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For Lincoln, Thanksgiving was always intended as a day of national self-reflection—on both the blessings, and the curses, of life.

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"Landing of the Pilgrims on Plymouth Rock, 1620," engraving by Joseph Andrews, circa 1869.

HISTORY

America's First Wall

With Thanksgiving approaching, it's a good time to recall the nation's first wall, built by the Pilgrims

CON CHAPMAN

Appeals to history that address issues in the present are often aspirational and unsupported, and for good reason. If one can foreclose discussion of a current topic by citing an abridged version of the past, the argument is won in the short term by forcing adversaries to scurry off to check original sources.

Such is the power of the "That's not who we are" gambit. Cherry-pick an idyllic fruit from the nation's history tree, and the counterargument is made to appear not just wrong, but heartless.

The "that's not who we are" riposte has been used to push the notion that the United States shouldn't defend its borders with walls because we are a nation of immigrants. A little research reveals that there's nothing more American than a wall, and with Thanksgiving approaching, it's a good time to recall the nation's first wall, built by the nation's first immigrants.

In December 1621, the Pilgrims in Plymouth, Massachusetts, who had survived their first terrible winter here were made fearful of attack by an ominous message received from the Narragansett tribe—a bundle of arrows wrapped in a snakeskin.

Myles Standish, the military leader of the colony who had been trained in engineering at the University of Leiden, designed and organized the construction of an eight-foot-high wooden palisade wall to protect the Pilgrims' settlement. The task wouldn't be easy; the wall would need to be more than half a mile in length, and hundreds of trees had to be chopped down, stripped of branches, and set deep into the ground to build it. There

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were fewer than 50 men to do the work, and they had been living on starvation rations.

Still, they got it done, as we say today. The Pilgrims—who came to America for religious reasons—counterintuitively worked to build the wall on Christmas Day, while more recently-arrived "strangers," who didn't share the fiercely-held religious beliefs of the first settlers, celebrated by playing a cricket-like game in the streets, the colonial equivalent of males who play intra-family touch football games on Thanksgiving Day while the womenfolk do all the work.

The wall the Pilgrims built wasn't a simple us-versus-them measure designed to protect English settlers from indigenous peoples. The Pilgrims had previously formed an alliance with the Pokanokets; and Squanto, who served as their interpreter and ambassador without portfolio to the natives, was a member of the Patuxet tribe. The political landscape of the New World thus resembled the Balkans or the current-day Middle East more than the Great Wall of China, and there was no binary animus based on color involved in the Pilgrims' decision to exercise every people's right to self-defense, self-preservation, and perpetuation.

But, the rebuttal comes, what about the inspirational words of Emma Lazarus's 1883 work "The New Colossus" that appear on the pedestal of the Statue of Liberty? America, the poem asserts, invites the world to send it "your tired, your poor, Your huddled masses yearning to breathe free, The wretched refuse of your teeming shore."

It is not churlish to point out that Lazarus was a poet, not an elected representative of anyone. More importantly, the scheme of American immigration laws at the time she wrote was vastly different from today's: Black

immigrants couldn't become naturalized citizens until 1870, and Asians were ineligible for naturalization until 1943, so reforms were in order. But even if those racial taints were corrected, there remains a core set of principles that the United States isn't alone in enforcing as conditions of entry; those with poor health, low levels of education, mental health problems, and infectious diseases were excluded by federal law.

Moreover, the specific inspiration for Lazarus's poem was the plight of Jews fleeing Russian pogroms, not immigrants generally, or those who wanted to leave their countries of origin because of poor economic conditions. Would the same progressives who invoke her to support open borders drop her if they knew that she was a Zionist avant la lettre, arguing for the creation of a Jewish homeland 13 years before Theodor Herzl?

It is also fair to note that Lazarus could be wrong about public policy issues that she addressed in less stirring fashion. She was a sucker for Henry George's land value tax, a panacea that attracted monomaniacal followers but failed to gain wide acceptance around the world, even though it was touted by supporters as "the perfect tax" that would eliminate the need for all others. Lazarus wrote a poem about it named after George's book "Progress and Poverty," surely the only instance of a tax proposal that inspired iambic pentameter.

A healthy skepticism is thus in order when the words "That's not who we are" are heard. It may be that the speaker doesn't really know who we are.

Con Chapman is the author of "Rabbit's Blues: The Life and Music of Johnny Hodges" (Oxford University Press).

Helping Veterans Develop Business Skills as Entrepreneurs

NEW YORK—Every year, about 250,000 U.S. military members leave the service and enter the workforce, and one in five tries to start their own business.

While the military focuses on leadership development, entrepreneurship isn't a top priority, says Gen. John W. Nicholson Jr., a retired four-star general who last commanded U.S. Forces in Afghanistan and NATO's Resolute Support mission.

Nicholson, who now serves as the president of the PenFed Foundation, a Washington, D.C.-based non-profit, talks about the value of providing seed capital to veterans who want to become entrepreneurs.

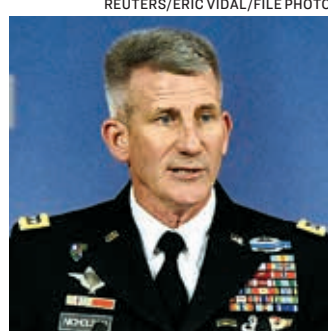
Q: Why do military veter-

ans need help launching businesses?

A: Age is one thing. If someone enters the military straight out of high school and serves for a 20-year career, they could be as young as 38 or 39 when they retire. Many service members leave in their 30s.

You are typically getting a young man or woman with leadership experience. They are physically fit. They are problem solvers. They have worked with adversity. These are people who have dealt with complex and dangerous tasks in tough conditions.

They bring a lot of good qualities to the table: leadership, drive, energy, and quiet often, great ideas. What they don't have is financial acumen and capital. They are not used



Gen. John W. Nicholson Jr. (Ret.), president of the PenFed Foundation.

to translating a good idea into a business plan.

Q: How does PenFed's Veteran Entrepreneur Investment Program work?

A: We provide the seed capital to help veterans build and grow their businesses. We work with them every step of the way, from the idea stage to the point where it can be

translated into a feasible plan as well as an investment for us.

Our goal is to select about 20 companies per year for a one-year period to help incubate them and get started. At the end, we select a handful and give loans of up to \$300,000 for their businesses. Then they repay the loan, and we reinvest the money in another veteran entrepreneur's business.

Q: Are certain industries better for veterans?

A: When we think of the military, we think of someone pulling a trigger, flying a jet or firing a missile. The truth is that 85 percent of military jobs are in support function roles, such as cybersecurity, human resources or logistics. The

trigger pullers are in the minority.

We have helped veterans launch businesses in many different kinds of industries, including technology and even food. One example is Abe Kamarck, a former Navy pilot, who started True Made Foods. His kids liked barbecue sauce and ketchup, but the products were loaded with sugar. He read the labels and endeavored to make a product with natural ingredients his own children would eat. We invested early, and now he is distributing nationwide.

Q: Veterans are 30 percent more likely to employ other veterans, according to your website. Why is that?

A: There is a shared culture and shared values within

the veteran community. We all serve. Hard work and a focus on others are at the center of it. Veterans also know that when it comes to problems, they have the stamina and will to push through.

Q: How much financial experience do most veterans have?

A: Not enough. The no. 1 stressor for the majority of military members after combat is money. Military families generally live close to their means. They endure separations from loved ones, and they often move around a lot. More than half are married, and they are raising young families.

By Lauren Young
From Reuters

JOSHUA CHARLES

Thanksgiving is one of the "high holidays" of American civil life. While proclamations of national days of thanksgiving go back to George Washington, the holiday didn't become an official feature of the American calendar until, in 1863, President Abraham Lincoln declared that it would fall on "the last Thursday of November" on an annual basis.

But most people don't realize that for Lincoln, the issuing of the Thanksgiving proclamation represented a spiritual development and catharsis in his own life.

While Thanksgiving has always been imbued with an implicit acknowledgment of the Divine, what made its birth during the Civil War particularly poignant was Lincoln's emphasis on national repentance. For most of his life, Lincoln's religious beliefs went from a tacit materialism in his youth, to a robust theism in his adulthood. He was never a member of a church, and because of this, his political opponents frequently tried to paint him as irreligious. Lincoln vigorously denied this, and his speeches throughout his life are replete with biblical allusions and references to God.

As the Civil War progressed, Lincoln became more and more imbued with a sense of divine impulse. At the beginning of the war, he made quite clear that destroying slavery was not his ultimate object—preserving the Union was. But as a war everyone expected to last a few weeks or months dragged on for years, Lincoln grappled ever more deeply with what was ultimately at stake. He grew to realize that it was ultimately about slavery, a sin for which God himself, Lincoln believed, was punishing the youthful nation.

Within this context came Lincoln's Thanksgiving Proclamation in October 1863. In its first paragraph, Lincoln emphasized the importance of thankfulness to God:

"The year that is drawing toward its close has been filled with the blessings of fruitful fields and healthful skies. To these bounties, which are so constantly enjoyed that we are prone to forget the source from which they come, others have been added which are of so extraordinary a nature that they cannot fail to penetrate and soften even the heart which is habitually insensible to the ever-watchful providence of Almighty God."

Lincoln went on to enumerate various economic blessings the nation had enjoyed, even amid the maelstrom of war. His conclusion was profound:

"No human counsel hath devised nor hath any mortal hand worked out these great things. They are the gracious gifts of the Most High God, who, while dealing with us in anger for our sins, hath nevertheless remembered mercy."

This appears to be the very first time that Lincoln ascribes the Civil War to the nation's sins, which many would have understood to be a reference to slavery. Few Americans would have wholeheartedly endorsed, let alone appreciated Lincoln's words at the time. Their family members were dying. They wanted the war over, not to be reminded that it was going on because of national sins. From this foundation, Lincoln proceeded to establish what would become a preeminently American holiday:

"It has seemed to me fit and proper that they should be solemnly, reverently, and gratefully acknowledged, as with one heart and one voice, by the whole American people. I do therefore invite my fellow-citizens in every part of the United States, and also those who are at sea and those who are sojourning in foreign lands, to set apart and observe the last Thursday of November next as a day of thanksgiving and praise to our beneficent Father who dwelleth in the heavens. And I recommend to them that while offering up the ascriptions justly due to Him for such singular deliverances and blessings they do also, with humble penitence for our national perverseness and disobedience, commend to His tender care all those who have become widows, orphans, mourners, or sufferers in the lamentable civil strife in which we are unavoidably engaged, and fervently implore the interposition of the Almighty hand to heal the wounds of the nation and to restore it, as soon as may be consistent with the divine purposes, to the full enjoyment of peace, harmony, tranquility, and union."

It is scarcely conceivable that a modern politician, let alone in the midst of a monumental national crisis, would ever refer to "our national perverseness and disobedience." And yet that is precisely what Lincoln did. Alongside gratitude and thanksgiving, he called for humility and repentance. For Lincoln, Thanksgiving was always intended as a day of national self-reflection—on both the blessings, and the curses, of life; on both

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Thanksgiving and the Religious Awakening of Abraham Lincoln

For Lincoln, Thanksgiving was always intended as a day of national self-reflection—on both the blessings, and the curses, of life; on both the things we enjoy, as well as those matters which require repentance.

the things we enjoy, as well as those matters which require repentance. One gets the sense that the paradox of a man celebrating while in sackcloth and ashes would have been a decent approximation of what Lincoln was aiming for—a humble gratitude, well aware that what we have is despite our sins.

For Lincoln, a decisive change had occurred. God was at work, but neither strictly for the Union or the Confederates, he believed. He was at work to destroy slavery, and in the process, exact an atonement from the American nation that had tolerated it. In this sense, God had no "side." For Lincoln, no attitude so captured this reality as both profound gratitude for the continued survival of the country, as well as deferential humility given what it had yet to endure. It all culminated with his second inaugural address, which remains, to this day, arguably the most profound and insightful theological disquisition of any American president. Far from fully endorsing the Union side, or castigating the South, Lincoln instead tacitly put the blame for slavery on the whole nation, and boldly declared that the God to whom both sides prayed had His own purposes to achieve:

"Yet, if God wills that it continue, until all the wealth piled by the bond-man's two hundred and fifty years of unrequited toil shall be sunk, and until every drop of blood drawn with the lash shall be paid by another drawn with the sword, as was said three thousand years ago, so still it must be said 'the judgments of the Lord are true and righteous altogether.'" [Psalm 19:9]

This remarkable background of the Thanksgiving holiday arouses my rever-

ence and gratitude for those ancestors who fought, bled, and ultimately secured my freedom, and the freedom of so many others. We can take a slavery-less country for granted because of them. In that fight, they were up against an institution that had survived in one form or another for thousands of years, in every nation on earth. But they determined to finally accept the chastisement of the Almighty, and extinguish it. I didn't pay the cost for that, and neither did you. It was paid for us by ancestors who had to grapple with what remains, to this day, not only America's most lethal war, but a war that was more lethal than all its other wars combined. We are its beneficiaries. We take many good things for granted precisely because they were secured by those who could not. For that, as for so many other things, I am, on this Thanksgiving, filled with gratitude and humility, just as Lincoln hoped we would be.

