

THE EPOCH TIMES LIFE & TRADITION

THE POWER OF FORGIVENESS

Page 5

5 THINGS YOU WON'T REGRET

Page 2

WORKING FROM HOME: BALANCING LIFE AND WORK IN ONE SPACE

Page 2

Damon West had a perfect life on paper: loving family, star quarterback, promising career. Then he got hit with a life sentence at a maximum-security prison.



Damon West

ON USING HIS STORY OF PRISON
AND RECOVERY TO INSPIRE GOOD

Page 6



5 Things You Won't Regret

BARBARA DANZA

In her inspirational book, “The Top Five Regrets of the Dying: A Life Transformed by the Dearly Departing,” Australian author Bronnie Ware, a former palliative care nurse, shares the lessons she learned sitting at the bedsides of the terminally ill. Her list was originally published as a blog post (that eventually went viral) in which she shared five regrets she says her patients expressed over and over:

1. I wish I'd had the courage to live a life true to myself.
2. I wish I hadn't worked so hard.
3. I wish I'd had the courage to express my feelings.
4. I wish I had stayed in touch with my friends.

▲ Making time for our friends and family always enriches our lives.

5. I wish that I had let myself be happier.

The regrets are relatable and devastating and say much about how, when driven by fear and insecurity, we are left with regret.

As we look toward a new year and a new decade, many of us think about how to live a better life—one, perhaps, that won't end with such regrets.

It often comes to pass that we regret what we don't do instead of what we actually do. Most of the regrets Ware highlights seems to be regrets of omission.

On the other hand, there are certain things we will likely never regret. What would the next decade look like if we focused on them?

Exercising

We know we should exercise.

Sometimes we make big plans to exercise, and then we hit the snooze or use weather as an excuse. Later, what do we do? We regret that we didn't fulfill our promise to ourselves.

We don't ever regret exercising, though. Those days when you don't feel like it at all, but you push yourself to do it anyway, are some of the best days. Afterward, you feel great that you moved your body and honored your commitment to yourself.

Living Within Your Means

From time to time, shiny objects tempt us to get into debt to get what we want, when we want it. Soon after, we experience what's known as “buyer's remorse,” or in other words, regret. Sometimes these shiny objects are large and have a

lasting impact, deepening the impact of the regret.

However, when we live within our means and forego immediate gratification, we enjoy a peace of mind that colors all other aspects of our lives.

Risking Failure

You know that thing you've always wanted to do? It's risky. It may not work. You may fail. It may be embarrassing. It's a risk.

If you fail, however, you probably won't regret doing it. You'll learn valuable lessons from the failure, and you'll be proud of yourself for going for it. There's always the possibility, too, that it doesn't fail.

If you don't do it, though, will you regret it? Risks, of course, need to be measured, but risking failure is probably one of those things you won't regret.

Spending Time With Loved Ones

Relationships are a key element of life and what brings meaning and connection. The fourth regret on Ware's list speaks to the significance of people in our lives.

Yet, we can get so busy, can't we? We lose touch. We talk about how we “should” get together. We think of a less busy time that never comes. We just stay wrapped up in our workaday routines, riding the treadmill.

Making time for our friends and family, though, always enriches our lives. When we do, we don't regret it. The memories of that precious time linger on in our minds for a long time after.

Letting Go of Attachments

There can be many things that hold us back from living up to our potential. Perhaps we're angry, jealous, or scared. These things we can't let go of, attachments, hinder us from living a fulfilled life.

Letting go of attachments to wanting things, to trying to control things, can be immensely freeing. Instead of wishing for a life in your mind, embrace the life that is.

Working From Home: Balancing Life and Work in One Space

A conversation with business consultant Adriana Monique Alvarez

BARBARA DANZA

A home-based business sounds like such a great idea, doesn't it? Technology now allows business owners to reach their target market while lounging in their pajamas and eating their favorite snacks from the comfort of their own home. Xanadu.

If you've ever dreamed of starting your own business from home, there are some considerations to take into account. I spoke to publishing and business consultant Adriana Monique Alvarez, founder of AMA Publishing & Business Consulting about her advice for making working from home work.

THE EPOCH TIMES: What are some common misconceptions about running a business from home?
ADRIANA MONIQUE ALVAREZ: Three common misconceptions I hear about when it comes to running a business from home are:

“It's most likely a hobby that doesn't create any substantial cash flow.” If you've ever mentioned that you work at home to your neighbor who is, for example, a pediatrician, chances are they don't think you actually do any-



If you're looking to start a business from home, share your vision with your family and friends, and set the boundaries you need to be successful.

thing all day other than sip wine.

“You don't need to have a structure in your day.” Unfortunately, most who dream of working from home do not realize it requires a great deal of discipline. Being a self-starter is a requirement, otherwise it's easy to behave like an employee secretly hoping the boss is going to keep tabs on how things are running.

“Everyone is working in their pajamas.” While there are perks to working from home, the truth is, most aren't running their business in yoga pants and dry shampoo. Many successful business owners are behaving as if they were going out and meeting clients in person.

THE EPOCH TIMES: What are some of the biggest challenges people who work from home face?
MS. ALVAREZ: Having business hours

are a must for anyone who expects to run a profitable business. Working from home provides for more flexibility, and yet without clear boundaries it's easy to waste time.

It's important that business hours are used to focus on money-making activities. Answering personal phone calls, doing laundry, and scrolling social media are not going to move the business forward and create income.

THE EPOCH TIMES: What are your best tips for balancing family life with working from home?
MS. ALVAREZ: My best tip for balancing family time when you work from home is to have traditions. For example, having a weekly date night with your spouse or bedtime ritual with your kids creates meaningful moments and memories.

THE EPOCH TIMES: In what ways can one prepare the home environment to be conducive to running a business from home?
MS. ALVAREZ: One of my favorite ways to create an environment that is conducive for a home-based business is to write out weekly income goals and keep them next to the computer or on the fridge. It's also nice to work in a clean and organized home. I love to diffuse essential oils and have fresh cut flowers at my desk. Surrounding yourself with beauty and signs of abundance are sure to affect your energy as you work.

THE EPOCH TIMES: How can entrepreneurs benefit from working from home?
MS. ALVAREZ: Working from home is a great way for entrepreneurs to run low overhead businesses that allow them to move into positive cash flow more quickly. Nothing is more important in the start-up phase than to create sales. Once there is money in the bank, business owners can decide how to best invest, but in the beginning, it's important to not bury yourself in unnecessary expenses.

THE EPOCH TIMES: What advice would you give someone who wants to start a business from home?
MS. ALVAREZ: My advice for anyone looking to start a business from home would be to have a conversation with your family and friends. Let them know the vision of your business as well as the boundaries that are necessary for you to be successful.

Women often fall victim to surprise visits from girlfriends, doing errands for their spouse, and attending to other people's emergencies, when in fact their business requires space and attention to truly thrive. Train everyone around you to treat your venture like a business from the beginning, and it will serve you well.

THE EPOCH TIMES: What advice would you give someone who wants to start a business from home?
MS. ALVAREZ: My advice for anyone looking to start a business from home would be to have a conversation with your family and friends. Let them know the vision of your business as well as the boundaries that are necessary for you to be successful.

Women often fall victim to surprise visits from girlfriends, doing errands for their spouse, and attending to other people's emergencies, when in fact their business requires space and attention to truly thrive. Train everyone around you to treat your venture like a business from the beginning, and it will serve you well.

THE EPOCH TIMES: What advice would you give someone who wants to start a business from home?
MS. ALVAREZ: My advice for anyone looking to start a business from home would be to have a conversation with your family and friends. Let them know the vision of your business as well as the boundaries that are necessary for you to be successful.



“Washington Crossing the Delaware” by Emanuel Leutze, 1851.

HISTORY

When All Seems Bleak, Look to 1777

‘Times that try men’s souls’ gave way to hope and optimism

ALAN WAKIM

‘Twas the early evening of Christmas Day in 1776 and Gen. George Washington was on the verge of losing the Revolutionary War. His armies felt defeated and discouraged, his countrymen had lost confidence in his abilities, his adjutant-general Joseph Reed had conspired against him, his second in command Charles Lee had been captured two weeks prior on Friday the 13th, and Gen. Horatio Gates was off currying favor at his expense with the Continental Congress, which had fled Philadelphia for Baltimore days earlier.



An image of the first page from “The American Crisis,” a pamphlet written by Thomas Paine and was first published on Dec. 19, 1776.

A Desperate Gamble

With his men's enlistments expiring in one week, Washington had no choice but to risk everything on a desperate gamble he hoped would save the cause. His plan was to split up the approximately 5,000 men left under his command into three coordinated strike teams, cross the Delaware River, surround the Hessian-occupied town of Trenton, and attack an hour before sunrise.

As he looked across the river from McConkey's Ferry toward New Jersey, Washington must have reflected on the disastrous events that had led him to this point. When independence was declared in July, he commanded approximately 20,000 men, albeit undisciplined and poorly trained. His opponent Gen. William Howe commanded 32,000 highly-trained and better-equipped British soldiers and German mercenaries. After a series of defeats in Brooklyn, Kips Bay, White Plains, and Fort Mifflin, as well as the abandonment of Fort Mifflin, what was left of the Continental Army found itself retreating across New Jersey and into Pennsylvania. An entire New York unit had abandoned the campaign and gone home. Many Americans accepted the offer of amnesty by swearing allegiance to the British crown.

‘Times That Try Men’s Souls’

The situation was so bleak that Thomas Paine, author of “Common Sense” and one of the few who still believed in Washington, felt compelled to write “The Crisis” in hopes of rallying the men and inspiring the nation to continue the war. As inspiring as St. Crispin Day's speech in Shakespeare's “Henry V,” Washington had it read to his beaten, demoralized men:

“THESE are the times that try men's souls: The summer soldier and the sunshine patriot will, in this crisis, shrink from the service of his country; but he that stands it NOW, deserves the love and thanks of man and woman. Tyranny, like hell, is not easily conquered; yet we have this consolation with us, that the harder the conflict, the more glorious the triumph. What we obtain too cheap, we esteem too lightly: 'Tis dearness only that gives every thing its value.”

Crossing the Delaware River

Heavy winds, snow, and sleet blew into the faces of the 2,400 men as they crossed the ice-covered Delaware River. What should have taken six hours took nine. Washington knew his men were bitterly cold and tired, and thought about calling off the attack. But the country needed this victory. He needed this victory and was determined to carry it through to the end as he encouraged his men, “Press on! Press on, boys!” He was unaware that further down river his two other strike teams led by John Cadwalader and James Ewing had aborted the operation due to the worsening weather.

With him were Nathaniel Greene and John Sullivan, who led the two divisions as they marched the nine miles to Trenton. Many of the men were improperly dressed for the bitter cold. Two soldiers would freeze to death. Those without shoes left blood trails in the ice and snow. But the men didn't complain. Rather, they marched on in hopes of victory. Among those marching that day were John Stark, Henry Knox, Alexander Hamilton, Arthur St. Clair, William Alexander (aka Lord Stirling) and future president James Monroe.

Victory at Trenton

While causing great misery for the Americans, the blizzard was heavy enough to convince the Hessian brigade that no army would dare attack under such appalling conditions. Their estimation of the Americans' determination to fight proved fatal as the attack commenced early in the morning.

The Hessian commander in Trenton, Col. Johann Rall, was sleeping when the shooting began. He got up and rallied his men in the chaos before two rounds slammed into his body. Americans charged down the street with bayonets and cannon. The 90-minute battle turned into a rout as the town was captured, along with an estimated 920 Hessians. Twenty-three to 25 were dead or dying, including Rall, while 400 managed to escape across the Assunpink Creek Bridge (James Ewing's objective). Only four Americans were wounded.

Word of the success in Trenton spread. Having felt despair for so long, patriotic Americans suddenly found themselves celebrating and rejoicing this rare victory. The British were in disbelief that undisciplined rebels could pull off such an attack during winter and annihilate a well-disciplined German brigade.

Gen. Howe had already retired to his winter quarters in New York City, since armies typically ceased fighting in winter before commencing military operations in the spring. With the rebel army smashed and on the verge of quitting, Howe was convinced he could reason with the

Continental Congress and end the conflict the following year. The raid on Trenton changed everything. A distraught Lord Charles Cornwallis, who had prepared to depart for London and visit his ailing wife, found himself instead traversing New Jersey on New Year's Day in the rain, commanding a unit assigned to crush the rejuvenated rebellion.

Washington wasn't satisfied with the lone victory. He requested money from Philadelphia banker Robert Morris to finance further operations before retiring for the winter. He then addressed his men and asked them to stay for six more weeks. When none volunteered, Washington pleaded with an anguished face and begged in the name of their country and all that was at stake. His second appeal won them over.

On the evening of Jan. 2, an exhausted Cornwallis finally reached Trenton and engaged Washington and his men who were deployed across Assunpink Creek. His plans were to rest for the night and finish off the rebels in the morning. Cornwallis believed his enemies were trapped with nowhere to retreat. But Washington had no intention of retreating. Instead, he and his men quietly slipped away and attacked Princeton the following morning, where Cornwallis had left behind a brigade of men and much-needed provisions.

