

ANDREW THOMAS

"Daddy drank a lot," Lianna Treitler responded when her mother asked about the concert she and her father attended the previous evening. That's when her dad, Marc, knew he needed to seek help, and achieve sobriety.

Marc Treitler is 47 years old, and grew up in a family of somewhat functional alcoholics in San Diego. Drinking was a large part of the family culture. While his mother and father weren't particularly drawn to alcohol, his aunt and uncles were alcoholics.

Family events and dinners always featured alcohol, and tales of drunken adventures were often the subject of conversa-

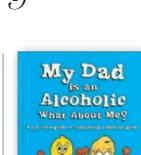
"It glamorizes it in the kids' head," Treitler told The Epoch Times.

Genetic Predisposition

This environment, combined with his family's genetic history, primed Treitler to become an alcoholic himself.

Treitler had his first drink at age 15 when he was at a friend's house. The friend's father was Russian, and served the boys vodka. Before long, he had passed out.

Treitler developed an addiction to alco-



The cover of Marc and Lianna Treitler's first book.

hol over time. When he attended college ask for help," Treitler said. at UCLA, the drinking really accelerated.

was available. He would drink a few beers in facility in Del Mar, California. the evening, but over time, he found himself sneaking vodka into the mix because it's **Family and Sobriety** easier to conceal on one's breath.

mask what you're doing, but a lot of vodka behind the scenes," Treitler said.

Treitler's alcoholism had a profound impact on both his family and professional life. He found himself not emotionally present for his family, which caused tension in his marriage. As an entrepreneur and attorney, he found himself showing up to work hungover and taking naps.

The Concert

Treitler often spoiled his children in order to compensate for his behavior. His daughter's favorite musical artist was David Archuleta, and he decided to take her to one of his concerts for father-daughter time.

"I was looking forward to it for weeks," Lianna said.

Lianna noticed that her father would continuously disappear at the concert and return with a beer in hand. As an 8-year-old, all she could remember was his drinking, the books "My Dad is an Alcoholic, What and not the concert itself.

controlled his drinking well. However, the & You: A Young Person's Guide to Avoiding next day, he asked his wife if Lianna had enjoyed the show. "She said you drank too" also accepts speaking engagements whenmuch, and she was worried about you," he ever she's asked. remembered his wife replying. Treitler was

chest," Treitler said.

The following weekend, Treitler was at a company event at Mandalay Bay in Las Vegas. He became extremely intoxicated like it out there, so the more kids we get and had to be taken to his hotel room in a it to ... the more likely we are able to help

"I think I did that intentionally to finally

The next morning, he asked his cowork-When he left college, he found himself ers to help him seek treatment. A friend of unable to stop. He would drink whatever his, who was also an alcoholic, suggested a

At first, Treitler's ego was one of the larg-"Towards the end, it was, again, beer to est obstacles on his path to recovery. As a successful businessman and family man, it was challenging for him to accept that he had an addiction.

> About halfway through his recovery, one of his counselors sat him down and told him that the smart, successful alcoholics were the ones who die, because they don't listen to others for help.

Once Treitler started to listen, his recovery process became much easier.

During his recovery, Treitler learned a lot about himself. He discovered that he had used alcohol to cope with stress and anxiety. He also learned, looking back at his family genetic history, that he had been particularly susceptible to alcohol abuse. He's been sober since June 26, 2009.

Treitler now is able to be emotionally present for his children and his wife. He also openly discusses alcoholism and addiction with his children, which led him to write About Me?: A pre-teen guide to conquer-After the concert, Treitler thought he had ing addictive genes," and "Alcohol Drugs Addiction," with his daughter Lianna, who

The Treitlers have supplied hundreds of free copies of their books, and continue to "I think that's what finally hit me in the do so. The books are also available for anyone who asks.

"The goal is to get the books out there, to get kids to read it. There's really nothing families break the cycle and help kids stay away from this," Treitler said.

ALL PHOTOS COURTESY OF MARC TREITLER

The Treitler family. As a successful businessman and family man, it was challenging for him to accept that he had an addiction.

OKSANA KUZMINA/SHUTTERSTOCK

7 Things That Make Childhood Magical

BARBARA DANZA

Childhood is so very precious. From the miraculous moment that a pure infant enters this world, loving parents set out to provide their little one with the best possible upbringing. Fortunately, a magical childhood doesn't require riches or a Ph.D. Like much else in life, it's the simplest things that matter most. Here are seven things that make childhood magical.

Love

Naturally, loving each individual child for who he or she is is the most fundamental aspect of providing them a childhood that will act as a solid foundation for the rest of their lives. Loving parents teach their children, shape their positive character, help them through the ups and downs of life, protect their innocent spirit, provide appropriate boundaries, and show them all the wonderful things that life has to offer.

It's the easiest and the hardest

Traditions

of joy, belonging, and security to childhood. Whether it's the way your family celebrates various holidays and special occasions, the recipe that has been handed down through the generations, the song you sing when you're setting off on a vacation, or the silly phrase you say as you kiss your kids goodnight each and every night, traditions, both new and old, bring warmth and depth to childhood–and adulthood, too.

Play

The most important "work" a child can do is play. As parents, we simply need to let them. As child kids get older, the temptation to schedule all of their time with "valuable" experiences and activities can be tempting, but we need to remember that it comes at the expense of time to play.

The simplest toys (a ball, blocks, a doll) are usually the best tools

part of parenting. Just love them. to play with. Boredom is a good thing, and when left alone, it often leads to creativity and in-Family traditions bring a sense genuity. Through play, children learn significant lessons and de-

It's so important to let them

velop their capacity to learn and

Atmosphere

The type of environment at the atmosphere feels and supports a child and a whole-has

hood. Is the home tidy and clean? Is there a lot of arguing, or is there peace? What sort of music and television is broadcast there? What does the rhythm of the day feel like?

An atmosphere that supports a child's peace of mind, natural love of learning, sense of well-being, and ability to grow is one that supports a magical childhood.

Family

In addition to one's immediate family, positive relationships with extended family enhance childhood. Such relationships can teach respect for one's elders, compassion for others, and a sense of responsibility. Children will gain a bet-

ter understanding of their fam-

ily heritage and history. Family

connections are worth fostering.

Beauty

As children grow, they will be exposed to all that society and culture have to offer. Steering them toward the very best will help

shape their character and benefit their upbringing. Now more than ever, access to all forms of art, media, and entertainment is easy to come by. Choose to feed your children's minds with highquality literature, movies, music, and works of art. The arts have a powerful impact on people. No need to settle for the junk food of such genres. Give your child

Wonder

The natural love of learning and the innate curiosity of a child is an amazing thing to behold. Continuing to kindle this fire throughout childhood, allowing a child to maintain their sense of wonder, is a gift any child would grow to appreciate. Too often, adults, perhaps unwittingly, manage to squash this sense. But those who are left to look upon the world wide-eyed and in awe have a zest and appreciation for life that will benefit them–and those they impact—throughout





Dr. Coby Webb demonstrates how Find'em Scent Safe works with her son.

A Woman and Her Bloodhounds Are on the Trail

ANDREW THOMAS

r. Coby Webb has been a law enforcement officer in Southern California since 1993. In 1999, she started training bloodhounds at her agency, and in 2003, she became an instructor. For Webb, her bloodhounds make all the difference when looking for the missing, and tracking criminal suspects.

Webb described the training process for bloodhounds as a game of hide and seek. They begin training the dogs when they're 8 weeks old, and teach them to chase someone who starts to run. Then, the trainer starts adding turns so the dog has to use its nose to look for the person.

Webb also teaches the bloodhounds to scent discriminate, so that they are able to track one person's scent. For the dog, it's a game of finding the subject in order to receive a reward. As they mature, Webb makes the trails longer and older. For Webb, its harder to train the handler than the bloodhound.

"It is really about learning about your dog and how to read them, and then learning how to be a team together," Webb said. It's also critical to trust the dogs' sense of smell. For instance, if a person says they saw a subject head west but the bloodhounds pick up the scent heading south

it's critical to trust the dog. Bloodhounds are a working breed, and their sense of smell is nearly unrivaled. They can track a missing person or criminal suspect for miles. Webb's personal record with her bloodhounds is eight miles of tracking.

Moreover, they love having a job to do. "They'll work so hard for you for that cookie and that praise ... it's the joy of the game," Webb said.

Black Ice

Webb's career was interrupted when she was involved in a car accident in 2010 while visiting her parents in Oregon. Webb's car hit black ice, and her vehicle began to slide. Webb's car collided with another vehicle, and she took most of the impact on the driver's side door.

Fortunately, her twin daughter and son

only suffered a broken foot and concussion, respectively. Webb sustained a broken back, a spinal cord injury, a broken femur, and a broken hip, and she broke all of her left ribs.

Webb was paralyzed from the waist

"My mentality was I had nothing to lose but to try," Webb said.

After using a wheelchair, she began using a walker, then two claw canes, two straight canes, and finally one straight cane. Nine months later, she was able to walk again without assistance. Shortly thereafter, she was back training blood-

I didn't think I was done giving. I still think I had more to give," Webb recalled.

Webb has been training and working with bloodhounds for two decades, and there have been some memorable cases that have stuck

ening for Webb. However, when Webb opened the lid of the trash can, she found the purse of one of victims. Maggie Mae and went onto the patio of the walked up to the neighboring

Bloodhounds are a working breed, and their sense of smell is nearly unrivaled.

"I could have tried to be a professor somewhere because I had an education, but it was still the same calling.

Memorable Cases

Webb's first bloodhound, Maggie Mae, made case Jackson. Jackson had raped and murdered an elderly woman and had raped a second. After leaving the second victim's house, Maggie Mae followed a trail and arrived at another house, where she began circling a trash can. It was dump day, which was disheart-

turned and walked up a driveway, house. She then turned around, house, and stopped.

was another victim, or the suspect was in the home. In fact, the suspect was there when the police entered the house. Maggie Mae had tracked his entire route. Maggie Mae was also instrumental in helping the FBI find Samantha Runnion, who had been kidnapped in 2002. After authorities found Runnion's body, Maggie Mae helped track the suspect who was ultimately apprehended and convicted of

Webb found out later that the sus-

pect had gone to the first house to ask

for money, and then went to the second

house, which belonged to his parents.

Webb had to tell the detective that Maggie

Mae wasn't going anywhere. Either there

kidnapping and murder. "I took a couple of days off work after that case, and so did Maggie. They really stick with us," Webb said.

Scent Item

For a bloodhound to be able to find a missing person or a criminal suspect, they need an item with the person's scent on it. Without that scent item, the best bloodhound in the world won't be able to do what they do best.

What bothers Webb the most is the people that she and her bloodhounds haven't been able to find. In an effort to help the bloodhounds do their job, she developed a

The product is intended to provide an uncontaminated scent sample, in case a bloodhound ever needs to track that

The kit includes a piece of gauze that is placed on an odiferous part of a person's body. After five minutes, the gauze is placed in a tamper-evident bag, and is dated and labeled with the person's name. The bag is then placed in a case, which is stored in a freezer. The scent item can last for up to 12 months.

Having a scent item readily available helps the bloodhounds start tracking immediately, and maximizes the chance of finding the subject alive.

"I don't want to identify anybody. I've worked homicides and kidnappings. I don't want to identify. I want to help find

I want them alive," Webb said

5 Instagram Hashtags That Will Bring You Inspiration

BARBARA DANZA

Instagram has garnered a reputation for being an overt display of filtered perfection, a bastion of FOMO, and a crowded environment of people trying to be something other than what

Like many things on the internet, however, it has its good side. It's a great place to research different interests or topics via images and be inspired.

The easiest way to dive deep into a topic on Instagram, of course, is to follow hashtags. Specific hashtags (#pourovercoffee as opposed to #coffee for example) can offer you a more accurate depiction of what you're looking for.

courage you to check out if you'd like some uplifting inspiration coming across your Instagram

Here are a few hashtags I en-

#PoetryTeaTime

"Poetry Tea Time" is a popular practice of homeschoolers, coined by homeschooling expert Julie Bogart. Homeschool families typically spend a portion of their day at a lovingly set table, with tea or other beverages of their choosing, seasonal snacks, and lots of poetry books.

There, parents and children enjoy the tasty offerings and take turns reading aloud poems from their books. That's it.

It's not complicated, but it's an extraordinarily lovely and warm language arts, and you certainly don't need to be a homeschooler to incorporate it into your family

way to explore an aspect of

#HyggeHome

If you're unfamiliar with the Danish term hygge (pronounced hoo-gah), it means, roughly, a cozy environment conducive to quality time with others and a sense of contentment and comfort that is a key component of Danish life. Picture being inside a cozy cabin in the winter, with a roaring fire, a pie baking in the oven, with close friends enjoying a stew. So good, right?

Well, if you'd like to see more cozy scenes like that, search #hyggehome for inspiration for adding more hygge into your life.

#DebtFreeLiving Less visually impressive and

Dr. Coby

Webb has

worked with

the FBI and

numerous

more encouraging if you're on a journey to become debt-free (or simply need motivation to stay that way), #debtfreeliving is your ticket to countless impressive people taking responsibility for their lives, along with tips and motivation for this worthy goal that, as financial guru Dave Ramsey says, could "change your family tree."

