrub seeds and seedlings, keeping shrub numbers down. “Without the shrubs, there is more movement of sand, and we get much more open environments.”

Deakin University ecologist Euan Ritchie agrees that removing dingoes has profoundly altered the

“THE INFLUENCE OF DINGOES ON CAT AND FOX NUMBERS IMPROVES THE ENVIRONMENT FOR SMALL MAMMALS”

In The Shadow Of The Fence

ecosystem. “A lot of ecologists have deep concerns about the environmental impact of the fence,” he says.

He describes the fence as “far from a perfect experiment” but says the differences either side of the fence are “relatively convincing evidence that when you lower dingo presence or abundance, there is an impact on the ecosystem”.

‘There is a war going on’

While the environmental repercussions of the dingo fence are becoming more understood, it does not alter the fact that started it all: it’s hard to grow sheep when dingoes are about. This reality makes many people in farming communities hostile to the predators – and in areas where grazing and dingoes overlap,

Clockwise from below left: A series of gates let people and vehicles through the dingo fence. It’s not just trees from which dead dingoes dangle – farm fences feature them, too. Australia has around 75 million sheep, the third-largest sheep population in the world





Clockwise from top: Both sides of the fence are cleared. Mike Letnic, a professor of conservation biology and ecosystem restoration at UNSW. Maremma sheepdogs were bred in Italy to guard farm animals against predators such as wolves and bears

the landscape is peppered with ‘dingo trees’. “Dingoes are hung in the tree to let people know that there is a war going on,” Professor Letnic says. “Government agencies [and] farmers often call them wild dogs, and people think they’re just kelpies or cattle dogs or Labradors gone wild.”

But Professor Letnic routinely

clips tissue samples from the hanging animals to get their DNA sequenced. His verdict? “It’s dingoes. They call them wild dogs because it’s easier, from a public relations perspective, to kill wild dogs ... But those domestic animals just don’t have what it takes to survive in the wild.”

“WE CAN MAINTAIN TOP PREDATORS IN THE LANDSCAPE AND CHOOSE TO MAINTAIN LIVESTOCK PRODUCTION AS WELL”

An uncertain future


So, what to do? Many already-arid areas enclosed by the fence are fast becoming too hot for sheep grazing, says Justine Philip, a research fellow at Birmingham University in the UK. This means much of the fence may soon become redundant. But at the moment, it is hard to do anything except graze sheep on the dry country inside the fence.

These places are mostly Crown land, Dr Philip explains, and you must be a grazier to take up a lease there. Sheep grazing is one of the only sources of income “because that’s the only thing that’s supported by the government”.

Another income source is maintaining the fence itself. It’s collectively funded by graziers, local and state governments, and upkeep costs an estimated A\$10 million per year. Dr Philip hopes governments will help communities transition from sheep grazing, especially where climate change is starting to make it impossible. Where grazing continues, “there are solutions at hand”, according to Professor Ritchie. “We can maintain top predators in the landscape and choose to maintain

livestock production as well.” He says a breed of guardian sheep dog called the Maremmano [Maremma] has successfully protected sheep in Queensland. “And we can have small areas of fencing where you might bring livestock when they are birthing or calving.”

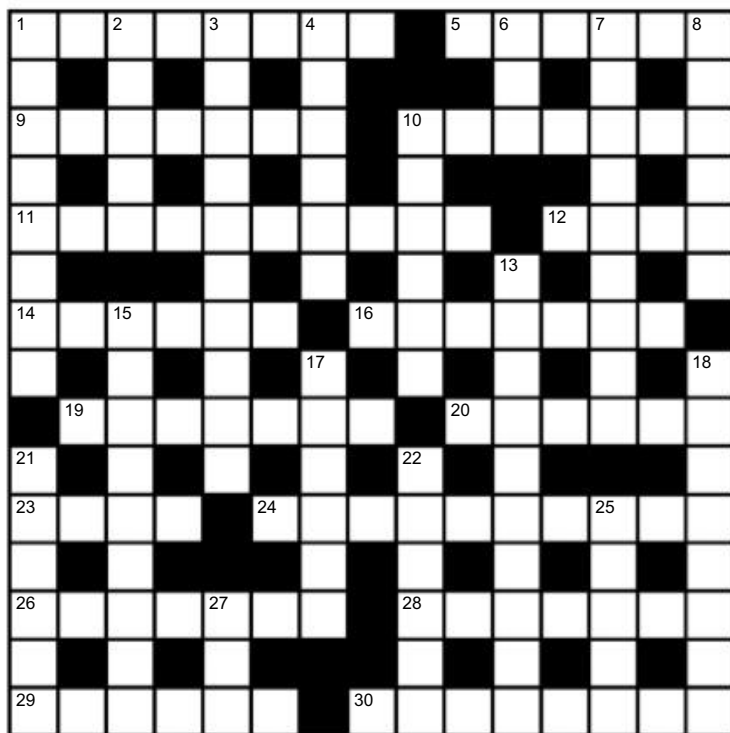
Meanwhile, new large-scale fences designed to keep dingoes out of rangelands are being built in Queensland and Western Australia, and Professor Ritchie is deeply concerned about what that means for the environment. “It’s just creating all these barriers to wildlife all over large areas of Australia ... It’s a pretty horrible vision for the future.”