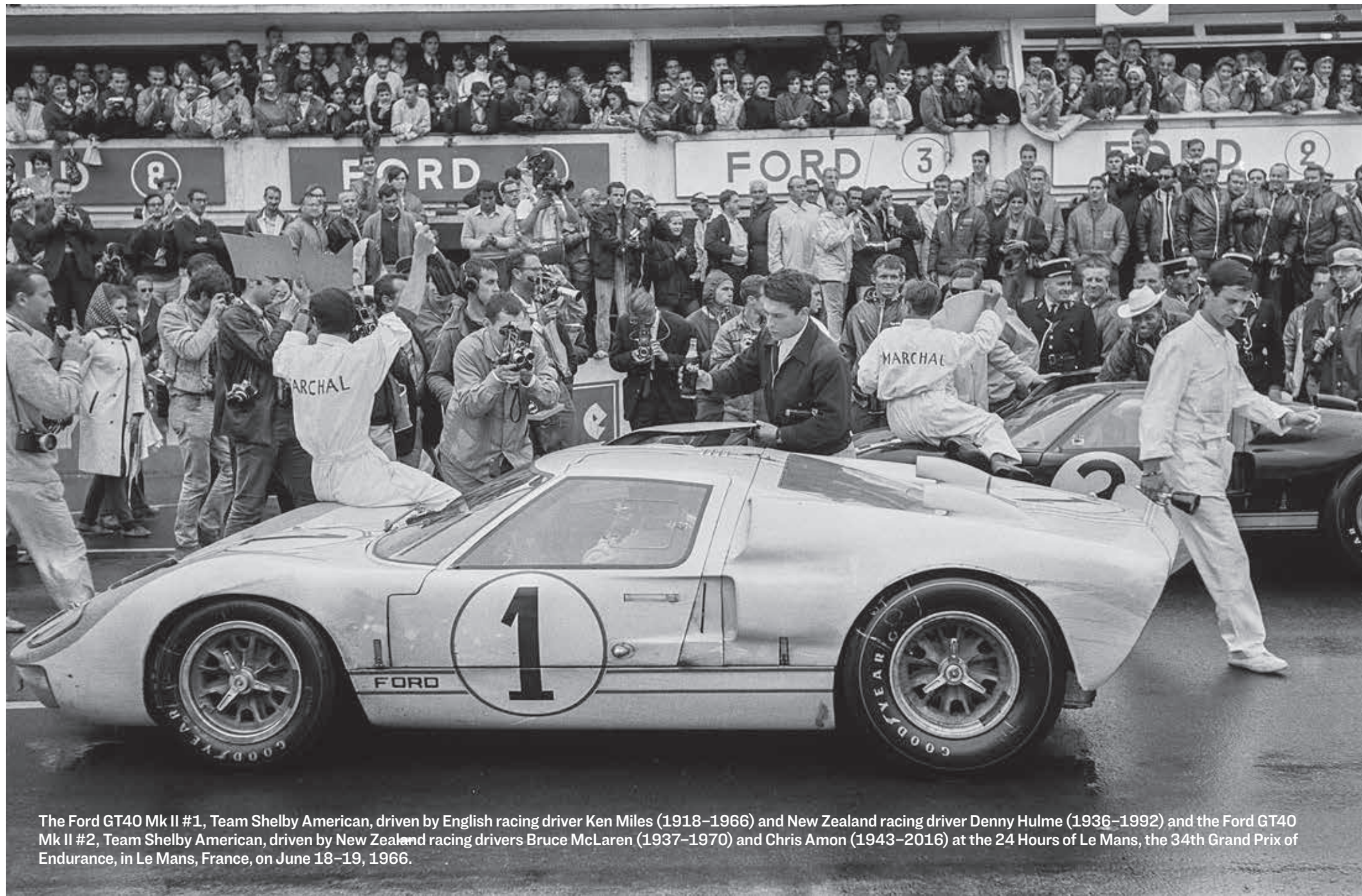
I hope that we, like Lincoln, might be led to ponder what may be the sins of our time—the things that we ourselves need to repent of in the midst of our blessings. That was Lincoln's attitude: penitential gratitude.

May we imitate the savior of our Union this Thanksgiving.

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A portrait of Abraham Lincoln by George Peter Alexander Healy, 1869.

REG LANCASTER/DAILY EXPRESS/HULTON ARCHIVE/GETTY IMAGES



The Ford GT40 Mk II #1, Team Shelby American, driven by English racing driver Ken Miles (1918–1966) and New Zealand racing driver Denny Hulme (1936–1992) and the Ford GT40 Mk II #2, Team Shelby American, driven by New Zealand racing drivers Bruce McLaren (1937–1970) and Chris Amon (1943–2016) at the 24 Hours of Le Mans, the 34th Grand Prix of Endurance, in Le Mans, France, on June 18–19, 1966.

AGENCE FRANCE PRESSE/GETTY IMAGES



Drivers run to their cars at the 24 Hours Le Mans Auto race, France, on June 18, 1966.

When Ford Fights Ferrari, We All Win

You don't need to be a die-hard gearhead to appreciate what goes into, and comes out of, racing

JEN MAFFESSANTI

If you weren't planning on seeing "Ford v. Ferrari," which came out on Nov. 15, I'd recommend changing your mind. Based on the real-life story of the Ford-Ferrari feud of the 1960s, as told in the nonfiction book "Go Like Hell," it manages to capture the spectacle and thrill of a 24-hour endurance race as well as the competitive spirit and insatiable drive necessary to even think that doing something that patently bonkers might be a good idea.

But you don't need to be a die-hard gearhead to appreciate what goes into, and comes out of, racing.

It's said that racing betters the breed. This means that the engineering that goes into making a fast, efficient, reliable, and safe race car generally ends up in the production cars you see on the road every day. Indeed, basic features that we take for granted in our daily drivers like disc brakes and rear-view mirrors appeared on race cars years before they ever made it onto the street. Even anti-lock braking systems on cars began on the race track.

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But racing has improved more than just driver safety. Huge gains have been made in fuel efficiency and overall vehicle durability, too.

Speed Matters

In a race, of course speed matters, but is it really all that important at the margins? Half a mile an hour slower over the course of a regular daily drive doesn't make any real difference, but in a race, it definitely does.

The 24-hour endurance race at Le Mans that's featured so heavily in "Ford v. Ferrari" is a perfect example. When the winning team is averaging 140 miles per hour (mph) the entire time but your team is averaging 139.5, by the end of the race, not only are you not in the top spot, you're 12 miles behind them. Forget the lead position, you're not even on the lead lap.

Since it's an event constrained by time, not the number of laps, the exact distance covered during the race varies from year to year based on weather conditions and how many yellow flags are thrown, but it's generally somewhere upward of 3,000 miles, 85 percent of which is at full throttle. That's like driving from Miami to San Francisco. It means tens of thousands of gear changes and thousands of braking points.

The event began as a way to showcase the reliability of manufacturers' cars, and that's still the case, but as time goes on, the racing style has shifted from being more like a marathon to being more like a 24-hour sprint: all-out, all the time. It's incredibly

demanding on the equipment (not to mention the drivers).

Big-name manufacturers like Porsche, Audi, Ford, Chevy, and Toyota sink millions of dollars and thousands of man-hours into research, development, and testing in order to be competitive in these races. That's a huge investment. So what are they getting out of it? And how does that improve things for the rest of us?

Fuel Efficiency

We all know that racing is about going fast, and nothing slows a car down during races, so they can manage those green-flag racing more than taking a pit stop. The less time you spend in the pits, the faster you can finish your race (or, in the case of timed events, not distance-limited events, the farther you can go). When you're only stopping for tires and not fuel, you can get beauties like this world record-breaking stop that the Red Bull Racing Team managed this year.

Granted, Formula 1 (F1) cars don't refuel during races, so they can manage those blistering pit stop times. But for cars like what you'd find at the 24 Hours of Le Mans, the rulebook strictly limits not only the size of the fuel tank but also the maximum amount of fuel the engine can use at any given time, as do many racing series these days. Since refueling the car takes longer than changing the tires (the two most common pit stop actions), the less you need to refuel the car, the faster your average speed. Improving an engine's fuel efficiency isn't

terribly complicated, but improving fuel efficiency while maintaining or increasing power is.

Ford's EcoBoost engines were developed, in part, with the help of Chip Ganassi Racing (a sports car racing team) before they became a factory Ford team. The combination of a smaller displacement engine with direct fuel injection and a turbocharger allows it to blend improved performance with improved fuel economy. You can even buy Ford's least expensive car, the Fiesta, with this technology right now.

Looking to the future, the F1 racing series is at the bleeding edge of squeezing more of the available energy out of the fuel their engines consume. This is called an engine's thermal efficiency, and the Mercedes F1 team made history in 2017 when they surpassed 50 percent thermal efficiency in their turbocharged V6 F1 motor. For reference, only five years before, F1 engines were peaking at about 29 percent thermal efficiency. Already, Hyundai has announced that it intends for its Smart Stream powertrains to meet the benchmark of 50 percent thermal efficiency and be in widespread use by 2022.

Further ahead, F1 has just announced its intention for the entire racing series, including the road and air transportation of staff and equipment, to be carbon neutral by 2030. It's not clear right now how they intend to manage it, but if anyone can, I'd bet it would be the wizard-engineers that work on Formula 1.

Durability

Any part failure during a race can mean precious minutes, or even hours, in the pits or garage getting it fixed, all while your competitors are still out on track getting further and further ahead, so durability is vital to race success. Endurance races like Le Mans are especially brutal on equipment. For example, there are two places in particular at Le Mans where cars have to go from more than 200 mph to less than 80 mph in order to make their turns safely, so those brakes better not fail.

The brakes on race cars do get changed during endurance races, though, which was an important plot point in "Ford v. Ferrari." The Ford team in 1966 pioneered changing the entire brake assembly as a unit during the race. These days, the process has changed more in execution than principle. Check out this incredible pit stop the Corvette Racing team pulled off at Le Mans this year. Four fresh tires, fresh front brakes, fresh driver, and a full load of fuel in less than 40 seconds.

Improved durability and reliability aren't particularly sexy. After all, nobody tweets about how their car engine didn't blow up today. But the durability of individual parts and the reliability overall of cars have im-

proved over the years, thanks in part to the development done by racing teams. Today's cars, despite dramatic increases in the use of complicated electrical systems and other historically finicky parts like automatic transmissions, are more reliable than ever.

The less your car needs repairs, the less money you spend on it. And for manufacturers, a reputation for reliability can translate into a better bottom line. The manufacturers of the five most common cars in America—Honda (via their luxury brand Acura), Chevrolet, Nissan, and Toyota—have all won not just endurance races but class championships within the last five years.

Racing Is for Everyone

I love auto racing, especially endurance racing. The first professional race I ever went to was the Rolex 24 Hour at Daytona and, clearly, it made quite the impression. But I also understand watching racing isn't for everyone. Not everyone enjoys the noise of an engine at full throttle, the scent of race fuel exhaust, the feel of the wind as prototypes whip past you at 180 mph on the front straight.

But racing is for everyone. The gains made on the racetrack improve everyone's lives.

Even if you don't own a car yourself, you've certainly ridden in one. Cars are safer, more reliable, and more fuel-efficient than ever before in part because of the R&D investment made by manufacturers to be competitive on the racetrack.

Prototyping anything is incredibly expensive, but it's how we create new and better things. Of course, without the element of competition, there wouldn't be as much incentive to push the limits as fast as possible, which is why race teams and the suppliers of their parts tend to be out on the far leading edge of experimental breakthrough technology. The investment is worth it to these manufacturers because it translates to increased sales. And consumers can be confident in their purchases because companies have put their products through some of the most grueling tests available: racecourses.

So the next time you slam on your brakes, pass some slowpoke on the road, or even just glance in your rearview mirror, practice a little gratitude for auto racing and the spirit of competition. And maybe catch a race at the track next season. While only one car will take the checkered flag, we all end up winning.

Jen Maffessanti is a senior associate editor at the Foundation for Economic Education and mother of two. When she's not advocating for liberty or chasing kids, she can usually be found cooking or maybe racing cars. Check out her website at www.JenMaffessanti.com. This article was originally published on FEE.org

From Race Car Driver to Author

When the danger of the sport caught up with him, John Warner IV delved into cars and history—as a writer

ANDREW THOMAS

John Warner IV grew up with very influential parents. His father was the secretary of the Navy and a U.S. senator. His mother was from the Mellon family, and his stepmother was actress Elizabeth Taylor.

From an early age, he had a fascination with cars and ultimately became a professional race car driver. However, a series of accidents would lead him to transition from racing to writing.

Warner grew up in Washington, and he would often do his homework at the Pentagon while his father worked. His father took Warner all over the world while he was the secretary of the Navy, and he was exposed to heads of states,

admirals, and generals. From an early age, he learned how the world worked at the highest levels of government.

After his father married Elizabeth Taylor, their family was in the eyes of the media constantly. For Warner, the scrutiny was difficult.

"School was tough for me. I got beat up a lot. It's the kind of attention a young teenage boy who struggles with academics and school, you don't want that,"



John Warner IV developed an interest in cars at a young age; his mother taught him to drive when he was 12.

PHOTO BY JOSUE BERNAL

Warner told The Epoch Times.

Race Car Driver

There was a very prominent car culture when he was growing up in the 1960s and 1970s, and Warner would build model cars and race tracks. As his mother taught him how to drive when he was 12, Warner developed a profound interest in cars at an early age, and was always intrigued by the mechanical details.

While attending the University of Virginia, he decided that he wanted a fast car. He had saved up some money from his summer job and asked his father to help him with a loan.

Warner purchased a bright-green Ford Pantera in Charlottesville, and one day, took his father for a ride. The two were driving on a back road, and Warner pushed the car to 140 miles per hour.

His father suggested he get some professional driving lessons, and a nascent passion for racing was stoked.

"I didn't want to be another stupid kid in a fast car, and didn't know how to drive it properly," Warner explained.

His father had always told him that he could do anything he

wanted in life, so if he was going to do something, he should do it well and to the fullest.

While learning how to drive in racing school, Warner became hooked on the sport. There was a class of 25, and the instructor informed the students that many of them would quit. After a couple of months, there were only six students left as race season began.

How to Race

Warner learned quickly that racing was entirely different from street driving. He had to essentially relearn how to drive, and unlearn bad habits that he'd picked up from street driving.