#LetThemBeLittle

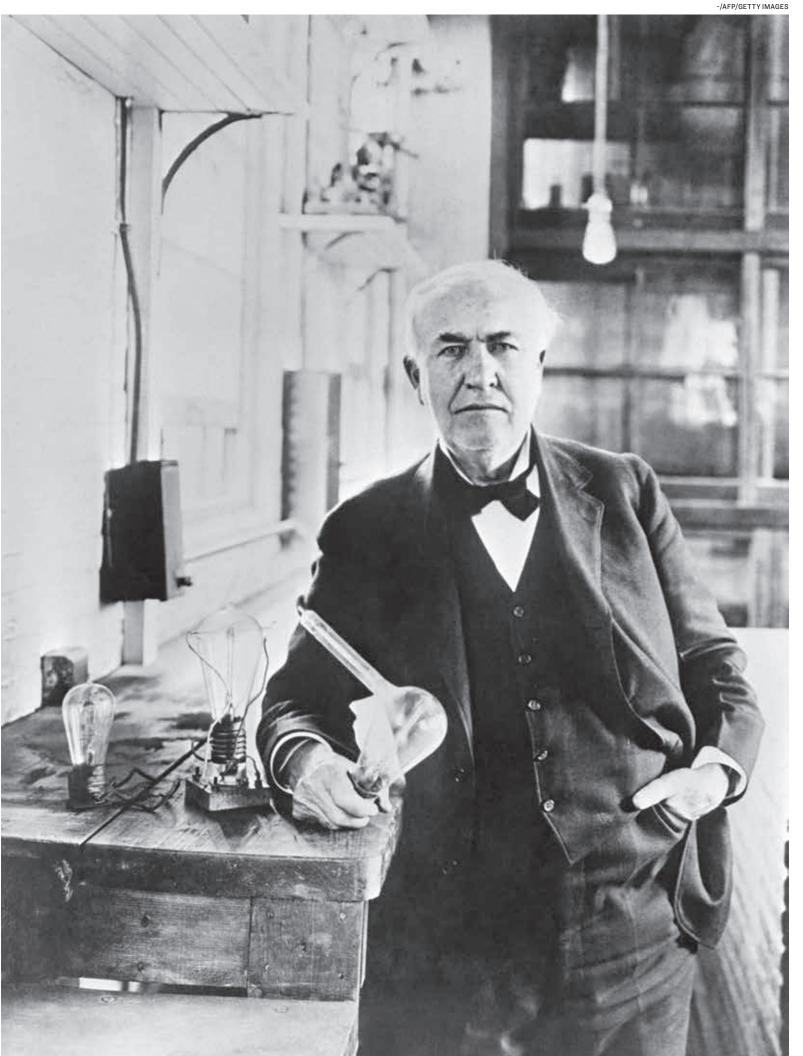
Possibly the most adorable hashtag on the list, #letthembelittle refers to the protection of and appreciation for the precious years of childhood. Search this and you'll be faced with many loving, adorable families

with little ones delighting in the joys of parenting and family. It's a heartwarming delight.

#WorldSchooling

If you haven't heard of "world schooling," this refers to families who homeschool but don't spend so much time at home. Rather, they make the world their classroom and give their children experiences as a key element of their education.

What you'll find are inspiring families that are carving their own path in the world, amazing windows into different locales around the world, and a reminder that the prescribed way is not the only way. It's mind-opening and worth checking out.



It's a Hard Knock Life: Teaching Resiliency to Our Young People

JEFF MINICK

was in the public library browsing Sam Losing: How Our Biggest Setbacks Can Lead one chapter stopped my fin-Susan Lucci.

played Erica Kane on the day, determined to perform soap opera "All My Children." While I never watched this show, Susan Lucci was Lucci's example deeply ina household name, not because of her role on television but because for 18 years, she received an Emmy nomination for the "Outstanding Lead Actress in a Drama Series" and for 18 years, she walked away from the ceremony without a trophy. Her losing streak became a day's young people. measuring stick of failure, a national metaphor applied to other losers. As Weinman and nephews, and other writes, the Chicago Cubs were the "Susan Lucci of

baseball," the Buffalo Bills

"the Susan Lucci of football,"

and Martin Scorsese "the Su-

san Lucci of the Oscars."

And then, in year 19, Lucci her soccer season warming won that coveted Emmy.

In this brief chapter, Weinman introduces us Weinman's "Win at to a woman who, though bitterly disappointed by failure, never gave up and to Our Biggest Gains," when rarely let others witness her birthday party attended by sorrow. Year after year, she her friends. Her older brothgers dead in their tracks. I returned home from the found a chair, read for a few Emmys, closed her bedroom minutes, and remembered door to hide her tears from her children, wept, and then From 1970 to 2011, Lucci returned to work the next to the best of her ability.

> According to Weinman, fluenced her children, especially her son Andreas, who "maintains that his mother's experience proved instructive in how to handle setbacks, even if it wasn't something she sought to teach explicitly." Which brings me to to-

Most of us have children,

grandchildren, nieces young people in our orbit who undergo disappointments. John, who spent hours training over the the long run? summer, gets cut from the football team. Julie spends

the bench. Second-grader Amanda comes home from school sobbing because she got demerits for talking too much in class. Ten-yearold Becky isn't invited to a er Doug earns unacceptable grades of C in math quizzes. Samantha has spent years hoping to attend State, but is re-

fused admission.

When these troubles occur, most of us want to rush to the defense of our children. We tell John and Julie their coaches are blockheads. We meet with Amanda's teacher to complain about her punishment, and we telephone the birthday party mom to ask why Becky was left off the invitation list. We console Doug and Samantha, telling them they are just as good as

This desire to protect our children is a natural in-

But is it good for them in

Google "Are students socially and emotionally prepared for college?" and up pops a chorus of negative replies. When failure comes knocking at the door, as it does for so many freshmen, these stressed and anxious D, may absorb a lesson as students don't know how to well as a poor grade. He handle the consequences. They're strangers to that awful sensation known as its due date.

"falling on your face." They're missing a key ingredient for success in school and in life: resiliency. Resiliency comes to

Resiliency

comes to us from

the Latin 'resilire,'

neaning to 'rebound

or 'leap back.'

us from the Latin "resilire," meaning to "rebound" or "leap back." Students heading off to university who have never studied in that other classroom—"the school of hard knocks"-are missing a tool more vital to success than an AP Chemistry course or a straight-A average. Even a minor setback can beat them to their

Our Responsibility

Part of their lack of resiliency is our responsibility. Those of us who deal with the misfortunes of our young people walk a rough road. When something

goes wrong, our protective instinct kicks in, and we want to ward off the blows life throws at them.

Week 44, 2019 THE EPOCH TIMES

This mama bear/cub approach can have long-term consequences. Once, for example, a grown man, now deceased, told me his parents always took his side against the teacher, no matter what the circumstances. He was proud of their defense.

Probably a bad idea. Given this man's history, definitely a bad idea.

No-if we wish to build resiliency in our young people, we must sometimes resist this urge to remove all obstacles from their path, to become what some now call "lawnmower parents." We can offer help, but must then step away and allow them to grapple on their own with the trouble at hand. This wrestling match with hardship, with expectations and plans gone awry, can build in them a sense of independence, a realization that failure is not an enemy so long as we learn from the experience. In "The Obstacle Is the Way:

The Timeless Art of Turning Trials Into Triumphs," Ryan Holiday writes that "obstacles are actually opportunities to test ourselves, to try new things, and, ultimately, to triumph." We overcome these obstacles using many tools, particularly resilience and perseverance, which, as Holiday tells us, the Germans call "sitzfleisch"-stay-

Holiday recounts dozens of examples of human beings who possessed sitzfleisch, figures ranging from Amelia Earhart to Erwin Rommel, from Abraham Lincoln to the boxer Jack Johnson. My favorite of Holiday's examples was an anecdote about Thomas Edison, who one evening raced from his home to his research and production plant when he learned it had caught fire. Fueled by chemicals in the various buildings, the flames were soon shooting up seven and eight stories high

"Edison calmly but quickly made his way to the fire, through the now hundreds of onlookers and devastated employees, looking for his son. 'Go get your mother and all her friends,' he told his son with childlike excitement. 'They'll never see a fire like this again."

That is resilience in spades. And if we become adept at resiliency, failure can be a great teacher. The history student who pulls an all-nighter, dashes off 800 words on Napoleon, and hands the essay to the teacher in the morning, only to have it returned splashed with red ink and a grade of rebounds, and begins his next paper a week ahead of

The next time your high school sophomore fiddles around on the Xbox all evening and then flunks his biology test, or your daughter forgets to bring to school that math homework the teacher checks daily, pause and think before you decide whether to intervene.

Learning to take responsibility and to rebound from failure can be painful, but possession of it is one of the keys to a great life.

Jeff Minick has four children and a growing platoon of grandchildren. For 20 years, he taught history, literature, and Latin to seminars of homeschooling students in Asheville, N.C. Today, he lives and writes in Front Royal, Va. See JeffMinick. com to follow his blog.

Break Out of Depression by Focusing on These 4 Pillars of Health

Balanced eating, sleeping, activity, and relationships support positive mental health

MICHAEL COURTER

essica and Bill came to my office with their daughter, who has entered into a deep depression since she graduated from high school two months ago. Amber, a straight-A student, is about to move away to start her freshman year at her top-choice university in three weeks.

She hasn't been out of bed in almost a week, and she still seems to be going downhill. Bill says that Amber has always been wound tightly and she's just feeling nervous about leaving home.

"She didn't get all of those A's sitting around relaxing all day," Bill chuckles. Jessica says that Amber has had a few "dark months" as she called them, but has always bounced back. It's never been this bad. She doesn't even think Amber can make it to school like this. Amber insists that she hasn't been using any drugs or alcohol and isn't having second thoughts about moving out. So what is going on?

Depression is a biological, psychological, social, and spiritual condition. While depression includes a depressed mood, it also affects sleep, eating, energy levels, selfimage, motivation, concentration, and the experiencing of emotions.

According to researchers, some form of depression affects about 16 million Americans in a given year, and about 25 million Americans take antidepressants regularly. Depression is the way that some people react to chronic stress, loneliness, relationship conflicts, trauma, or other types of environmental stresses.

However, it can also be caused or made worse by a consistent lack of structure, purpose, and meaningful activity. Addressing that aspect of depression is the purpose of this article.

The Importance of Structure

Work and school create a schedule and structure for most people. Frankly, some people will start to fall into a depression within a few weeks if they don't have a regular schedule or consistent activities planned in their day. That's one of the reasons why many people will become depressed when they're out of work or school or when they retire. They lose the activities that used to



each day and stayed up later each night. She laid around the house all day relaxing, bingewatching shows on Netflix, eating junk food, and scrolling through Instagram. She also had a tendency to go into depres-

anything to do, she slept later and later

sion, as indicated by "dark months" her mother described, and her highly anxious approach to school.

Pillars of Mental Health

When I assess people who say they're depressed, I focus on five major factors that I think of as the pillars of mental health: eating, sleeping, activity, relationships, and stress. In analyzing Amber's situation, a big picture of her life began to emerge–a common, self-reinforcing pattern with people who have depression. She was sleeping late into the day and couldn't fall asleep at night. She didn't start eating until later in the day and didn't participate in any meaningful activities. She

productive or useful and anxious that she wasn't completing the small number of responsibilities she had. To break out of a depression that's

felt guilty that she wasn't being more

caused or made worse by a lack of structure, follow these steps.

1. Develop a regular sleep pattern. Start by making the change to your morning waking time and don't take a nap. You can't fall asleep at night if you haven't Michael Courter is a therapist and counbeen awake and active enough during the day. Decide on a time that you will wake up every day, but don't try to do that on and following your dreams. His website the first day. You might have to gradually move your waking time back by 15 to 30 minutes per day until you reach it. Once Do you have questions about relationyou have a regular sleep pattern, maintain it as often as you can. The best way to have like Michael to address? Send them to

up at the same time every day. Your body will begin to live by this clock.

2. Eat meals throughout the day, not just in **the latter part of the day.** Eat wholesome foods that will provide a stable source of energy throughout the day. This will also make you less vulnerable to emotional ups and downs.

3. Schedule activities for yourself. You need to be physically and socially active for at least four or five hours per day. This could include cooking, cleaning, exercise, work, volunteering, errands, playing a game with kids, or having lunch with a friend. Do the activities even if they don't cause motivation or joy. It's important to resist the urge to isolate yourself and be inactive. Ultimately, there is no other choice but to make yourself do it.

4. Take care of responsibilities. Responsibilities often feel overwhelming when you're depressed. Before starting your responsibilities, make a list of the things you need to do and prioritize it. Work on your list gradually. Achieve a few accomplishments and then celebrate them.

5. Set small, achievable goals in these ar**eas.** Don't fall prey to the all-or-nothing thinking that depression causes. Gradual progress is great!

Amber committed to volunteering at a local retirement home for a few hours each morning. This gave her something to do in the morning and corrected her sleep schedule. She committed to starting her day with a small meal and reduced her screen time to less than two hours per day.

Three weeks later, Amber looked much more cheerful and she was ready to go off to college with a new life lesson under her belt. You or your loved one also can make these changes by focusing on the right areas.

selor who believes in the power of personal growth, repairing relationships, is CourterCounsel.com

ships or personal growth that you would a sleep routine is to fall asleep and wake mc@CourterCounsel.com

even for two-parent families, but

single parents have far more dif-

ficulty. Along with the emotional

challenges, this can contribute

to a cycle of poverty. Children in

single-parent families are likelier

to have emotional and behavioral

problems, to drop out of school and

The worsening behavior of chil-

dren is a topic of conversation in

almost every generation. But with

tales of violence and disrespect

against teachers proliferating in the

last few years, it seems safe to say

that the current generation wins the

prize for having the most emotional

Would today's teachers have

more time to spend on instruction

if they didn't have to deal with the

emotional fallout from America's

and behavioral problems.

broken homes?

to be poor as adults."

Psychoanalyst: Forget Political Correctness, Kids Need Both Parents

Schedule activities for

yourself. You need to be

physically and socially

active for at least four

or five hours per day.

ALL PHOTOS BY SHUTTERSTOCK

ANNIE HOLMQUIST

hen I was a young college student trying to feel my way through classes and take assignments seriously, I dutifully weighed in on an online discussion board with a few thoughts on the disadvantages faced by children raised in single-parent homes. Big mistake.

responses, the essence of which can be summarized as, "I was raised by a single mom! I turned out just fine!' Over the years, I've learned such responses aren't limited to college students. I get it. Single mothers have rough lives and do yeoman's work,

I was lambasted with emotional

many sacrificing constantly to give the best to their children. They need all the love and support we can give. But giving love and support doesn't mean that we should ignore the fact that children raised with only one parent–Mom or Dad–face

various life disadvantages. Psychoanalyst Erica Komisar understands this.

Writing in The Wall Street Journal, Komisar says that "Political Correctness Is Bad for Kids," citing a new poll in which nearly 70 percent of those with a liberal political affiliation disagree with the idea that "marriage is needed to create strong families." Those who think this way are wrong, says Komisar. "It's a shame that political correctness inhibits discussions of what's best for children."

come from growing up without a father and a mother. I repeat them here because they illuminate several head-scratching trends we've seen among millennials and those

The past several years are full of stories about a generation that can't seem to make it on its own. They don't know how to cook, or clean, or do 'adulting' tasks.

1. Losing the Apron Strings "Children need a balance of secure attachment and healthy separation, and the traditional two-parent structure provides it. Mothers are uniquely suited for sensitive nurturing, which helps regulate distress and is critical to early development. Fathers provide balance by teaching children to regulate their aggression and become independent. In my practice, I have seen an increasing number of moms who are single by choice. Although the mothers have the attachment part down, they don't separation process, and the kids struggle as a result."