Professor Letnic says it’s about striking a balance. “It’s important to remember that dingoes are a pest to livestock producers,” he says. But spaces for dingoes are important, too. “We’re coming to realise that dingoes can play an important ecological role. I think it’s really important that we think about places where we can keep dingoes – and maintain these healthy ecosystems.” 

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PUZZLES

Challenge yourself by solving these puzzles and mind stretchers, then check your answers on page 140.



ACROSS

- 1** Passerine songbirds (8)
- 5** Desisted (6)
- 9** Made suitable (7)
- 10** Put in writing (3,4)
- 11** Grasp (10)
- 12** PIN points? (1,1,2)
- 14** Up till now (2,4)
- 16** Faith-based fight (4,3)

- 19** One of the archangels (7)
- 20** Grieve (6)
- 23** Portal (4)
- 24** Slow-cooked stew (10)
- 26** Declines (7)
- 28** Hibernia (7)
- 29** Spotting (6)
- 30** Becomes rigid (8)

Crossword

Test your general knowledge.

DOWN

- 1** Dearth (8)
- 2** Sleep stopper (5)
- 3** The written classics (10)
- 4** Side-to-side measurements (6)
- 6** Corrode (3)
- 7** Cat breed (9)
- 8** Coffee accompaniment (6)
- 10** Elder (6)
- 13** Without assistance (2,8)
- 15** Large flying insect (9)
- 17** Flower attractions (6)
- 18** Every story has them (3,5)
- 21** Puts on a pedestal (6)
- 22** Holiday memento (1-5)
- 25** Depart (5)
- 27** Transgression (3)

Puzzle Answers

PAGES 140

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

Sudoku

HOW TO PLAY: To win, put a number from 1 to 9 in each outlined section so that:

- Every horizontal row and vertical column contains all nine numerals (1-9, and without repeating any of them);
- Each of the outlined sections has all nine numerals, none repeated.

IF YOU SOLVE IT WITHIN:

15 minutes, you're a true expert

30 minutes, you're no slouch

60 minutes or more, maybe numbers aren't your thing

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FAMILY FUN

**Puzzle
Answers**
PAGE 140

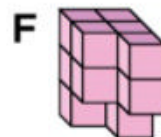
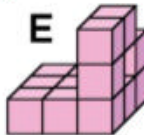
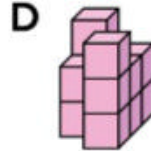
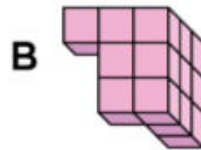
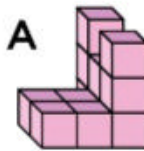
Spot The Difference

There are ten differences. Can you find them?



Perfect Fit

Which are the only two pieces on the left that will fit together perfectly to form a cube made up of 27 smaller cubes?



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TRIVIA

Test Your General Knowledge

1. What skill did Tenoch Huerta Mejía have to learn for his role as ruler of the underwater kingdom in *Black Panther: Wakanda Forever*? **1 point**

2. If a Flemish Giant thumped through your garden, what kind of creature would you be looking at? **1 point**

3. What 17th-century book is often estimated to be the bestselling novel of all time? **1 point**

4. What civic-observance day, held every April, attracts about one billion participants in over 190 countries? **1 point**

5. Which Latin American city is sinking faster than Venice, at 50 centimetres per year? **1 point**

6. Which North American city has a 42-year history of supporting jazz music with its annual international festival? **1 point**