The Winds of Fortune Shift

What at first appeared to be a British victory turned into an American one as Washington charged into the battle on his white horse, rallied the retreating men, and personally led them back to the fight. The British and Americans were only 30 yards apart when Washington rode between the two lines and shouted at his men “Halt!” before yelling “Fire!” Both sides fired volleys and filled the scene with smoke. When the smoke cleared, Washington could still be seen on his horse as the enemy ran away. He not only secured another victory but unwittingly achieved the status of a mythical figure. The news of the victory and Washington's courageous actions inspired Americans across the nation to volunteer and continue the fight.

Despite the overwhelming odds, the defeats, people's skepticism about his ability to lead, and the bleak outlook for both the war and the revolution itself, Washington refused to quit. His determination and persistence made all the difference when a localized New England rebellion between the Sons of Liberty and British authority metastasized into a worldwide conflagration when France, Spain, Vermont, Mysore, and the Netherlands joined the war. When all seemed lost after a dismal 1776, fortune changed for America in only nine days as 1777 began with hope and optimism.

If 2019 was a tough year for you, think of George Washington, press on, and have a Happy New Year in 2020.

After Elizabeth's Passing

ANNETTE HINES

My daughter Elizabeth was the love of my life.

I know most people say their husband or their wife is the love of their life. But for me, I know it was her. Elizabeth just totally got me, and I got her. We spent a lot of time alone together, she and I. She was a good daughter. Even though she was so disabled, she was incredibly powerful in her way, and so good to me—and good for me.

She taught me so much, and not in that stupid, goofy way that people like to say. She really did help me learn about life. For one thing, she brought me to this great profession that I love. I get to meet so many awesome people because of her.

After Elizabeth passed, after the parade of people in our house, suddenly everybody was gone. The house was empty. A crew came and took away all her medical equipment. They removed her hospital bed, her medicines, everything. It was weird. Then I had to go to the funeral home and pick out a casket. I couldn't even think. I don't really remember much about it. It felt so surreal: What am I doing here, picking out a coffin, what am I even supposed to be asking for?

All in all, it felt like the longest week of my life. We buried her on Friday, four days after she passed. It was raining outside, and I remember waking up that morning and thinking that I just wanted it to rain forever. I never wanted the sun to shine again. It felt right somehow, appropriate, that it was so cold out. It was the kind of November cold that just sits in your bones and makes you hurt, you know?

When we buried her, I thought I was ready. I was so full of myself thinking about how smart I was that I had made all these preparations and how I was going to be ready when the time came. I wasn't ready. I'm still not ready.

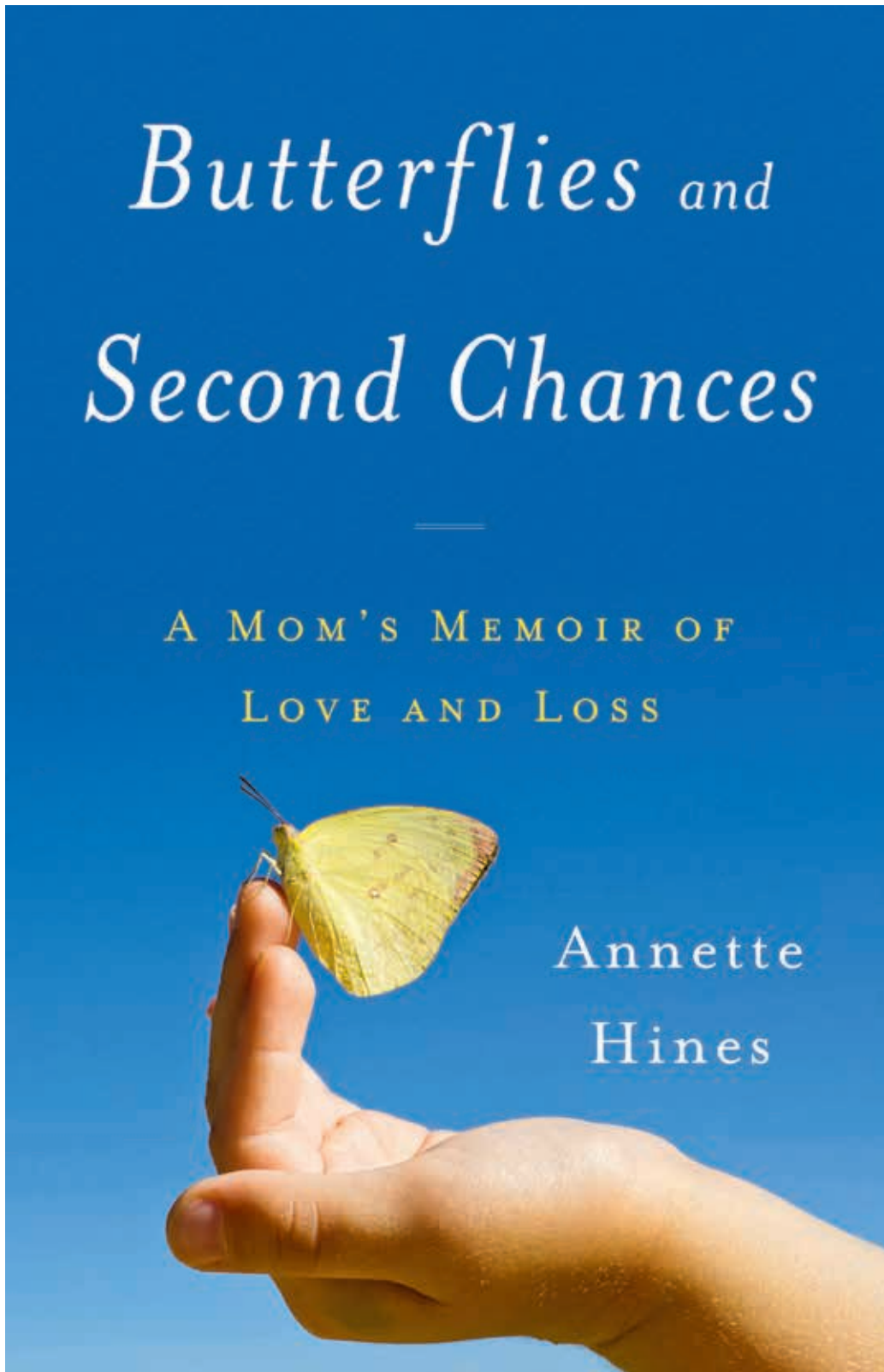
In the months after Elizabeth died, in fact for a whole year after, I was like a dead person, just walking around like a zombie. I still did my job; I connected with people. But it was all a charade. I struggled every morning just to get out of bed and go to work. I remember spending a lot of time that winter lying on my bed, doing nothing, just staring at the ceiling. Mark, my husband, took up the slack in terms of keeping the household running, getting Caroline, my other daughter, back and forth from school, calling in laundry service, having meals delivered. He was amazing. Me, I just couldn't get up. It was like my arms and legs and head were all so heavy, weighing me down. It took so much energy just to lift myself up out of bed, get my clothes on, and get out the door.

People had stopped visiting. For them, it was all over. For me, it was still such a difficult time. I couldn't think. Grief is funny that way, how it hits you. It's not always about the crying. It's not like you're in the same excruciating pain and agony that you were. But the grief is still there, it's deep, and it impacts you in other ways: it interferes with your memory, your ability to think and process information.

Grief comes like the ocean: It crashes over you like waves, then retreats for a little while, then comes back again. In the same way the waves reshape the shoreline, my grief would slowly reshape my life. It's a very gradual transition, just like with the seascape, but very powerful. It is the process of becoming something else.

At some point, almost a year after Elizabeth's death, I was able to get my footing again. The sand had come back and the tide had gone out. The waves weren't as strong. Whereas earlier, I felt like I was drowning, now the ocean was calm and I could catch my breath. I started to think clearly again, and to try to rediscover who I was in life and why I was doing what I was doing.

But then I started to question everything about myself. If I wasn't Elizabeth's mom anymore, who was I? The relationship had defined me for so long, almost my entire life. I had her right after I graduated from law school. It had been



"Butterflies and Second Chances: A Mom's Memoir of Love and Loss" by Annette Hines.

COURTESY OF ANNETTE HINES



Grief comes like the ocean: It crashes over you like waves, then retreats for a little while, then comes back again.



Annette Hines.

school, school, school, school, school, married, baby. My whole identity as an adult was being Elizabeth's mother. Without it, I was lost. I started to perform a kind of inventory of self. Yes, I was an attorney, but did I still want to do that kind of work? Did I want to get another job instead? Did I want to shut my practice down?

I was also a wife. Did I want to stay married to Mark? I loved him, but part of me wanted to just sell everything, shed all the trapping of my previous life, and move away with Caroline. I know how harsh that sounds, and I'm certainly glad I didn't do that, didn't act on those impulses. But at the time, I just didn't have anything left. As devoted as Mark had been to me, I didn't think I had it in me to love him the way he loved me. I was struggling just to love Caroline. It's awful, but it's the truth. I was struggling to feel anything at that time.

My family—my mom, my sister—were there for me during this time, but they also kept a distance. Everyone did. I get it now: It's just too painful. As much as people say they just want to help, the reality of losing a child is just so devastating and traumatic that it's too much to engage with. It's a psychological hurdle and most people can't make that leap. Unless they've been there themselves. I had known several people in my life who'd lost their children before me. I had been to their funerals. The beautiful thing is that every single one of those moms came to Elizabeth's wake and funeral. They all showed up for me, because they knew. They'd been through it, too. But they were the exception. The natural

instinct is to turn away, and that's what a lot of people did.

I was surprised at the number of friends, or people I had considered friends, who didn't reach out after Elizabeth passed. They were there for me during her active dying phase. And then right after, people came for a while to pay their respects. But then it was all over so quickly. Everybody just went on with their lives. I couldn't understand it. Was I also supposed to move on so quickly? How do people do that? I couldn't wrap my head around living without Elizabeth in my world.

When we had a luncheon at a local restaurant on the Friday morning after she died, the place was packed with friends. But strangely, I don't remember who exactly was there. Many of them didn't stay in my world for long after that. There were lots of cards and gifts. People sent these strange things to put out in my yard, ornaments to hang on the trees, little poems and angels and wind chimes.

I smiled and thanked everyone who gave me those gifts, but I didn't want them. I put them all in a box, and they're still sitting in that box. I haven't opened it since, but maybe one day, it will be time for me to pull them out. Back then, I wasn't ready. I did what I had to do to put up a brave face and keep up with appearances. But it would still be many years until true healing came.

It wasn't until the spring of 2015, the second spring after Elizabeth passed, that I started to come alive again. What changed? The turning point was when I attended a grief group—put on by Children's Hospital and the Dana Farber Cancer Institute—for parents who had lost their children through illness. The team at Children's had been trying to check in with me, calling and emailing, for a full year. But I just wasn't ready to talk or engage. I never answered, but to their credit, they kept trying. Then, one day, they sent me a note about the grief group.

Something about this invite struck a chord with me. I had almost tried something similar in the past, a group that the hospice had sent me to. But when I had gotten there, I couldn't do it. I had stopped and turned around—partly because I was terrified, but also because I realized I didn't want to hear about kids who had died from suicides and car accidents and the like. Those are terrible tragedies, of course, and I feel for the families, but I don't totally relate. They are a different kind of loss. It took me a while to figure this out: All loss is not the same.

Also, at that point I was still just mad. Back then, the hospice group had given me a little pamphlet to read, and it was just crap. I wasn't in the right state of mind to hear that kind of stuff. And there was a certain value in my feeling mad. It made me happy in a way. It was a step in the right direction. At least when I was mad, I wasn't numb. But when the invitation to the new grief group arrived, it was the right circumstances and the right time. Don't get me wrong: I was still mad, and I was definitely the angriest person in the group. I had the roughest edges. But the fact that the other parents had experienced the same kind of loss as me made a big difference. Those parents really touched me.

Not only that, but I got to reunite with some of the amazing hospital personnel whom I had lost touch with: my social worker and my nurse practitioner. It felt good. Everyone else who had been part of my world—the network who used to help me take care of Elizabeth—was now gone, all the teachers, all the nurses. I had no more Perkins people, no more health care people. Everything was just over. Done. So to see the social worker and nurse practitioner felt like a glass of water in the desert. They were almost the only ones left who were still part of my connection with Elizabeth.

But of course, there was also Mark. He came with me to the grief group and was able to listen, but it was also the first time he was able to talk and be heard. Because he was the newcomer to our situation and the best supporting actor, he never felt like he was able to claim the tragedy for himself. Finally, he was about to talk about it in that group, a full year and a half after Elizabeth died.