The past several years are full of stories about a generation that can't seem to make it on its own. They don't know how to cook, or clean, or do "adulting" tasks. They have trouble going to college interviews or navigating their first real job without Mom playing advocate and running interference for them. There could be other factors at work, but is it possible the increasing absence of fathers has gotten our kids into this mess?

Is the current generation of young people unable to spread their wings and fly because Dad is so often the one who helps them cut the apron strings?

2. Marriage Decline

"Children of single parents also lack the opportunity to observe a loving relationship between two adults, and that can interfere with their ability to form relationships when they grow up. These losses

If the example of a father

is absent, won't it be much harder for young people to make their way to the altar?

She lists three disadvantages that have a man around to help the can be repaired only if they are balance has become more difficult acknowledged."

Another trending topic in recent years is the inability of young people to properly date, marry, and raise a family. Theories aboundit's video games, or social media, or the explosion of choices on dating apps that keep young people from settling down like they once did. What if they just don't know how? We learn by example. If the example of a father and mother loving each other is absent, or if those stories of "how I met your mother" aren't there, won't it be much harder for young people to make their way to the altar?

3. Behavioral Issues "Traditional family structures

have fostered a division of labor in which the father earns money and the mother cares for children.

Annie Holmquist is an editor at Intellectual Takeout. This article was originally published on Intellectual Takeout.

Cal Neuport

ON ATTENTION IN AN AGE OF DIGITAL DISTRACTION

CATHERINE YANG

nly a few years ago, Cal Newport's ideas about digital distraction and social media made him an outlier. He was a millennial who read a print newspaper and never had a social media account, during a time when every small business was starting, if not an account, a whole department.

And even though no one could give Newport a compelling argument for using social media, they asked without a hint of irony, but what if by not having an account, he missed out on a potential opportunity?

"People used to think my thoughts on social media were eccentric if not downright dangerous," he said. "When I wrote an oped in The New York Times in 2016 that said social media was not as important for their careers as many young people think, the outrage was so strong that the paper commissioned a response op-ed for the next week to argue against my points."

Less than a year later, the tide was turning. "Starting around early 2017, I noticed this reaction begin to change. People were increasingly receptive to this idea that there might be something rotten about our relationship with our digital devices," Newport

Newport is the author of several books, including "Deep Work" and most recently "Digital Minimalism," which both deal directly with our relationship with digital distraction.

University and grapples with mathematical theorems for a living–exactly the kind of field that requires deep work, or pushing your cognitive capabilities to their limit. He has published more than 60 peer-reviewed papers that have been cited more than 3,500 times. So he was, in fact, incredibly aware of the sort of cognitive noise that can immediately have a negative, and accumulated, impact on your ability to focus and concentrate.

In 2008, Newport titled an introspective journal entry, "Better."

In it, he laid out a vision for his personal and professional life, and ended it with the earnest request to "accept only excellence from myself." By the end of the year, he had an entry titled "The Plan," in which he listed his values in the categories of relationships, virtues, and qualities.



"In my professional life, I've always been surrounded by people who do high-impact work at elite levels, so I've always been driven to understand how I can get better and better at what I do," Newport said. "This mindset of continual improvements was simply in the air around me at that stage of life, and seemed as natural as breathing."

It was, in many ways, a natural progression. In 2006, Newport had published his first book, "How to Win at College," for students, which includes the tip "always be working on a 'grand project.'"

Newport was a student himself at the time and had found college advice books written to be too fluffy, or talking down to students. Before the books, he had actually been the humor columnist for the student newspaper at Dartmouth.

"Once I started down the path of writing, I found I had a knack for it, and so I kept going long after I moved beyond my student years," Newport said.

He published "How to Become a Straight-A Student," and then started blogging about study hacks, and published "How to Be a High School Superstar." In 2010, he got interested in the idea of "Simplicity 2.0," or the power of specialized craftsmanship in our age of general-purpose computing, and the danger of passion-driven career planning. These ideas are explored in length in his last

With "So Good They Can't Ignore You: Why Skills Trump Passion in the Quest for Work You Love," Newport debunked the passion hypothesis ("do what you love," or "follow your dreams") showing that it's not only wrong, but dangerous. He compares it to the "craftsman mindset," which instead "focuses on what you can offer the world" while "the passion mindset focuses instead on what the world can offer you." The latter has a track record for leading to disappointment and unhappiness, as he shows through interviews and stories. This book focused on the importance of skill, the beginnings of his attention capital theory.

If his ethos seems clear and unwavering, as he writes in his books, it's because he has carved out the solitude necessary to form his ideas and values. He describes a stack of 12 black Moleskine notebooks, accounting Autonomy Versus Convenience for roughly one per year, with one more in

It turns out, knowing yourself is the beginning of an antidote to digital distraction.

Connected 24/7

"Deep Work" begins with psychiatrist Carl Jung writing away in a locked private office in a village by the lake.

It goes on to share stories of other acclaimed individuals who eschew email and instant messaging in order to have long stretches of uninterrupted time, during which they aimed to show the reader how to do that.

The book was published in 2016, and he has since many times had to explain that he isn't, in fact, a neo-Luddite (in fact, he's excited about new developments in artificial intelligence and virtual reality).

"Deep work is necessary to wring every last drop of value out of your current intellectual capacity," he wrote in the first chapter. Many professions require nothing short of this, for one to stand out. But Newport found that with the rise of email and other methods for constant communication, even workers in these fields were working longer hours, dedicating more time to messaging and relegating the actual work to early or late hours outside the office. Knowing this, it's hard to make a case for email's ability to relied on depriving oneself of something

There's a bigger cost than merely wast-



It's important to have a physical hobby. "Our brains are wired to crave manipulating our physical world with our hands," Newport said.

OURTESY OF PENNY GRAY PHOTOGRAPH

Author Cal Newport.

Deep work is

necessary to

wring every

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vour current

intellectual

capacity.

Cal Newport

ing time. Newport shows that if you spend enough time fragmenting your attention, you can permanently reduce your capacity to even do deep work.

After publishing "Deep Work," Newport planned to write about what the workplace might look like going forward if we actually got rid of email and Slack. He wanted to explore this idea of attention capital theory, that in modern knowledge work, the primary capital resource is the human brain. But feedback from readers of "Deep Work"

took him in another direction.

People kept asking, what about our personal lives? How can I apply these principles outside of the workplace?

Later that year, Newport was on a beach in the Bahamas when he finally found the words: "digital minimalism."

That was essentially the philosophy he was advocating for, to take the principles of minimalism and apply them to how you use technology. Rather than trying to make a case for whether Facebook or Twitter is good or bad, he outlines a broader philosophy, asking whether an app or platform adds positive value to your life (and making very specific arguments for elements that don't).

Instead of social media, Newport has an

"interesting" inbox, a public-facing email where his readers and followers can send him links to articles, books, studies, and other things that may be of interest to him. "I love my interesting inbox," he said. "I

learn a lot from what comes through that

"In this way, it provides the same value to me that social media does for many others, but does so without any engineered addiction."

In preparing to write the book, Newport nurn out sometimes groundbreaking work had reached out to his readers to ask if in a relatively short period of time. Newport anyone would be interested in trying out a "digital declutter." He expected maybe 40 or 50 brave souls to venture forward; 1,600

> The results were interesting: people old enough to remember life without the internet talked about reconnecting with old hobbies and interests that were perhaps lost to them with their time sunk into scrolling on their phones. But people who had practically grown up with smartphones felt like they had stepped out into the void. There was real existential fear because they didn't have anything to fill the void, or know how to go about beginning.

> It solidified Newport's theory that the tips and tricks and weekend digital detoxes weren't enough. Especially if those tips we had before. People needed an underlying philosophy and values to have a staying

reason to use tech in a way that would only improve their lives. "Digital Minimalism" contains not just philosophy, but a practical 30-day guide. He even presents a philosophy for socializing in the digital age.

Newport also interviewed digital minimalists who actually live a variety of lifestyles. Some use social media in a clever and intentional way, some find they don't miss it after all. What it really came down to was reclaiming autonomy.

"Most of the digital minimalists I encountered were people who became fed up with how much of their time they felt they were losing to their devices. They felt like they were losing autonomy, so went looking for ways to redirect their energy back to what really mattered to them," he said.

In a podcast interview, he used heavier terms to describe what he was hearing: "People were getting the sense that their humanity itself was being degraded." This was a huge shift in public opinion

from when he was writing "Deep Work."

Work, Leisure, and AI

In one book, Newport interviews a talented 16-year-old professional banjo player who lives a monastic lifestyle and derives fulfillment from spending hours on improving technique. In another, he tells the story of a craftsman of handmade furniture who wrote a book subtitled "Creative Focus in the Age of Distraction."

These types of stories demonstrate the importance of concentration and skill, but they also help Newport make a point about the importance of having a physical hobby.

"Our brains are wired to crave manipulating our physical world with our hands; to see intentions made manifest concretely," he said. "Physical crafts satisfy this craving in a way that no amount of digital memes can approach."

"In my own life, recently, I've been getting into soldering together circuits—usually for little toys or gadgets for my kids. I'm also struggling to get a cool drip irrigation system up and running in our gardens."

Newport writes about the difference between low-quality leisure and high-quality leisure, the kind Aristotle identified as crucial for human happiness. These are pursuits he recommends people develop before they try to quit social media or declutter their digital life, not after, in order to prevent that miserable feeling of the void.

Part of this advice includes creating a "leisure plan," a strategy for committing to high-quality pursuits. It can be seasonal or weekly, and ideally consists of both objectives and habits you intend to honor for that period ("Attend one cultural event per

Newport has three young children, so the family's leisure plan tends to center around activities appropriate for them. "Interesting museums, nature centers, hikes, visits to relatives, games, and family movie nights,"

Despite his work on the dangers of the attention economy, with companies like Facebook and Twitter making money off your eyeballs and having every incentive to press forward, Newport is an optimist.

"Right now, in the world of knowledge work, we are making very poor use of the brains we employ. This is going to shift," Newport said. This is the subject for his next book, "World Without Email," set for publication next year. "We will look back at our current workflows-which depend on frenetic communication-with puzzlement."

Newport also thinks AI will ultimately help solve some of these problems, and "minimize unproductive busyness in the workplace—which is making whole sectors of our economy miserable."

About That Che T-Shirt

Think twice about adding a Guevara T-shirt to your Christmas giving this year

LAWRENCE W. REED

et's say that all you knew about Adolf Hitler was that he painted scenic pictures, postcards, and houses in Vienna, loved dogs, and named his adorable German Shepherd "Blondie," and frequently expressed solidarity with "the people." You might sport a T-shirt adorned with his image if you thought such a charismatic chap was also good looking

But your education would be

widely regarded as incomplete. If you later found out that the guy on your T-shirt was a mass murderer, you might ask your oppression-studies professor why she left out a few important details.

This hypothetical resembles a real-world phenomenon seen today on numerous college campuses. Fifty-two years after his demise in Bolivia-on Oct. 9, 1967-the maniacal socialist Ernesto "Che" Guevara is still making headlines and spoiling perfectly good clothes.

In film and pop culture, Guevara comes off as an adventurous motorcyclist, a humble-living commoner, a romantic egalitarian revolutionary, and a swashbuckling sex symbol. His ghastly history as one of Fidel Castro's favorite thugs routinely gets whitewashed because, in spite of all the murders, he supposedly had good intentions

(read: hate the rich, concentrate

power, eliminate dissent, help the poor by creating more of them).

In his remarkable 2007 volume, "Exposing the Real Che Guevara and the Useful Idiots Who Idolize Him," acclaimed journalist Humberto Fontova contrasted the fiction with the facts in these terms:

"Who Was Ernesto 'Che' Gue-

"Myth: International man of the people. Humanitarian. Brave freedom fighter. Lover of literature and life. Advocate of the poor and oppressed.

Reality: Cold-blooded murderer. Sadistic torturer. Power-hungry materialist. Terrorist who inspired destruction and blood-

shed through Latin America." Here are some lesser-known info bits about the psychopath-on-

book and other sources: • He publicly applauded the Soviet invasion of Hungary in 1956 and denounced the student protesters battling Soviet tanks in Bu-

the-T-shirt, drawn from Fontova's

dapest as "fascists." Upon the victory of the 1959 communist revolution in Cuba, Guevara commandeered for himself one of the most luxurious mansions in Havanacomplete with a yacht harbor, monster swimming pool, seven bathrooms, sauna and massage salon, and five television sets.

· Guevara played a leading role in the Cuban Literacy Campaign of 1961 and, at the same time, helped direct the regime's brutal policy of crushing dissenting opinion and opposition media. As Fontova documented in his biography, he "promoted book burning and signed death warrants for authors who disagreed with him." Communist despots routinely teach reading and writing but work even harder at making sure you only read and write what they want you to. Guevara's first public bookburning set more than 3,000 books ablaze on a Havana street. Even Guevara's adoring hagiog-

rapher, Jorge Castaneda, admits that he "played a central role in establishing Cuba's security machinery" in the early days of the Castro regime. In that capacity, Guevara supervised the torture and execution of untold thousands of Cubans without trial. He had a special affection for firing squads. · Cuban poet and diplomat Ar-

mando Valladares, author of "Against All Hope: My 22 Years in Castro's Gulag," says Guevara "was a man full of hatred" who executed people "who never once stood trial and were never declared guilty," and who declared, "At the smallest of doubt

we must execute." · Guevara was no equal opportunity oppressor. He held special dislike for gays, whom he incarcerated in multiple prisons. He

was a well-known racist, as well. Fidel Castro appointed Guevara as communist Cuba's first "eco-



People pass by a flag depicting Argentine-born revolutionary leader Ernesto "Che" Guevara during the 84th edition of the annual "Fete de l'Humanite" music festival in the Paris suburb of La Courneuve on Sept. 14, 2019.

nomics minister" and president of the country's National Bank. Within months, the Cuban peso was practically worthless. Castro appointed him minister of industries, too. In that job, Guevara proved equally incompe-

tent. Once he bought a fleet of snowplows from Czechoslovakia because he thought they would make excellent sugar cane harvesters, but sadly the machines simply squashed and killed the

STEPHANE DE SAKUTIN/AFP/GETTY IMAGES

czar, although he knew nothing about economics beyond Marxist bumper stickers. His former deputy, Ernesto Betancourt, said he was "ignorant of the most elementary economic principles." Nonetheless, he actually wrote communes. Production plummeted and is still lower today than before the revolution.