7. Along which myelin-covered infrastructure does information travel up

to a speed of 430 kilometres per hour? **1 point**

8. What flower grows up to one metre in diameter and is one of the official state flowers of Indonesia? **2 points**

9. Fog netting is useful for collecting what resource in some arid areas? **1 point**

10. Dwarf star Lucy is approximately 90 per cent crystallised carbon, making it the largest known what? **2 points**

11. What was the name of John Lennon and Yoko Ono's fictional micronation, which had a moment of silence as its national anthem? **2 points**

12. Malaysia has 13 states. Name the biggest state. **2 points**

13. The first permanent European settlement in the country, this town was the original capital of New Zealand for just over a year. What is it called? **2 points**



14. We share 99.9 per cent of our DNA with other humans. What percentage do we share with bananas? **2 points**

16-20 Gold medal **11-15** Silver medal **6-10** Bronze medal **0-5** Wooden spoon

ANSWERS: 1. Swimming. 2. A rabbit. 3. *Don Quixote*. 4. Earth Day. 5. Mexico City. 6. Montreal. 7. The human nervous system. 8. Rafflesia. 9. Water. 10. Diamond. 11. Nutopia. 12. Sarawak. 13. Old Russell (Okato). 14. About 60 per cent.

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PUZZLE ANSWERS

From Page 134

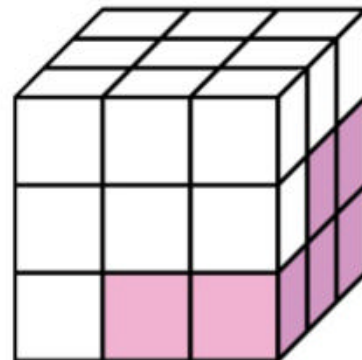
Crossword



Sudoku

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

Spot The Difference



Perfect Fit

Answer: B and F. Rotate B by 90 degrees anti-clockwise and F by 90 degrees clockwise.

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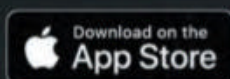
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WORD POWER

The Living Desert

Deserts cover nearly one-tenth of the planet. Master this vocabulary and you'll be the toast of the oasis.

BY *Linda Besner*

1. wadi – A: dry ravine that fills up during the rainy season. B: clay water container. C: watering hole.

2. saguaro – A: green salsa. B: tall cactus. C: yellow-spotted beetle.

3. dromedary – A: sweat-secreting gland. B: five-stringed instrument. C: one-humped camel.

4. petrified – A: turned to stone. B: enraged. C: rotten.

5. mesa – A: Italian delicacy. B: steep flat-topped hill. C: naturally occurring sundial.

6. rain shadow – A: dry area beside a precipitation-blocking mountain. B: moist layer under seemingly dry soil. C: planting period after a brief rainy season.

7. mirage – A: dust storm. B: dry-farmed wheat strain. C: optical illusion produced by hot air.

8. yucca – A: stiff-leaved plant of the agave family. B: baked mud brick.

C: corn processed in lime water.

9. caracal – A: goat-hide tent. B: geometric woven pattern. C: wild cat with tufted ears.

10. kumis – A: horse harness. B: fermented beverage made from mare's milk. C: pipe made from horn.

11. rhea – A: peaceful dispute resolution. B: large flightless bird. C: yearling goat.

12. shamal – A: guide. B: unseasonable storm. C: hot northwesterly wind.

13. oryx – A: antelope with pointed horns. B: fossilised crustacean. C: corkscrew rock formation.

14. caravan – A: group with vehicles or pack animals travelling together. B: dried fruit and meat preserved in tallow. C: bowing gesture.

15. torrid – A: hot and dry. B: extremely dangerous. C: windswept.

Answers

1. wadi – A: dry ravine that fills up during the rainy season. A wadi usually forms on relatively flat land and often leads to a dry lakebed.

2. saguaro – B: tall cactus. The tree-like saguaro can grow to be over 12 metres tall.

3. dromedary – C: one-humped camel. While the two-humped Bactrian camel appears more often in popular culture, the dromedary is far more common.

4. petrified – A: turned to stone. Hiking in the Alberta badlands, Sameena was amazed by the colourful petrified wood.

5. mesa – B: steep flat-topped hill. The mesa in the distance resembled a huge tabletop.

6. rain shadow – A: dry area beside a precipitation-blocking mountain. On the other side of the mountain lies a rain shadow where the climate is largely drier and warmer.