He had to learn to keep his foot on the gas while his brain was telling him to hit the brakes, and how to

calculate a variety of factors constantly. He learned how rain and temperature affected the grip of his tires, how to listen to the gearbox and the engine to make sure the car was running properly, and how to calculate oil pressure, all while working the radio.

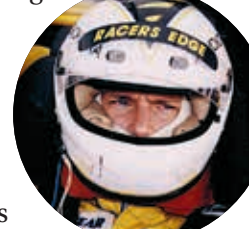
"It's not just raw courage. You're living life at 100 percent. Most people go through life at 40 or 50 percent. It's just the way it is. Racing is one of those things like mountain climbing or another dangerous sport, where you're really living 100 percent. You're using every scrap of your intellect, your courage, and your higher thinking," Warner explained.

Death was always an option if he made a mistake, and the prospect of being killed allowed him to develop a concentrated focus,

while breathing and trying to relax.

In 1995, Warner started racing professionally full time. Contrary to popular belief, race car driving isn't a glamorous lifestyle. The pay is low, and a race lasts an entire week. He would practice during the week, qualify on Saturday, and race on Sundays.

Warner would wake up in a motel somewhere, wondering if he was in Florida or California. Racing did have its perks though. He had the opportunity to race against Paul Newman and Dale Earnhardt, and compete with some of the best drivers in the world.



John Warner IV started racing professionally full-time in 1995.

PHOTO BY JOSUE BERNAL

The Crash and Writing

In 2001, the danger of the sport caught up with him. During a practice run, Warner crashed backward into a wall at high speed. At the hospital, doctors told him that many of his spinal discs had a lot of wear and tear. After a couple more accidents, his back began to hurt more. After three surgeries, his racing career had come to an end.

While he was recovering, a good friend suggested that he buy a laptop and begin to write. He had written in high school, and the friend had liked his work. After two years of practicing and writing short stories, he started working

on a historical novel series, titled "Little Anton."

With an interest in both cars and history, Warner wanted to write about the technological innovations of the 1930s and 1940s and espionage. Furthermore, he wanted to write about how notable leaders took advantage of these technological advancements in the World War II era.

According to Warner, the novel tells the story of engineer and professor Dr. Ferdinand Porsche while Adolf Hitler is rising to power. Hitler ultimately asks Porsche to develop race cars and military hardware, and other engineers are drawn into the regime's ambitions.

Warner also describes the book as a love story between a British aristocrat named Lady Beatrice Sunderland and a Bavarian racing

driver named Lutz Becker. Sunderland becomes a spy and goes on a mission to gather intelligence on German armaments, while Becker drives for Porsche, and competes in the international Grand Prix, which becomes part of the Nazis' propaganda campaign.

Warner is currently working on the sequel to "Little Anton," titled "Lion, Tiger, Bear." While his writing career started late, you could say he was destined to become a writer. Ten years ago, as he was starting to write professionally, he asked his mother when he learned how to read and write. She said she taught him how to read and write at age 2. Astounded, he asked her why.

"You asked me to," Warner recalled her saying. "And that floored me," Warner said.

Great Books, Timeless Questions

Eva Brann on happiness and learning

CATHERINE YANG

It was Homer who drew Eva Brann into the classics for the first time, and now, even after more than 60 years of studying the poet every year, Brann is still brimming with enthusiasm.

“The Iliad” and “The Odyssey” are the first things our students read, and we’ve just finished “The Odyssey,” Brann said, latching onto the topic immediately with highlights from one seminar class discussion. “I asked, ‘At what moment does Penelope recognize Odysseus?’ People have various opinions and it became a very interesting conversation. I have my own opinion about it—I think that she recognizes him even before he enters the palace. You may remember that the old dog recognizes him, there’s an old dog called Argus who recognizes Odysseus is there in the getup of a beggar and behaving as if he was a cripple.”

“Well he speaks, she can hear things, she’s upstairs. I think the moment she hears his voice, she knows. First of all because in a happy marriage wives and husbands don’t lose sight of each other just because they haven’t seen each other for two decades. And because she’s said many indications that something’s about to happen,” Brann said.

Others pointed to various other parts of the text as the moment of recognition, including fairly late in the story in which Odysseus gets angry when Penelope tells him she’s cut loose the marriage bed.

“I think that’s a sign to her that he’s her husband—which is a different kind of thing,” Brann said.

I asked when she made up her mind about this point, and if the discussions ever change her mind.

“Oh, often I change my opinion,” Brann said.

St. John’s College is perhaps an unusual place of higher learning among universities today. “Radical,” Brann calls it. Among the many things it may boast, it is, she says, “never boring.” Brann, having taught there for more than 60 years, is certainly never bored. Rarely does she see a student disengaged. How many places of learning can claim that?

Founded in Annapolis in 1696, it is the

third-oldest college in America. It has since opened a second campus in Santa Fe, New Mexico. With no departments, no majors, and no professors (they are instead “tutors,” guardians of knowledge, rather than instructors professing knowledge), St. John’s instead relies on the Great Books program as its curriculum, and embraces liberal arts education in the traditional sense.

Brann came to St. John’s herself by a happy twist of fate, and from her first moment on campus, she never wanted to leave.

“I was drunk with expectation and joy,” Brann said. “It was absolutely wonderful. I knew I’d found my home.”

Discovering Education

Brann’s introduction to Enlightenment philosophy was early, starting around age 6 or 7, during Sunday walks in the park with her father. Brann’s father, a physician, was interested in philosophy and would explain, in simple terms to Brann, what he’d been studying. Kant became an early friend.

Brann says, as such, she has likely always thought of herself as a teacher, passing on what she’d learned to her younger brother. “I’d lecture him about things,” she said.

Brann was born in 1929 to a Jewish family in Berlin, and early on went to a Jewish private school. “The Nazi kids would throw rocks” on the way to school, she remembered. Then came the British bombs, a few years later. By 1941 the family had moved to Brooklyn.

Brann went to the public Brooklyn College, and initially had no interest in classics, which was a required course. But then she finally picked up Homer, and she was smitten. She pursued a classics major, instead of becoming a physician like her father as she originally planned. Her love for ancient Greece led to an archaeology doctorate at Yale, but after authoring one book and various writings on her excavations in Athens, she realized this was not where she wanted to be.

She was asking questions that were perhaps broader, perhaps deeper, than what fit neatly into the archaeology department. Luckily, she had a friend who was teaching at St. John’s, who was leaving because teaching was not an ideal fit, and he introduced Brann to the dean.

“That was 1957, and I’ve been here ever since,” Brann said.



“Odysseus and Penelope” by Johann Heinrich Wilhelm Tischbein, 1802.

with deep topics in theology and ontology and so on, but personally distant. It’s a very satisfying environment for learning, Brann adds, noting it avoids the oddly embarrassed feeling that hangs over student-teacher dynamics she sees on other campuses.

“A couple of weeks ago, I’m teaching freshmen, as it happens. I asked a question and a young woman, sitting up, she looked at me and said, ‘Ms. Brann, are you asking this question because you don’t know? Or do you have the answer?’”

“She’s only been at the college four weeks or so, she had the right idea. She knew that this was the kind of question that would be welcome, would be thought to be funny and interesting, and would get a candid answer,” Brann said.

Serious as the learning is, it is also a time of happiness. Brann says students sometimes say they’ve never been as happy as the four years they spent reading. She sees this as a wonderful compliment.

Satisfaction

Small things constantly change at the school; the curriculum is tweaked year to year, books may leave the reading list and later come back. But big changes rarely ever happen.

“We’re already got as radical a program as possible,” said Brann, who this year turned 90. She’s the longest-serving tutor at the school, and formerly served as dean for a period. In 2005, she was awarded the National Humanities Medal. “So things don’t change. On a deep level, we’re always trying to find the finest texts about the deepest matters.”

Brann said the students graduate knowing how to learn, and build communities. “We would like them to be afraid of nothing,” Brann said. They’ve spent four years learning things they may have previously known nothing about, and they know how to learn. She wants them to leave ready to face any intellectual challenge.

“They know how you go about gathering a group of people who do something together that really holds them together,” Brann said. “They know some very fundamental things which you need to know in order to learn ... We’d like them to be natural makers of communities, which is another way of saying they know how to make friends around something interesting.” And, she hopes, by then they will know how to “engage in really satisfying work.”

“Which is to say, how to find something that they can really give their allegiance to, and that is a pleasure for them to be in and to work with,” she said. Brann certainly has, herself.

And often, in the process of learning, teaching, investigating ideas, the thoughts bubble over and it turns into a product, whether it be a design or a novel, as so many former students have come back to show her.

For Brann, it’s books. She’s written more than a dozen on wide-ranging topics, from essays on Greek philosophers to collections of aphorisms.

“Something coagulates in your mind, and you’ll want to make something of it,” she said.

Rarely does she see a student disengaged. How many places of learning can claim that?

Taking Learning Seriously

There is a moment in every class when students’ eyes light up, or go wide, and they have a moment where it clicks and makes sense, where you can see they are learning something that they will never forget—these are the very highlights for Brann.

Perhaps teachers everywhere grapple with the mystery of how to keep students engaged, she mused. Well, great books do that. Brann points out that their students are never assigned secondary works, which can make up the bulk of the reading list elsewhere. The Great Books program is blessedly free of “junk.”

Liberal arts in universities today sometimes mean the humanities, which isn’t quite what they really are. The idea of liberal arts education goes back to Aristotle, who divided disciplines into seven arts: first rhetoric, grammar, and logic; then math, music, astronomy, and geometry.

At St. John’s, all students take four years of mathematics, three years of laboratory, two years of music, and four years of reading.

Liberal arts education is essentially the opposite of vocational education, learning for a specific practical purpose.

“Put another way, is there anything that can’t be treated as a liberal art? For instance, take accounting. Is it possible to teach accounting as one of the liberal arts? It’s not usually. Most people wouldn’t think of it as being among the liberal arts. I think there are always ways of approaching things, as if it were a liberal art,” Brann said.

“It means that you try to get to the bottom of the thing that you’re trying to see. What is at the root of it? From that point of view accounting can become very interesting; you know, double-entry accounting is fascinating, and accounting is what makes the business world go around,” she said.

“Liberal learning is simply taking things seriously.”

“Students should care about their learning and they should learn to recognize when something is worth knowing, and when it’s not worth dwelling on.”

Vocational learning can instead be impractical, she added. Would those who train two or four years for a job that no longer will no longer exist in five or 10 feel their education a waste?

Brann said that instead, her mission is to attend to fundamentals, and perennial questions. These are things that don’t change from year to year, and in some cases millennia to millennia.

The fundamentals really are fundamental, to life, to being. How can students do good in the world, she asks, if they don’t know what good is?

Great books, in fact, “cooperate in saving our souls,” Brann wrote in one essay.

You might think this sort of education,

which leans toward the philosophical and timeless, flourishes particularly in times of prosperity—such as today. You would be wrong.

“Here’s an interesting thing,” Brann said. “It’s exactly when things go wrong, as in the Great Depression, for instance, that liberal education flourishes.”

“I don’t know exactly what it is, but it’s got something to do with the fact that since the world of moneymaking is not really working, people begin to think of their own nature and what they can do to form themselves, to form more self-knowledge,” Brann said.

“Self-knowledge is a large part of liberal education; you learn who you were meant to be and who you would like to be, and what you actually are,” she said.

At St. John’s, tutors refer to students by their last name and honorific, Brann said. The formality allows relationships to be intellectually intimate, as they grapple

Unstoppable Aspirations

Years after losing a limb, a veteran got to represent America on the ‘world’s biggest athletic stage’

ANDREW THOMAS

For Melissa Stockwell, 39, joining the military had always been a lifelong aspiration.

“I knew as a child that I wanted to join the military. I love our country, and I wanted to give back,” Stockwell said. While in college, she participated in ROTC and was commissioned as a second lieutenant in the U.S. Army.

But in March 2004, during a routine patrol with her unit in Iraq, a roadside bomb exploded next to her vehicle.

Stockwell was conscious, and a combat medic applied a tourniquet to her leg. Rushed to the Baghdad emergency room, she underwent a life-saving surgery.

When she woke up, she learned that she had lost her left leg above the knee. She was

the first female soldier to lose a limb in U.S. history.

“I remember even very early on just knowing that it was going to be OK. I knew I had a great family. I had a great support system,” Stockwell explained. “I was happy it was me and not another one of my soldiers because I knew I would be able to adapt and overcome.”

As a result of her bravery and service, Stockwell was awarded the Purple Heart and the Bronze Star. While recovering at Walter Reed Army Medical Center, she realized there were other soldiers in much worse condition. Some were missing multiple limbs, some had lost their eyesight, and some had suffered traumatic brain injuries.

“[I] thought of myself pretty early on as one of the lucky ones because I had only lost one leg,”

Stockwell recalled.

Becoming a Paralympian

Stockwell wasn’t about to let the loss of her leg stop her from what she wanted to do in the future. Her biggest challenge was waiting for her body to heal so she could receive a prosthetic leg. Fifty-two days after she had lost her limb, she stood up on her prosthetic leg.

“It was an amazing day. Just kind of the realization that life would go on. I would be independent. I would walk again. It was a great day,” Stockwell remembered.

Stockwell had grown up as a competitive athlete, and as she recovered in her hospital room she knew she wanted to be an athlete again. There was a pool at Walter Reed, and Stockwell relished how swimming and the water made her feel.



Melissa Stockwell is a United States Army veteran and paralympian.

As she began swimming more regularly, she learned about the 2008 Paralympic games, which would be held in Beijing. She figured that if she dedicated herself to

“It was an amazing day. Just kind of the realization that life would go on. I would be independent. I would walk again.”

Melissa Stockwell

her training, she could qualify for the games—“the world’s biggest athletic stage,” as she said.