Guevara was Castro's economic

The Soviet missiles in Cuba that nearly precipitated a world war in 1962 were Guevara's idea. When the Soviets were pressured by the Kennedy administration to remove them, Guevara publicly declared that if the missiles had been under Cuban control, they would have been fired at the U.S. because the cause of socialism was worth "millions of atomic-war victims."

Guevara left Cuba in 1965 to fo-

ment violent insurrections first in Africa and then back in Latin America. He was captured by the Bolivian military on Oct. 8, 1967, and was administered a dose of his own summary medicine the

communist Cuba's agrarian Bottom line: Think twice (actureform law, limiting the size of ally, just once ought to be enough) all farms and creating state-run about adding a Che Guevara Tshirt to your Christmas giving

> Lawrence W. Reed is president emeritus, Humphreys Family senior fellow, and Ron Manners ambassador for Global Liberty at the Foundation for Economic Education. He is also the author of "Real Heroes: Incredible True Stories of Courage, Character, and Conviction" and "Excuse Me, Professor: Challenging the Myths of Progressivism." This article was originally published

Timothée Chalamet as King Henry V, in "The King."



Timothée Chalamet as King Henry V, in "The King."

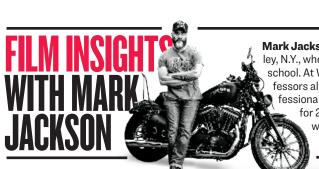


Robert Pattinson (C) plays the eldest son of the king of France, in "The King."



Week 44, 2019 THE EPOCH TIMES

Joel Edgerton as Falstaff in "The King."



Mark Jackson grew up in Spring Valley, N.Y., where he attended a Waldorf school. At Williams College, his prossors all suggested he write profor 20 years instead. Now he ites professionally about

'The King'

Director David Michôd

Timothée Chalamet, Joel Edgerton, Robert Pattinson, Lily-Rose Depp, Sean Harris, Ben Mendelsohn, Dean-Charles Chapman, Tom Glynn-Carney, Thomasin McKenzie, Andrew Havill, Edward Ashley, Tara Fitzgerald

Running Time Rated **Release Date**

No Shakespeare (Lines) Necessary

Medieval mud movie borrows story elements from the Bard

MARK JACKSON

ou've seen "Braveheart." So you know what I mean by "medieval mud movie." But it was actually 1989's groundbreaking "Henry V," written by William Shakespeare and directed (and starred in) by Kenneth Branagh, that kicked off the genre. It introduced medieval mud battles-the now, oh-so-familiar legions of thundering horse hooves churning up muck, with flaming arrows whistling overhead, and acres of muddy, primal battle gore. (Actually, it was Monty Python's "Jabberwocky" and "Monty Python and the Holy Grail" that truly put the sheer, massive amounts of mud that humans dealt with in the Middle Ages on the screen.) Netflix did a mud movie just last year,

"Outlaw King," more or less a "Braveheart" retelling from the perspective of Sir Robert the Bruce. This year, with "The King," we've finally come full circle-back to the "Henry V" story, where the British boyking Henry V (Timothée Chalamet) goes up against the French Dauphin (Robert Pattinson) for control of 15th-century France. So it's more or less a medley of the

Shakespearean "Henriad"-that is: Richard II, Henry IV (Part 1), Henry IV (Part 2), and Henry V–co-rewritten by Aussie actor Joel Edgerton (who plays Falstaff), and who specializes in playing warriors. It's co-written and directed by Aussie director David Michôd.

And Brad Pitt produces.

So word-wise, it's sort of Shakespeare lite, but Pitt's got good taste in movies touting manliness ("Fight Club," "Troy") and, um, motorcycles. And the star of this movie, Timothée Chalamet, may be the best actor of his generation, so "The King" has some heft. If you like manly, muddy, medieval war movies-it's a must-see.

The Doings

Chalamet has done this transition before. from innocent to mature and jaded, most recently in "Hot Summer Nights," where he morphed, in one summer's time, from a moody, shy, innocent boy into a cutthroat, highly effective drug dealer.

Here, he's young Prince Hal, the prodigal son of brutal, ambitious King Henry IV (Ben Mendelsohn). Chalamet turns in a rather millennial Hal; he's no bawdy lad, but delicate, like some chiaroscuro painting of a languid satyr, with pale skin and dark locks, but with a voracious appetite for the ladies, and more of a humanitarian core compared to his father's land-grabbing politics. Hal has no interest in ruling Merry England.

That is, until dad falls ill and dies in the sobering way that people did in the Middle Ages-fast-but not before handing the keys to the kingdom to Hal's younger brother Thomas (Dean-Charles Chapman). This leads to the rebellion of Harry Hotspur (Tom Glynn-Carney), which finally rouses Hal, who, seeking to shield his little brother, kills hotheaded Hotspur in single combat, sparing the armies-and grabs the crown.

In Branagh's "Henry V," Hal's drinking buddy Falstaff is the linchpin of Hal's explosive transition from wastrel and naif to ruthless, full-blown, power-wielding king: Hal has Falstaff hanged. Not here. This is some serious rewriting, since even in Shakespeare's original, Falstaff dies. Here, Falstaff is kept on as counselor,

As king, the newly appointed Henry receives gifts from other kings and countries, elaborate ones with flowery notes. The king of France, though, sends a primitive leather ball—a child's plaything (with nary so much as written word) that Henry V's wisemen interpret as an insult and a challenge to war. Next, a French assassin is apprehended. Henry's got no choice: He must go and put the smackdown on France forthwith.

aide-de-camp, and surrogate dad.

But before the battles kick off, Henry meets the French Dauphin (the eldest son of the king of France) in a tent at night, for some kingly trash talk. Robert Pattinson (of the "Twilight" vampire series), wielding a theatrical yet highly accurate French accent, utterly hijacks this scene, excoriating the young English king with barbed witticisms and later backing up his threats with some bloodcurdling butchery of children that one would really prefer to un-see. That said, it does prime the audience's revenge lust. And the pay-

off is considerable. Cue the hyper-muddy Battle of Agincourt. Hacking, whacking, crunching, clanging, bow-twanging, thumping, excellent trebuchet-whanging of great gobs of flaming what's-its (I'm guessing boulders wrapped in cloth, slathered with pitch, and set on fire), dying horses, groaning men ... and everywhere is mud.

Post-mud, there's a fine scene of the beauteous Lily-Rose Depp (daughter of Johnny) as Catherine of Valois, the French king's daughter, who's to be given to Henry to unite the countries in conciliatory fashion. She insists he win her; she won't simply submit, and she speaks truth to power admirably.

Why did you start this war?

They sent me a ball. They. Sent. You. A. Ball ...???!!

Fine Performances

In addition to Chalamet's Midas touch in demoing a blistering boyhood-tomanhood rite of passage, and Edgerton's workmanly aide-de-camp Falstaff, and Miss Depp's giving notice that she's here to stay, and Pattinson's fireworks–there's also an excellent turn by Sean Harris as courtly adviser William Gascoigne, steering the fledgling king and, in doing so, attempting to attach some marionette strings to Henry's sleeves. It's a ploy that eventually backfires vehemently.

If you're a traditionalist and find the concept of rewritten Shakespeare into Shakespeare lite an abomination, I'd have to agree from a conceptual point of view. However–it works. There may be no "Once more unto the breach, dear friends, once more; Or close the wall up with our English dead." Nobody can mess with (as Joni Mitchell calls him) "Willy the Shake."

But–I don't know about you, but any time some actor gets on a horse and starts riding up and down in front of a ragtag army of extras playing starving patriots ready to lay down their lives, and starts yelling "Freedom!!" I start bawling. Suffice it to say, if you feel patriotic mud battles in your bones, you will find "The

In closing, the medieval mud movies remind us that without our modern conveniences, human existence is a muddy existence. Without air conditioning, central heating, and bug spray, humans boiled in the summer, froze in the winter, and got eaten alive by bugs. And always there was mud.

King" most satisfying.

Shen Yun Symphony Orchestra

Is an 'Incredible Soul-Searching' Experience

CATHERINE YANG

EW YORK–Yvonne Fernandez, a technical director at Madison Square Garden, had a life-changing experience at Carnegie Hall. She attended a concert of Shen Yun Symphony Orchestra (SYSO), and left with a memory she would keep with her forever.

"It completely made me forget about everything. It heightened my senses. Incredible soul-searching happened," she said after the matinee on Oct. 12.

"I will never forget this. I will never forget how this felt; I didn't want it to end."

Learning that traditional Chinese culture centered on harmony between heaven and earth, Fernandez said the feeling she had while listening to the music now made

"It brought me back to a certain state and then this incredible height of feeling and expansion, like anything is possible and everything is possible," she said. "I also felt a lot of hope and desires, anything I wanted to do; this music just had me travel completely."

SYSO is comprised of musicians from the orchestras of Shen Yun Performing Arts' touring ensembles, of which there are now seven. Having just finished the Asia leg of the tour, the orchestra was in New York for two concerts.

The orchestra is acclaimed for its unparalleled ability to blend East and West, folding ancient Chinese instruments such as the pipa and erhu into a Western symphony, creating Chinese melodies with

ment listening to this."

"For me, the violins were like voices, and the drama, and all the different instruments that we're not accustomed to," she said.

Fernandez said.

Linda Devlin and Bill O'Keefe have looked forward to this year's Shen Yun Symphony Orchestra season. They are longtime fans of Shen Yun Performing Arts, having seen the company many times, and have come to the concert performances of SYSO four times.

sic more intensely

classical orchestration.

"A lot of times, I would think to myself, I can't believe what I'm hearing. I couldn't believe what I was hearing," Fernandez said. "Just the beauty of it and the magnificence of it, I couldn't believe I was living this mo-

Art can change the course of a person's life, Fernandez added, thinking back to her own theater experience as a student that led her to where she is today. Now, the SYSO concert had inspired her to work on some of her own writing.

"I'm definitely coming back next year,"

'Heavenly Music'

"It sounds like it comes from heaven," Devlin said at Carnegie Hall on Oct. 12. "This is our fourth time attending it, we look forward to it every year. It's just so beautiful." "We just kept coming back," O'Keefe said.

He said he felt a sort of peaceful relaxation being in the audience, and he often closed his eyes just so he could experience the mu-

"It sounds like they play from heaven, really," Devlin said. "It's amazing every time. They're just so talented. It's a peaceful, uplift-



Linda Devlin and Bill O'Keefe enjoyed the Shen Yun Symphony Orchestra at Carnegie Hall in New York on Oct. 12, 2019.

ing place to be, with sounds from heaven." "The range of emotions are from love, to escape, to strength, and to submission-it runs the whole gamut of emotions, absolutely," she said

This season marks the debut of conductor Dmitry Russu, who was the assistant conductor of the Saint Petersburg Philharmonic Orchestra prior to his new post with

Maestro Milen Nachev also conducted in the program, which included original Shen my eyes and think of heaven."

Yun compositions peppered with classical favorites. Both conductors came back out for encores of original pieces and met with thunderous applause and a cheering standing ovation.

"The string music sounded like heavenly music, and at the end when they picked up the tempo, with the drums in the background, it just seemed like it was composed with God entering the picture," said Richard Eng, a portfolio manager. "It had me close

If the permission came, she contin-

ued, it often compromised the film-

makers' own integrity and vision in

order to do what was right for their

careers, according to "industry pros."

For many others, the permission

never comes at all and these people

spend years just trying to get their

movies made

Taking the Drama Out of Filmmaking: 'Shoot From the Heart'

An interview with award-winning director and writer Diane Bell

MASHA SAVITZ

Marilyn Monroe once said, "Hollywood is a place where they'll pay a thousand dollars for a kiss, and fifty cents for your soul." Many have echoed this sentiment.

Award-winning director and writer Diane Bell offers an alternative template for making movies. Her book "Shoot From the Heart" and her online academy of the same name put heart and soul back into the process. That process is fundamentally opposite of the usual, albeit precarious, Hollywood track that can often feel heartless-more like "shooting yourself in the foot."

Through wisdom gleaned during her career as a yoga instructor and then later as a filmmaker, Bell comes from a philosophical or even spiritual perspective of filmmaking, hence the name of her book and academy.

"All the information I share comes from a place of integrity and authenticity, meaning it comes from my own honest experiences," she said in an interview in September.

"I don't teach theory. I teach realworld nuts and bolts: how-to-makeit-happen-yourself information, along with a heavy dose of if-I-can-do-it-youcan-too inspiration."

Bell emphasizes that screenwriting is an inside job, but too often writers look outward instead of trusting themselves and the process: "I absolutely believe that as a screenwriter or filmmaker, you will do your best work when you take action from your intuition and inner guidance," she said.

Unfortunately, we're often focused on the results we want to achieve, she said, instead of trusting the process.

Sage, Trailblazer, and Cheerleader Bell targets those who feel disenfranchised from the filmmaking enterprise because it just wasn't what they were

exposed to growing up and so it feels

Hailing originally from Scotland, far

out of their grasp.

But with much persistence, she broke through her internal obstacles and not only became a professional screenwriter but also has gone on to write and direct three features, including one that won two awards at Sundance and was nominated for two Independent Spirit Awards.

"If you had told me that would have been possible when I was in my 20s, I

from the palm trees and movie stu-

dios of Los Angeles, Bell can identify with this feeling. She never thought

that making films would be possible

for her. "I didn't believe that I could be

a screenwriter or that my voice mat-

tered," she said

would have laughed at you," she said. "I wish someone had been there to say, 'Yes, you can do this.' That's who I aspire to be in other people's lives: the one who says, 'Yes, you can and here's how, so quit with the excuses and do it."

Finding Her Mission

Bell addresses the "I can't syndrome" by laying out a comprehensive plan for "how you can."

She recognizes that many people feel the calling to write or direct, but they self-select out of the career because it seems too frightening or overwhelming.

"'Who am I to make a movie?' is a question I wrestled with," she confessed, "and my answer for anyone who is asking it now is, 'Who are you not to, if it's your calling?"

Bell's mission crystallized in 2014, after her second feature, "Bleeding Heart," left her feeling disheartened.

Despite the fact that the film had a much bigger budget than her first film and that it had name actors in it-Jessica Biel and Zosia Mamet–she had a very difficult time making the movie and was unhappy with the result.

She realized that many of her directorial choices had been based in fear. "I'd signed a contract ... knowing the producers and I weren't a great match, but was motivated by this thought: This is the right thing to do for my career;

suck it up." As the dust settled, Bell came to realize that she had forgotten the most important thing when you're making an indie film, or anything really, to "ground all your choices in love, and you can't go wrong."