7. mirage – C: optical illusion produced by hot air. The day was so hot, Gloria saw a mirage of water shimmering on the road ahead.

8. yucca – A: stiff-leaved plant of the agave family. The Zuni of New Mexico use yucca sap as medicine to stimulate hair growth.

9. caracal – C: wild cat with tufted ears. Caracals, like most other big cats, are nocturnal.

10. kumis – B: fermented beverage made from mare's milk. Nomads in Mongolia have brewed kumis for thousands of years.

11. rhea – B: large flightless bird. Sofia watched with irritation as a flock of invasive rheas crossed her yard.

12. shamal – C: hot northwesterly wind. From the International Space Station, Natasha watched a shamal pushing sand over Iraq.

13. oryx – A: antelope with pointed horns. The oryx likes to feed on wild melon.

14. caravan – A: group with vehicles or pack animals travelling together. Merchants carrying luxury goods, such as salt, across the Sahara banded together into caravans for safety.

15. torrid – A: hot and dry. André learned to manage the torrid weather of Tamil Nadu in India.

VOCABULARY RATINGS

5-9: Fair

10-12: Good

13-15: Word Power Wizard

Only \$2 Postage! - Quote code **RM235S** when ordering

\$2
Postage
Offer ends
30/06/23



Big Button Safety Flip Mobile Phone

– SOS button with your GPS location!

Do you have difficulty hearing on a mobile phone? Or you can't find what you need? If so, this phone was made for you! With large talking keys, this 11L x 5.5W x 2D cm (when closed) 4G mobile flip-phone is filled with great features. This includes photo speed dial, caller announce via recorded ringtone, and an SOS button on the back that also sends your GPS location. This button activates a local alarm and dials/text's up to 5 stored numbers in an emergency. Easy to navigate and hearing aid compatible and you can use your own SIM card on any network. Charging cradle included. Mfr OLT2908V2

EasyFlip 2 Mobile Phone • EFLIPN \$199 or \$49.75 x 4 mths
Leather Phone Pouch • EFLIP-02 \$39.95



SIMPLY PRESS THE HELP BUTTON
to auto dial pre-programmed numbers and send location

Designed for simplicity – features a large screen, voice output, emergency button and much more!

GREAT PRICE

Features:

- GPS location/share location
- Earpiece volume boost key
- Auto answer function • FM radio & camera
- M4/T4 Hearing aid compatible
- Voice keys & main menu • 4G network unlocked
- SOS Help button with up to 5 numbers for auto dialling with GPS location



Mini Cordless Chain Saw – the easy way to trim and prune

*Lightweight and portable,
with long battery life!*

*Takes the
hard work out
of pruning
or cutting
branches*



This compact 31L x 12W x 11D cm chain saw weighs barely more than a kilo, so it's easy to use and control – yet it will slice through most branches up to 15 cm in diameter. The powerful, rechargeable battery simply clips on the handle and you have the option of purchasing a spare. The charger is included, along with a hex key and screwdriver for adjustments. We recommend the use of protective gear (*not included*) when using this item.

Mini Chain Saw • HNSAW

\$89 or \$22.25 x 4 mths

Spare Battery • HNSAW-1 \$29.95

Spare Chain Set of 2 • HNSAW-2 \$12.95

Spare Charger

• HNSAW-3 \$14.95

*Additional spare battery
available to purchase*



Irresistible Country Bunnies Planter – just add pretty little flowers

As if curious rabbits weren't cute enough, this basket also has a baby bunny scrambling to get inside. It's such an adorable scene – and it will make a lovely home for your favourite dainty flowers. Made from weather resistant polyresin with the look of baked clay, it measures 33H x 27W x 20D cm. As there's a drainage hole you can plant directly into it or simply pop in a pot. *Flowers not included.*

**Country Bunnies
Basket**

• BUNNYB

\$59 or \$29.50 x

2 mths

*Adorable
display*



*Add a touch of whimsy
to your garden with
these curious bunnies*



BACK SAVER!

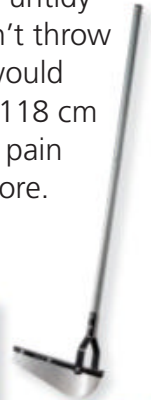
Step On It Lawn Edger – neater borders fast!

Imagine walking along your borders and leaving a neat edge behind. This brilliant tool has a curved stainless steel blade topped by a platform long and broad enough for either foot. The base of the handle will then keep it in place as you slice cleanly through untidy grass – and you won't throw dirt around as you would with a line trimmer. 118 cm long, it can take the pain out of a tiresome chore.