That’s when she began training full time. At first, her times were slow, but she became faster and faster. As a result of her diligent work, she qualified for the 2008 games.

Her first experience at the 2008 Paralympics allowed her to wear a U.S. uniform and represent her country once again.

While she competed as hard as she could, she didn’t make the finals.

“I was pretty upset that I came all the way to the Paralympic Games and ended up with a participation medal and nothing more,” Stockwell explained.

However, at the end of the games, Stockwell’s team nominated her to carry the U.S. flag during the closing ceremony.

“Looking back I think that that was the meaning of that Paralympics, to kind of let myself know that the journey is sometimes more important than the destination or any medal that you might get,” Stockwell said.

Stockwell continued to challenge herself, making the switch

from swimming to triathlon. She enjoyed the additional challenge of all three sports—swimming, cycling, and running—and excelled, winning three consecutive triathlon world titles in 2010, 2011, and 2012.

In 2016, Stockwell was on the inaugural triathlon team for the Paralympic Games in Rio de Janeiro. Again, she savored the fact that she could wear a U.S. uniform and represent her country.

After fierce competition, Stockwell won her first Paralympic bronze medal. Not only that, but the U.S. team had swept the competition—fellow Americans Hailey Danz and Allysa Seely won the silver and gold, respectively.

“It was September 11th, and standing on the podium with my two teammates in a USA sweep, I mean it doesn’t really get much

better than that,” Stockwell said.

Dare2Tri

Stockwell had always known the importance of athletics, especially for people with disabilities.

In 2011, she co-founded a Paratriathlon club called Dare2Tri for young people, adults, and injured veterans. At first, the organization’s goal was to help get a few athletes with disabilities to compete in triathlons. As it turned out, dozens participated in the first year.

Dare2Tri provides training, adaptive equipment, and financial assistance for its athletes. The organization relies on sponsors like Toyota to help them help get disabled athletes into the sport.

The organization’s impact on its participants has been massive—whether it’s a young athlete who

has been bullied at school for their disability or a veteran who has suffered a life-changing injury.

“They do the triathlon and they cross the finish line, and you see the self-confidence and the self-worth—not just in them but in their family as well,” Stockwell said.

Looking Ahead to Tokyo 2020

Stockwell is currently training for the 2020 Paralympic Games in Tokyo. She is taking her training day by day, and is hopeful that she will qualify for the games and be able to represent the United States once again.

“I don’t think it would ever get old to be able to put that uniform on, on the world’s biggest athletic stage, and really just show the world what I’m capable of,” Stockwell said.



How Shen Yun's Music IS RENEWING 2 GREAT TRADITIONS

CATHERINE YANG

Chia-Chi Lin was only 2 when she first heard the violin, having grown up with many sisters who were taking music lessons. Looking back, it must have been surprising that a child her age would sit so quietly, with rapt attention, focused on the music through the entire lessons.

"There was nothing else I wanted to learn, just violin," Lin said. She found herself inexplicably attracted to the instrument, which was easy to learn once she was old enough to begin lessons, but Lin said she now knows it was a calling.

About 13 years ago, the classical Chinese dance company Shen Yun Performing Arts had begun to tour. Upon seeing what those artists had set out to accomplish, Lin said she realized she had a duty, a purpose.

"I realized that's what I had to do," she said.

Lin, from Taiwan, is an accomplished principal violinist of orchestras, and she felt her path in classical music was a gift.

"Shen Yun has combined from the East and the West the best, most glorious of classical traditions," Lin said. Moved by the company's study of classical tradition and adherence to beauty, she knew she had to be part of those efforts to preserve tradition.

Bringing East to West
Shen Yun's orchestra is famously unique. From the first notes of the production, the audience can notice a distinctly Chinese sound. But peering down into the orchestra pit, one will find a largely Western classical symphony orchestra, with one or two exotic instruments here and there.

"When I first came to Shen Yun, even though I was born in Taiwan and am Asian, this really was my first encounter with Asian music," Lin said. She has served as both concertmaster and conductor during her time with Shen Yun.

"Listening as an audience member, the Western classical arrangements will be very familiar, but we also use ancient Chinese instruments, such as the erhu and pipa, and some percussion. These instruments mainly play the melodies, to express the character of Chinese culture, that traditional Chinese cultural expression," Lin said.

The tonality between the two traditions is totally different, Lin explained. Western tonality is a well-established system, the backbone of classical music. Chinese music, with its pentatonic scale, sounds im-

“You still have that glorious, sweeping arrangement of classical music ... but the character is different—unique.”

Chia-Chi Lin, violinist, Shen Yun Performing Arts

As for the Chinese melodies, ancient China too had a culture of reverence for the divine, and of using art to express higher ideals.

(Top) Shen Yun Symphony Orchestra performs at Carnegie Hall in New York on Oct. 12, 2019.

mediately foreign compared to it, but Shen Yun has managed to harmonize the two.

The effect?
"You still have that glorious, sweeping arrangement of classical music ... but the character is different—unique," Lin said.

2 Traditions

Classical music came together as a system in the time of Bach and Beethoven, Lin said, a period of time when musicians and composers saw their talent as a gift from God and believed in a higher power and divine ideals. It is music that was born of such a world, establishing a tradition that artists have followed ever since.

"So here [in Shen Yun], even with the musical aspects we take from the Western tradition, we have kept things traditional, classical. We really are working within tradition," Lin said.

As for the Chinese melodies, ancient China too had a culture of reverence for the divine, and of using art to express higher ideals.

"There is 5,000 years of Chinese civilization, and that was divinely inspired," Lin said. "That's what we're preserving: traditional culture. Whether it's dance or music, we're working within tradition."

When she first played this music, Lin felt immediately very moved—and that feeling has never faded away.

If you have never played Chinese music, yes, it can be difficult to sight-read, Lin said. But the technical difficulties are easy to overcome; the real challenge is understanding the culture deeply enough to express it beautifully.

"Even though on the surface, the music seems to be played effortlessly, to make it very beautiful, very moving in a performance, you're moved yourself at the sheer beauty of it. You're emotionally moved," Lin said. "In the course of these 13 years, I honestly feel each performance is different, and at every single performance, I'm moved."

"If there is a challenge, it's to express the character of something, really understanding the inner meaning or content, and figuring out how to best express that," Lin said. "You have to get inside the music and understand it in order to make it right and make it beautiful, in order to achieve what the music is for."

What the music is for, and what the Shen Yun musicians do best, is storytelling.

Harmonizing

Lin said that each piece has a storyline, even

when a narrative isn't depicted; and those pieces have a unique character. The composers work closely with the choreographers so that every note and phrase corresponds to a gesture or movement on stage.

"I try to look at [the performance] on stage, to see how the dancers move their bodies and what the piece is about, and what the meaning they're trying to express is," Lin said. "When I play the line or the melody, I use my instrument to try to express the character of the piece, to express what they're trying to convey on stage."

From the notes that the composers write and the musicians play, to the colors chosen for the costumes, to the backdrop graphic design, to the dancers working together to tell a story on stage, there is a sort of coordination that happens not just on a physical level but also mentally, emotionally, and spiritually.

"Everything is building together for the best effect," Lin said. Each piece plays a part in contributing to something whole and beautiful. "I think that's why people feel Shen Yun is so great."

Lin said that whether it's conducting or playing the violin, during the performances, she focuses on the moment in order to put herself completely into the whole work of art in play.

"You kind of become one with it," she said. "It's a group effort, not an individual thing."

"And I think we show different things every day when we play," Lin said. "Maybe it's very subtle, but it's different every day because we feel differently every day. ... Maybe tomorrow, or next week, or last week, because I am improving, hopefully, I can achieve different things or learn different things."

"We are all trying to improve ourselves all the time. What can we do to achieve this together on stage? And the next day it can be something else, on top of that. There's always room to improve, and it's never the end of it," Lin said. "Art has always been like that, an endless pursuit of perfection."

And when everyone in the ensemble is in this pursuit together, you can feel it, she said.

"The heart you have is actually very important ... We can feel each little bit of tension, when it's not there yet, not beautiful enough, not smooth enough," Lin said. "Only when you're cooperating can you achieve that sort of perfect harmony. Music can convey to people feelings—what's in our hearts comes through in the music."

A Hoodlum, a Hurricane, and Hope

Film review: 'Key Largo'

ALL PHOTOS BY MPTV IMAGES/WARNER BROS.



Film legends Lauren Bacall and Humphrey Bogart in "Key Largo."

TIFFANY BRANNAN

Even if you haven't seen many classic films, you've probably heard of the famous film couple Humphrey Bogart and Lauren Bacall. Of the four movies that these married actors made together, "Key Largo" from 1948 is one of the most acclaimed. Also starring Edward G. Robinson, Lionel Barrymore, and Claire Trevor, this John Huston-directed movie paired these great screen lovers as a hardened veteran and a war widow who find love in the Florida Keys. In addition to being the final Bogie and Bacall movie, it is considered one of the finest films noir. What most people don't know about "Key Largo" is how inspiring it is.

This movie shows a man's struggle to continue fighting for what he knows to be right, even though his experiences have hardened him. After risking his own life and seeing friends lose theirs during the war, Bogart's character, Frank McCloud, is bitter because, like many veterans, he wonders if the world is better off because of the fighting. When he faces a powerful gangster, he questions the use of sacrificing himself to destroy one evildoer. After all, the world is full of them. However, in the face of danger, he realizes that life isn't worth living if he doesn't fight for his values.

McCloud, a World War II veteran, goes to Key Largo to visit a deceased comrade's father and widow. Although it is the off-season, he finds their closed hotel occupied by five shady men and a drunken woman. The proprietor, Mr. Temple (Barrymore), and his daughter-in-law, Nora (Bacall), greet him joyfully. They are eager to hear about their fallen loved one's service from his commanding officer, so they invite him to spend the night.

As a hurricane approaches, the Temples learn that the party who rented out the hotel for a week is more than mysterious. The men are criminals, led by the infamous gangster Johnny Rocco (Robinson). He was deported years ago but is now attempting to restart his criminal activities in America. The hotel keepers, McCloud, and Sawyer (John Rodney), who is a local deputy, are held hostage by this brutal criminal who has no qualms about adding more murders to his record.

The Temples are desperate to overpower the loathsome man, but they are outnumbered and unarmed. Meanwhile, Frank and Nora feel the stirrings of love during these tumultuous circumstances.

As the storm bears down, Rocco faces an enemy that he can't intimidate or defeat with his gun: nature. Will any of them survive the storm? If they do, can the situation inspire enough heroism to defeat Rocco and his mob?

A Telling Scene

Danger doesn't always inspire bravery. McCloud risked his life during the war because it was his duty. However, he doesn't think he should have to keep sacrificing himself.

At one point, Rocco hands Frank a gun and challenges him to shoot him, warning that he will be shot in return. Although his friends urge him to shoot the villain, McCloud decides that he's not going to lose his life just to eliminate Johnny Rocco. He looks like a coward, but he doesn't seem to care.

Sawyer, on the other hand, snatches the gun and makes his way toward the door, aiming to escape and bring the police. But Rocco shoots the valiant deputy before he can leave the room. Sawyer tries to shoot back but realizes too late that the gun isn't loaded. Everyone is horrified at Rocco's ruthless trick against McCloud.

Is McCloud a coward? Mr. Temple eagerly suggests that McCloud somehow realized the gun wasn't loaded; he doesn't want to believe that his new friend is a coward. McCloud, though, cynically says that he didn't know it wasn't loaded. He just didn't want to risk his own life. Nora rebukes him, saying, "If I believed like you do, I'd want to be dead."

McCloud loses the respect of his friends, particularly Nora, but it's clear that he is just discouraged because of his experiences, and he hasn't lost faith in everything. He still believes in the principles for which he fought during the war. He needs only to be reminded of those principles for them to be rekindled. This movie rekindles its viewers' faith in these principles in much the same way.

When McCloud's confidence falters in the face of Rocco's power, Nora tells him that you can't always do what logic tells you: "When your head says one thing and your whole life says another, your head always loses." McCloud eventually realizes how true this is, and it motivates him to forego the chance to save himself to defeat Rocco permanently. The selfless bravery that this character embodies is tremendously inspiring.

You don't have to fight in a war to win a battle against evil. There are battles of good versus evil fought every day. Nora's motivating words to McCloud can serve as a motto: "Maybe it is a rotten world, but a cause isn't lost as long as someone's willing to go on fighting."

Tiffany Brannan is an 18-year-old opera singer, Hollywood historian, travel writer, film blogger, vintage fashion expert, and ballet writer. In 2016, she and her sister founded the Pure Entertainment Preservation Society, an organization dedicated to reforming the arts by reinstating the Motion Picture Production Code.

(Below) Mr. Temple (John Barrymore) and the widow of his son, Nora (Lauren Bacall) greet Frank McCloud (Humphrey Bogart).



'Key Largo'

Director
John Huston

Starring
Humphrey Bogart, Edward G. Robinson, Lauren Bacall, Lionel Barrymore, Claire Trevor

Running Time
1 hour, 40 minutes

Rated
Not Rated

Release Date
July 31, 1948 (USA)



In a revealing scene, war hero Frank McCloud (Humphrey Bogart) is threatened by gangster Johnny Rocco (Edward G. Robinson), while in the back, Curly (Thomas Gomez) and on the side, Mr. Temple (John Barrymore) and Nora (Lauren Bacall) watch.

The Old Gray Matter Ain't What She Used to Be

Memory, memorization, and modernity

JEFF MINICK

Recently, my friend Allen and I were discussing books and literature beside the fireplace in his home in the mountains.

I started to tell him about a novel I'd read and enjoyed, but both the author's name and the title had slipped away.

"When this happens," I said, "my mind acts like one of those Magic Eight-Balls we had as kids. Remember those? You'd ask a question, turn the ball over, and an answer would slowly drift into view. That's how my memory works."