I never knew how he felt. Shame on me: I never asked him how he was doing. And even in that group, he talked maybe 20 percent of the time that I talked. But I got to have a little window into how he felt, and particularly how hard it had been for

him to see me so hurt and crushed by life. That group was so good for him; he got so much out of it. They were able to tell him things that I hadn't been able to say, like just what a wonderful person he was.

The grief group changed me, too. It was amazing in so many ways. We had different readings every week, and not all of them were slam-dunks but they were always thought provoking. We also each got a little bottle, and would add a new layer of colored sand each week, whatever color we chose. We did that for three months, and at the end we all had these beautiful bottles: a collage of colorful sand in different layers and different colors.

The layers were not all the same depth

and they were a little intermingled. But the whole project connected with me, like I was developing my own new shoreline. As art, it was imperfect, and always changing. Some weeks the sand would be black, some weeks pink or gray or brown or white. But I always felt like it represented what I was going through during this process of creating my new seascape.

It wasn't just about survival. It was a process of transformation. Through it all, I became something different and awesome. I still have the bottle to this day. It sits on top of my piano. Mark did one, too, and his sits next to mine.

It may have taken me a while to get in the groove of the grief group, but once I did, it was just what I needed, to let it

'Mercy, Pity, Peace': The Power of Forgiveness

JEFF MINICK

"... forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us ..."

I remember the exact place and time when the meaning of those words smacked me upside the head. It was February, and I was 41 years old and standing in the kitchen of our bed and breakfast, listening to a recording in which a female comedian, her name long forgotten, says the Lord's Prayer, only to be interrupted by God again and again for her failure to practice the tenets of the prayer. When she delivered the above line, I realized that with those words we are asking God to judge us as we judge others. Terrifying, if you are a believer.

Pardon Versus Resentment

Some people have a knack for forgiveness, a built-in ability to let go of insults or wrongs committed against them, water off the proverbial duck's back, so to speak. When another wounds them, they seek explanations instead of resorting to anger, understanding rather than bottling up hatred and resentment. Depending on the wrong committed, such people may not forget the harm done to them, but they know the liberating power of forgiving the transgressor, of letting go, and moving on.

Then there are those who don't forgive, who remain prison-pent in bitterness, stuck behind walls and bars of hatred they themselves have built. Blinded by animosity, deafened by resentment, they dream of revenge. Sometimes they become consumed by this desire to get even, rubbing salt into the wounds they have suffered, unaware of the healing and interior freedom forgiveness can bring.

When It's Personal

Many of us have witnessed firsthand the ugliness that results when pardon and clemency are nowhere to be found. When I was a kid, for example, my grandmother and her sister had a falling-out—I don't remember the cause—and they didn't speak to each other for years. Since then, I've known plenty of other families fractured by a lack of charity. Friends, too, sometimes turn away from each other, forswearing the good times and intimacy they've shared, often over a misunderstanding—a badly worded email, a disagreement over politics, even the misreading of a facial expression—that an explanation or an apology might set right.

Quite often, the hardest person in the world to let off the hook is the self. We may find it possible to dispense mercy to a coworker who slanders us, or to a spouse who has deserted us, but after we have hurt someone, extending William Blake's "mercy, pity, and peace" to ourselves can be one tough mountain to climb.



To forgive can be tough, but to ask for forgiveness can be tougher. Yet to do so can have profound consequences.

In my own case, I generally find it simple to forgive others, even, in two or three cases, people who have done me horrible wrongs, but forgiving the self—that is another beast altogether. A memory from 40 years ago can pop to mind, and I wince. My worst sins can return with unbidden ease, casting dark clouds over the brightest day, and not all the confessional booths in the world can clear those skies.

Sometimes, it pays to be kind rather than right.

Begging Your Pardon

To forgive can be tough, but to ask for forgiveness can be tougher. Yet to do so can have profound consequences. In 1997, a deranged Jordanian soldier gunned down seven eighth-grade Israeli girls. King Hussein of Jordan visited each family of the murdered girls, knelt before family members, and with tears in his eyes begged forgiveness for what had happened. This act of repentance changed the relationship between Jordan and Israel, and provided a powerful glimpse of hope in a region rampant with hatred.

After the First World War, the victors imposed humiliating terms of surrender on the Germans. The Treaty of Versailles showed little clemency or mercy to the Germans, and the resentment it provoked among them helped give rise to Nazism. In contrast, when the Second World War ended, the nation-states of Western Europe, which for six years had fought one another as bitter foes, decided to seek healing rather than revenge and recrimination.

As Joseph Ratzinger points out

all go and talk freely. It couldn't have happened earlier, until all the right pieces were in place. But now I had this group that I could really relate to, this tragic club of parents who had lost their children to disease. What an odd kind of community: It's a group you never expect to be a part of, and you certainly never want to join—

but there it is. Thank God that they were there for me, that they understood and wanted to listen. I didn't have that anywhere else. Healing doesn't come in a linear fashion. Rather, it shows up in patches, like puffs of smoke. You catch a piece of it and start to feel whole again, but then it evaporates. There are starts and stops. But like



the ocean, eventually the angry waves subside.

It marked the beginning of true healing for me. Finally, it was my time. I was ready for it, and I came out of the experience that spring with a renewed passion for my life.

Excerpted from "Butterflies and Second Chances: A Mom's Memoir of Love and Loss" by Annette Hines (Lioncrest Publishing, 2019).

Annette Hines, Esq. is the founder of the Special Needs Law Group of Massachusetts, PC. For more information, please visit SpecialNeedsCompanies.com

OKSANA ALEKSEEVA/SHUTTERSTOCK

LIGHTFIELD STUDIOS/SHUTTERSTOCK

was disappointed, he took his revenge by junking such entertainments.

- Sometimes, it pays to be kind rather than right. That old axiom will see us through many a misunderstanding, and given today's family squabbles about culture and politics, should probably be emblazoned on a banner over the dining room table at Thanksgiving and Christmas.
- And if we have wronged another? We have only to speak two simple words: "I'm sorry." The 1970 film, "Love Story," had as its advertising tag: "Love means never having to say you're sorry." This assertion—and the vast majority of married couples will back me up on this one—is absurd and false. When we hurt someone we love—and most of us do that, intentionally or unintentionally, on a regular basis—we tell that person we're sorry for the transgression and ask forgiveness.

The Time for Forgiveness Is Now

This charity from the heart takes us out of prison and brings us new life. We are no longer like Marley's ghost in "A Christmas Carol," dragging iron weights of past sins as we plod through the day. Forgiveness dissolves those weights.

A new year traditionally means new beginnings. What better time to give the green light to clemency and compassion, repair relationships, and make this winter the season of "mercy, pity, peace?"

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.

Damon West:

On Using His Story of Prison and Recovery to Inspire Good

CATHERINE YANG

Damon West had a perfect life on paper: loving family, star quarterback, promising career. Then he got hit with a life sentence at a maximum-security prison. The rosy biography belied a serious addiction problem that had begun at a young age, after a traumatic incident went unaddressed.

First it was pot and alcohol, then cocaine, and finally meth. The meth led to continuous theft on West's part, until he got caught. His sentencing was a reckoning, and prison was one fight after another, but he knew he had nowhere to go but up.

Seven years later, West made parole. It's been four years since he walked out of prison, and since then, he has ceaselessly told his story as part of his efforts to make amends.

"I know that my life and these presentations that I give can be used to stop somebody in that audience from going down that road that I went down. And if they don't go down that road, then their family doesn't have to go through what my family went through. And if they don't go down that road, then they don't create victims like I did. And if they don't go down that road, society is saved the burdens that us criminals, us addicts put on society to pay for the things we've done," West said.

It all started with a letter West received in prison in 2011, when his former junior high teacher told him that one day he would get out, and he had the opportunity to be a powerful messenger who could deliver hope.

"That was the message that planted a seed," West said. "Those seeds grew to be trees, those trees grew to be a forest now. I'm literally speaking to tens of thousands of young people every year, and it all started with that letter."

West speaks in prisons, too, and the state of Texas has agreed to have him speak in all 104 state prisons over roughly the next two years.

The Meth Days

West recounts the hazy days of his addiction in his book, "The Change Agent," which tells the story of his addictions, incarceration, and recovery.

As a cocaine addict, he was constantly



Kendell Romero, Clara Romero, and West at his parent's 50th wedding anniversary in June 2018.

"I tell people my worst day out here in the free world is better than my best day in prison. There's no comparison."

Damon West

(Below) West brings Hurricane Harvey supplies to the correctional officers at the Stiles Unit on Sept. 4, 2017. Less than two years earlier, these same guards had been watching over him inside the prison.

thinking about whether he had enough of the drug stashed. Sleep-deprived, nose bleeding, and with a cross-country trip ahead of him, West still felt like he had everything under control. The addiction only got worse once he tried meth.

Common sense went out the window, and his judgment completely lapsed—the only thing on his mind as an addict was when and where he could get more meth. West is intentional in filling the book's early chapters with details because he wants to be clear, honest, and make a point. His life is a cautionary tale. These were days of sex, drugs, alcohol, and crime, and there is no clear reasoning to be found.

West's meth habit led to him stealing cars and breaking into people's homes for goods and money, and then he finally got caught. In jail, his main thought was, when would be the next time he'd get high? The judge set a high bail and told him to keep clean. West said yes sir, made bail, and then got high.

Then West was brought back to jail again, was hit with more charges, and was stuck with an impossibly high bail.

During his trial, despite having a defense lawyer who seemed insistent on not lifting a finger and a jury who looked at him with contempt, West had the sinking realization that there was no one to blame but himself. He did commit the crimes he was charged with. No one made him do it. He was a man who had every opportunity in life to do well, and he squandered those opportunities.

Prison Journal

West kept a journal in prison, and when he got out, he showed it to a friend of his, who sent it to a publisher. It wasn't long before they were talking about a book.

But the best chapters hadn't been written yet, so West ultimately interspersed the stories from his times at the Mark Stiles prison with everything that happened before and after.

While in jail and on trial, West had no idea what kind of sentence he would receive. A life sentence, as he learned, was in reality a 60-year sentence. He ended up receiving 65.

"This was my rock bottom," West said. "What motivates me is the possibility of the potential to be useful every day," West said. "I know what a bad day looks like, and since I've been out of prison, I haven't had any bad days. I tell people my worst day out here in the free world is better than my best day in prison. There's no comparison. I have

promised to let Him.

Here was a place where race was radicalized and the universal language was violence. West doesn't spare details here either—it's not meant to be a pleasant place. At one point, he was put in a position to kill or be killed.

But he also now had all the time in the world to work on recovery. He met people who taught him he could be a positive force for change, rather than letting his environment harden him. He learned that there was nothing he could control but his own mind.

"Every addict must have a program of recovery," West said. "That requires me surrendering to God every day, it takes that daily surrendering, because that reprieve I've been given is contingent on my spiritual growth. And let me tell you, growth always takes place out of your comfort zone."

This is why he thinks his story has spread like wildfire: Addiction affects everyone, whether yourself, or a loved one, or even just as a taxpayer footing the bill for a prison; and it doesn't have to be a drug addiction either.

With a lot of work, West came to a turning point when he realized he had to give up his "self." His wishes, his entitlements, his ego, his illusion of control.

Because although his story is one of redemption, he is clear that he didn't do this alone. Family, mentors, and God had opened the right doors for him. Time and again, people put in place to judge where West would head next would look at his file and say his story wasn't quite like all the others they'd seen. He came from a good family, with parents who visited him more than 150 times while he was incarcerated, and had pillars of the community who vouched for and pledged their support to him.

"I had a lot of help along the way, a ton of help. God has opened so many doors for me," West said. He was absolutely determined to make use of this life he was given; he would do his best to become useful to society.

Becoming Part of the Solution

Four years ago, West walked free. Not long after, he started sharing his story, and has since been invited to schools, sports teams, and prisons to tell his story.

"What motivates me is the possibility of the potential to be useful every day," West said. "I know what a bad day looks like, and since I've been out of prison, I haven't had any bad days. I tell people my worst day out here in the free world is better than my best day in prison. There's no comparison. I have

EMILY BICKFORD



this tremendous perspective God has given me of what a bad day truly looks like, and that helps me get through my days."

When West shares his story, he hopes the lesson gleaned is that every one of us has the power to change, and to choose to have a positive effect on our environments.

Out of all the venues he speaks at, West believes he has the most impact in prisons. "I think this is the place I'm most valuable," West said. "This is the area where I think I have the most currency."

No inmate can accuse West of not having been sentenced to real time, as he had a life sentence, nor that he didn't really serve, as he was sent to Mark Stiles, which is a maximum-security penitentiary.

"So when I go into a prison, the response is overwhelming in that 100 percent of the audience is listening, they're hanging onto everything I'm saying because they want what I've got. And I want them to want what I've got," West said. "They know that I know what [their] misery is like."

Inside, hope is in short supply, and that's what West brings when he shares his story: hope and the possibility of redemption. Making parole had been like swimming upstream and required West's complete commitment to recovery, and that's the turnaround he hopes to see in others.