Immaculate edges one step at a time!



Step Lawn Edger
• SLAWN \$39.95



Only \$2 Postage! - Quote code RM235S when ordering

\$2
Postage
Offer ends
30/06/23

This Watering Can Pours Out Light! – a truly stunning feature

Hanging on its decorative support, this watering can glows prettily after dark. And, instead of pouring out water, it pours out light – a cascade created by six 50 cm strands of LEDs! 70 cm high when the support is in place, it will create a wonderful centrepiece in your garden or patio, or even on a balcony. Position the solar panel in a sunny spot to enjoy the spectacular effect at night.

Cast patterns on surrounding surfaces at night



Watering Can With Solar Lights
• SWCAN \$39.95

Pours out flickering lights at night!

A stunning focal point in your garden!



All-Day Comfort For Tired Or Swollen Feet

– these slippers are adjustable!

READY FOR WINTER



Navy

Pink

Memory foam inside, velour padding outside

If you have sore or swollen feet, these slippers could bring welcome relief. The velour uppers open wide so that they're easy to slip on and off and you can adjust and re-adjust the fit with the touch fasteners.

The rubber sole is elastic, hard wearing and slip-resistant, while the memory-foam insole comfortably moulds to the shape of your foot.

**Enfold Shoes Pink • ENF
Navy • ENFM-
\$34.95 each**

Easy to open & adjustable - fits any type foot



Euro Sizes	36	37	38	39	40	41	42	43	44	45
AUS Fractional Sizes - Women	5	7	7	8	9	10				
AUS Fractional Sizes - Men					6	7	8	9	10	11

Extra Large Heating Pad – soothing warmth, helps ease muscular tension

Here's an easy and cost-effective way to provide relief and comfort to tired aching muscles and stay warm all through winter. Simply position this pad behind your back on the lounge or bed, on your lap or anywhere else you need the soothing heat. Mains powered, it measures a generous 60 x 40 cm and you have three heat settings to choose from. You can detach the controller to wash the cosy fleece cover and it switches off automatically after 90 minutes as a built-in safety feature. Not suitable for people with pacemakers. Mfr DK60x40-1S

Soothing Comfort Heating Pad
• SCMFT \$59 or
\$29.50 x 2 mths

Cosy cover comes off so it's easy to wash



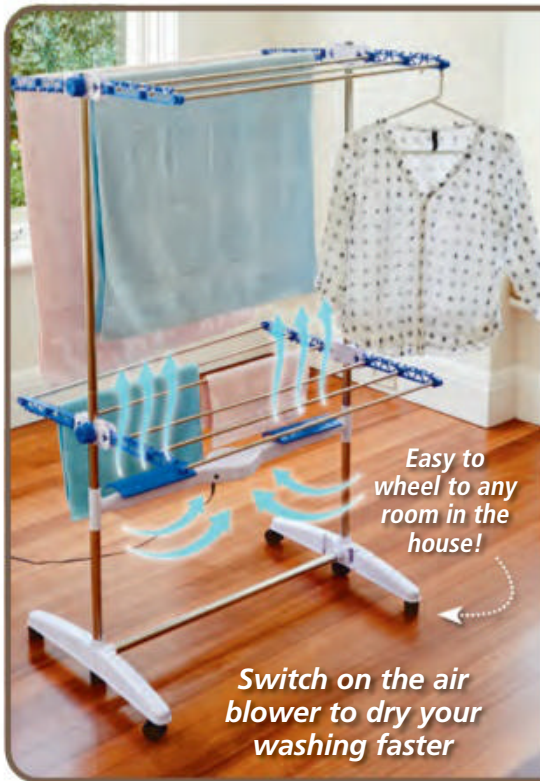
Gentle warmth on your back, shoulders, stomach, legs and knees



RADIATES HEAT

Simple to use controller

Relief at home when you need it

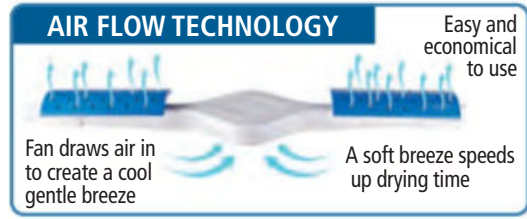


Faster-Drying Clothes Rack

– it creates its own cool breeze!