"Well," Allen said, "the old gray matter ain't what she used to be."

We laughed, continued our conversation, and sure enough, several minutes later, the book popped to mind, the title floating up from the debris accumulated in 60-some years of living. (An ironic confession here: My memory has once again slipped a cog, and I can no longer recollect the book in question.)

Aging, Stress, and Forgetfulness

Many older people attribute this diminished remembrance of things past to aging, and there is truth in that idea. Researchers view such memory loss as normal, and reassure us that as such it isn't necessarily a sign of dementia or Alzheimer's disease. Indeed, age-related memory loss can often be reversed, even through such simple practices as drinking less alcohol, getting more sleep, or taking vitamin B12.

But no matter whether we are 20 or 80, most of us at times have trouble recollecting names, forgetting where we put the car keys (and sometimes where we put the car), or walking into the kitchen and then wondering what we intended to get there. (Don't feel too bad: Twice in my life I have looked for my cellphone while talking into it.) When I was 40, and beset by tremendous financial strain, I found myself forgetting so many things that my condition frightened me into seeing a doctor. He recommended ginkgo biloba, which to this day, I pronounce balboa and which increases blood flow to the brain, boosting memory and cognitive function. That very afternoon, I zipped off to a pharmacy and purchased a bottle of



WAYHOME STUDIO/SHUTTERSTOCK

those magic pills the doctor had so highly touted.

Only one problem: I could never remember to take them. I'd take one, feeling proud of myself, and then forget about them for another three or four days. Eventually, the pills hit the trash can, and I later found stress and lack of sleep were responsible for my harried mind.

A Surfeit of Sensations

I believe another reason other than aging exists for our forgetfulness: brain overload. Here's an example: As I write these words, I am sitting in the Happy Creek Coffee Shop in Front Royal, Virginia. Seated around me are 11 strangers, four of whom are engaged in conversation, the others tapping away, like me, on various electronic devices. Music drifts through the room, piped in from some outside source.

Every once in a while, I break from this writing to look at online sites I enjoy or to research memory loss.

It's a peaceful place, to be sure, but let's compare the coffee shop of our digital age to the 19th century. Some of my ancestors living at that time were farmers in Western Pennsylvania. Most likely, few in that Minick clan saw 11 strangers in a week, much less in a two-hour stint in the coffee shop. They lived on farms, traveled by foot or by horseback, and spent most of their days working to grow food.

But no matter whether we are 20 or 80, most of us at times have trouble recollecting names or forgetting where we put the car keys (and sometimes where we put the car).

I believe another reason other than aging exists for our forgetfulness: brain overload.

They lacked our distractions. No billboards, no radios or television, no computers—their minds were free of the constant barrage of information to which we moderns are subjected.

Evidence suggests our IQs may be superior to theirs, but I wonder if they were as plagued as we are by loss of memory. Did they call their grandson by his father's name? Did they forget they'd left the old gray mare at the general store's hitching post instead of in the barn?

The Value of Memorization

Perhaps so. Unlike us, however, these folks prized memorization.

In "A Literate South: Reading Before Emancipation," Beth Barton Schweiger examines the reading and writing habits of four young women, Amanda and Betsy Coolsey and Jennie and Ann Speer, and some of their contemporaries. Schweiger's investigation reveals the enormous amount of print resources available to people of that time: hymnals, Bibles, books of poetry, novels and histories, broadsides, newspapers and magazines, and almanacs.

Throughout her book, Schweiger also demonstrates how keenly that society appreciated memorization. Spelling bees, recitation of poetry and prose both in the home and in public contests, and learning by heart everything from the Bible to blue-backed spellers

were all applauded and a part of that culture.

Born in 1874 and so a product of this same century, Winston Churchill memorized reams of poetry—Macaulay's "Horatius," Whittier's "Ballad of Barbara Frietche," and much more—and could quote those lines verbatim until his dotage. I love my computer and the internet, and the information at my fingertips, but sometimes wish I carried a bagful of poems in my brain like Churchill.

No doubt we moderns maintain those powers of memorization; we just neglect their practice. Most students memorize facts at some level—multiplication tables, French vocabulary, basic facts from history—but in general, our educators frown on what they term learning by rote and what our ancestors called learning by heart.

Sometimes, we have a chance, even today, to witness some phenomenal display of memory. We sit in a theater in awe of the number of lines some of the actors know by heart. In Asheville, North Carolina, the homeschool group used to sponsor an annual Poetry Night, during which tots to teens recited poetry onstage. One performance I will always remember was that of the high school junior who memorized T.S. Eliot's "The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock" and recited it in its entirety without missing a word. Hers was a phenomenal performance.

Keep Calm and I Forget What Else I Wanted to Say

At any rate, take heart, those of you who are looking for your glasses while wearing them atop your head, or who tell a joke and then forget the punch line. Given the flood of information bombarding us every day, we're fortunate we remember to put on our pants before leaving the house.

And now I'm back home and am off to retrieve the mail from its box.

As soon as I can figure out where I put the key.

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.



FOR KIDS ONLY

THE EPOCH TIMES



An Old-Fashioned WELCOME

by Edgar A. Guest

There's nothing cheers a fellow up just like a hearty greeting, A handclasp and an honest smile that flash the joy of meeting; And when at friendly doors you ring, somehow it seems to free you From all life's doubts to hear them say: "Come in! We're glad to see you!"

At first the portal slips ajar in answer to your ringing, And then your eyes meet friendly eyes, and wide the door goes flinging; And something seems to stir the soul, however troubled be you, If but the cheery host exclaims: "Come in! We're glad to see you!"

MA30PHOTOGRAPHY/SHUTTERSTOCK

WHY WAS THE TURKEY ARRESTED?

IT WAS SUSPECTED OF FOWL PLAY.

SUDDOWOOD/SHUTTERSTOCK

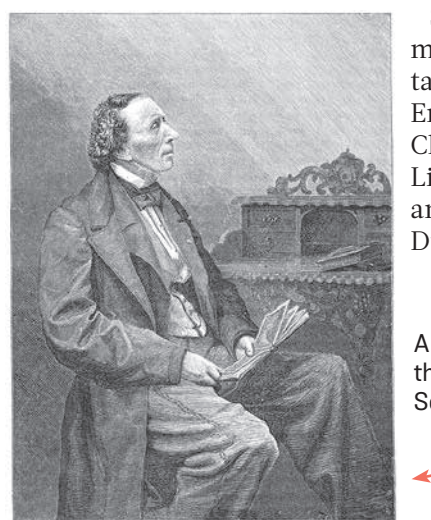
“We make a living by what we get, but we make a life by what we give.”

WINSTON CHURCHILL

CHAMAU/SHUTTERSTOCK

HANS CHRISTIAN ANDERSEN PUBLISHES HIS FAIRY TALES

On Dec. 1, 1835, Danish writer Hans Christian Andersen published his first book of fairy tales. Since then, more than 3,000 of Andersen's fairy tales have been translated into more than 100 languages around the world and are still beloved today.



Some of his most famous fairy tales include "The Emperor's New Clothes," "The Little Mermaid," and "The Ugly Duckling."

An engraving from the January 1871 Scribner's Magazine.

By Aidan Danza, age 13

PLANTS TO AVOID IN NATURE

Have you ever been on a hike, and come home to discover you have a red rash? Chances are you have come into contact with poison ivy (or perhaps poison oak or sumac). Here's how to identify these irritating plants.

POISON IVY
Poison ivy grows as a ground vine, a climbing vine, or even a shrub in brackish environments. It always has three compound leaves.

There are two helpful rhymes about poison ivy: "berries of white, do take flight" and "don't be a dope and grab the hairy rope." Poison ivy ropes can look hairy, but their berries don't appear in all seasons.

Poison ivy leaves vary in shape. They can have large, jagged edges, smaller jagged edges, or scalloped edges. In spring, poison ivy sometimes has

maroon-colored leaves. Sometimes, there are green leaves on one part red on another. In summer, most of the leaves are green.

Poison ivy can grow pretty much anywhere. Near salty locations, the leaves curl. In fall, their leaves are among the first plants to lose their green color, making them easier to distinguish. They also lose their leaves earlier than other plants, so bare bushes, ground vines, or climbing vines could be poison ivy. In winter, the vine is hairy, and this is the easiest way to tell if it is poison ivy or another vine or ground cover.

POISON OAK
Poison oak likes to grow in dry, sandy areas and is rather uncommon. It grows as a ground cover or a very small shrub. It is also very difficult to distinguish from poison ivy. Like poison ivy, it always has three leaves.

The easiest way to tell the difference between the two is the berries: poison oak berries and stems are fuzzy, poison ivy's berries and stems are not. Since poison ivy and poison oak give off the same toxin and the same itchy, nasty rash, whichever one you encounter—stay away.

POISON SUMAC
Poison sumac likes marshy, swampy habitats. It is very rare, but if you see one, there's a good chance you'll see quite a bit more. Poison sumac does not have three compound leaves, but it does have a stalk with leaves branching out on each end. It grows like a small tree. A good way to identify poison sumac is by its red "branches." They can grow from 5–30 feet tall, and each branch carries nine to thirteen leaves.



Mom, Interrupted: Reframing Life's Little Disruptions

BARBARA DANZA

I've been reading a fantastic book, "Teaching from Rest: A Homeschooler's Guide to Unshakable Peace." If you're a homeschooler, this one needs to be on your bedside table.

In the book, author Sarah Mackenzie shares this quote by C.S. Lewis: "The great thing, if one can, is to stop regarding all the unpleasant things as interruptions of one's 'own,' or 'real' life. The truth is of course that what one calls the interruptions are precisely one's real life—the life God is sending one day by day; what one calls one's 'real life' is a phantom of one's own imagination." This one stopped me cold.

I began to think about how often I felt like my children were interrupting me—an uncomfortable thought. I mean, here I am—a stay-at-home, homeschooling mom. They are not interruptions, they are the life in front of me that I should be present for and focused on.

So, what are they disrupting me from doing? Sometimes it's actual work or tasks around our home that need to be done, but too often it's planning activities for a life to come instead of participating in the life that is. In the worst moments, if I'm being honest, I've even felt twinges of annoyance when being "interrupted" while look-



Instead of trying to plan everything, have a little faith and show up for the life that is in front of you.

ing at unimportant things on my phone.

C.S. Lewis's words ring so true. The interruptions are the "real life," and the plans are just a fantasy. Sometimes a simple quote from a book is all you need to spark a change for the better. Since reading this one, I've made the slightest tweak to my mindset around interruptions. Now, when I'm doing one thing and I'm "interrupted" by something else, I see it as the life that is being put before me. From this standpoint, I can take a moment and determine how to best handle it.

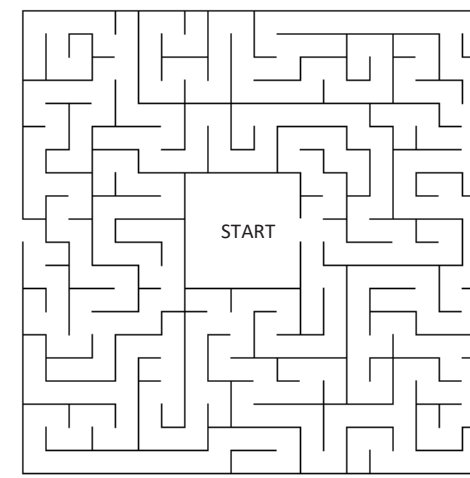
Sometimes interruptions should be ignored. If I'm working on math with my

11-year-old and my phone rings, I'm simply not going to answer it. However, if I'm checking my email and my 13-year-old says he'd like to go to the library to find resources for a project he's working on, off we go.

Moms, especially, are pulled in a thousand different directions all day long and can easily feel drained by the end of the day. I think this reframe can be a powerful one, to allow ourselves to let go of trying to plan everything out and control what is to come—and instead have a little faith and show up for the life that is in front of you.

It's a bit of a relief, actually, to let go of the reins a little. Next time you feel interrupted, give it a try.

AMAZING ESCAPES!



USE THE FOUR NUMBERS IN THE CORNERS, AND THE OPERANDS (+, - AND X) to build an equation to get the solution in the middle. There may be more than one "unique" solution but, there may also be "equivalent" solutions. For example: 6 + (7 X 3) + 1 = 28 and 1 + (7 X 3) + 6 = 28

Easy puzzle 1

8	10		
6	8		
+	-	x	÷

Solution For Easy 1

8 + 8 = (8 - 0)

Medium puzzle 1

8	17		
4	8		
+	-	x	÷

Solution For Medium 1

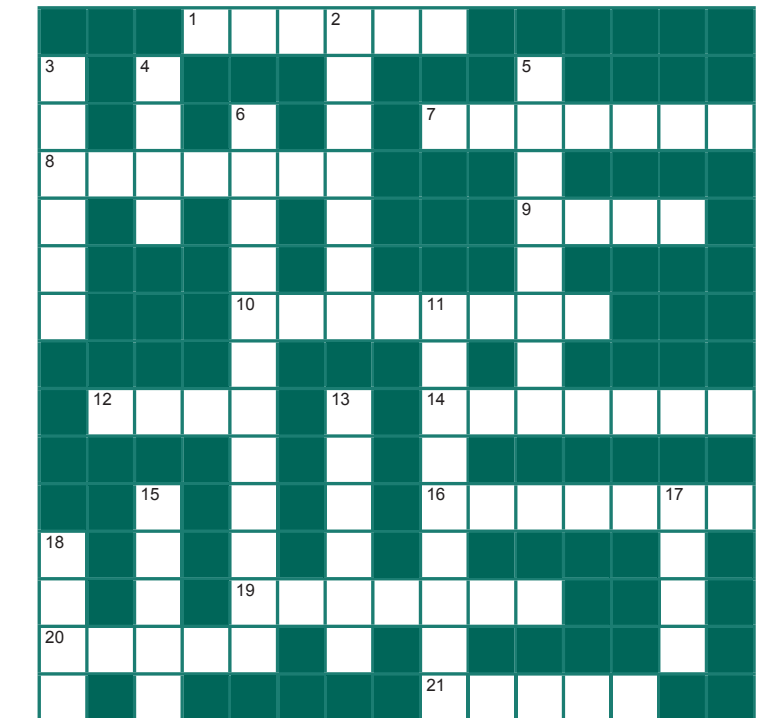
8 - 17 = 8 x 8

Hard puzzle 1

21	32		
10	23		
+	-	x	÷

Solution For Hard 1

(22 - 28) x (01 - 12)



Across

1 Donate to the cause (6)
7 "___ begins at home" (7)
8 Frequent need (7)
9 Contribute (4)
10 Unselfishness (8)
12 Without strings (4)

Down

2 Gift (7)
3 Bestow (6)
4 Comestibles (4)
5 Generous gifts (8)
6 Generosity (12)
11 Altruistic (9)
13 Provide (6)
15 Give (5)
17 Handouts (4)
18 Something you can contribute (4)

14 A place to sleep (7)
16 Many donors (7)
19 Afford (7)
20 Charity's need (5)
21 Compassion (5)

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Stan Krzyston, pastor



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TRUTH AND TRADITION

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“The Ascension,” circa 1570, by Lattanzio Gamba. Pen and brown ink, heightened with white, on blue-gray paper, squared for transfer; 11 13/16 inches by 9 5/16 inches.