"I tell people all the time, it's like a thirsty man in a desert. If he sees a mirage and he's thirsty enough, he'll drink the mirage, he'll drink the sand thinking it's water and it'll kill him. That's what happens in prison," West said. "They're looking for a good leader, and in the absence of good leadership, they'll follow someone off a cliff, you see it all the time."

And the last few months, every time West has spoken at a prison, at least one or two people will point to his new wedding ring with a question.

"They'll be like, 'Your story is fascinating, Damon, but I want to know how you did that. How did you manage to find somebody who will love you?'" West said. "Out of all the stuff that happened in my story, all the stuff for them to gravitate toward and latch onto, they want to know, 'How did you do that, because I want that, too. I want that one day.'"

The Importance of Family

In May 2019, one decade after West was given his life sentence, he got married and became a husband and stepfather.

When he was in prison, he had similar

"I failed so completely in my life and my family would not get rid of me. My family would not let me go. They would not turn their back on me."

Damon West



West walking out of prison on Nov. 16, 2015.



West's mugshot, taken by the Dallas Police Department on July 30, 2008.

thoughts as all those inmates asking him about the ring.

"This was something I thought about the whole time. Would I ever find somebody who loves me, would I ever find a family that would take me in after all the mistakes I've made?" West said.

"It has been the biggest blessing that ever happened to me, and I would not have been able to have a relationship like that in my life without a program of recovery."

West himself is in a 12-step recovery program, and he says it requires of him vigorous honesty, accountability, and a willingness to work on it every single day of his life. The first three steps require surrendering to a higher power, and this in itself isn't as easy as it sounds.

"It takes humility," West said. "You have to be willing to make amends every time that you're wrong, and you have to admit that you're sorry, and be willing to make amends wherever you go. You have to admit your shortcomings, admit your flaws, show you're vulnerable," West said. That means being willing to forgive but forego forgiveness yourself. And that takes a lot of humility.

"I think the biggest obstacle to doing it is you have to give up the idea of control, you have to give up that fantasy of control we have as humans."

He learned from a man in prison, and writes in his book, that the only four things you can control are what you think, say, feel, and do. Everything else is in God's lane.

"If you focus on those four things that you can control, you can have an amazing life," West said. He can attest to it, and he hopes those he speaks to can apply those hard-earned lessons.

"We have these fears in life that we have no control of ... like all these fears I had about when I got out of prison: Will I be accepted, will people want anything to do with me—they're all unfounded. Because I came out of prison willing to share my story so that other people's kids don't have to make the same mistakes I made, and I became a valuable part of society. People see you as part of the solution instead of part of the problem," he said. "If you want to be accepted by society, you have to own what you have done."

"I think every person on the planet should have to work the 12-step recovery program at some point, because everyone is going through something," West said. Family is profoundly important, because we are the relationships we make. There's

a passage from a book that has stuck with West, where an old man tells a younger man that the families we're born into have to love us no matter what, but the families we choose are in some ways even more amazing because they choose to love us.

"My family, the way that they love me unconditionally, showed me what the importance of family is," West said. "Because when you go through a situation like that, really those are the only people who are going to be around you, when you've made such huge mistakes. I failed so completely in my life and my family would not get rid of me. My family would not let me go. They would not turn their back on me. And they showed me the importance of family."

The absolute hardest part of his story to tell is the damage he did to his own family. In his speeches, West talks about his steadfast and faithful parents who raised him well and refused to abandon him, and how they suffered because of his addiction. In his book, he includes a story that hurt to tell, when his grandmother came to live with him and he lied to her to cover his addiction and the criminal activity that took place right under her nose. She was becoming increasingly incoherent and couldn't even remember who he was.

"That's the biggest failure that I see as me as a human being, how I failed to adequately take care of her," he said. "It's one of those stories where no one would ever know, unless I told it."

His parents asked West if he wanted to reconsider, because it was such a painful story to admit to.

"If I was going to paint the picture of the dark side of addiction, the most horrible, ugly side of addiction, why didn't I show the most horrible, ugly thing I've ever done in my addiction?" he said. So he included it.

Despite all the dark moments in his story, West doesn't dwell on the past, or think about why things happened a certain way, or if there was something he could have changed.

"There was no way, in any way in my mind, that my life would turn out like this," West said. "For example, in January, I will become Professor West. I'm teaching a class on criminal justice at the University of Houston downtown."

"I think I had to go through everything I've been through in order to get to this place, this time right here," he said. "I had to fail so completely to end up where I am, so it's always a looking-forward thing, because I can't change the past. The past is done."

ALL PHOTOS COURTESY OF DAMON WEST UNLESS NOTED OTHERWISE



West playing high school football in Port Arthur, Texas, in 1993.

Damon West went from being a college quarterback to being hit with a life sentence in prison to transforming his world for the better.



West speaks to North Texas' football team at his alma mater in January 2017.



Mark Jackson grew up in Spring Valley, N.Y., where he attended a Waldorf school. At Williams College, his professors all suggested he write professionally. He acted professionally for 20 years instead. Now he writes professionally about acting in the movies.

POPCORN & INSPIRATION

A 'Little-Miss-Can't-Be-Wrong' Becomes Emotionally Literate

Film review: 'A Room With a View'

MARK JACKSON

I watched 1986's "A Room With a View"—Merchant Ivory's first chapter of a brilliant run of high-quality period-piece films—five or six times in the movie theater. It was unique and stood head and shoulders above the rest of its contemporary fare, except for maybe "Back to the Future" and 1986's "Platoon." This film review is about an artistically told tale of a Victorian-era "Little-Miss-Can't-Be-Wrong" learning to follow her heart and live her bliss.

Even though all the Merchant Ivory films were fabulous, for some reason I thought Merchant Ivory Productions was some kind of company brand that made Victorian soap operas. Maybe it was the name Ivory. Ivory soap. Period-piece soap operas. My younger mind was a little obtuse.

Classic novel adaptations (in this case E.M. Forster's novel of the same name) of high-production quality and world-class acting talent were what Merchant Ivory did. Merchant Ivory was the following team: director James Ivory,



ALL PHOTOS BY GINECOM

'A Room With a View'

Director
James Ivory

Starring
Helena Bonham Carter, Daniel Day-Lewis, Maggie Smith, Julian Sands, Judi Dench, Denholm Elliott, Simon Callow, Rupert Graves

Running Time
1 hour, 57 minutes

Not Rated

Release Date
March 7, 1986 (USA)

★★★★★

screenwriter Ruth Praver Jhavalva, and producer Ismail Merchant.

Down Memory Lane

Rewatching "A Room With a View" in 2019, I confirmed that my two favorite characters are the impetuous and passionate young George Emerson (Julian Sands) and his compassionate father (Denholm Elliott), whose healing effect on people is due to a generous soul and deep wisdom regarding affairs of the heart.

My next favorite was of course the debut of the then-19-year-old, petulantly pouting, luxuriantly maned Helena Bonham Carter, all frilly dressed, dark-browed, square-jawed, and exceedingly brooding and fetching. This level of beauty is often what drags young men into movie theaters, after all.

I loathed Cecil (Daniel Day-Lewis) in 1986, and now, in 2019, I see what happened: Day-Lewis, that ultimate chameleon character-actor-in-a-leading-man's-body, became the snobbish, pince-nez-wearing, priggish Cecil Vyse, with his obsessive-compulsive robotic cane-swinging, so thoroughly that I didn't see it as an acting perfor-

mance. This go-round, with my own acting career behind me, I enjoyed his performance like a fine wine.

The Proceedings

Lucy Honeychurch (Bonham Carter), a respectable young British lady of good breeding, is vacationing in Florence, Italy, chaperoned by one Miss Charlotte Bartlett (Maggie Smith).

The two are put out because they don't have a room with a view. Theirs is a back-alley view. At the Italian pensione's bed-and-breakfast-y communal dinner, they meet George Emerson and his father, the latter of whom insists they all swap rooms, since men are less concerned with having a good view.

The next day, Lucy manages to ditch Miss Bartlett and goes roaming the city. As fate would have it, she and George end up in the same piazza, where they witness a rather horrific stabbing. She faints, and George ministers to her. A powerful bond is forged, but she, in her youthful inexperience and prim-and-properness, fails to recognize it for what it is.

Later on in the vacation, they wind up in the same orchard, where the delight-

fully eccentric George climbs a tree and loudly declaims his creed. We hear him shouting in the distance, "Love!!! Beauty!!! Joy!!!"

Then, Lucy comes upon George meditating in a breeze-blown field of golden wheat and red lilies, where he sweeps her off her feet and kisses her, and she, despite herself, lets him, and, had Miss Bartlett not interrupted them, the realization that this was the love of her life would most likely have dawned on her. As it stands, it only serves to make her shore up her societal expectations more vehemently.

A few months later, back in England, Lucy gets engaged to the snooty Cecil Vyse. As fate would further have it, George and his father start renting a cottage in the vicinity.

Lucy's options are paraded before us: on the one hand, the supercilious Cecil awkwardly trying to smooch his new fiancée, cringe-worthily smooching his pince-nez against her face; on the other, the skinny-dipping George, cavorting with Lucy's brother Freddy (Rupert Graves) and the local pastor, The Reverend Mr. Beebe (Simon Callow). C'mon Lucy, wake up! Who's

1. (L-R) Dame Judi Dench, Dame Maggie Smith, and Helena Bonham-Carter in "A Room With a View."

2. Helena Bonham-Carter and Julian Sands in "A Room With a View."

3. Dame Maggie Smith (L), and Helena Bonham-Carter in "A Room With a View."

4. Julian Sands as George Emerson in "A Room With a View."

5. (L-R) Rupert Graves, Helena Bonham-Carter and Daniel Day-Lewis in "A Room With a View."

Examining the Myths of Socialism

Book review: 'The Case Against Socialism'

LINDA WIEGENFELD

Socialism in America is on the rise. A recent Gallup poll found that 45 percent of young American adults (aged 18-29) have a positive view of socialism, while 51 percent of this same group see socialism positively. Older Americans have been consistently more positive about capitalism than socialism; 58 percent of those between the ages of 30 and 49 have a positive view of capitalism, and 41 percent have a positive view of socialism. Of those aged 50 to 64, 60 percent have a positive view of capitalism and 30 percent have a positive view of socialism.

A reason for this rise in the favorability of socialism is due to the fact that young people grew up during the Great Recession, a time when the media did a poor job covering socialism, and a time when socialism prevailed as a popular ideology on American college campuses. Now, too, socialism is extolled by many of the Democratic progressive leaders such as Bernie Sand-

ers, Elizabeth Warren, and Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez.

As a result, there is a serious lack of knowledge about what socialism truly is. Socialism has killed millions, yet its many failures are barely mentioned by the media or our leaders.

The book "The Case Against Socialism" by Rand Paul is just the place for Americans to become acquainted with socialism.

Paul is the junior senator from Kentucky and a former physician. His book is a careful study of socialism that reaches a diagnosis: It is a spiritual illness that we should be vaccinated against. The examples that he includes to prove his point are solid and next to impossible to refute.

Paul defines socialism as a societal system in which the government owns the means of production. With socialism, the rights of the individual are made secondary to the desires of the collective. Democratic socialism is the same thing, just pitched in a gentler way. A natural outgrowth of socialism,

Paul says, is communism, where the government controls everything: all things political and the means of production. Lenin himself said, "The goal of socialism is communism."

False Ideas and Seeing Through Them

Paul's effectiveness in his book lies in taking pro-socialist arguments and picking them apart. Organized into six parts, the book contains 39 chapters with topics such as socialist countries, authoritarianism, economic inequality, climate change, and fake news, and in each he dispels fallacious assumptions upon which socialism rests.

FALSE IDEA: Government control of the private sector is a good thing for a country.

PAUL'S RESPONSE: Paul asks the reader to look at Venezuela's once-vibrant economy, which was so rich with oil (Venezuela still has the largest oil reserves in the world) and was destroyed by government control. Added to that was the na-



Sen. Rand Paul (R-Ky.) addresses the Faith and Freedom Coalition's Road to Majority Policy Conference in Washington on June 27, 2019.

tionalization of private companies, which the government mismanaged. The country fell rapidly: from 48 percent of the populace in poverty in 2014 to 87 percent in poverty in 2017. Today there is a humanitarian crisis that threatens to engulf the region.

FALSE IDEA: Income inequality between rich and poor slows economic growth.

PAUL'S RESPONSE: In reality, while the rich are getting richer so are the poor. Simply put, a rising tide lifts all boats. He points to the fact that low-income groups have access to goods and services that were previously unheard of. At no other time

in history have so few around the world lived in poverty.

FALSE IDEA: The Scandinavian countries are examples of socialism's success.

PAUL'S RESPONSE: In 2015, Denmark's prime minister chided Bernie Sanders and asked him to stop insulting his country by labeling it as socialist. Corey Iacono (who wrote for the Foundation for Economic Education) says that Scandinavian countries do indeed have heavy taxation and generous social welfare programs. But that does not make them socialist. Heavy taxation and wealth are promoted through the framework of a capi-

talistic democracy.