Why put up with the steamy heat of a tumble dryer? Simply hang your wet items on this generous 12 metres of drying space and cool air will blow through them like a natural breeze. They'll dry gently, also more quickly than with simple airing. Mains adaptor powered, economical to run and made from stainless steel, the rack folds from 140H x 85W x 65D cm to just 12.5 cm wide for easy storage.

Clothes Drying Rack With Blower • CDRBL
\$139 or \$34.75 x 4 mths



Simple to fold and store

Easy to wheel to any room in the house!

Switch on the air blower to dry your washing faster

\$2
Postage
 Offer ends 30/06/23

Only \$2 Postage! - Quote code RM235S when ordering

Super-Soft Cuddly Throw – wrap yourself in luxurious warmth!

Draped across a chair or sofa, this throw will add a stylish designer touch to your living room. Then, when you're curled up with a book or watching TV, you can wrap it around your shoulders or knees to stay cosy and warm. It's made from baby-soft, long-pile teddy fleece backed with coral fleece, machine washable and, at 200 x 150 cm, it also makes a handy extra blanket on your bed. Available in Cream or Grey.



Snuggle up with long-pile teddy fleece

Cuddly Soft Throw
Grey • CUDLP Cream • CUDLY
\$59 each or \$29.50 x 2 mths



Cream

So comfy on your couch or bed



Blissful comfort and warmth

Touch Fastening Shoes – lightweight, breathable and cool



Easy to adjust touch fasteners

Cool breathable mesh uppers!

Euro Sizes	37	38	39	40	41
Australian Fractional Sizes	6	7	8	9	10

You'll hardly know you're wearing these super-comfortable shoes! The polyester mesh uppers allow air to pass through, keeping your feet feeling cool and fresh all day. The ankles are gently padded, the EVA soles are tough, slip-resistant and very light and, as the single strap closes with a touch fastener, they're also very easy to fit and adjust. Smart in navy and white, they're perfect for walking, weekends and casual wear.

Breathable Touch Fastening Strap Shoes • TFTRN

**\$69 or \$23 x
3 mths**

Gabbeni



Aroma Diffuser with Coloured Light – sleek, wood-grain finish

This elegant diffuser will help you to relax completely. Simply add water and a few drops of your own favourite essential oil (not included) to surround yourself with a soothing aroma. You can then choose a soft, steady light or a shifting rainbow of colours to set the mood. 16 cm tall and powered by your own phone charger using the supplied USB cord, the wood-grain finish will complement any room.

Aroma Diffuser With Coloured Light • ADIFF \$39.95



Set the mood with coloured light

Add a few drops of your favourite oil for a beautiful aroma



A shifting rainbow of coloured light

- HOME OFFICE
- BEDROOM
- GUEST ROOM!

SAVE \$60
Buy two for
\$198 or \$49.50 x
4 mths

Pretty And Practical Cabinet – 4 roomy drawers

This cabinet would look equally at home next to your bed, at the office or in a corner of your sitting room. Incredibly practical in wipe-clean acrylic, it's also very decorative thanks to the delicate scrollwork pattern on the sides and top, and the fronts of the four attractively-moulded drawers.

It measures 69H x 39W x 32D cm, is easy to assemble and glides smoothly on four castors.

4 Drawer Cabinet
• TDRWR \$129 or
\$32.25 x
4 mths

4 castors
make it
easy to
move from
room to
room



Only \$2 Postage! - Quote code RM235S when ordering

\$2
Postage
Offer ends
30/06/23

Double Layer Blanket – get ready to snuggle!

Cuddled up on the sofa or tucked up in bed, you'll love the warmth, lightness and unbelievable softness of this amazing blanket. The top is velvet fleece with a smart tartan design, the reverse, sumptuous Sherpa fleece. You can choose from two sizes – 170 x 130 cm or 240 x 230 cm. And as they're made from easy-care polyester, so you can simply pop yours in the washing machine to keep it looking like new.

*Soft and cosy
Sherpa fleece*



Large size
blanket shown on double bed

2 sizes
available!

**Double Layer
Blanket • DLBLK**

Small..... \$69
Large..... \$99

4 mths payment terms
available



Safety lock

Retractable Utility Knife

Ergonomic Grip Handle

Spare blades stored in the handle

Wire Cutter

Super sharp blade, so many uses around your home and garden!