FINE ARTS

Starting With the Drawing: Italy’s Devotional Art

The life of Christ: San Diego exhibits prints and drawings from The British Museum

LORRAINE FERRIER

Rare, sublime art is on show in San Diego, in an exhibition titled “Christ: Life, Death, and Resurrection.” Consisting of drawings and prints from the Italian Renaissance, on loan from The British Museum, the exhibition offers an exceptional chance to see the many modes and methods artists used to depict devotional art. Through the prints and drawings on

In Renaissance Italy, the moment artists left their homes they would’ve been immersed in religious art each and every day.

display, we also can explore the different ways artists across the Italian Renaissance have expressed—in print, ink, chalk, and charcoal—some of the most important episodes of Christ’s life. Visitors to the University of San Diego’s Hoehn Family Galleries can see over 40 of the works on display until Dec. 13. An additional dozen or so works are a short walk away at San Diego’s Timken Museum of Art,

in “Masterpieces of Italian Drawings from The British Museum” until Dec. 15. Hugh Chapman, keeper of The British Museum’s collection of prints and drawings, along with his colleague Sarah Vowles, worked with the University of San Diego and the Timken Museum of Art to make the exhibitions possible. *Continued on Page 16*

What Our Readers Say:

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THE EPOCH TIMES
TRUTH AND TRADITION

LITERATURE

The Ardor of Eloquence, The Love of Virtue

Some lessons from ‘The Columbian Orator’

JEFF MINICK

Though a history major in college and a disciple of Clio (the muse of history) ever since, I was unfamiliar with Caleb Bingham and his once famous compendium, “The Columbian Orator.” After stumbling across an online article about Bingham’s book, I ordered a copy and received the historian and biographer David Blight’s edition of “The Columbian Orator: Containing a Variety of Original and Selected Pieces Together With Rules, Which Are Calculated to Improve Youth and Others, in the Ornamental and Useful Art of Eloquence.”

In this diverse collection, we find speeches by Cicero, William Pitt, and George Washington.

What a title! And let me say that in addition to finding pleasure in reading history, I’m a sucker for compilations and for books on rhetoric and writing. And so I set out.

The Book Itself

First, I read the blurb from the back of the book and discovered I was holding in my hands an early American bestseller: “First published in 1797, ‘The Columbian Orator’ helped shape the American mind for the next half century, going through some 23 editions and totaling 200,000 copies in sales. The book was read by virtually every American schoolboy in the first half of the 19th century. As a slave youth, Frederick Douglass owned just this one book, and read it frequently, referring to it as a ‘gem’ and his ‘rich treasure.’”

Caleb Bingham (1757–1817) was a remarkable American. As Blight tells us in his introduction, Bingham graduated from Dartmouth College, taught school in various capacities, opened the first private school for girls in Boston, pushed to increase the teaching of reading and literature, and wrote and sold more than a million copies of different textbooks.

Bingham kicks off “The Columbian Orator” with a lengthy introduction titled “General Instructions for Speaking,” and then introduces his readers to 84 pieces that he deems excellent examples of the practice of rhetoric: speeches, sermons, poetry, bits of plays, and dialogues. Referring to himself in the third person, Bingham notes in his Preface: “In his choice of materials, it has been his object to select such as should inspire the pupil with the ardor of eloquence, and the love of virtue.” (A typo in Blight’s edition of the book mistakenly renders that “and” as “end.”)

In this diverse collection, we find speeches by Cicero, William Pitt, and George Washington; works such as “The Speech of Galgacus to the Caledonian Army,” the satirical “Dialogue Between a School-Master and School Committee,” “Socrates’ Defense Before His Accusers and Judges,” “Slaves in Barbary: A Drama in Two Acts,” Milton’s “Christ Triumphant Over the Apostate Angels,” a scene from Addison’s “Cato,” which was George Washington’s favorite play, and much more.

The Book’s Influence

Two of the 19th century’s greatest orators immersed themselves in these lessons on eloquence. In 1831–1832, 21-year-old Abraham Lincoln was absorbing the rich language and elocution techniques of Bingham’s compilation.

A year earlier, 12-year-old slave Frederick Douglass, who was like Lincoln largely self-taught, purchased a copy of “The Columbian Orator” for 50 cents that he had earned polishing boots, and began a lifelong love affair with what he called his “noble acquisition.” Pieces like “Dialogue Between a Master and Slave,” where a slave reasons with his master and wins his freedom, must have left a profound mark on the young Douglass.

As Blight points out, “The Columbian Orator” and Bingham’s other publications not only shaped the American mind but also “helped build the American character.” Like so many other textbooks of the 19th century, “The Columbian Orator” expected its readers to draw moral lessons from its contents. Liberty, religious faith, truth, virtue, and patriotism are concepts deserving high praise. Slavery and injustice draw condemnation.

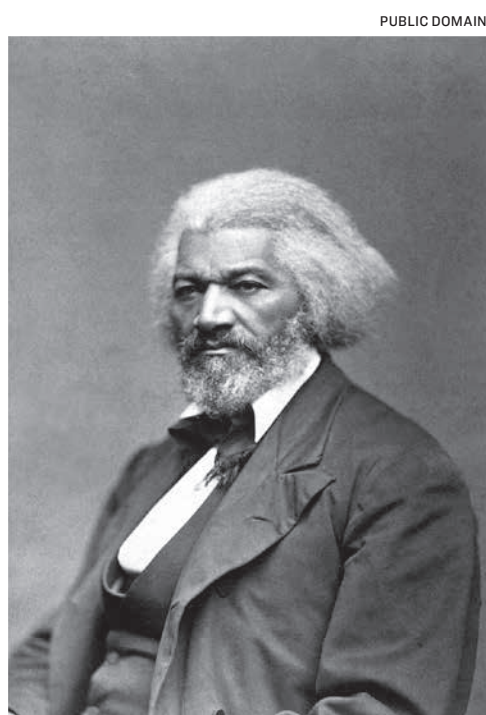
What We Can Learn Even Now

For modern readers, this collection provides other lessons and insights as well. First, the supple language found in these selections—the carefully chosen words, the intricate syntax, the logic and care in erecting various arguments—demonstrates the power and value of well-constructed spoken or written thought. Read, for example, a passage by the Frenchman Abbot Claude Fauchet as he eulogizes Benjamin Franklin. Or better yet, read the passage aloud as Bingham intended:

“At one and the same time, he governed nature in the heavens and in the hearts of men. Amidst the tempests of the atmosphere, he directed the thunder; amidst the storms of society, he directed the passions. Think, gentlemen, with what attentive docility, with what religious respect one must hear the voice of a simple man, who preached up human happiness when it was recollected that it was the powerful voice of the same man who regulated the lightning.”

‘The Columbian Orator’ offers us a lesson in humility.

“The Columbian Orator” also offers us a lesson in humility. That such a book, so rich in ideas and vocabulary, was once commonplace among school children, including that 12-year-old slave, should raise an eyebrow regarding our modern standards of education. Here in this book is a feast of words and ideas, a banquet table when compared to the thin soup we sometimes



American social reformer, orator, writer, and statesman Frederick Douglass, circa 1879. National Archives and Records Administration.

deliver to today’s young people.

Bingham’s selections, particularly those speeches and letters contemporary to his times, reveal as well a formality missing in our own public debates and arguments. The writers and speakers of that era are as fervent about their various causes as are we today, but they fancy-dress their speech, as if realizing that language, even when carrying a rapier, should obey certain standards of civility. We are more direct in our communica-

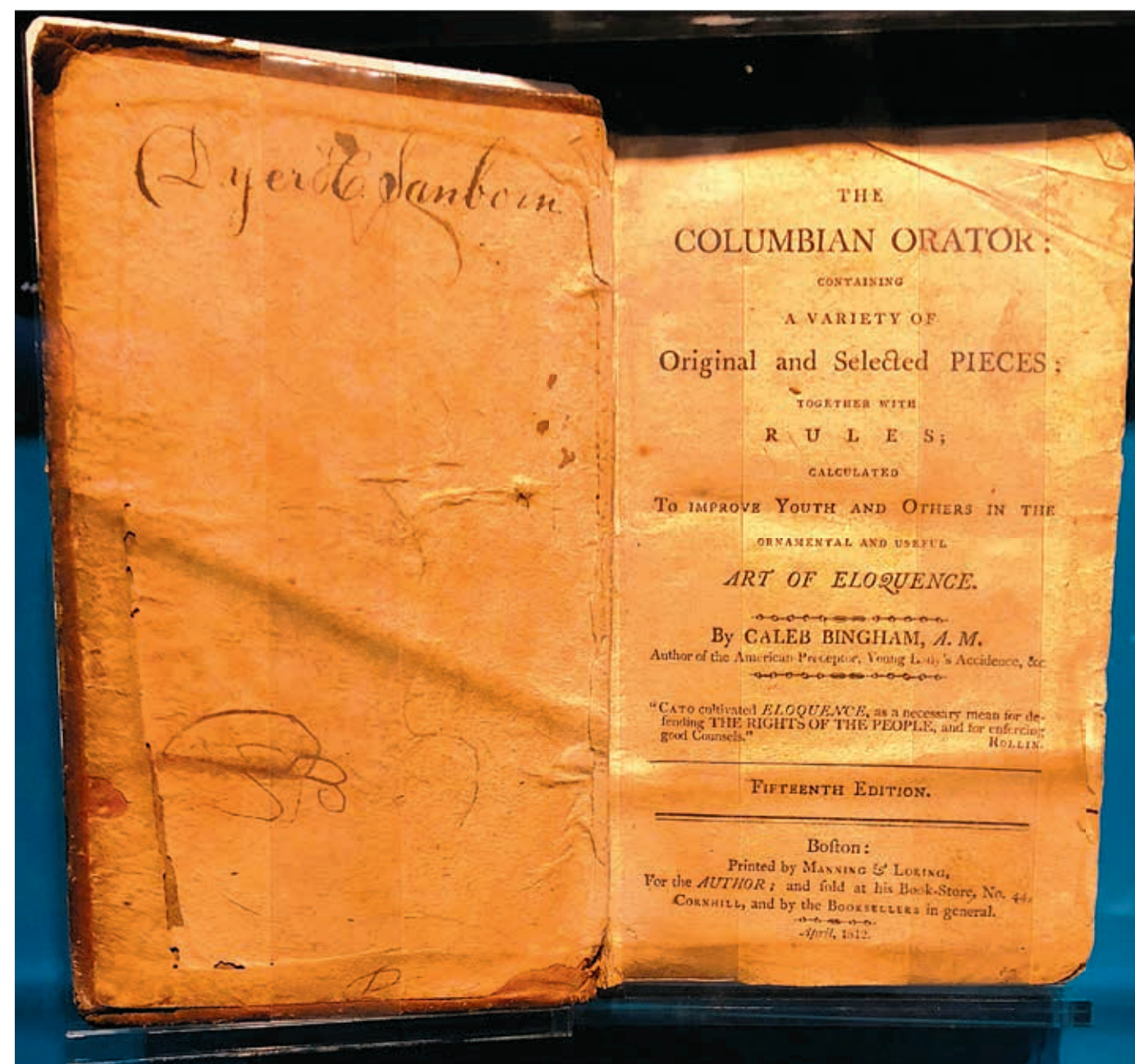
tions, but might gain by emulating the spoken and written courtesies practiced by our ancestors.

Finally, “The Columbian Orator” is a reminder of the value of public and private virtue, and their relationship with liberty. At the close of the Constitutional Convention of 1787, as Benjamin Franklin was leaving Independence Hall, someone asked him, “Well, doctor, what have we got—a Republic or a Monarchy?” Franklin supposedly replied, “A republic—if

you can keep it.”

The designer of “The Columbian Orator” aimed to help keep that republic by generating republican values in its citizens. The book celebrates liberty and virtue, and warns that “if avarice, if extortion, if luxury, and political corruption, are suffered to become popular among us, civil discord, and the ruin of our country will be the speedy consequence of such fatal vices.”

A lesson to bear in mind: Virtues lost end in lost republics.



Frederick Douglass’s copy of the 1812 edition of “The Columbian Orator,” compiled by Caleb Bingham.

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.



A portrait of Benjamin Franklin by Joseph-Siffred Duplessis.



The cover of David W. Blight’s 1998 bicentennial edition of “The Columbian Orator.”