Paul adds that this mixture of big government and private ownership is not, however, free. These countries have the heaviest middle-class tax burden in the world. Historically, the Scandinavian countries have embraced high taxation of the middle class because they were actually using all of the services that they got in exchange. Free tuition and health care were not a safety net for the poor, but used by all. In the past, the high degree of cohesion in both racial and cultural identity among the citizens made it easy to determine priorities. Now with more immigration, signs of strain on services are starting to show.

FALSE IDEA: Throughout history, socialism has overthrown authoritarian regimes, which makes socialism a very positive force.

PAUL'S RESPONSE: One of the greatest ironies of modern political history is that as socialists around the world arose to overthrow authoritarian regimes, they ultimately replaced them—despite their promises to establish free democracies—with authoritarian regimes of their own.

FALSE IDEA: Socialism is the answer to climate change.

PAUL'S RESPONSE: Even the most ardent climate change alarmists acknowledge that this debate is about more than just pollution or temperature changes. Paul argues that the real motive behind the alarmists' efforts is the global redistribution of wealth and a worldwide socialist welfare state.

Paul wants to see a rational discussion of how much of climate change stems from natural causes and how much from man, and then with clarity proceed from there with the capitalistic system.

FALSE IDEA: The Nazis were not socialists.

PAUL'S RESPONSE: Despite the Nazis literally having "socialist" in their name—the National Socialist German Workers' Party—progressives persist in trying to convince the world that the Nazis were not socialists because they did not have the orthodox version. What is true is that the Nazis never wavered in their support of socialism. They simply believed they had a better form of it to offer. It is a fact that while the Nazis' industries were privately owned, it was in name only. State control over industry was so complete that, in reality, owners were essentially stripped of private control of their property. Paul further claims that progres-

sives do not want to claim Nazis as their own because of the Nazi policy of eugenics. However, eugenics is a natural outgrowth of socialistic policies. After all, if the state is controlling industry, and industry depends on workers, socialistic theory would allow the same for the production of babies. Why not have more strong people and fewer weak ones? Paul's quote is that "socialism and eugenics were not a historical anomaly but a historical symbiosis." He feels that eugenics is a danger whenever the collective is elevated over the individual.

Paul wonders why today Margaret Sanger is proudly promoted and lionized as the founder of Planned Parenthood in spite of the fact that she advocated for eugenics.

FALSE IDEA: Socialism encourages creativity since most basic needs are met.

PAUL'S RESPONSE: This is not so. Unauthorized ideas are dangerous ideas, because they can lead people to begin thinking for themselves and thus to begin thinking about the nature of socialism and its rulers. Complete control of the economy means complete control of all the people participating in that economy.

FALSE IDEA: Socialism isn't violent.

about) and gently points it out to her. However, a little grin at the shameless mischievousness of it all.

And then one day, George grabs Lucy and kisses her again, following it up with an impassioned speech, telling her that she can't marry Cecil. Cecil only wants Lucy as eye-candy to bolster his priggish foppery. George will lay down his life for her and walk on broken glass to win her heart. This still doesn't do it for Lucy, so self-deluded is she.

To be fair, Lucy's lived a thoroughly suffocating, Victorian existence of piano in the parlor, petticoats, P's and Q's, and prim-and-properness. These were the days when a lady's exposed ankle was enough to make a man beside himself with desire.

It must also be said, though, that this is an archetypal period in the life of a particular kind of young woman (a good example of which is the song "Little Miss Can't Be Wrong" by the 1990s alt-rock group the Spin Doctors). There's a specific type of young woman who would rather be right than be happy. She'd rather die than admit her feelings of ardor for a young man—the need to cut off the nose to spite the face is all-powerful. It can take her until her mid-40s to experience enough heartache to be able to lose that stubborn attachment and then realize that she's exhausted and would now rather be happy than right.

It is ultimately kind, old, free-thinking, Thoreau-reading Mr. Emerson who recognizes Lucy's love for his son that she's willfully suppressing (and lying

about) and gently points it out to her. Which unleashes a floodgate of tears of relief at finally allowing the truth of the matter to enter her conscious mind.

Love! Beauty! Joy! "A Room With a View" is visually sumptuous, with Italian architecture, Tuscan vistas, wooded British byways populated with horses and carriages, and Victorian costumes, all of which are moving aesthetically.

The sense of nature is strong. All of which stands in sharp contrast to the dry, intellectual comportment of the characters, and fusty convention of lives lived from a place of timidity and fear.

George, his father, and Freddy (to a lesser extent) are the sources of passion in the story, and passion, in this case—is truth. Lucy's passionate nature emerges only when she plays Beethoven; otherwise, it's stuffed up and padlocked. George disagrees with Reverend Beebe that these are all chance meetings. He knows they're fate and destiny. George's unfettered passion for Lucy ultimately frees Lucy's own passion for life. The Emersons, senior and junior, encourage us to look within, think about, and acknowledge consciously how we feel.

"A Room With a View" was nominated for eight Academy Awards (including Best Picture and Best Supporting Actress and Actor for Maggie Smith and Denholm Elliott). It ultimately won three: Best Adapted Screenplay, Best Art Direction-Set Decoration, and Best Costume Design.

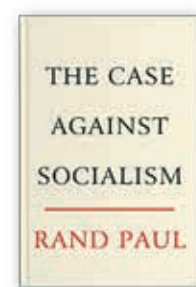
China, the state prophesied in the dystopian book "1984" is a real-

ity, but with modern technology.

Is There Hope?

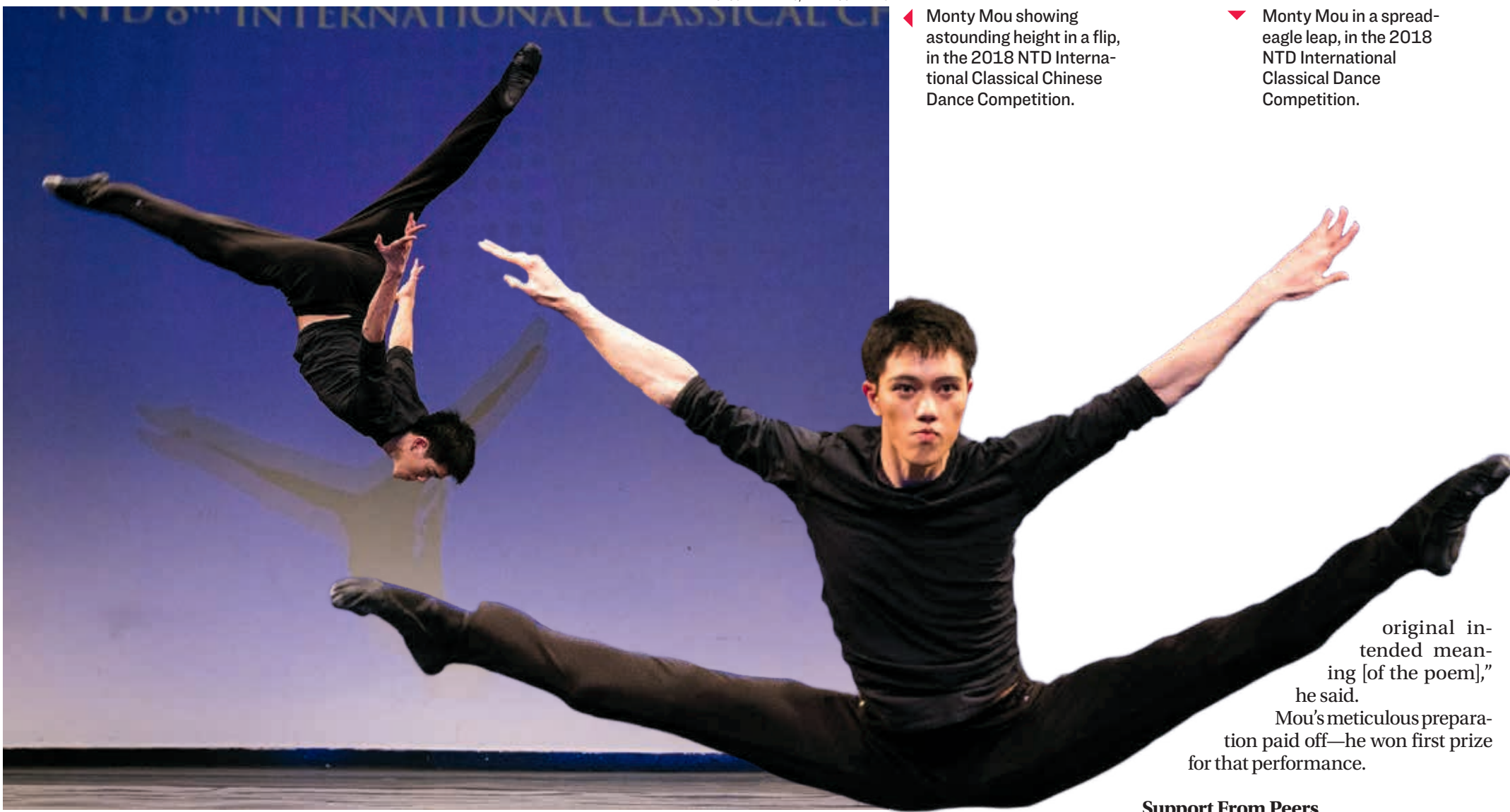
In a country in which youth is turning toward socialism, Paul ends his book with measured hope for the next generation. He hopes that they will come to understand that free markets and free people have produced better health, longer life expectancy, and reduced poverty and suffering around the world. He hopes that they will choose liberty.

Linda Wiegenfeld is a retired teacher with 45 years' experience teaching children. She can be reached for comments or suggestions at LWiegenfeld@aol.com

**'The Case Against Socialism'**

Rand Paul
Broadside Books
368 pages

ALL PHOTOS BY DAI BING/THE EPOCH TIMES



▶ Monty Mou showing astounding height in a flip, in the 2018 NTD International Classical Chinese Dance Competition.

▶ Monty Mou in a spread-eagle leap, in the 2018 NTD International Classical Chinese Dance Competition.

original intended meaning [of the poem],” he said. Mou’s meticulous preparation paid off—he won first prize for that performance.

SHEN YUN PERFORMING ARTS

Shen Yun Principal Dancer Monty Mou on the Expressive Power of Classical Chinese Dance

CATHY HE

NEW YORK—Dancing wasn’t exactly at the top of Monty Mou’s agenda when he first started. It was his mother’s idea to send the Sydney-raised Mou to Taiwan to receive basic training in classical Chinese dance. There, he was thrust into a grueling schedule of long days filled with stretching, tumbling technique practice, and Chinese dance 101. “It was boring, tedious, and really arduous,” Mou said. After years of this hectic regimen, Mou returned to Australia and resolved to never dance again. Fast forward a decade and Mou is now a principal dancer with Shen Yun Performing Arts, the premier classical Chinese dance company based in New York. For almost six months each year, he tours the world performing gravity-defying leaps, depicting scholars and soldiers from ancient dynasties, and telling stories through dance from China’s 5,000-year civilization. In 2018, he won first place in New Tang Dynasty (NTD) Television’s International Classical Chinese Dance Competition; he had won second place just two years before.



“The better a person, the cleaner and purer you are on the inside. Then your art, what you express, is clean and pure, and it will give people a good feeling.”