"I realized that so many aspiring filmmakers get caught up in the same false traps—and this is why they haven't been succeeding," Bell said. "They were buying the lies that films have to be made a certain way. They were waiting for permission."



won two awards, the

Alfred P. Sloan Award

and Excellence in Cinematography.

The overall result is "mediocre in-Diane Bell's first film die films, broken dreams, and jaded as writer/director, "Obselidia," premiered In response to these experiences and at the Sundance Film Festival 2010 in intensive weekend workshop in which Dramatic Narrative she'd share everything needed to be-Competition and

> filmmaker. She taught workshops sporadically over the following years and honed the material, which became the basis of her book.

come a successful, self-starting, indie

When she'd decided to make her first film, there were plenty of books on guerilla, or no-budget filmmaking, and many on the taking a conventional path, that is, getting a name talent and secure foreign sales. These books

were not helpful. "I wanted to raise the money myself, pay everyone who worked on my movie, including myself, and make a movie that had a real shot at standing





The cover of Diane Bell's book on Filmmaking, "Shoot From the Heart."

Helping Others Realize Their

their goals comes from the belief that if someone feels called to make movies, it's not a selfish or frivolous thing.

"To me, movies don't just reflect our reality, they help create it. Your voice, your unique, once-in-eternity perspective matters. The world needs your unique voice; it's there for a reason. Otherwise, you wouldn't feel the calling," she said. Helping fuel that calling, her course is appropriate for a variety of filmmakers and screenwriters–from those who have never written or made any films before to those who have already written and directed prestige movies but are looking for "support,

community, and inspiration." As far as Bell's calling, she used to always dream about winning an Oscar. "I still think there's one out there with my name on it (screenwriting, FYI)," she said. But my dream just now is to see someone else up on that stage, clutching their award, and thanking me for helping them achieve the impossible. That's my goal."

Masha Savitz is a freelance writer and filmmaker in the Los Angeles area.



and Bones," in which a desert recluse is visited by her dead husband's best friend and fellow Syrian war journalist.

I absolutely believe that as a screenwriter or filmmaker, you will do your best work when you take action from **your intuition** and inner

Diane Bell

guidance.

There are countless online accounts that teach you how to cook simple and cheap meals at home.

5 Tips on How to Pay Off That Student Loan Before You're 30

CHLOE ANAGNOS

ollege isn't the best option for everyone. Some will do just as well, if not better, by learning their by simply enrolling in a trade school.

But when college is part of your calling and you simply can't juggle a part-time job and school, taking on student loans might be your only option.

If this is your case, don't despair. It's true that the government's long history of getting involved with the student loan industry made the situation worse.

But despite the evidence, regulators don't seem ready to get out of the picture just yet, meaning the cost of a college education will continue to rise. To many, this means tens

of thousands of dollars in the red the moment they step out of school. And if alumni aren't careful, that reality could affect their credit and their chances to own a home or even buy a car.

So how do you speed up the process of paying off your student loan without putting everything you earn toward your debt? And how can you follow through before turning 30?

Here are five practical tips that literally everyone can follow to put an end to student

1: Live Frugally

Sounds like your grandpa's advice, right? That's because it is. And you know what? He was right: trimming your budget never fails. Especially if your first years as a professional

aren't being spent on high-paying jobs. Fur- 3: Explore Tax Deductions thermore, cutting your monthly expenses will help you to afford doing things you love while paying off your debt. Unfortunately, young people today aren't as good at saving as the last generations, so finding ways to stop spending so much might not be all that

So how do you live frugally in a potentially difficult economy and with the price of everything on the rise?

If you live in a big city, explore the idea of having roommates, especially if you're close to a college campus.

Former college colleagues might be in the same boat and might be more than willing to share an apartment with you. But if that's not an option, how about finding current students who are looking to save some money by sharing a place?

When budgeting for food, remember to keep it simple and cheap by not going out to eat.

There are countless online accounts that teach you how to cook simple, cheap meals at home. That means that if you have acess to WiFi, you, too, can

conquer the kitchen. Also, consider slashing any extra payment to that month's due Starbucks and other side expenses that aren't a necessity from your monthly budget. You will be surprised to know you could be saving over \$2,000 per year!

Whatever you save, put it toward paying off your debt. Remember, making more than the minimum payment each month is the best way to get rid of debt rapidly.

2: Find Yourself a Side Gig

Side gigs are in style these days, and that has a lot to do with student loan debt repayment. A lot of people find that their single-job income isn't enough. Like others who found themselves in need of extra work, you, too, might have to take on a side gig.

If you have a car, you might want to join Uber or Lyft and do a little hustling a few days here and there. You could even rent your car to others who don't have one. But if neither of those options will work for you, using sites such as Fiverr and TaskRabbit to make some extra spending money, or even renting a room in your home on Airbnb, could do the trick. You could also be part of mock juries for extra cash, as lawyers are always trying to test their cases to mock juries before going to court. To those living near law schools, this might be extra easy.

In addition to gigs that don't require any special skills, there are also side gigs you might be qualified for that could help you pay off your debt sooner.

If you like dogs, you can become a pet sit- life easier—even if you have to hustle a bit ter using sites such as Rover, Petsitter.com, for a few years before being able to relax or even looking for opportunities on Craigslist. And if you have special skills, such as knowing other languages, you can work as a translator on Gengo or Upwork or find com-

panies looking for part-time remote workers. You can also use Amazon Mechanical Turk to do easy tasks such as visit websites, identify objects on photos or videos, fill out surveys, write content, and others that don't require much time.

Whatever you do, keep it simple. There are plenty of opportunities, especially if you can work online and from home in your spare time.

and Other Credits

When working on your tax returns, keep in mind you might be eligible for student loan interest deductions even if you don't itemize your taxes. While some requirements must be met, this could easily deduct up to \$2,500 on your taxes yearly, helping you to keep more of your money and put it toward paying off debt.

While taxation is a drag on our efforts to make ends meet, it's important to take advantage of any and all tax deductions we can get. Especially if we're in the red.

4: Make Extra Payments

Making more than

the minimum

payment each month

is the best way to get

rid of debt rapidly.

Sounds like a no-brainer, right? And that's because it is. But simply sending the financing company an extra check every

> month won't do. After all, many firms simply apply any extra payment to the next month's bill, and this won't help you pay your loan faster.

The right way to send extra payments monthly is to contact your service provider in advance and instruct them to apply

balance without changing anything about the next month's due date. By following this strategy, you could be debt-free years ahead of schedule.

5: Refinance (But Only if You Meet Requirements)

The idea of refinancing is to be able to bring your interest rate low enough that your student loan debt will be faster to repay. Unfortunately, not everyone is eligible to take this shortcut, since it requires good credit and steady employment. Before considering taking this route,

check your credit. If it's in the high 600s and you have a history of on-time debt payments and solid, steady income, then you're a good candidate for refinancing. For instance, if you have \$50,000 in debt and you refinance it, lowering your 8.5 per-

cent interest rate to 4.5 percent, you could end up paying off your debt two years earlier than you originally expected. Think ahead, friends, and you will go far.

Another advantage of refinancing is that it replaces several student loans with one private loan. You pay to one service provider at a lower rate, and you can choose new loan terms that are shorter and that will help to save you big bucks in the end. While this may drive your monthly payment minimums up, it will save you money in the long run and make your everyday and enjoy your hard-earned money!

However, if you have a federal loan that offers benefits such as income-driven repayments, refinance won't be the best

So what are you waiting for?

By following these practical tips, you should be debt-free and ready to even start saving for retirement! Think ahead, friends, and you will go far.

Chloe Anagnos is a professional writer, digital strategist, and marketer. This article was originally published on FEE.org

FOR KIDS ONLY THE EPOCH TIMES







This Week in History

The crowd outside the New York Stock Exchange on Oct. 24, 2019.

n Oct. 24, 1929, stock prices on the New York Stock Exchange collapsed, losing a record 13 percent of its value in one day–a day that became known as Black Thursday, Losses continued until the next Tuesday (Black Tuesday). It was the most significant stock market crash in U.S. history.

The crash was preceded by a crash of the London Stock Exchange the month before and marked the beginning of the Great Depression–a devastating, worldwide financial crisis that lasted over the decade following the Great Crash.



ALL PHOTOS BY SHUTTERSTOCK

By Aidan Danza, age 13

I live in a

there are

Octobers.

L.M. MONTGOMERY,

world where

owls, and black cats—what do

Riddles

I am a net for catching intruders,

A weapon for a cold blooded murder

And a mode of transport that is super.

The prankster's favorite home decor,

Never eaten, found in bowls

A part of a book, a hair off a tree,

Around I go, I'm on a roll.

Clockwise or counter, the choice is yours.

Come to my hot tub, I'll make you some tea

ANSWERS: A SPIDER WEB, TOILET PAPER, A LEAF

An elegant plate for eating supper

by Evan Mantyk

Have a try,

Who am I?

by Mike Munsell

What am I?

What am I?

by Evan Mantyk

Courtesy of The Society of Classical Poets

It's Halloween time, and these animals are the stars of the show, often featured on holiday decorations.

they all share?

But why are these particular animals supposed to be so scary? Why isn't the pigeon the meanest, most terrifying animal out there?

OWLS

Owls have a very mixed reputation. The ancient Greeks revered the little owl as their goddess Athena's pet. Athena was the goddess of wisdom in Greece, and so owls were said to be very wise (sound familiar?).

ALL PHOTOS BY SHUTTERSTOCK

On the other hand, the Romans believed that owls were messengers to witches, and that witches would turn themselves into owls and suck people's blood. Some also believed that owl hoots symbolize death.

There are other spooky owl stories. For example, it is said if an owl makes a nest in a vacant house, it's haunted, because owls are the only creatures that can live with ghosts.

BLACK CATS

USE THE FOUR NUMBERS IN THE CORNERS, AND THE OPERANDS

11

For example: $6 + (7 \times 3) + 1 = 28$ and $1 + (7 \times 3) + 6 = 28$

Solution For Easy 1

1-7+7+7

(+, - AND X) to build an equation to get the solution in the middle. There may be

18

13

Solution for Medium 1

ll + 8 × (£l - 8l)

11

(33 + 11 - 29) × 3

more than one "unique" solution but, there may also be "equivalent" solutions.

Black cats are associated with witches, because according to medieval European legend, witches turned into them and back. In Greek mythology, the Greek queen of the gods, Hera, was planning



one of her many spiteful plots. This plot was foiled by a servant. Hera turned her into a black cat as ounishment, and the cat eventually became the servant of the Greek goddess of witchcraft, ghosts, the

The Norse goddess of love and war, Freyja, rode in a carriage, pulled by black cats. When Frevia freed them from servitude she turned them into

In 1232, even the Pope, Pope regory IX (the Ninth), said that black ats were really the devil in cat form.

BATS Some bats, in Central and South

America, do drink the blood of cattle and other animals. Unsurprisingly, ats have thus been a subject of nany spooky stories. A book by Bram Stoker, "Dracula," written in 1897, talks about vampires that shapeshift into bats, and this has only furthered the bat's bad reputation.

US Teachers Take Hands-On Approach to Financial Literacy

NEW YORK–There are a lot of hard truths about money, but here is one of the hardest: We're really bad at passing along money smarts.

As it stands, only 57 percent of American adults can be considered financially literate, according to a global survey by Standard & Poor's. A new initiative from fundrais-

ing website DonorsChoose.org and the Charles Schwab Foundation is aiming to change that with a new hands-on approach. Rather than kids reading about starting a business, why not actually open a school store? Rather than reading about concepts like supply and demand, why not start making Tshirts, and see if they can sell them?

The "Innovation Challenge" prompts teachers to craft creative FinLit projects, helps them get funded, and then monitors which

"Experiential learning is so important, especially for lowerincome families," said Casey Cortese, managing director of Schwab's

community services, which is taking a new hands-on approach to teaching financial literacy. "If you make lessons tangible and real, it really cements learning." This year's overall winner of an

online fan vote: Students of Rapunzel Galang in Lanham, Maryland, undertook virtual-reality field trips to different historical landmarks through time. They did that using VR headsets-but first, they had to plan, budget, and pay for such trips, by researching about the places they wanted to visit.

Another innovative project: Xavier Lewis in Dayton, Texas, combined financial literacy with a "Mission to Mars" STEM project. Students earned money in their virtual bank accounts with attendance, class participation, and completing assignments. They could then spend that money to buy supplies to assemble rockets, rovers, and hovercrafts for a simulated flight to Mars. Other projects included creat-

a how-to video series on personal finance, using dinosaurs to pass along money lessons, and teaching the idea of "wants versus needs" via dramatic play.

Keep It Going While 92 percent of teachers say financial education is important, only 12 percent actually undertake it-because they just don't have the resources, said Cortese. To combat that with the Innova-

tion Challenge, 15 of the top projects were developed into full lesson plans. Teachers across the country could then download them for free and use them in their own classes. The first 200 teachers who did so, and submitted a report on how it went, got a \$250 credit to apply to future projects on the site.

The initiative has encouraged educators to think bigger and more creatively than just using a crowdfunding site like DonorsChoose to cover things like basic supplies. ing a virtual-reality bank, filming Since the Innovation Challenge



You can teach young children about money smarts today, but you won't know for years whether those habits have actually taken root.

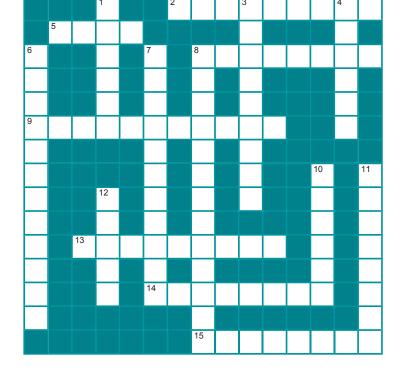
first got started, "There has been a 66 percent increase in FinLit projects posted," said Rianne Roberts, partnerships manager for the fun-

Financial literacy is a long game, though. You can teach a third grader about money smarts today, but you will not know for years whether those habits have actually taken root.