SAVE \$10

Buy two for \$49.90 or \$24.95 x 2 mths

Super-Sharp Tough Multi Cutter – slices easily through cables, wood and more

Unlike traditional scissors or secateurs, this cutter combines a super-sharp blade with a flat surface and offset pivot. It sounds very technical, but it means you can more easily slice through tough materials like cables, leather, rope and even small tree branches. 25 cm long with ergonomic handles and a safety lock for storage, it also has a slide-out utility blade. There's even 3 spare blades kept in the handle ready for when you need them.



Pruning & Garden work



Cuts Wire & Cables



Cuts Rope & Leather

Multi Cutter • MCUTR \$29.95

Comfort Gel Cushion

– a welcome relief!

If you use a wheelchair, drive a truck, or sit for long periods, this cushion could make a big difference to your comfort. Layers of cooling gel and foam topped with neoprene conform to your shape and help to reduce pressure points by distributing your weight more evenly. The base is non-slip PVC and, at 41.5W x 46.5 x 6.5D cm, it will fit most seats.

Comfort Gel Cushion

• CCSHN \$69 or \$17.25 x 4 mths

Layers of comfort and relief



Great for use on wheelchairs, car trips and chairs



Perfect For:

- Car trips
- Wheelchairs
- Home & Office
- Sporting events

SAVE \$10

Buy two for \$128 or \$32 x 4 mths

Sit more comfortably as you drive or work



Simply position these cheerful chickens in your lawn



A garden filled with chickens – all the fun without the work!

Set of 5

Each has a different, distinctive pose!



These eye-catching sculptures are a fun way to keep chickens in your garden. Each of the five has a different, distinctive pose – and the bright red combs add a sweet, decorative touch. Made from powder-coated iron, they stand between 13 and 22 cm tall. All have integral stakes – after minimal assembly, you can simply push them into position into your lawn or any soft ground.

Chicken Silhouettes

- CHKNS \$59 or \$29.50 x 2 mths
- Set of 5

\$2
Postage
Offer ends
30/06/23

Only \$2 Postage! - Quote code RM235S when ordering

Eight Stunning Butterflies – beautiful wall art inside or outdoors

Each of these butterflies has its own exquisite and colourful design – and an impressive 20 cm wingspan shows this off to perfection. Finely crafted from metal, they're mounted on springs so they gently bob and sway whenever there's a breeze. Complete with a hook for easy hanging, they will make a striking display in your sitting room, bedroom or outdoors.

You can also arrange them to reflect your own, unique style.

Simple to attach and display

Mounted on a small spring with a hook – watch them flutter in the breeze

Butterfly Wall Decor Set

- BWDS \$39.95

Set of 8



Stunning Bathroom Collection – three ways to add practical style

Whether you're looking for a particular space-saving solution or a bathroom transformation, this collection is sure to meet your needs. Made from white-coated metal, each piece features a gorgeous beach-themed decoration of painted seashells and starfish. Choose the over-toilet space saver, folding towel rack or toilet paper holder – or treat your bathroom to a complete makeover with all three. *Props not included.*

- Space Saving Bathroom Furniture**
- Toilet Paper Holder • TPAPHD \$39.95**
 - Folding Towel Rack**
 - FOLTR \$59 or \$14.75 x 4 mths
 - Space Saver**
 - SPACS \$99 or \$24.75 x 4 mths



Space Saver

Towel rack folds for easy storage

Towel Rack

Each piece adorned with pretty beach themed decorations



Toilet Paper Holder

Measurements:

Space Saver - 162H x 60W x 30.5D cm

Folding Towel Rack - 78H x 40.5W x 30.5D cm

Toilet Paper Holder - 54.5H x 16.5W x 16.5D cm

SAVE \$50

Buy all 3 for \$147.95
or \$36.99 x 4 mths

Beautiful & functional!

A gorgeous way to store your paper towels



Sunflower Paper Towel Holder – a cheerful touch for your kitchen

This paper towel holder has all the practical features you expect – it holds all standard-sized rolls and has the weight and stability you need to tear off sheets with ease. It also brings a lovely touch of summer into

your kitchen, thanks to the two gorgeous, golden sunflower blooms. 34 cm high and 17.5 cm in diameter, it requires very minor assembly and is beautifully crafted from quality steel.