Monty Mou

York, to further develop his skills. It was there that he finally committed to the art form. “When you first begin dance ... it seems like something not for men,” he said. “Especially when you have to wear tights ... It’s very uncomfortable.” But over time, he came to realize the expressive power of classical Chinese dance—and from then on, he was hooked. “You can move the audience,” he said, similar to how watching a movie or reading a book can stir a person to the point of crying or laughing. “And to me that was very interesting.” Classical Chinese dance’s expressive power, however, does not come from merely acting the external movements, according to Mou. A dancer’s inner expression is just as important. Known as “yun” or bearing, this concept is integral to classical Chinese dance, which seeks to convey a person’s inner world through outward form. This is why a dancer’s moral values and realm of thought is so important, Mou said. “If your inner world is full of things that are negative, then what you’re expressing is obviously negative,” he said. “So, the better a person, the cleaner and purer you are on the inside. Then your art, what you express, is clean and pure, and it will give people a good feeling.” Mou recalls with pride his performance at the 2018 NTD International Classical Chinese Dance Competition, in which he depicted the Chinese master poet Li Bai in a dance based on his poem “Drinking Alone Under the Moon.” The poem captures the feelings of Li Bai as he enjoys a jug of wine by himself under the moon. There is a sense of joy, tinged with deep yearning and loneliness, Mou said. The challenge thus lay in how to convey this complicated feeling through physical movement. Mou immersed himself in Li Bai’s poetry, read his biography, and watched other dancers’ interpretations of the same poem in an effort to grasp the “realm of thought” behind the words. “I tried to get as close as possible to the

Support From Peers Mou credits his success to the support of his peers and the lessons he’s learned over the years in New York and Taiwan. One of them was facing his fears when learning new tumbling techniques. “Whenever someone tries a new technique, it’s scary,” he said. “There’s a fear factor involved when you flip backward. And it’s quite normal to get injured on the smallest things.” At Fei Tian Academy, Mou was always pushed to be the first person in his class to try out a new flip or tumbling technique. Luckily, he always had friends who helped him with tackling these tricky assignments. “I wouldn’t be able to do that if it weren’t for a lot of the people who helped me during my time here,” he said. Despite not enjoying it at the time, Mou is also thankful for his training in Taiwan, which forged his ability to endure hardships and treat difficulties as opportunities for improvement. “It was a test of mental and physical endurance,” he said. Being a principal dancer, Mou relishes the opportunities that it brings him to learn and experience new things. And of course, there’s the responsibility involved. “If you don’t do well, then you can’t hide—you can’t really be average.” But Mou isn’t daunted by this pressure, partly because he’s clear on why he’s working so hard to achieve perfection on stage: to expose the persecution of the spiritual practice Falun Gong in China. Along with showcasing stories from China’s 5,000-year history, Shen Yun Performing Arts also depicts the Chinese communist regime’s suppression of Falun Gong practitioners. Since 1999, the regime has sought to eradicate the practice by subjecting adherents to detention, brainwashing, forced labor, torture, and even death. Mou himself is a Falun Gong practitioner and is guided by the practice’s moral teachings—based on the principles of truthfulness, compassion, and tolerance—in his daily life. With these values as his compass, Mou’s goals as a dancer dovetail with his general aspirations in life. “I want to uplift my realm of thought, and to put it really simply, I just want to become a better person.”

Shen Yun Inspires Audiences for the New Year

ALL PHOTOS BY NTD

CATHERINE YANG

Documentary maker Nicole Zak walked out of the theater feeling like a weight had been lifted. Zak had seen advertisements for Shen Yun Performing Arts for many seasons and finally bought herself a ticket, but the experience was one that went beyond what she imagined. “I came here and then I watched it, and I kid you not, I’m sincere and earnest when I say that I walked out feeling like a weight lifted a little bit,” she said at the War Memorial Opera House in San Francisco on Jan. 4. This year, two of the short dance pieces in New York-based Shen Yun depict how the peaceful spiritual practice Falun Dafa is being unjustly persecuted in China. Falun Dafa includes meditative exercises and moral teachings based on truthfulness,

compassion, and tolerance. Zak was interested in learning more about it. “Leaving this performance, I feel extremely peaceful. I feel healed to an extent in which I want to explore the practice further, because if you can just walk out of a theater feeling this way, what can you do when you actually participate in the practice?” Zak said. She felt that Shen Yun gave her “a lot to think on and a lot to chew on, mentally and spiritually.” In Montreal, audience members felt seeds of change planted in their hearts after seeing Shen Yun. “I felt a lot of emotions in the show. I look at the faces, the expressions, the colors ... for me it was wonderful. Sometimes I cried a little,” said Javier Hoyos, a network manager, who saw a performance on Jan. 4 at the Place des Arts with his wife Magda Sedra, a teacher.

The couple said they saw themes of harmony, peace, loyalty, and integrity, values that have been eroded over time in the world today. “And it’s good to rename them, bring them back to the surface, and present them to people again. There were children sitting there, of all ages, and I think it’s a beautiful, healthy message,” Sedra said. “We walk out of this show with a little seed planted again,” she said. For more information and tickets, see ShenYunPerformingArts.org. The Epoch Times considers Shen Yun Performing Arts the significant cultural event of our time and has covered audience reactions since the company’s inception in 2006. The Epoch Times is a media sponsor of Shen Yun Performing Arts.

Nicole Zak at the San Francisco War Memorial Opera House on Jan. 4, 2020.



Javier Hoyos and Magda Sedra at the Place des Arts in Montreal on Jan. 4, 2020.



FOR KIDS ONLY

THE EPOCH TIMES

Week 3, 2020



The Mountain

by Emily Dickinson

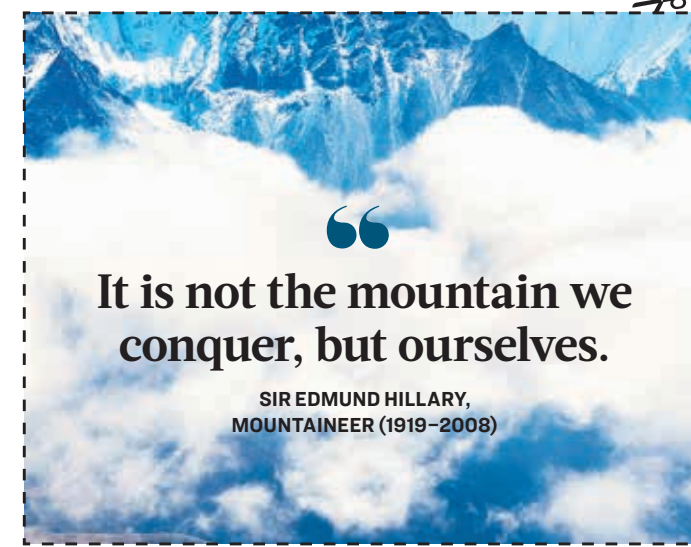
The mountain sat upon the plain
In his eternal chair,
His observation omnifold,
His inquest everywhere.

The seasons prayed around his knees,
Like children round a sire:
Grandfather of the days is he,
Of down the ancestor.

VIXIT/SHUTTERSTOCK



WHAT DO MOUNTAINS WEAR TO KEEP WARM?



It is not the mountain we conquer, but ourselves.

SIR EDMUND HILLARY,
MOUNTAINEER (1919–2008)

A MIRACLE HAPPENS ON THE HUDSON



AP PHOTO/REBE TO MATTHEWS
AP/WIDEWORLD/SHUTTERSTOCK

On Jan. 15, 2009, a passenger plane piloted by Capt. Chesley Sullenberger III, flew into a flock of Canada geese. The plane’s engines were severely damaged. Sully, though, managed safely land the plane and all 155 of its passengers on none other than the Hudson River. The event became known as the “Miracle on the Hudson.” On the 10th anniversary, Sully wrote on Twitter, “This was a novel event that we had never trained for. In our flight simulators it was not possible to practice a water landing. Yet, I was able to set clear priorities. I took what I did know, adapted it, and applied it in a new way to solve a problem I’d never seen before.”



Capt. Chesley Sullenberger III

CHRIS MCGRATH/GETTY IMAGES

By Aidan Danza, age 13

FEEDING BIRDS IN WINTER

ALL PHOTOS BY SHUTTERSTOCK

Winter is, in my experience, the best time to feed birds in your backyard.

They have a hard time finding food elsewhere, so they will flock to your feeders in large numbers. Birds like different foods in winter than they do in summer, and different birds like different foods and different feeders.

THE FEEDERS

I recommend getting two feeders: a large, preferably metal, tube feeder with holes and perches in the sides, and a hopper at the bottom for larger birds. Don’t waste time on a squirrel-proof one. I will say that I have never seen any bird feeder that is supposed to repel squirrels succeed. While you will be entertained watching the squirrels figure the feeder out, once they do, they’ll chow down. The second feeder you should get is a suet cage. Suet cages are a metal cage in the shape of a suet cake. You can get any kind of garden-variety cage if you want—as long as it isn’t going to break as soon as you open it, you’re fine. You can also throw large amounts of seed onto the ground, because many birds actually prefer this to bird feeders. The configuration described above will bring birds in—these methods are a favorite of blue jays, mockingbirds, mourning doves, and almost any kind of sparrow in your area. Just remember to keep your feeders full.



THE SEED

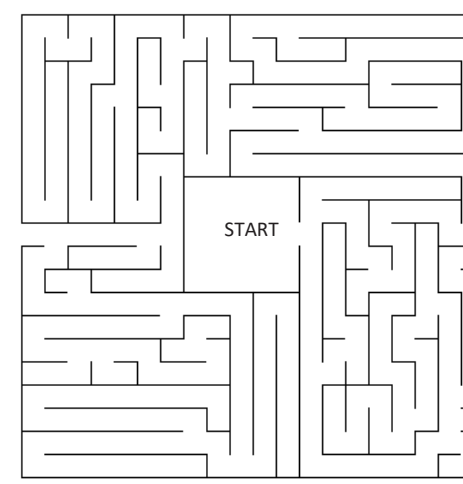
I buy a blend of black-oil sunflower and white millet seed from a small bird specialty store. Of course, you could make your own mix. I recommend buying a large, 20-pound bag of sunflower seed and two small, five-pound bags of white millet, and mixing them in a small metal trashcan bought specifically for the purpose of mixing and storing seed. Keep it in a garage or shed—trust me, you don’t want squirrels, raccoons, possums, or bears getting into thirty pounds of birdseed! It will be heavy, so when filling your feeders, bring them to the seed can.



THE SUET

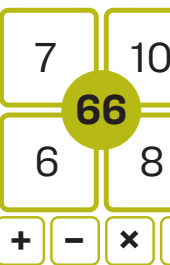
Suet is a fatty substance birds love in summer and winter. You can get it at almost any bird specialty store, home improvement stores, and some farm supply stores. It comes in rectangular cakes, sized to fit in its own feeder called a suet cage.

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



Solution For Easy 1

9 × (2 - 8 + 0)

Medium puzzle 1



Solution for Medium 1

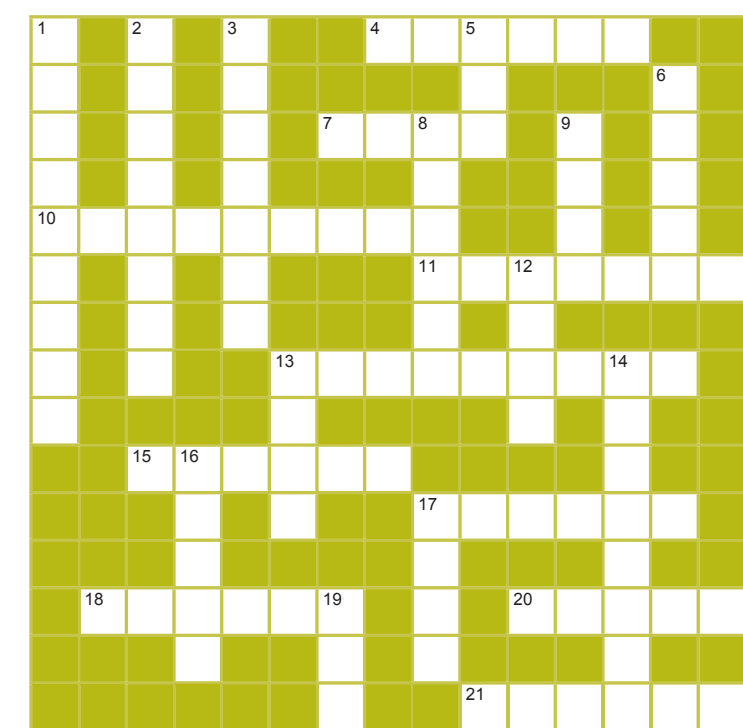
0! × (2 - 6 - 9)

Hard puzzle 1



Solution for Hard 1

22 - 6 + 0! + 1!

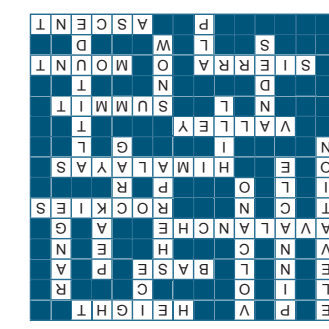


Down

- 1 29,029' for Everest (9)
- 2 Acme (8)
- 3 Mount St. Helens (7)
- 5 Mountain climber’s problem (3)
- 6 The Sierra Nevada, e.g. (5)
- 8 Himalayan guide (6)
- 9 Mountain top (4)
- 12 Rugged rock (4)
- 13 Very old (worn down) mountain (4)
- 14 Mountain climber’s sickness (8)
- 16 South American range (5)
- 17 “Frozen lace,” in haiku (4)
- 19 Matterhorn, e.g. (3)

Across

- 4 Elevation (6)
- 7 Climber’s starting camp (4)
- 10 Alpine phenomenon (9)
- 11 The U.S.’s tallest range (7)
- 13 “Roof of the World” (9)
- 15 Found between mountains (6)



- 17 Pinnacle (6)
- 18 ___ Club (6)
- 20 Get up onto (5)
- 21 Climb (6)



View Subscriber Information at Our Customer Portal

service.TheEpochTimes.com

Manage Your Account Details

- Shipping address
- Contact details
- Payment information
- Billing history

FAQ

- Can I change my subscription plan?
- How will I be billed?
- How can I pause my subscription?
- What's The Epoch Times' story?

Buy a Gift Subscription

ePaper Settings

- Manage your ePaper logins
- Reset your password

File Delivery Complaints

Check Terms and Conditions

Don't Have a Subscription Yet? Visit ReadEpoch.com, call 917-905-2080, or email subscribe@epochtimes.com to get Truth and Tradition delivered to you.