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For Italian artists, *disegno*—the ability to intellectually visualize and then realize a design on paper—was the very foundation of art, from the Renaissance on.



FINE ARTS

Starting With the Drawing: Italy's Devotional Art

The life of Christ: San Diego exhibits prints and drawings from The British Museum

Continued from Page 13

Devout Art

For Renaissance patrons, commissioning art "for a sacred space was an act of devotion," Chapman wrote in the exhibition's catalog. And commissioning an acclaimed artist was an act of prestige. Patrons came from religious and lay society. A patron would often be referenced in the painting and sometimes even appeared in the artwork itself.

In Renaissance Italy, the moment artists left their homes, they would've been immersed in religious art each and every day; biblical inspiration was literally in their backyards. Frescoes, sculptures, paintings, and the like, adorned religious and secular buildings, as well as the streets and plazas. And with the advent of printmaking, which came to Europe in the early 1400s, such art became even more accessible.

Even though artistic techniques changed over time, the story of Christ's birth, death, and resurrection remained pictorially intact regardless of location, Chapman notes. Italian artists were less likely to closely follow the biblical text than their Northern European peers such as Rembrandt because Protestant painters in Northern Europe favored Bible study, whereas Roman Catholics learned the Bible from church sermons and in the



"The Risen Christ," circa 1498, by Jacopo de' Barbari. Engraving; 7 5/16 inches by 3 11/16 inches.

open air, he explains. "Because the stories were so well known, the artists could generally rely on viewers being able to pick up subtle narrative details."

Drawing, the 'Beginning of Everything'

For Italian artists, *disegno*—the ability to intellectually visualize and then realize a design on paper—was the very foundation of art, from the Renaissance on.

"Drawing is the necessary beginning of everything [in art], and [by] not having it, one has nothing," wrote the Renaissance artist and art historian Giorgio Vasari. Bearing this in mind, to see an artist's drawing must therefore be like seeing the bedrock of a building before any bricks and mortar have been laid.

Drawings were made for many reasons: to prepare for a painting or sculpture; to practice, hone, and develop artistic skills; or to convey ideas to ensure contractual obligations were met.

In Europe, before paper became widely available in the 1400s, drawings were made on expensive vellum (calf or goat skin) or were temporarily made on wax tablets, or on the floor or walls using charcoal.

Most drawings were made in the artists' studios and were not intended to be publicly shown. This meant the

artists perhaps had more creative freedom, occasionally flouting convention, and their drawings had no need for a refined finish.

Drawings only became works of art in and of themselves in the 1500s, when the finely finished drawings of Michelangelo and the painter Andrea Mantegna made drawings collectible, Chapman says in the catalog.

Michelangelo's "The Three Crosses" is one such exhibit, a rare surviving finished drawing by the master. Another completed work is Domenico Piola's pen and wash drawing "Noli Me Tangere," which is delicately rendered, mirroring Christ's demeanor. Here, Christ gently moves away from Mary Magdalene, saying, "Do not touch me," while urging her to tell the apostles of his return. Having just risen from the dead, he is between earth and heaven.

Lattanzio Garmbara's preparatory drawing of Christ ascending can be seen fully realized in color as a fresco high on a wall, in Parma. In the drawing, Garmbara's jubilant Christ ascends majestically to heaven. Christ's arms are outstretched, showing the world's people the wounds he received. "The Ascension" is divided into squares so it can be accurately copied and enlarged to probably make a cartoon, Chapman explains.

Look closely at the delightful car-



"The Adoration of the Magi," after Filippino Lippi, 1500–10, by Cristofano Robetta. Copper printing plate (L) and engraving.



toon of "The Adoration of Christ," and you can see the tiny pin pricks characteristic of these types of drawings. Cartoons are 1:1 scale drawings specifically used to outline the design onto the surface of a wall or canvas to then be painted. An artist or an artist's assistant would dab chalk over the tiny holes to outline the design. This particular cartoon was drawn by a follower of Pietro Perugino. The old master Perugino was Raphael's teacher. The cartoon was created for the painting of the same title that now hangs in the Yale University Art Gallery.

Large or life-size cartoons, consisting of sheets of paper glued together, rarely survive due to age, fragility, and their disposable nature. Raphael's recently restored "School of Athens," a cartoon measuring 9 feet, 4 inches by 26 feet, 4 1/2 inches, at the Ambrosiana Gallery in Milan, Italy, is a rare, exquisite example.

"The Risen Christ" is the oldest drawing in the exhibition, rendered in pen and brown ink between 1435 and 1445 by Parri Spinelli. Chapman

notes that Spinelli was obscure compared to his famous contemporaries such as Masaccio and Donatello, yet none of their drawings survive. In Spinelli's drawing, Christ has risen. He is depicted with a mandorla, the halo of an enlightened being. His expression is serene and he casually drapes his robe over his left arm, the folds of which are gently drawn.

In Fra Bartolommeo's drapery study for Christ in the "Last Judgment," the scene is more dramatic and foreboding, with dark colors highlighted by white pigment. Chapman notes that the rather stiff robes are probably due to Bartolommeo's making the study from a wooden model with cloth draped on it, and then wax was applied to the fabric for the folds to stay in place. He adds that these types of drawings on linen were specific to certain Florentine artists. Leonardo da Vinci included, in the last decades of the 1400s.

Divine Prints

Printmaking techniques originated

from other crafts. Woodcuts came first from textile decoration, and then engraving evolved from the goldsmiths and metal workers who would use a tool called a graver or burin to decorate metal.

With intaglio printmaking, incising techniques such as etching, engraving, or drypoint on metal proved costly in terms of the materials, labor, and time needed to design and make the prints. However, woodcuts were cheaper to produce and became popular from the 1600s on.

Cristofano Robetta's engraving "The Adoration of the Magi," after Filippino Lippi, is the oldest print in the exhibition and an early example of printmaking. Few examples survive of this printmaking technique whereby engravings were made on a thick piece of metal, most likely copper, and both sides of the metal plate were engraved. The copper plate can be seen alongside the engraving.

Giovanni Battista Pasqualini's

compelling engraving "The Incredulity of St. Thomas," after Guercino, captures the moment that Thomas touches Christ's wounds. Having been told by his fellow apostles that Christ had risen, he had to see for himself.

"The Christ: Life, Death, and Resurrection" exhibition enables visitors to gain an insight into how drawings and prints were used and evolved in one of the most important periods of Western art history.

To find out more about "Christ: Life, Death, and Resurrection," Italian Renaissance Drawings and Prints from The British Museum," at the Hoehn Family Galleries, visit SanDiego.edu

From Jan. 25 to April 19, 2020, all 53 works will be on display at the New Mexico Museum of Art in Santa Fe, in the exhibition titled "The Birth, Death, and Resurrection of Christ: from Michelangelo to Tiepolo."

(Left) "Noli Me Tangere," 1642–1703, by Domenico Piola. Pen and brown ink, with brown wash, over black chalk; 11 1/8 inches by 16 1/4 inches.

(Right) "The Adoration of Christ," 1500–10, by Circle of Perugino (circa 1450–1523). Brush drawing in brown ink, over black chalk, pricked for transfer; 11 5/8 inches by 11 1/8 inches.

GOREVISHUTTERSTOCK



The Making of a Poem: Courage, Strength, and Kung Fu

JAMES SALE

In June, I had the pleasure of visiting New York and, courtesy of The Society of Classical Poets, did a talk and a reading of poetry at Manhattan's Princeton Club. What a delight it was, and a real joy to rub shoulders with some of New York's finest, such as professor Joseph Salemi from New York University, a deep expert. While I think my talk on poetry was well-received, I suspect it also came as somewhat of a surprise, since I was arguing that we can learn a lot from Chinese martial arts about the nature of poetry. These two disciplines are not often associated together, although it was the renowned martial artist and Hollywood film star David Carradine, who once said, "If you cannot be a poet, be the poem"—surely a profound observation.

New York is quite integral to this story, as more than 20 years ago, when I was a much younger man, I studied Wing Chun (a type of Kung Fu made famous in the West by Bruce Lee) with fourth-dan black belt David Friskney, who proudly displayed in his dojo a photograph of his having, some years before, trained the New York police force on unarmed and street combat.

Friskney lived and breathed martial arts, and one of his favorite Chinese aphorisms from the Kung Fu masters was simply this: In personal combat, there are three "things" that bring victory. The more I thought of those three "things"—ingredients—the more I realized they applied to poetry, too. To write great poetry you had to have all three; to have only one or two would mean a poem that was impaired or limited; to have none of the three would be to not be writing poetry at all but pretending you were.

3 Ingredients That Bring Victory

According to Chinese masters, the first and most important ingredient for victory is courage. This isn't difficult to understand, for after all, we all admire courage when we see it, whether it be in a fight, a war, or something more mundane like standing up for oneself against, say, an office bully or an oppressive boss.

After courage, the fighter needs strength, and this seems obvious. In sports like boxing, one's weight, which correlates with strength, is clearly demarcated so that gross and unfair mismatches do not occur; and clearly it is one reason why it is inadvisable for most women to fight most men, since men have on average a height and weight—and so strength—advantage.

Finally, and surprisingly, the

third and least important ingredient for success is Kung Fu itself! This is surprising because most people attending martial art classes imagine that once they get the techniques they'll be able to handle anyone. Not so; Friskney would say that you'd need an awful lot of Kung Fu to stop a 6-foot-6, 250-lbs. guy charging you, football style. You might get one chance to deliver one blow before you were overwhelmed and crushed. But such a blow would need to be precise and awesome, especially if you are only 5 feet tall and weigh only 125 lbs.

So let's unpack this now in reverse order of importance. Kung Fu really means technique, and in martial arts, there are many within many sub-disciplines of the activity: boxing, wrestling, judo, aikido, tai chi, and so on. But this is also true in poetry. Here the techniques are the forms, structures, lineation, meters, and sound effects, which are vehicles to deliver the intent of the poet.

The lack of form—just to use one critical idea—means we have formlessness, or free verse. For free verse to be poetry is very difficult indeed, for what defines it as poetry? As Edgar Allan Poe said, "Poetry is the rhythmical creation of beauty in words." How can formlessness be rhythmical? And as Stephen Fry put it, "... [I]s it not equally true that we need to escape from the dreary, self-indulgent, randomly linedated drivel that today passes for poetry ...?"

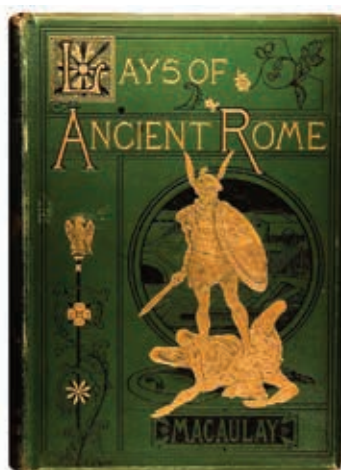
However, there is also a misunderstanding, and that is that poetry is just and only form; this leads to wannabe poets focusing almost exclusively on forms, and this produces dead verse. Indeed, often it produces doggerel. It may be perfectly accomplished, not a missing beat in the meter, and not an imperfect rhyme to be found anywhere, but sadly, totally boring because monotonous. Something more is needed than just Kung Fu or technique.

The second ingredient—strength—is in poetry what I call its topics, themes, and the actual subject matter, which exemplify core beliefs and values. One critic estimated that more than 90 percent of great English language poetry was written in iambic meter, which is surely right since the iambic is the rhythm of the heartbeat.

It would also be true to state that some 90 percent of good and great poetry relies on one of four thematic or topical "strengths" of poetry: God (West) or the Tao (East) or ultimately the mystery of the cosmos; death, or the mystery of life; love or sex, and the mystery of relationships; humor, great satires, epic burlesques, nonsense poems, word

Poetry is the rhythmical creation of beauty in words.

Edgar Allan Poe



The 1881 edition of the "Lays of Ancient Rome" by Lord Macaulay, Longmans, Green & Co., London.

PUBLIC DOMAIN

play, and all the ironic mysteries of people and circumstances.

Of course, a great poet like Shakespeare covers all four strengths. However, we need to be aware that even perfect technique plus strong thematic preoccupations need not lead to great poetry. It might lead only to worthy verse or inflated grandiloquence. To illustrate this point, Charles Williams once compared an extract from Lord Macaulay's "Lays of Ancient Rome"

"Round turned he, as not deigning
Those heathen ranks to see;
Naught spake he to Lars Porsena,
To Sextus naught spake he."

with this short passage from the close of Book 5 of Milton's "Paradise Lost":

"So spake the Seraph Abdiel,
faithful found;
Among the faithless faithful
only he;
Among innumerable false
unmoved,
Unshaken, unsexed, untrifled,
His loyalty he kept, his love,
his zeal;
Nor number nor example with
him wrought
To swerve from truth, or change
his constant mind,
Though single. From amidst
them forth he passed,
Long way through hostile scorn,
which he sustained
Superior, nor of violence feared
aught;
And with retorted scorn his
back he turned
On those proud towers, to swift
destruction doomed."

They both are about bravery or courage. But in reading the first extract we think, "That's good, how noble to behave like that"; but in reading the Milton we actually experience what courage is like—the poetry enacts it in us. Thus, Kung Fu (technique) plus strength (thematically) gets us

with this short passage from the close of Book 5 of Milton's "Paradise Lost":



"Abdiel and Satan," circa 1868, by Gustave Doré. An engraving for Milton's "Paradise Lost."

to Lord Macaulay, but not to truly great poetry like Milton's.

The missing ingredient, of course, is courage, the first constituent I mentioned—not writing about courage necessarily, as Milton has done, but the courage involved in the writing process itself.