Sunflower Kitchen Towel Holder • SFTWL \$29.95

Slide And Film Viewer

– enjoy your memories

Here's an easy way to relive happy memories, or decide which of your 35mm negatives and 2 x 2" slides or negatives you'd like to digitise. This neat 15.5H x 8W x 16D cm viewer has an 8 x 8 cm glass lens, 3X magnification and bright, even lighting for sharp, clear images. Powered by 4 x AA batteries (*not included*), or with the USB cable supplied and your own adapter, it could bring hours of enjoyment.

Slide And Film Viewer

• SFVW \$59 or
\$29.50 x 2 mths

*Relive your
happy family
memories*



Only \$2 Postage! - Quote code RM235S when ordering

\$2
Postage
Offer ends
30/06/23

Beautiful Big Butterfly Throws – available in two sizes

Add instant life and colour to your room



*Perfect to
snuggle into
in the cooler
weather*

These gorgeous butterfly throws will bring colour and life to any setting. They're made from cosy flannel, so they're ideal for snuggling into when the weather is chilly. Choose from small 130 x 150 cm or large 180 x 200 cm – they're perfect for an armchair or sofa, or even a single bed.

Butterfly Throw • BTROW

Small (130 x 150 cm)

\$39.95

Large (180 x 200 cm)

\$79 or \$19.75 x

4 mths

2X & 4X magnification

Hands-free
for reading
or crafts



Hands-Free Precision Magnifier – incredibly versatile for optimal clarity

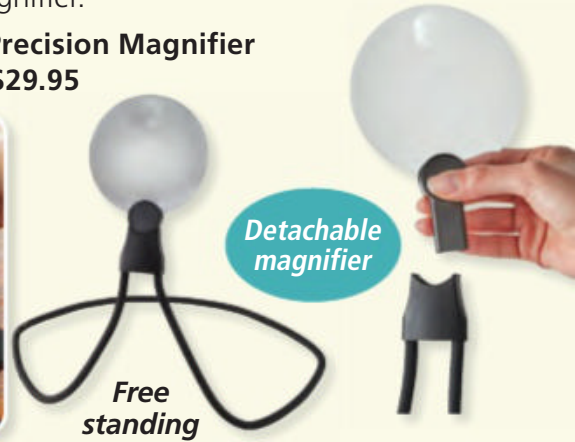
Hanging round your neck or freestanding on a work surface, this brilliant magnifier leaves your hands free as you read, work on hobbies or use your phone. 11 cm in diameter and weighing just 250g, it provides both 2X and 4X magnification – simply bend the flexible, silicon-coated metal frame to achieve the clearest view. The lens also has a handle, so you can detach it from the frame if you need a handheld magnifier.

Hands Free Precision Magnifier

• HFMAGN \$29.95



Makes threading
a needle easy to see!



Detachable
magnifier

Free
standing

Gentle Grip Socks – stay up without constricting!

Set of 3

These socks are so stretchy and comfortable you'll forget you're wearing them. Another big plus – they won't sag or wrinkle round your ankles. The mix of 80% natural, absorbent cotton and 20% spandex grips your ankle and lower calf very gently so they stay in place without a tight band. One size will fit most men and women perfectly and our set includes 2 black pairs and 1 white pair to cover all occasions.



Gentle Grip Socks

• GGRIP
\$19.95



Non-binding
gentle-grip
comfort

**“GET THE POWER OF
OVER 300 STORES
ACROSS AUSTRALIA”**



 **Tyrepower**



13 21 91 | [tyrepower.com.au](https://www.tyrepower.com.au)

GET THE POWER OF AUSTRALIA'S **BIGGEST INDEPENDENT**

find your

Outback Spirit

Arnhem Land

It's the spiritual heart of this country and a place few have the opportunity to explore. Home to the oldest surviving culture in human history and a plethora of untouched natural wonders and wildlife, it's a privilege to experience the magic of Arnhem Land. Now it's time to find your Outback Spirit.

2024 adventures now selling. Earlybird fares available, 13 days from **\$11,495* pp.**

Exclusive 4WD Adventures

Call **1800 688 222**, visit **outbackspirittours.com.au**
or contact your local travel agent

JOURNEY BEYOND

DISCOVER MORE



*Conditions apply. Earlybird offer is reflected in the tour fare quoted. Prices are per person twin share. Earlybird Fares are subject to availability. Bookings must be made by 30 September 2023 unless allocation sold out prior. Offer is available to new bookings only for travel in 2024. Price is correct at time of printing. Further Terms and Conditions apply. Enquire or visit our website for more details.