THE EPOCH TIMES

TRUTH AND TRADITION

TRUTH AND TRADITION Can Be Blocked but Never Stopped

Here's how you can help bring Truth and Tradition to every household in America

You know that traditional journalism like ours is under attack by legacy media and Big Tech. That's why we need your help to restore honest journalism based on Truth and Tradition. Just as you're informed and inspired by The Epoch Times, your friends and family can be as well. The more people who know the truth, the more freedom we can all enjoy.

As a valued subscriber, you know well the values and tenets of The Epoch Times, and now you can pass those

along to friends and family members of your choice. With your referral, they'll experience Truth and Tradition by subscribing to The Epoch Times for just \$3* for 3 months. At the same time, you'll receive a month added to your subscription for free. It's our way of saying "thank you" for helping us spread the news—and the truth!

Why not refer your friends and family to The Epoch Times right now? Simply visit ReadEpoch.com/Friends



NO SPIN. NO HIDDEN AGENDAS. NO FALSE NARRATIVES.
NO CORPORATE CONTROL. TRADITIONAL JOURNALISM.
HONEST OPINIONS. FEATURES YOU'LL ENJOY.

GET MORE WHEN YOUR FRIENDS SUBSCRIBE:

FOR YOU: 1 MONTH FREE • FOR THEM: 3 MONTHS FOR \$3*

READERS
TELL US OUR
NEWSPAPER
FEELS LIKE
"HOPE IN
DARKNESS."

*Refer a friend or family member online at ReadEpoch.com/Friends, and when that person subscribes with you, you'll get an extra month added to your existing subscription. Your friend will receive a \$3 for 3 months plan because of you—our valued subscriber. Their plan will renew at the rate of \$16.90 per month at the end of their first 3 months.

FINE ARTS

The New Year's Spirit: Improving on the Past

The Renaissance's new artform that embodied the era's pioneering and innovative spirit



Portrait of Emperor Charles V, circa 1519, by Daniel Hopfer. Etching, plate. Gift of Junius S. Morgan, 1919; The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York.

J.H. WHITE

NEW YORK—The New Year is synonymous with new beginnings, resolutions, and growth. You look to your past to craft a better future. The Renaissance was similar.

The Renaissance, or "revival," rediscovered classical Greek philosophy and perspectives on art that would lay the foundation for a new wave of innovation and, in time, merit its reputation as the West's Golden Age.

So the new era, married with the past,

would guide mankind for centuries in its developments of art and expressions of deep, thought-provoking themes, often expressing spirituality. The artform of etching, which took off in the Renaissance as painters gravitated toward the new medium, was a microcosm of the

era's spirit for exploration, experimentation, and most of all, beauty.

These understandings came to life as soon as I walked into The Metropolitan Museum's exhibition "The Renaissance of Etching," showing until Jan. 20.

Continued on Page 17



THE EPOCH TIMES

ARTS & TRADITION

To advertise, call 212-292-8359 or email advertise@epochtimes.ny

LITERATURE

Celebrating America: The Poetry of Rosemary and Stephen Vincent Benét

JEFF MINICK

When I was around 9 or 10 years old, my family was visiting my mom's parents, who operated a dairy farm in Pennsylvania. The house owned by my grandparents was nearly 200 years old, and at night the shadows in the rooms, the dim-lit stairs, and the creaking floorboards often fired up ghosts in the imaginations of those of us in the younger set. Those terrors doubled one evening after we watched a televised version of "The Devil and Daniel Webster," the story of a New England farmer, Jabez Stone, who sells his soul to the Devil for seven years of prosperity. If memory serves, the show was in black-and-white, and it left me in bed that night staring into the darkness for what seemed an eternity, terrified to close my eyes and sleep.

It wasn't until I was a teenager and reading one of my father's college anthologies that I realized the writers for that show had taken the script from Stephen Vincent Benét's story by the same name. I read and reread that story, not for the horror but for its rich portrayals of men like that famous orator, politician, and son of New Hampshire, Daniel Webster, who defends Jabez Stone in a trial against the Devil, and of the villains whom Mr. Scratch—New Englanders frequently referred to the Devil as Old Scratch—summons for a jury, including Edward Teach, known popularly as Blackbeard.

When I taught American history to seminars of homeschoolers, we usually kicked off the year with Benét's "The Ballad of William Sycamore," a rollicking poem about a pioneer and his place in the history of the movement west. Too long to include in its entirety here, let's look at the first three stanzas of this ballad:

My father, he was a mountaineer,
His fist was a knotty hammer;
He was quick on his feet as a running deer,
And he spoke with a Yankee stammer.
My mother, she was merry and brave,
And so she came to her labor,
With a tall green fir for her doctor grave
And a stream for a comforting neighbor.
And some are wrapped in the linen fine,
And some like a godling's scion;
But I was cradled on twigs of pine
In the skin of a mountain lion.

Sharp Names That Never Get Fat

In poem and story, Benét celebrated America and Americans. Here are the first and last stanzas of "American Names."

I have fallen in love with American names,
The sharp names that never get fat,
The snakeskin-titles of mining-claims,
The plumed war-bonnet of Medicine Hat,
Tucson and Deadwood and Lost Mule Flat.

I shall not rest quiet in Montparnasse.
I shall not lie easy at Winchelsea.
You may bury my body in Sussex grass,
You may bury my tongue at Champmeley.
I shall not be there. I shall rise and pass.
Bury my heart at Wounded Knee.

A Writer Rediscovered

For many years, I took no more interest in Benét until when in my teaching days, I began stumbling across his other work, mostly his poetry. I read his most famous book-length poem about the Civil War, "John Brown's Body," which won him a Pulitzer Prize for Poetry in 1929. And I looked at "Western Star," another book-length Pulitzer-winning poem unfinished at Benét's early death from a heart attack.

Benét (1898-1943) was a writer who both loved and critiqued America. In this short poem, for example, he introduced Daniel Boone to my children, and later to my grandchildren:

When Daniel Boone goes by, at night,
The phantom deer arise
And all lost, wild America
Is burning in their eyes.



PUBLIC DOMAIN

Benét also wrote "The Sobbin' Women." This short story was based on the legend from ancient Rome about the capture of the Sabine women by the Romans, and Benét set it on the American frontier. Hollywood later made this tale into the 1954 film "Seven Brides for Seven Brothers."

American Duet

In 1921, Benét married Rosemary Carr (1898-1962), who was also a writer and a poet, and who after her husband's death strove to keep his reputation alive. The husband-and-wife team collaborated on "A Book of Americans," a look at various figures from American history that can be enjoyed by children



RKO RADIO PRODUCTIONS



PUBLIC DOMAIN



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.

1. "Daniel Boone Escorting Settlers Through the Cumberland Gap," 1851-52, by George Caleb Bingham, is a famous depiction of Boone.

2. "A Book of Americans" by Rosemary and Stephen Vincent Benét.

3. Edward Arnold (L) as Daniel Webster and Walter Huston as Mr. Scratch in the 1941 film "The Devil and Daniel Webster," originally titled "All That Money Can Buy."

4. Stephen Vincent Benét's college year-book photo of the Yale class of 1919.

and adults alike. This volume contains Rosemary Benét's well-known "Nancy Hanks," with this enchanting opening stanza:

If Nancy Hanks
Came back as a ghost,
Seeking news
Of what she loved most,
She'd ask first
"Where's my son?
"What's happened to Abe?
"What's he done?"

Other Observations

At the Poetry Foundation, John Griffith offers an excellent sketch of Benét and his literary contributions. Two details in this account are striking.

First, as Griffith points out, from 1928-1943, Benét's work was more widely read than that of "Robert Frost, T.S. Eliot, William Carlos Williams, or Wallace Stevens," and that "his books sold in the tens of thousands"—this at

a time when the American population was about a third of what it is now. That figure in itself is telling, both in regard to the loss of stature of poetry today and the regard with which it was held less than 100 years ago.

Griffith then adds "Since that time, his reputation has declined steeply among literary sophisticates to the point where his poetry is seldom included in college anthologies and his name is often neglected in literary histories."

In my copy of "Literature: An Introduction to Fiction, Poetry, and Drama (Sixth Edition)," a volume nearly 1,900 pages long, I find hundreds of works by poets, writers, and playwrights, but no story or verse, or for that matter, no mention at all of Stephen Vincent Benét.

Yet as Griffith also tells his readers, Benét's "poems and several of his short stories remain steadily in print, finding a sizable audience among general readers year after year."

The Continuing Relevancy to Our Times

Readers enjoy Rosemary and Stephen Benét for their depictions of famous American figures and events, but also, I suspect, because some of what they had to say speaks to the 21st century. At the end of "The Devil and Daniel Webster," for example, Daniel Webster inquires of Mr. Scratch: "I have fought for the Union all my life. Will I see that fight won against those who would tear it apart?"

A pertinent question then and a question pertinent now.

Treat yourself by reading some of the works of these two writers. Several of their books are still in print. Others can be purchased secondhand. Their poems can be found online.

The Benéts remind us of where we came from. They remind us of who we were and who we are. They remind us of what we should be.

Become a Published Author with Dorrance.
We want to read your book!

Trusted by authors for nearly 100 years, Dorrance has made countless authors' dreams come true.

DORRANCE PUBLISHING CO. INC. EST. 1928

Our staff is made up of writers, just like you, and we are dedicated to making publishing dreams come true.

Complete Book Publishing Services

FIVE EASY STEPS TO PUBLICATION:

1. Consultation
2. Book Production
3. Promotion
4. Distribution
5. Merchandising and Fulfillment

Call now to receive your **FREE Author's Guide**
877-655-4006 or www.dorranceinfo.com/epoch

What Our Readers Say:

It's the only sane newspaper amidst all this insanity.
STAN K., PASTOR

It's bringing morality back to newspapers.
LISSA T., BUSINESS OWNER

It's the only paper that I know of right now that actually gives you the honest, old fashioned journalism.
DRUEL, BUSINESS OWNER

You're presenting the facts and letting the reader decide.
TERRI B., BUSINESS OWNER

Everything I read in it is fair and balanced, compared to other newspapers.
JUNE V., RETIRED BANKER

\$1 FIRST MONTH!

THE EPOCH TIMES
TRUTH AND TRADITION

Subscribe @ ReadEpoch.com

FREER GALLERY OF ART



Bodhisattva Avalokiteshvara (Gwaneum), Goryeo Dynasty, mid-14th century, Korea. Hanging scroll mounted as a panel; ink, color, and gold on silk. Gift of Charles Lang Freer.

Bodhisattva Avalokiteshvara (Gwaneum) Korea, Goryeo Dynasty, circa 1220–1285. Gilt wood and gilt copper and iron with crystal inlays.



NATIONAL MUSEUM OF KOREA, SEOUL

A Rare Beauty That Bestows Fearlessness for Buddhists

The deity Bodhisattva Avalokiteshvara at the Smithsonian

LORRAINE FERRIER

Life can be hard. When faced with fear, crisis, and hardship, some Buddhists call out to Bodhisattva Avalokiteshvara for help. Avalokiteshvara immediately responds by bestowing fearlessness, according to Chapter 25 of the Buddhist scripture known as the Lotus Sutra.

Stated in the same chapter:

He rains down sweet dew and Dharma rain,
Which extinguish the flames of affliction.

Dharma refers to the Buddha's teachings that Buddhists believe to be the universal, eternal truth.

The Lotus Sutra mentions 33 different forms of Avalokiteshvara: male or female, human or nonhuman. Avalokiteshvara could be anyone from a god to a layman, a king to a beggar, an elder to a youth, or even a heavenly dragon, and all manner of spirits. Whatever form Avalokiteshvara takes is always the best for the situation at hand and the spiritual growth of the being seeking help. Bodhisattva Avalokiteshvara is known as the bodhisattva of infinite compassion and mercy.

Bodhisattvas such as Avalokiteshvara are on earth solely to save living beings from the pain and suffering that comes from being bound by the cycle of birth, life, and death—a cycle that Buddhists call samsara. Just as a mother selflessly puts her children's needs before her own, so does the bodhisattva put the needs of all living beings first. As a high spiritual being, a bodhisattva has only one lifetime to undergo before obtaining the state of a supreme Buddha. And during that lifetime, the bodhisattva vows to attain enlightenment (spiritual awakening) in order to help others, a selfless act that Buddhists call bodhicitta.

Buddhists believe they will receive the blessings and protection of bodhisattvas by reciting mantras and bringing offerings to them at temples.

The name of Bodhisattva Avalokiteshvara changes from country to country, but each represents the same deity. Many may be familiar with the Chinese name Guanyin. In Korea, Avalokiteshvara goes by the name of Gwaneum.