When the Schwab Foundation first started partnering with the site in 2017, 350 teachers participated in its financial literacy campaigns,

reaching 36,000 students. In 2019, by comparison, they have already reached 1,600 teachers and 250,000

So far this year, Schwab donated \$375,000 to the Innovation Challenge, and \$500,000 total to DonorsChoose. Of those teachers who used the resulting materials, 98 percent said they plan to keep teaching financial literacy in



- "Gimme a break!" bar (6)
- 3 Candy that "Makes Mouths Happy" (9)
- "Pieces" candy brand (6) 6 Chocolate-coated peanutty bar (12)
- 7 Chocolate-coated movie theater candy (11) 8 These kids aren't sweet! (13)
- 10 Coconut bars without almonds (6)
- 11 Chewy, chocolaty treats in a yellow box (8)
- 12 The candy, not computer geeks! (5)



Across

2 Chocolate-coated toffee treats (9) 13 Chocolate with a snap (9)

5 "Pause like you mean it" candy (4) 14 3 Musketeers alternative (8)

8 Sweet/sour multi-colored treat (8) 15 Bigmouths (8)

9 120-year-old candy (11)

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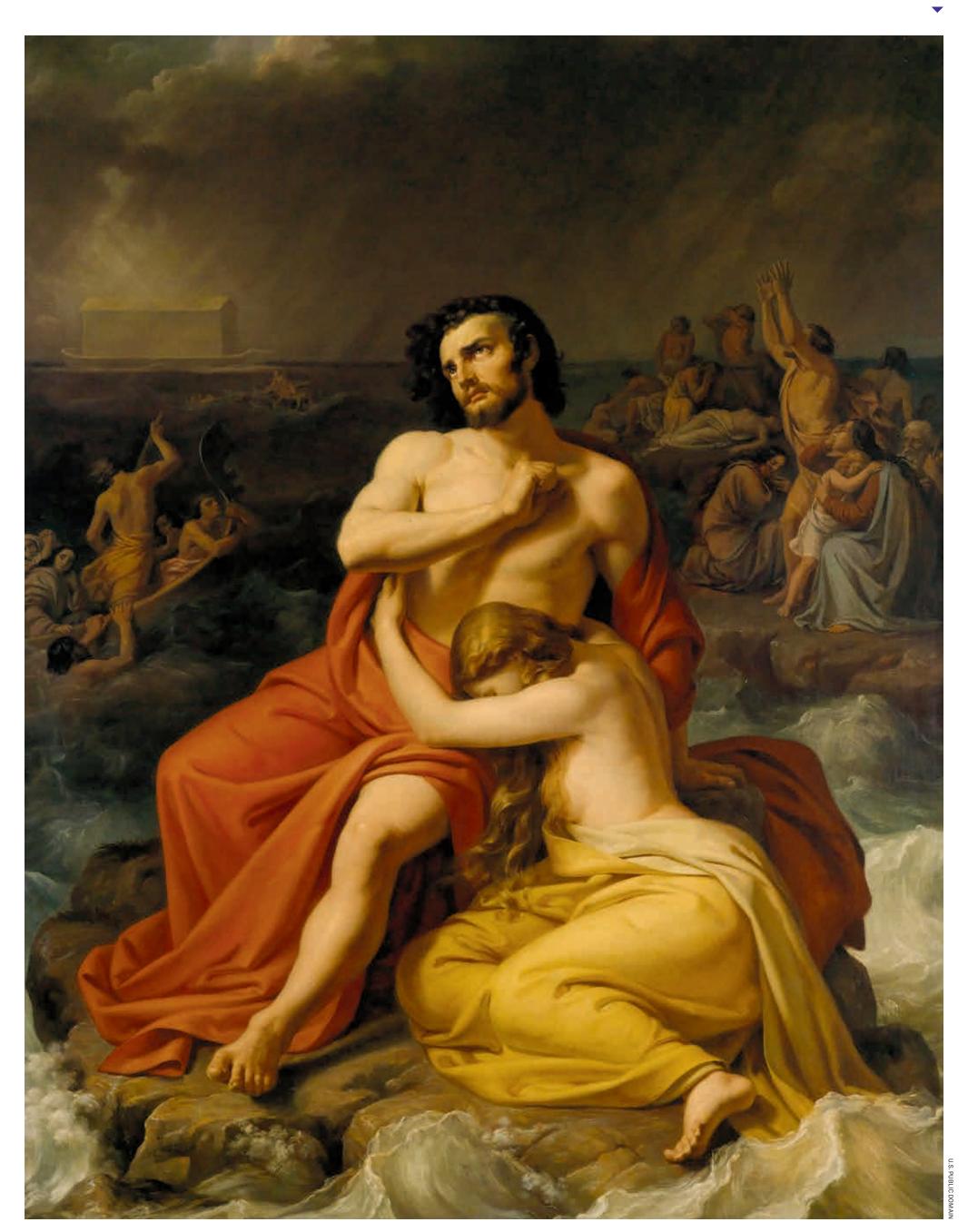
TRUTH AND TRADITION

COMMENTARY

The Great Flood

and What It Tells Us

How is the biblical Great Flood dif



JAMES SALE

Perhaps no myth-if myth it be-is more relevant today than the myth of the Great Flood that nearly destroyed humanity at some unknown point in the past.

We colloquially use the term myth, happened in an historical sense, though in the case of the Flood, there is some trying to discredit the story. doubt because it seems that virtually all The Assyrian King Ashurbanipal (668 cultures and races have some recollec- B.C.-627 B.C.) whose greatest achievetion of this event: the ancient Assyrians, ment (according to himself) was the Egyptians, Babylonians, Greeks, Chinese, library at Nineveh, which was found and

Aboriginals, Andean, and many more. Indeed, the only culture that I am aware of that does not have a Flood myth is, ironically given its current location near tectonic plates, the Japanese.

The point is that the testimony of mankind from earliest times, and so nearer of course, to refer to things that never that point of origin, is more telling than scientists, usually for ideological reasons,

excavated in the 19th century, wrote that he made himself master of all types of writing, including the "dark Akkadian language which is difficult to rightly use"; and then he adds, "I took my pleasure in reading stones inscribed before the flood."

This seems an astonishing remark and a highly credible one, too: He knew how to read the language before the Flood. Certainly, something of an extraordinary and catastrophic nature occurred which indelibly marked the memory of mankind-so that even 2,700 years ago it was a source of awe and wonder to King Ashurbanipal. And, incidentally, it was the discovery

of this library that led to the recovery of

the specific Babylonian Flood myth. There are, then, various versions of this Flood story from across the world, which differ in all sorts of ways, but my favorite is the biblical one of Noah and his ark. It is instructive to compare it with the wonderful-and seemingly older-version

Continued on **Page 16**

that was uncovered at Nineveh.

POETRY

Well Done, John Donne

A look at a master of metaphysical poetry

JEFF MINICK

"John Donne-Anne Donne-Undone." Fledgling poet John Donne (1572–1631) wrote these words in 1601 after his secret marriage to 16-year-old Anne More was discovered. A young man with promise, Donne was then working as secretary to Sir Thomas Egerton, the wealthy Lord Keeper of the Great Seal of England. Unfortunately for the enthralled Donne, Egerton was also Anne's uncle. Both Egerton and Anne's father, George More, strongly opposed this marriage, refused to grant Anne a dowry, and even had Donne briefly imprisoned.

So much for that promising career. For nearly a decade, the Donnes lived in poverty, supported by friends and sympathizers, and by whatever money Donne could scrape together from his writing and practice of law. Eventually, Anne's father paid the dowry, and Donne's prospects improved.

In 1617, after giving birth to their 12th child, who was stillborn, Anne died, and Donne, who had converted from Catholicism to Anglicanism, became dean of Saint Paul's Cathedral in London, where he became famous for his sermons and devotional meditations. Perhaps most renowned of his prose of this period is a paragraph from Meditation 17, which some moderns have rendered as poetry.

"No man is an island, entire of itself; every man is a piece of the continent, a part of the main; if a clod be washed away by the sea, Europe is the less, as well as if

The funeral effigy of the metaphysical poet John Donne in London's Saint Paul's Cathedral, where he was the dean from 1621 until his death

a promontory were, as well as if a manor of thy friend's or thine own were; any man's death diminishes me, because I am involved in mankind, and therefore never send to know for whom the bell tolls; it tolls for thee."

Week 44, 2019 THE EPOCH TIMES

Donne's poetry was as varied as his fortunes. In his younger years, when he studied law at London's Inns of Court, traveled about Europe, and served with English forces fighting the Spanish at Cadiz, and even after his marriage, Donne devoted himself to love poetry and satire in forms ranging from epigrams to sonnets, from songs to elegies. After his beloved Anne's death, and with his appointment to Saint Paul's, he turned his energy toward religious verse and meditations on the Divine.

Donne's poetry was as varied as his fortunes.

A Metaphysical Poet

Like other metaphysical poets, Donne employed paradox and the use of conceits, unlikely extended metaphors that are intellectually imaginative and emotionally engaging. Here Donne was, and is, a master of this device.

Let's look at two of his best-known poems structured on this idea of conceit or, as it was called in the early Renaissance, "wit." In Holy Sonnets, a collection of 17 poems with religious themes, we find "Batter my heart, three-person'd God."

Batter my heart, three-person'd God,

As yet but knock, breathe, shine, and seek to mend:

That I may rise and stand,

o'erthrow me, and bend Your force to break, blow, burn,

and make me new. I, like an usurp'd town to another due,

Labor to admit you, but oh, to no end; Reason, your viceroy in me,

me should defend,

But is captiv'd, and proves weak or untrue.

Yet dearly I love you, and would be lov'd fain,

But am betroth'd unto your enemy;

Divorce me, untie or break that knot again,

Take me to you, imprison me, for I, Except you enthrall me,

Nor ever chaste, except you ravish me.

never shall be free.

Examine the unusual comparisons Donne constructs in the poem. First, he asks that God assault him, "that I may rise and stand, o'erthrow me." He then compares his soul to a town captured by another, in this case, by evil. With the words "am betroth'd unto your enemy," Donne introduces a final conceit, asking to be freed of this engagement, to be instead imprisoned by the Divine, and even ravished with love. By such powerful and strange images, Donne seeks to waken our sensibilities to sin and repentance, and to the power of the Divine.

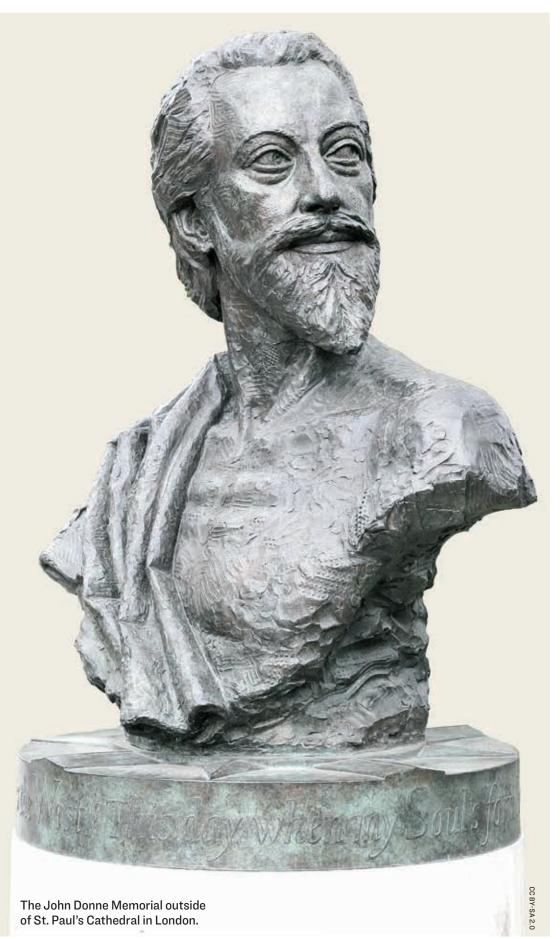
In "Death, be not proud," Donne turns our conventional fear of dying on its head. Death is not a master but a "slave to fate." It dwells with ugly condiments-"poison, war, and sickness" – and has less power of sleep than "poppy or charms." Resurrection strips Death of its powers, and Death itself, ironically, will die.

Death, be not proud, though some have called thee

Mighty and dreadful, for thou art not so; For those whom thou think'st thou

dost overthrow Die not, poor Death, nor yet canst thou kill me.

From rest and sleep, which but thy pictures be, Much pleasure; then from thee



much more must flow, And soonest our best men with thee do go, Rest of their bones, and soul's delivery Thou art slave to fate, chance, kings, and desperate men, And dost with poison, war,

and sickness dwell, And poppy or charms can make us sleep as well And better than thy stroke;

One short sleep past, we wake eternally And death shall be no more; Death, thou shalt die.

why swell'st thou then?

Looking Into the Nature of Things

Though we may take pleasure in reading Donne's poems for their beauty and their lyricism, meaning his poems express strong personal emotions, they also offer other gifts to us: boxed packages which, when unwrapped, may open our eyes and bring us insights into rerum See JeffMinick.com to follow his blog. natura-the nature of things.

This metaphysical poet and some of his contemporaries put the profound questions of existence under the microscope, then tug at our sleeves and invite us to have a look as well. They steer our minds, if just for a short time, away from the busyness of living to contemplate the possible meanings hidden beneath that frenetic activity.

In addition, the metaphysical poets, who are a bridge in time between a world of medieval faith and a new world of "enlightenment," remind us that beyond science, data, polls, and statistics is a kingdom we moderns have forgotten, a different reality. They point us to abstract concepts concealed by our craving for the empirical and our belief that only what we can feel, taste, touch, hear, and

Finally, this idea of conceit itself, radical comparisons offering a sort of gymnasium for the mind, can spark our own employment of metaphor. Do we see ourselves as lions or lambs? Do we compare ourselves metaphorically to Ulysses Grant at Galena, a failure awaiting the summons of a trumpet of glory, or are we Theodore Roosevelt, striving always for excellence at whatever we undertake? Do we equate the Divine with the storms and gentle winds of nature, or find it in

the face of a homeless man or in the bond between mother and infant? By such metaphorical exercises, we deepen our comprehension of the world and of our interior selves.