Courage Comes First

And courage is the most important thing of all in a fight or combat situation. Courage involves among other things a mindset, an attitude, a will to win. But furthermore, the word courage comes from the Romance languages—"cour"—meaning "heart." Courage is from the heart and the heart traditionally has always been considered the seat of the human soul: The ancient Egyptians didn't preserve the brains of the deceased, but the heart was a different matter altogether.

And because it is where the soul resides, it is where the source of poetry is, too. As English writer Patrick Harpur observed, "Soul is poetry; spirit is prose."

The muse of poetry is in the heart because there is the soul that the muse can speak to. Naturally an encounter with a goddess, such as the muse, always requires courage for mere mortals.

Coleridge expressed it this way in his poem Kubla Khan: "close your eyes in holy dread." Yes, exactly, this is what all true poets experience, as the muse descends upon them, holy dread. Through the muse, we can say that the poet does not write poems, but poems are written through the poet.

What is needed is a dynamic tension between these trinity of forces: courage leading, strength sustaining, and technique, Kung Fu, enabling in the way I have explained.

But courage comes first. Technique without the muse is dead verse; themes without the muse lead to inflated grandiloquence; and a muse or courage without the discipline of theme or technique will tend to produce pure gush. The three, though, create a dynamic tension together that is capable of reaching the heights of a Milton or Dante or Shakespeare. That is what we need to aspire to once again in our modern times, and not to settle for less.

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.



(Above) Fred Rogers (Tom Hanks, L) and Lloyd Vogel (Matthew Rhys), in "A Beautiful Day in the Neighborhood." (Top R) Matthew Rhys as Lloyd Vogel on the set of Mister Rogers's show. (Bottom R) Tom Hanks as Mister Rogers.

FILM REVIEW

Heartfelt Biopic Reminds Us of Goodwill for All

IAN KANE

When the first trailers for "A Beautiful Day in the Neighborhood" appeared on all the movie alert channels, they indicated that the focal point of the film would be the life of one of the most cherished of American icons, Mister Fred Rogers, and his show "Mister Rogers' Neighborhood." But that's a little misleading.

In fact, unlike the recent documentary about Mister Rogers "Won't You Be My Neighbor?" or the PBS special "Mister Rogers: It's You I Like," this film is less about Mister Rogers and more about how he affected the life of a particular man.

Director Marielle Heller and screenwriters Noah Harpster and Micah Fitzerman-Blue utilized the freedom of a scripted feature format to adapt a 1998 article written by the award-winning journalist Tom Junod that's titled "Can You Say ... Hero?" The article is about how being around Mister Rogers fundamentally changed his life for the better.

It's a risky approach, but it mostly works. In the film, Junod is transformed into the fictional character named Lloyd Vogel (Matthew Rhys, "The Americans"), a grumpy journalist who doesn't seem to get along with his co-workers much or anyone else for that matter. He's also at odds with his wife, Andrea (Susan Kelechi Watson), with whom he's just had a son.

His life deteriorates further when he attends his sister's wedding and gets into an actual physical confrontation with his fa-

'A Beautiful Day in the Neighborhood'

Director
Marielle HellerStarring
Tom Hanks,
Matthew Rhys,
Chris CooperRated
PGRunning Time
1 hour, 48 minutesRelease Date
Nov. 22, 2019

★★★★★

Hanks manages to capture the spirit and essence of Mister Rogers.

ther, Jerry (Chris Cooper, "Money Train," "A Time to Kill"), with whom he's had a strained relationship, to say the least. It turns out that Lloyd is understandably angry at Jerry for abandoning him and his dying mother long ago. This has created a deep fissure between the two men.

Shortly thereafter, Lloyd gets tapped by his superiors to interview Mister Rogers. He sneers at the assignment, gruffly saying that he's above doing what he considers a "puff piece." However, as he begins to learn more about the fascinating figure, his guarded walls gradually begin to erode.

The crux of the film involves Lloyd at first being skeptical of how goody-two-shoes Mister Rogers is, trying to find fault with him, and then discovering that the man really is so resolutely kind and compassionate that it causes Lloyd to embark on a journey of personal growth, healing, and reconciliation. But is it enough to mend the damaged relationships with both his father and wife?

Tom Hanks Captures the Essence

It's hard to imagine anyone stepping into the shoes of Mister Rogers—even a formidable actor such as Tom Hanks. There's only so much makeup and so on that they could apply to Hanks in order to mitigate the fact that the two men look completely different.

However, if we try to pick out physical differences, we'd be missing the point: Hanks manages to capture the spirit and essence of Mister Rogers (he passed away in 2003), as well as his relentless philosophy of generosity and simple goodness.

Hanks perfectly emulates many of Mister Rogers's more iconic show scenes, such as when he walks through the door singing, removes his coat and business shoes, and swaps them out for cardigan and sneakers. Or when he's hidden off-camera and speaks in different voices while performing with one of his many puppets.

These tear-inducing touchstones will surely tug at the nostalgic heartstrings of those whose lives were touched by Mister Rogers. By all accounts, he was a man who could seemingly transmute any kind of negativity and, through sort of a mental and spiritual jujitsu, turn anything bad into a radiance filled with kindness, and a serene love for all living things. An ordained Presbyterian minister, he certainly exemplified the hallmarks of Christianity and the teachings of Jesus Christ. This is a movie that will melt the ill will of any but the most jaded of cynics.

In a clever move, Sony is pushing this film as something important for our current times and something that people need to see—a sort of antidote for all of the deepening bipartisan divides that are unfolding around us within our country.

It's a good move, as "A Beautiful Day in the Neighborhood" reminds us of the potential for goodness and civility that we all possess, in spite of the powers that be who are constantly trying to divide us. In the end, we're all neighbors; let's try to be nice ones.

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

Film Brings Awareness to Mental Health Issues

An interview with the producer of indie film 'Two Ways Home'

MASHA SAVITZ

"I'm proud of where this movie has gone," said actress and producer Tanna Frederick when I spoke with her by phone about her new movie "Two Ways Home." Indeed, this film is a conversation that we need to have, and the response thus far has been incredible.

The film won the Women Empowerment Award at the 2019 Women Texas Film Festival. It went on to win The Grand Jury Prize for Narrative Feature at the 2019 Awareness Film Festival in Los Angeles.

It was a very personal movie for Frederick on many levels. As she is always dynamic on screen and equally passionate and ambitious off, this project offered a platform both for her creative expression and for her humanitarian concerns, bringing awareness to an important social issue: mental health.

"Two Ways Home" is about a young woman returning to rural Iowa. While balancing her own bipolar disorder and struggling to care for her veteran grandfather, who suffers with PTSD, she attempts to reconcile with her estranged husband and precocious 12-year-old daughter.

Three generations are represented in this heartwarming depiction of modern rural life. With an original screenplay by Richard Schinnow and directed by Ron Vignone, it was filmed and produced entirely in Iowa.

"Two Ways Home" has an impressive cast of local, supporting actors, whose roles all have wonderful depth and color. The production team was passionate about finding homegrown actors and supporting the incredible and authentic talent that all too often just cannot be found in Hollywood.

In addition, the film's Iowa landscape seems to capture

a sense of time and place with enduring shots of wind-combed fields of wheat stretching seemingly to the horizon.

Presenting the complexities of living in a postmillennial world, this story touches on the myriad of conflicting realities that face contemporary families. Specific to rural farmers in Iowa are the issues of tradition, with old farming practices coming up against the pressures of modern industrialization.

The film also examines the terrible pressures and challenges faced by sons and daughters making decisions about their aging parents, and about those suffering from mental health issues and PTSD.

Frederick explained that her interest in portraying mental illness in a more meaningful, truthful way came from her childhood. While she was growing up, both of her parents worked in health care professions and cham-



Tanna Frederick produced and stars in "Two Ways Home."

pioned the cause for decades. "I watched them work tirelessly to build a facility to get mentally ill folks off the streets and give them the help they so desperately needed, like support groups, housing, and jobs," she said. "And I could see the misconceptions people had about the mentally ill. The neighbors, for instance, didn't

want care homes built near them. So many films depict the mentally ill in negative ways. My mom would always say to me, 'Please make a film that people can learn from, learn the truth from.'" Frederick sought their advice while preparing for this project. "I wanted to portray a strong woman who faces adversity about health conditions and becomes a more beautiful human as a result of confronting that." It's an inspiring ambition.

Frederick explained that the title, "Two Ways Home," refers to the intergenerational relationships between the grandfather and the granddaughter. The screenplay was based in part on Frederick's actual grandfather, who, like the film character, was a war vet and an alcoholic—a typical symptom of PTSD—and the special bond they shared.

The resolution Frederick was able to create on-screen between the grandfather

and granddaughter characters was an ideal less realized in her own life, but it is clearly what drives her passion, and one can feel that passion and dedication in her work. This film ultimately reminds us that, in some basic ways, we all need to return home to our roots—a place that nourishes us emotionally, physically, and spiritually through a connection to land, family, self, or faith.

Commitment, devotion, love, faith, and family can all lead us back home, reminding us that there is more than one way to get there.

The next screening will be presented by the National Alliance on Mental Illness at the Vista Del Mar Child and Family Services located at 3200 Motor Ave., Los Angeles on Dec. 4, at 7 p.m.

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

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THEATER REVIEW

'Little Shop of Horrors'

Where dreams are everything

JUDD HOLLANDER

NEW YORK—Musical comedy and pathos walk hand in hand in "Little Shop of Horrors."

Based on the 1960 low-budget horror film, the show burst full bloom upon the Off-Broadway stage in 1982 and later became a major film in its own right. It was revived on Broadway in 2003. The current Off-Broadway revival at the Westside Theatre offers just the right amount of schlock and silliness, along with some painful reminders about how grim life can be.

The story takes place on Skid Row, where winos congregate, and most of the inhabitants have long since given up hoping for anything better. This includes Seymour (Jonathan Groff), an awkward and shy young man, who works in a flower shop owned by Mr. Mushnik (Stephen Berger, subbing for Tom Alan Robbins the afternoon I saw the show).

The shop's only other employee is Audrey (Tammy Blanchard), a woman with a good heart but absolutely no confidence. Her boyfriend named Orin (Christian Borle) has a definite mean streak.

Seymour's one joy, other than pining for Audrey, is working with exotic plants. One day during a total eclipse of the sun, he finds and purchases a strange-looking plant, which he names Audrey II (voiced by Kingsley Leggs), and brings it back to the flower shop. In no time at all, Audrey II becomes the talk of the town, with people coming from everywhere to view this strange phenomenon.

The shop, which was previously on the verge of closing, suddenly receives an avalanche of publicity and business. Seymour, meanwhile, finds himself hailed as a botany genius and begins to see a future

The show's creative team takes the source material and fashions it into something both touching and wildly entertaining.

'Little Shop of Horrors'

Westside Theatre (Upstairs)
407 W. 43rd St.

Tickets:
212-239-6200 or
Telecharge.com

Running Time
2 hours (one intermission)

Closes
March 8, 2020

Please note: the upstairs theater is not wheelchair accessible

Judd Hollander is a reviewer for Stagebuzz.com and a member of the Drama Desk and the Outer Critics Circle

filled with possibilities.

However, Audrey II has a very specific dietary need: human blood. The plant's ever-growing hunger matches its growth spurts. At first, Seymour, dreaming of a life with Audrey, goes along with the plant's demands. But it's not long before matters quickly spiral out of control, and people start disappearing.

A Wonderful Production

What could easily be a simple parody becomes something much more in the hands of the show's creative team, as they take the source material and fashion it into something both touching and wildly entertaining. The wonderful score by Howard Ashman and Alan Menken is the real star here, as it brings both the story and the characters vibrantly to life.

The number "Skid Row (Downtown)" perfectly sets the mood; it paints a bleak picture while still maintaining the show's underlying sense

of fun. The song delivered by, among others, a trio of street urchins (Ari Groover, Salome Smith, Joy Woods), serve as a sort of doo-wop chorus.

Other standouts include the heartbreaking ballad "Somewhere That's Green," sung by Audrey as she dreams of a life far different from her current existence; and "Suddenly, Seymour," when Seymour and Audrey begin to realize the possibility of a future together.

Howard Ashman's book is also filled with period references; it's interesting to see how many the audience picks up on. There's the names of the three Urchins (Ronnette, Chiffon, and Crystal—remember the Ronnettes ... ?). There's also Borle strutting around as a leather-jacketed, motorcycle-riding Marlon Brando or Elvis Presley wannabe.

Thematically, the show also offers a warning to beware of things that seem too good to be true, as well as the dangers of looking out only for yourself. The end definitely does not justify the means here.

As far as the actors: Groff perfectly shows Seymour's turmoil and loneliness—somebody who just wants to be loved. Blanchard is a perfect match for him as Audrey, a woman with her own self-esteem issues.

Berger is blustery as Mushnik,

while Borle does a great job playing multiple roles, and he and the offstage crew deserve great credit in flawlessly pulling off several quick costume changes. Groover, Smith, and Woods do a fine job as the Urchins, both musically and also when flinging occasional verbal zingers.

Credit also must go to the Audrey II tech team of Eric Wright and Teddy Yudain.

Julian Crouch's sets beautifully embody the depressing ambience necessary for what is to come. A particularly nice touch occurs during a renovation sequence at the flower shop, where despite some cursory changes—new furniture, more flowers—Mushnik, Seymour, and Audrey, can't quite eliminate the previous bleakness of the place, as evident by the cracks in the walls.

The only major problem is with the show's sound design. It's often hard to hear Ashman's lyrics, especially during the group numbers. Also, the costumes that the three Urchins initially wear seem a bit too tidy, given the surroundings.

Alternatively poignant and side-splittingly funny, "Little Shop of Horrors" presents a tale of lost souls in the most unusual of circumstances. Not to mention a fast-growing plant with a mission of its own.



Seymour (Jonathan Groff) feeding Audrey II, in "Little Shop of Horrors."

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***Speed comparison based on 15 Mbps DSL.