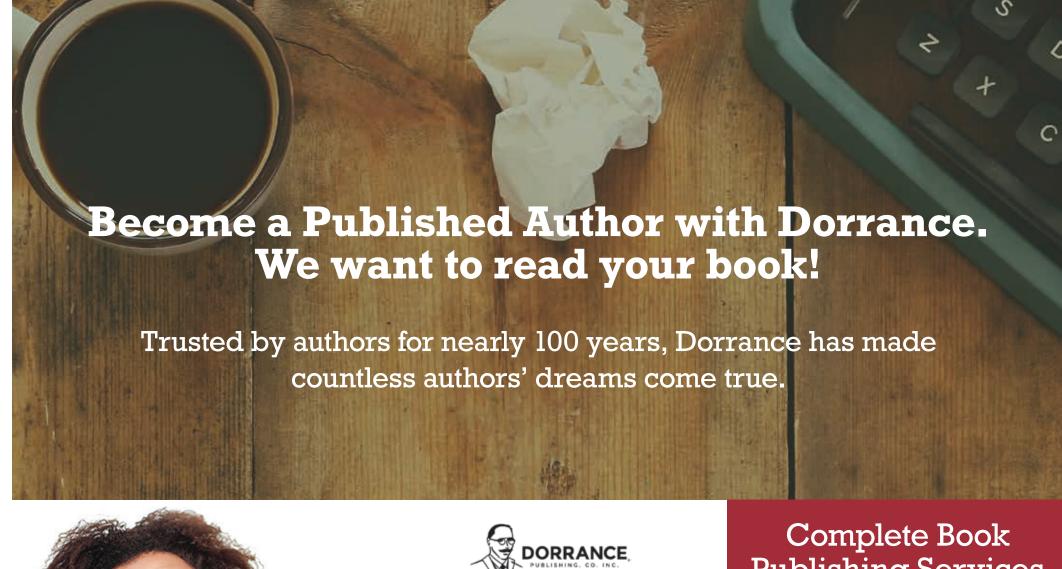
Metaphor artfully employed can also be a powerful incentive to others. It opens doorways, releases emotions, and leads us to hear or see in a different way. Here is a simple and humorous example: Once at a tense moment of play during a soccer game, I heard a homeschool mom, Jill, shout to her son, "Be a nightmare, Sawyer!"

That was effective use of metaphor. That afternoon, Jill and John Donne were shaking hands.

Jeff Minick has four children and a growing platoon of grandchildren. For 20 years, he taught history, literature, and Latin to seminars of homeschooling students in Asheville, N.C., Today, he lives and writes in Front Royal, Va.



Autograph letter from John Donne in Fleet Prison to Sir Thomas Egerton, Feb. 12, 1601/1602. Folger Source call numbers: L.b.526 & L.b.528. Permission of the Folger Shakespeare Library.





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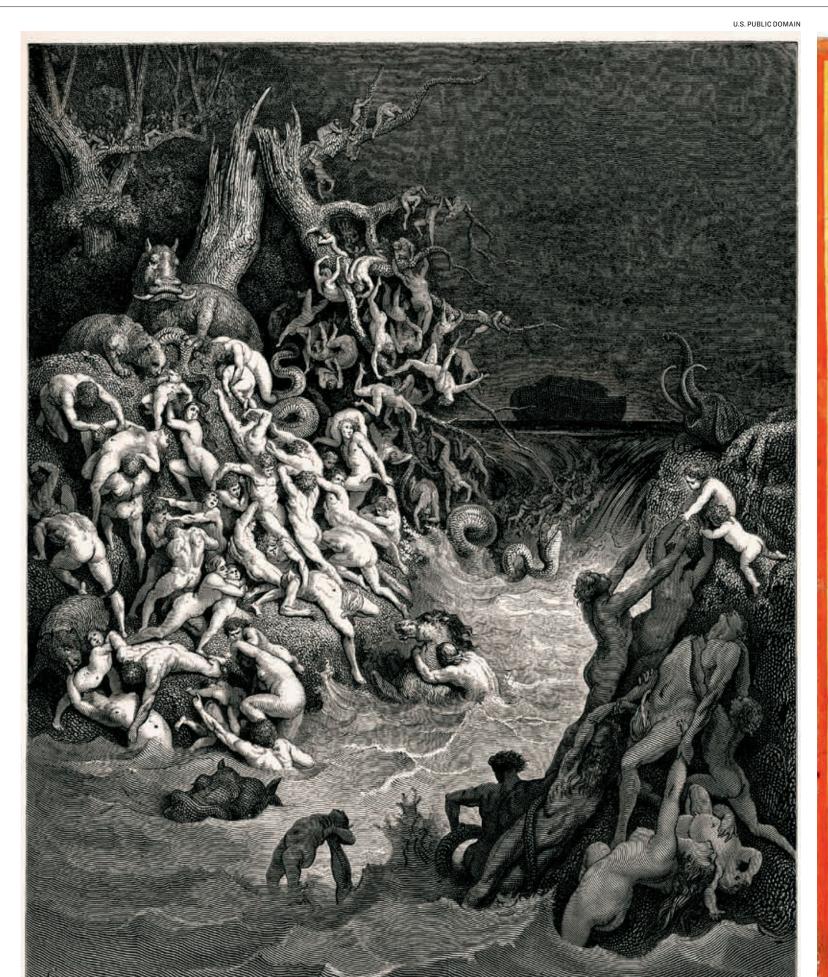
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"Noah's Ark," 17th century, by Theodoros Poulakis after an engraving by J. Sadeler.

"Flood Destroying the World," 1866, Gustave Doré. Engraving.

COMMENTARY

The Great Flood and What It Tells Us

needed, they claim.

the leaders do.

Continued from **Page 13**

Which Flood Story?

What is significant to me is what the popular theologian of the 20th century J.B. Phillips once termed the "ring of truth." This idea is difficult to quantify, but it centers around the idea of plausibility. If we look at the Babylonian myth, for example, in "Epic of Gilgamesh," the Great Flood ends with its hero, Utnapishtim, being rewarded by the gods with immortality.

The story with Noah ends quite differently, for there are some highly discordant notes. First, that he gets drunk, and as a result of it one of his sons, Ham, gets cursed; Noah does live a long time, but he, too, dies eventually-there is no reprieve from death. The contrast, then, is that the Babylonian myth does end like a fairy story, whereas the biblical account seems to contain- as most biblical stories do-a kind of gritty realism that recalls something that actually happened. In the context of a worldwide flood killing virtually everybody, why recall the fact that somebody got drunk afterward? Unless it actually happened, it appears inconsequential. So this "mythical" story is the one we should mine for meaning.

Why, then, is this story more relevant today than virtually any other myth? Two words might point to some sort of answer: Extinction Rebellion. As I write this now, London is being besieged by activists seeking to virtually shut the city down for a fortnight with protests. It claims to have a presence in 72 countries and some 200,000 supporters, including some well-known public figures. And its message is that unless we reverse climate change, billions-if not the whole planet-will die.

How we will die is almost certainly going to be the result of floods and flooding, as the ice caps melt and all that released

warning from Extinction Rebellion and the proclimatechange

scientists really

from the gods

a message

or God?

Is the

Second, the prime agents of this movement are possibly as much motivated by their anti-capitalist agenda, as they are by the impending disaster. Put simply, they want to overturn the governments of the world. Their Declaration of Rebellion states that "The wilful complicity displayed by our government has shattered meaningful democracy and cast aside the common interest in favor of short-term gain and private profits." The rank and file may well not hold these anti-capitalist views, but

What is less understood by the popula-

tion at large, however, is firstly that some

of their extreme claims for this cataclysm

don't believe in the Great Flood, and some

aren't actually founded in science itself.

Which is ironical, since most scientists

don't believe in the next one!

Upsetting the Enlightenment Mindset Setting these points aside, however, what else is important about this myth for

today? The first thing, I think, is truly to realize what its historicity actually means for us now. The nature of the Great Flood and how it happened we cannot tell for certain now, but given its nearly universal acceptance by ancient cultures, that it happened and that most of humanity was wiped out I think we can be sure of.

The thing to understand here is its discontinuity and disruptive nature. Jesus exactly understood this: "In those days which were before the flood they were eating and drinking, they were marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noah entered the ark, and they did not understand." (Matthew 24:38–39). One day, it's all bright and sunny, but the next is total devastation.

We in the West have gotten used to a phi-

water raises the sea level. Radical action is losophy from the Enlightenment, which preaches endless human progress and possibilities that nothing can or will stop. Today this is manifested in the Silicon Valley mindset whereby artificial intelligence (AI) is going to solve all our problems, and whatever problems we have here anyway,

no need to fret as Elon Musk is going to

help us all settle on Mars-as if, of course,

we wouldn't scramble that planet, too! But suddenly, we understand, the idea of the Great Flood and the fear of an upcoming flood upsets the status quo and changes all that. The myth–the facts of the myth-warn us against such complacency, and warn us to walk with humility, not arrogance or hubris, before God or, if we aren't monotheistic, the gods and invisible forces that are above us.

Two Sides, One Coin

Secondly, we need to grasp that Extinction Rebellion and the science of the status quo are really two sides of the same coin, although they appear diametrically opposed. Whereas the latter can only conceive of an existence of plenty that runs on forever, in which science cures cancer, and people live to 150 years old, and so on, the former see that the whole world order needs changing and that this second flood cataclysm needs to be

The latter is hopelessly complacent and smug, the former desperate and earnest. How are they two sides of the same coin? They are two sides of the same coin because at root they both embrace the same philosophy: The "complacents" think nothing and no one can interrupt their "progress," whereas the rebels believe they have the power to prevent the second flood through their own political machinations first and foremost, and possibly with some science second (new greener

technologies). In short, mankind is entirely able to control the situation; both are saying this, one passively, one actively. It seems we will, at all costs, avoid thinking about the will of the gods, or God, if you prefer. Recently, Warren Buffett's friend Charlie Munger captured this sentiment exactly when he said: "A great nation will, in due time, be ruined ... our turn is bound to come. But I don't like thinking about it too much." Yes, we don't

like thinking about it too much. The final thought, then, about the Great Flood that engulfed the world all that time ago is to ask, why? Humans didn't will it or want it, and only one-with his family–anticipated it. Why did God destroy the world? This, too, is a highly unpalatable thought.

In Genesis 6:5, we learn that "the Lord saw that the wickedness of man was great on the earth, and that every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only evil

King Ashurbanipal, from the North Palace at Nineveh, seventh century B.C. The British Museum, London.

The myth of the Great Flood reminds us that we are not in control, and that there is a higher power. continually." My point here isn't to try to institute some facile moral crusade, but to ask, in the age of social media and mass communication on a scale barely conceived of in the past, how do human beings seem to you?

A Lot of It About

There are many, many people doing very good things to help others, but if one takes a snapshot of the world as it is, I think the word "evil" would appropriately describe it. As Pink Floyd commented on being "down and out" in their '70s album "Dark Side of the Moon": "There's a lot of it about!"

Why, as I write this, Turkey has just invaded Syria and attacked the Kurds; doubtless for its own "good" reasons, but the reality seems to be that the world is constantly throwing up aggressions of one sort or another, if not here, then there and elsewhere, too.

In some sense, the Flood myth captures for us now that sense that—as with that other great topic, Armageddon–we can be distracted from our own personal evil and divert all our attention onto the big cause that is the "problem," which at the same time avoids our own responsibility for the state of the world.

For the myth of the Great Flood reminds us that we are not in control, and that there is a higher power, and we are answerable to it. Indeed, it seems as if freedom of the will is of a paramount importance in the spiritual cosmos beyond where we can legitimately probe. Noah warned the earth of what was coming, but they didn't believe him-eating, drinking, and marrying were clearly much more enjoyable than considering the destiny of mankind. They freely chose to ignore the

warnings, and then Noah entered the ark. Where does this leave us? Is the warning from Extinction Rebellion and the pro-climate change scientists really a message from the gods or God, or is it a false prophecy? I don't know, but there is another great myth relevant here: Jonah preached to Nineveh and the city repented, and so God didn't destroy it. The hearts of the leaders and the people turned in a different direction from the evil they had been pursuing. If that were to happen, then perhaps a new and spiritual energy might turn the tide, and instead of some socialistic commune of oligarchs telling us what to do, we might all cooperate as free peoples for the common good. And that just might make the difference.

All biblical quotes are from the New American Standard version of the Bible.

James Sale is an English businessman whose company, Motivational Maps Ltd., operates in 14 countries. He is the author of over 40 books on management and education from major international publishers including Macmillan, Pearson, and Routledge. As a poet, he won First Prize in The Society of Classical Poets' 2017 competition and recently spoke at the group's first symposium held at New York's Princeton Club.



Many who signed our Constitution admired the Republican ideals of the Romans. "Scene at the Signing of the Constitution of the United States," 1940, Howard Chandler Christy. United States Capitol.

The Past Is Never Really Past: America and Rome

Once both Rome and Con-

stantinople, the other half

of the Empire, validated

ter almost any city or town

in America, and you'll find

homes, churches, courthous-

es, and other public build-

ings with Roman mark-

ings. Arches, columns, and

domes-these are a part of our

Roman heritage. In my town

of Front Royal, Virginia, with

a population of about 16,000,

several older homes reflect

Roman architectural styles.

JEFF MINICK

gnorance may be bliss, but it can also be down-President Donald Trump The Washington Examiner reported that during a press conference, Trump had noted historic ties to the ancient city, saying, "The United States and Italy are bound together by a shared cultural and political heritage dating back thousands of years to ancient Rome."

As the Examiner reported, some people, apparently poor readers, tweeted out criticism of Trump's remarks, believing that he thought the United States and ancient Rome had existed side by side. Others displayed their ignorance of history by declaring that ancient Rome and the United States had no connection at all.

many ties to ancient Rome. Let's look at a few of them.

The Founding Fathers

Men like Thomas Jefferson, John Adams, James Madison, and many more were avid students of Roman history and law. John Adams admired the republican ideals of Cicero and read his works throughout his life. His son, John Quincy, declared that Cicero was as essential to him as his limbs.

Men like Jefferson and Madison read historians like Livy and Tacitus, studied Plutarch's "Lives," and sought to emulate statesmen like Cicero, Cato, and Marcus Aurelius. George Washington so admired Cincinnatus, who took the helm of Rome during a crisis and then resisted the offer to become dictator, that Washsame, became known as the "American Cincinnatus."

Senate. They sought to crebased somewhat on the Roman model. They favored a republic, another Roman idea, rather than a democracy. And from their studies of the Eternal City, they realized that the practice of virtue was crucial to the

ideas of natural law-universal laws that exist independently of the positive laws of a particular place or people–are also Greek and Roman in origin. The Romans also deployed such concepts as equality before the law, holding that all Roman citizens, from nobles Latin to commoners, must obey the same laws and face the same consequences if they

failed to do so.

America does, in fact, have

Admired the Romans

ington himself, who did the Religious Faith

Christianity and that faith for centuries became the This fascination with the beating heart of Europe and met with Italian Presi- ancient Romans helped shaped Western Culture. We Following the Roman lead, tion of Christians, but all the framers instituted a too often we forget that Rome became the vehiate a mixed government cle by which Christianity spread throughout the Empire. Walk through Washington, D.C., or for that mat-

> survival of that republic. Like our Constitution, our

From the colonial period until the middle of the 20th century, many secondary schools offered, and many colleges



Washington modeled himself after the great

Men like

Thomas Jefferson,

were avid students

of Roman history

and law.

Roman leader Cincinnatus. who left his plough in the field to fight for Rome and then returned to the field shortly after victory. The statue of Cincinnatus at his plough,

required, the study of Latin. Though English is officially considered a Germanic language, we derive more than half our words from Latin.

Our state mottos are often invented concrete. Some taken from Latin. North Car- of our holidays, including olina's "Esse Quam Videri" Christian ones, match up New York's "Excelsior" parties, Caesar's Palace in "Sic Semper Tyrannis"

John Adams, James Madison, and many more states pay homage to the descendants of

Both law and medicine still use many Latin phrases, and when biologists and other scientists use binomial nomenclature for classifying species, they most often resort to Latin: "Oryctolagus cuniculus" (rabbit), "Quer- ho, Western civ has got to cus virginiana" (Southern live oak), "Homo sapiens" (human beings).

Place Names

Cincinnati, Rome, Georgia, Hannibal, and hundreds of American cities and towns the attack has been ongotake their names from an- ing and devastating. The cient Rome. New York State alone boasts Cicero, Pompey, Marcellus, Scipio, Virgil, and a dozen other towns whose names link them to the land branches and attacked by a of Caesar and Mark Antony.

Bits and Pieces

We use the Julian calendar, first developed during the brief imperium of Julius Caesar and later modified, with the months named after deities, famous Romans, and numbers.

Those numbers, incidentally, used for September from a Rome with a New Year's Day of March 1, and so no longer match our own equation of dates. September, for example, is descended from the Latin "septem," meaning seven. Yet here we are, employing the Roman numbers for our months

to Roman numerals. We owe our ideas of roads, sanitation systems, and city planning to the Romans, who also ("Ever higher"), Virginia's Las Vegas, wedding rings worn on the left hand-these ("Thus always to ty- are just some of the ways we rants"), and 19 other remember ancient Rome. So yes, the United States

More: We frequently resort

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shares a cultural and political heritage with ancient Rome.

That many of our young people are ignorant of this connection should come as no surprise. After all, for the last 40 years, Western culture has existed in a state of siege. From "Hey, hey, ho, go" in the 1980s to our own time, when so many students graduate high school and college abysmally ignorant in the history, art, and culture of the United States and the West in general, roots of our Greco-Roman, Judeo-Christian heritage run deep, but even an oak will fall when stripped of its

mob with hatchets. That old Roman Cicero wrote "To be ignorant of what occurred before you were born is to remain always a child." And a child, as Ralph Waldo Emerson once noted,

"is a curly dimpled lunatic." This ignorance explains much about the lunacy of today's culture and politics.

children and a growing platoon of grandchildren. For 20 years, he taught history, literature, and Latin to seminars of homeschooling students in Asheville, N.C., Today, he lives and writes in Front Royal, Va. See JeffMinick. com to follow his blog.



(L-R) Little Rock (Abigail Breslin), Nevada (Rosario Dawson), Columbus (Jesse Eisenberg), Wichita (Emma Stone), and Tallahassee (Woody Harrelson), in Columbia Pictures' "Zombieland 2: Double Tap."

as in career longevity).

It also checked many Americana boxes.

There were the characters' names-Tallahas-

see, Columbus, Wichita, and Little Rock. Like

James Bond creator Ian Fleming pointed out,

the names of American cities and states, with

"... freight cars bearing names from all over

the States-'Lackawanna,' 'Chesapeake and

Ohio,' 'Lehigh Valley,' 'Seaboard Fruit Ex-

Santa Fe'-names that held all the romance of

the American railroads. 'British Railways?'

thought (James) Bond. He sighed and turned

his thoughts back to the present adventure."

So, thus far, "Zombieland" had going for it 1)

nascent star power, 2) Americana romance of

state and city names, and then 3) there were

the horizon, twinkling with lights in the dusk,

are hugely Americana-ish. "Zombieland" had

some. And zombies. "Zombieland" tapped

into a uniquely American, trick-or-treat-y,

Does "Zombieland 2" recapture the magic?

an Oscar winner, Jesse Eisenberg was Oscar-

nominated for portraying Facebook founder

slin is still with us. It turned out, she had legs.

mystery ... all those unspoken questions have

been answered. Takes a tiny bit of fun out of it.

The original four have now taken up resi-

dence at the White House, which is a sham-

OK, let me stop right here: This is an im-

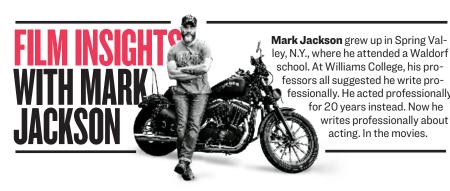
mediate problem. In the original, we had no

carnivalesque, Halloween-ness.

What Do They Do?

not having it.

their numerous Native origins, are exotic:



So-so Monster Mash for Your Halloween Enjoyment

MARK JACKSON

Madison (Zoey Deutch), a Valley girl, joins the zombie-klllers and Columbus (Jesse Eisenberg).

he original 2009 "Zombieland" was an instant cult classic due to not-yetstars Emma Stone and Jesse Eisenberg wafting some Who Are Those Guys? star-power mystique about, and Woody Harrelson smack-dab in his wheelhouse of hilarious hicks, like the one on "Cheers" that kick-started his showbiz career. The fourth cast member, Abigail Breslin, had budding potential that begged the question: Will this child-actor have legs? ("legs"



Director Ruben Fleischer

Woody Harrelson, Emma Stone, Jesse Eisenberg, Zoey Deutch, Rosario Dawson. Luke Wilson, Thomas Middleditch, Avan Jogia

Running Time 1 hour, 39 minutes Release Date

* * * * *****

Tallahassee (Woody Harrelson) and Nevada (Rosario Dawson) meet in Graceland.



bles because the zombie apocalypse is still going strong. And Wichita and Columbus are having a relationship. He proposes to Oct. 18 her using the actual Hope Diamond, which was lying around in the White House. She's

idea Emma Stone would eventually belong to the rarefied club of ginger-screen sirens like Rita Hayworth and Katharine Hepburn. In 2009 we were able to semi-buy her being attracted to über-nerdy Columbus. But

> Anyway, she leaves the White House boyfriend. The girls are soon replaced by Madison (Zoey Deutch). Madison's a pinksweatsuit-wearing Valley girl, who's survived zombies by living in a frozen yogurt store freezer. She bubbles ceaselessly with | I invite you, à la a 1983 Kool & The Gang lyrthe low-brain-wattage effervescence for which her species is known.

> As Deutch (who is "Back to the Future" actress Lea Thompson's daughter) says in a YouTube interview, "I grew up in the Valley, so I've been studying this accent for 24 years." Practice makes perfect–Deutch's ditziness steals the movie out from under | aren't zombies? Oh it's the Zombiepocalypse her co-stars.

But Then Wichita Comes Back

Wichita returns to the White House because Little Rock has taken up with millennial neo-hippie Berkeley (Avan Jogia), who pre-

tends to make up songs, like the lead character in "Yesterday," and carries a giant stash of weed. Since Tallahassee has protective, avuncular feelings for Little Rock, they go looking for her.

They end up in Graceland, because Tallahassee is an Elvis buff. Naturally, scores of zombies are terminated en route, with gatling guns, shotguns, grenade launchers, folding chairs, metal trays, etc. There's a fun press,' and the lilting 'Acheson, Topeka, and bit about how there are now different species of zombie, like one labeled a "Homer," due to exceptional stupidity, and the "T 800," which you have to kill many times for it to stop crawling after you.

also Ferris wheels. Distant Ferris wheels on **Does 'Zombieland 2'** recapture 'Zombieland' magic? Somewhat.

Graceland's in worse shape than the White Somewhat. However, this time Emma Stone is House, but since one of the most Americana things in America is Elvis, there's a Graceland-themed roadhouse, run by Ne-Mark Zuckerberg, and Woody Harrelson was vada (Rosario Dawson). Take a wild guess: likewise nominated for "Three Billboards Will Tallahassee make Nevada feel that her Outside Ebbing, Missouri." And Abigail Bretemperature is risin'?

Then, Albuquerque (Luke Wilson) and So, what once contained an atmosphere of | Flagstaff (Thomas Middleditch) arrive in a monster truck that squashes Tallahassee's monster truck flat. This duo is just like Tallahassee and Columbus.

Alike, in a similar way to how the timehonored success formula for rock bands is pairing a loud-mouthed, spandex-wearing banty rooster lead singer with a taciturn, introverted lead-guitar hero. Meaning that here, the formula that apparently insures survival success in the zombie apocalypse is the pairing of a trash-talking redneck-y alpha male with an über-geek, who spouts

a list of at least 50 safety rules. So the two geeks conspiratorially compare survival rules, while the two alphas have a dispute about the awesomeness of their

Before long, they all arrive at the Disneyfied hippie commune where Little Rock and Berkeley now live. Legions of zombies are headed that way, of course. The mass killing with her little sister, who wants to find a | of the undead that goes on here is kind of inspired. Here's a hint: lemmings.

You Could do Worse in Terms of a Halloween Movie

ic, to go and "Ha-ha-ha-haaave some fun!" Because we're living in the actual zombie apocalypse. What? You think people with their faces sucked down their various smart screens aren't a form of zombie? That the legions of fentanyl, meth, and oxycodone addicts strung out across our great nation alright. Never doubt it for a minute-bwahahahaha! All the dark minions and rotten demons of the underworld are collaborating to waylay our souls and chew our faces off. Beware!

But it's good to laugh at zombies ...

FILM REVIEW

A Satirical Sendup of Societal Ultra-Conformism

IAN KANE

The trailer for Taika Waititi's new satirical war dramedy, "JoJo Rabbit," is gasp-inducing. It features Hitler Youth, knee socks and all, practicing Nazi salutes, war games, ambush techniques, and other martial maneuvers. It also shows a bedraggled Jewish girl secreted in someone's attic. All this accompanied by cheery songs such as "I'm a Believer" by The Monkees—only in German.

Normally, "holocaust" and "comedy" don't go together. There are a few exceptions: Roberto Benigni pulled this combination off with success in the excellent tearjerker "Life Is Beautiful," and filmmaker Ferne Pearlstein explored this unlikely coupling in her fascinating documentary "The Last Laugh."

However, keeping in mind that Waititi wrote and directed the film (based on a novel written by Christine Leunens), I figured that it had more than a fighting chance. After all, he directed one of the more hilarious comedies of the last decade, 2014's "What We Do in the Shadows," which was a horror mockumentary about four vampires sharing a flat together.

A Young Soul at the Crossroads

The titular young protagonist of the film is Jojo (newcomer Roman Griffin Davis), a 10-year-old boy who is enrolled in the Hitler Youth program. At first glance, Jojo is quite enthusiastic (almost overly so) about serving his country and carrying out whatever dastardly deeds the Nazis have planned for him. So committed to the ideals of their regime is Jojo that he has fabricated Adolf Hitler (Taika Waititi himself) as his imaginary personal sidekick and confidant.

The youth camp Jojo is assigned to is presided over by Captain Klenzendorf (Sam Rockwell), an iron-fisted soldier whose stringent policies root out any weak links. Jojo soon discovers that he isn't up to the training's standards and suffers an almost fatal accident that sends him to the hospital. There, he has a talk with his mother (Scarlett Johansson), who encourages him to spend more time at home instead of engaging in the camp's martial training regimens.

Back at home, Jojo soon discovers something else: Elsa (Thomasin McKen-

'Jojo Rabbit'

Director

Taika Waititi
Starring

Roman Griffin Davis, Thomasin McKenzie, Scarlett Johansson

Running Time 1 hour, 48 minutes

Rated PG-13

Release Date Oct. 18, 2019

Director
Waititi skillfully weaves
a tale of how
easy it is for
certain forces
to beguile certain folks into
joining their
conformist
hate groups.



Scarlett Johannson and Roman Griffin Davis in "Jojo Rabbit."



Adolph (Taika Waititi, center, above), the imaginary friend of Jojo (Roman Griffin Davis) in "Jojo Rabbit."

zie, "The King," "Leave No Trace"), a teenage Jewish refugee whom his mother has stealthily secreted in the house. Elsa's bargaining chip with Jojo is that if he alerts the authorities to her presence, not only will she perish, but his family will as well.

Her ploy works, and in between the usual talks with ol' Adolf, Jojo begins to spend more and more time with Elsa. Over the course of his visits with her, Jojo sees her as less of a threat and more as the gracious and good-natured though utterly frightened person she is. And his preconceived notions of Jews, in general, begin to erode.

Once Jojo comes to peace with the idea of sharing his family's home with Elsa, and as Germany begins to lose its ground against the Allies, the film takes on a more serious, dramatic tone. The film's comedic moments are mostly replaced by grittier, thought-provoking

scenes, as Waititi reminds moviegoers about the high cost of mindless bigotry and having blind faith in the wrong ideals.

Excellent All Around

The film's casting is superb, with the standouts being the two younger actors. Davis is excellent as the young Jojo, who convincingly portrays a child's shift from becoming a potential mass murderer to blossoming into one who questions the "Bizarro World" status quo, along with its fake news.

Likewise, McKenzie lends some emotional depth along with a gentle, yet sly, comedic touch to the proceedings. Despite the extreme adversity that her character has endured, she still offers up a relatively cheerful disposition. She even has the wherewithal to systematically dismantle the racial prejudices that Jojo was taught.

Not surprisingly in this sort of over-the-top satire,

all of the Nazi characters are over-exaggerated cardboard cutouts. From being totally convinced that all of the fake news being fed to them is indeed real, to trying to outdo one another in their Nazi salutes, there are some clever modern-day parallels that deserve more than passing guffaws. After all, we live in an age when unquestioning ultra-conformists devour Big Media drivel as sacrosanct insights.

"Jojo Rabbit" is a superb film. Waititiskillfully weaves a tale of how easy it is for certain forces to beguile certain folks into joining their conformist hate groups. Remember, the ones usually babbling about things such as "hate speech" and casually labeling others as "racists" are usually projecting themselves onto others.

Ian Kane is a filmmaker and author based out of Los Angeles. To see more, visit DreamFlightEnt.com