A Korean 13th-Century Sculpture of Gwaneum

Right now, a rare sculpture of Gwaneum can be seen up close at the Smithsonian's National Museum of Asian Art. The devotional figure is on loan from the National Museum of Korea, in Seoul, and can be seen in the exhibition "Sacred Dedication: A Korean Buddhist Masterpiece" at the Freer Gallery of Art and Arthur M. Sackler Gallery.

The Gwaneum sculpture is believed to have been made for a temple around 1220–1285, late in Korea's Goryeo period (918–1392).

Glistening from head to toe in gold, the wooden Gwaneum is carved, swathed in jewels and a simple silk robe, and topped with a stunning metal crown intricately rendered with lotus flowers, bejeweled flames, and wooden ribbons that seem to flutter. A jewel on Gwaneum's third eye, between and slightly above his eyebrows, denotes one who sees with enlightened vision, that is, can see beyond our physical plane.

He sits almost nonchalantly with his left foot extending directly toward us and his right leg bent, raised to hip height and extended out to his side: a pose called rajalilasana—Sanskrit for royal-ease pose. Not only is this Gwaneum the oldest known gilded wooden figure in an informal pose, but it also has a crown. To find a bodhisattva sculpture and crown surviving together is rare.

14th-Century 'Water-Moon Avalokiteshvara'

To understand more about the Gwaneum figure, the Freer Gallery invites viewers to draw upon the painting "Water-Moon Avalokiteshvara" in its collection. Although the Gwaneum figure was made a century

prior to this Avalokiteshvara hanging scroll painting, it's helpful to compare the two pieces of Goryeo period art.

In the painting, the bodhisattva is helping Sudhana, a young pilgrim, shown at the bottom left of the picture. The scene is from "Entry Into the Realm of Reality" in the Flower Garland Sutra, where Sudhana meets Avalokiteshvara as one of the 53 teachers that Bodhisattva Manjushri has told him to find on his path to enlightenment.

Just as a mother selflessly puts her children's needs before her own, so does the bodhisattva put the needs of all living beings first.

In the painting, Avalokiteshvara is adorned with jewels similar to those of the wooden Gwaneum, but in the hanging scroll, Buddha Amitabha is clearly painted on Avalokiteshvara's crown, something missing on the figure. On the gilt-wood Gwaneum, an empty space can be seen on the crown where it's believed that the Buddha would've been secured on a separate metal plaque.

The bodhisattva in the painting is holding a set of crystal rosary beads in his right hand, leading scholars to believe that the wooden figure may have held some at one point in time. Avalokiteshvara has a halo in the painting and is encased in an oval called a mandorla, both signs of a divine being. These also may have been once a part of the wooden figure.

Avalokiteshvara is painted sitting on the rocky outcrop of his celestial home at Mount Potalaka, which some believe could be an island off the coast of West India. If the place sounds familiar, it's because the Dalai Lama's home Potala Palace in Tibet

is named after Potalaka. Tibetan Buddhists believe that each Dalai Lama is the reincarnation of Bodhisattva Avalokiteshvara.

Consecration Versus Curiosity

The exhibition also presents in-depth research about the figure from the National Museum of Korea, including how the figure was made and the dedication objects found inside.

Buddhists practice consecration ceremonies, which they believe invite the spirit of the enlightened being onto the figure being dedicated.

Inside the Gwaneum figure are two sets of dedication objects: One set dates from when the figure was made in the 13th century, and another set is from some 200 years later. Items inside include woodblock-printed Buddhist texts in Sanskrit, and objects symbolizing the Buddhist concept of the universe.

Some of the offerings inside are incomplete; perhaps their removal was deliberate in order to protect heavenly secrets at the time the figure was taken from the temple and out of worship.

As consecration is such a solemn practice, the laying out of these pieces from their revered context somehow undermines the exhibition's aim to present how Buddhists once revered their beloved bodhisattva. For many Buddhists believe now, as they did then, in Bodhisattva Avalokiteshvara's ability to relieve suffering. In the words of the Lotus Sutra:

That for those who hear his name or see him,
And who are mindful of his name unceasingly,
He can extinguish the suffering of all realms of existence.

To find out more about the "Sacred Dedication: A Korean Buddhist Masterpiece" exhibition, which runs through March 22 at the Freer Gallery of Art and Arthur M. Sackler Gallery, Smithsonian's National Museum of Asian Art, Washington D.C., visit Asia.Si.edu

FINE ARTS

The New Year's Spirit: Improving on the Past

The Renaissance's new artform that embodied the era's pioneering and innovative spirit

Continued from Page 13

The exhibition itself is a labor of love, much like the artwork from this era. In a phone interview, Nadine Orenstein, one of the exhibition's curators and the Drue Heinz Curator in Charge of the Department of Drawings and Prints, explained that the exhibition took 10 years to produce.

"I don't know if we were cursed," Orenstein said with a laugh. But the long duration of time may, in fact, be a reflection of its virtues.

"A lot of the works in the show are really rare," she said. Many of the early experiments in printmaking haven't survived, so The Met carefully sourced works from old European collections. "Quite a lot of these works you just never see, certainly not in this country."

A Pioneer: Daniel Hopper

In the late 15th and early 16th centuries in Europe, etching transitioned from an artform used to decorate armor to printmaking on paper. The German armor decorator Daniel Hopper was one of the early pioneers in this new medium.

His "Portrait of Emperor Charles V" grabbed me as soon as I entered the exhibition. I just stood there examining it, impressed that its endless detail wasn't a sketch but an etching. With engraving, you just cut straight into the printing plate with a sharp tool. With etching, in contrast, you carve into a wax-like material laid over a metal plate; you pour acid to create grooves in the metal where the wax is missing; then ink is added, you press it with paper, and you get a print. Etching offers more room for exquisite detail, such as in this early print by Hopper.

"Around the profile portrait are concentric circles of ornament that mix simple acanthus leaves against a dark field with beasty hybrids and cherubim frolicking in winding tendrils and endless vines against a blank or crosshatched ground," states the exhibition's companion publication, "The Renaissance of Etching," by Catherine Jenkins, Nadine M. Orenstein, and Freyda Spira.

The outlining of foliage, figures, and text was achieved with techniques Hopper developed for intricate designs on armor, known by historians as "Hopper style" armor. For finer designs, he would first paint on the "ground"—the wax-like substance covering the plate; then he would etch the delicate interior details with a stylus.

Hopper's use of negative space—such as the bright white space around the head—and deep, dark lines juxtaposed with detailed ornamentation create a striking, lifelike three-dimensionality. The concentric rings around the profile of Charles V almost seem to pulse.

Hopper's experimentation continued in his equally enchanting print "Death and the Devil Surprising Two Women." Two noble ladies gaze at themselves in a mirror, as Death waits behind them with a skull and hourglass, hinting that time is running out for them to awaken to their spiritual growth. But the most captivating figure is the Devil, behind Death.

"It's an allegory on vanity, a very traditional sin at the time ... Life is short, and you better spend your time doing other things [besides] preening and looking in the mirror," Orenstein said. "The way [Hopper] did that Devil is where you can see how experimental he was. Everything else is black lines on white, but the Devil is the opposite—it's black with white lines."

Hopper seemingly portrayed the women and Death as the same color—white—since they are part of the natural cycle of life. The black Devil, in contrast, embodies evil—the inverse of life and the natural order. The Devil's darkness is also especially eye-catching, warning viewers—don't overlook the alluring, hidden modus operandi of evil.

Paintings on Plates

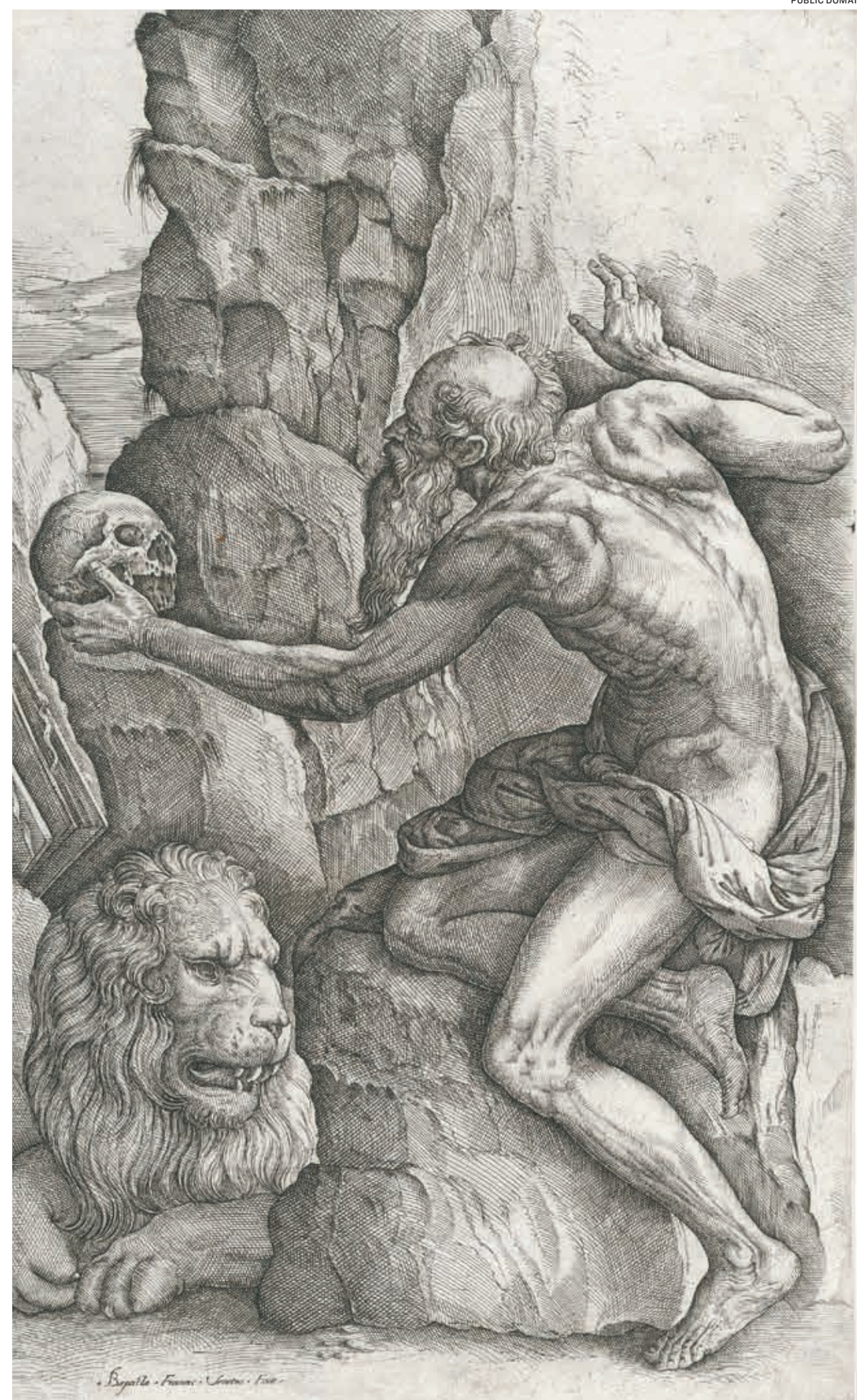
As word spread throughout Europe that there was a new medium of art to be experimented with—and, of course, improved upon—Italian painters took interest. One such Venetian artist was Battista Franco, who was considered the leading practitioner of disegno in central Italy.

"Disegno"—the Italian word for drawing or design—distinguishes the artist, when both meanings are taken together, who has both the ability to make the work as well as the ingenuity to invent the design. The disegno artist becomes a mirror or microcosm of God of sorts, in that the artist can both conceive the concept and manifest its creation.

As Franco turned toward etching, he took experimentation to a new level, combining etching, engraving (for darker, more exaggerated lines), and drypoint, which is a printmaking technique that uses a hard-pointed needle for extra-fine detailing.

In "St. Jerome," Franco depicts a popular Italian Renaissance theme—the ascetic saint in the wilderness with his faithful companion, a lion, from whose paw he removed a thorn. The detail in St. Jerome's anatomy, curved body, and exaggerated musculature not only takes your breath away, it also suggests the influence of Michelangelo.

As with a Renaissance painting, you can feel St. Jerome's spirit, sincerity, and devotion, especially through his tender but serious gaze, and body contorted by an overwhelming trance in the presence of divinity.



A detail from "Saint Jerome," circa 1550–60, by Battista Franco. Etching, engraving, and drypoint, second state of three. Harris Brisbane Dick Fund, 1953; The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York.



"Death and the Devil Surprising Two Women," circa 1510–15, by Daniel Hopper. Etching. The Elisha Whittelsey Collection, The Elisha Whittelsey Fund, 1951; The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York.

"It's a really stunning print," Orenstein said.

While the 10 years of hardship Orenstein had to endure to bring this exhibition to fruition is reminiscent of St. Jerome's own devotion, maybe the timing was also divinely arranged. "The Renaissance of Etching" aligned perfectly with the now-closed exhibition "The Last Knight: The Art, Armor, and Ambition of Maximilian," which covered the same era and even some of the same artists.

"So, in fact, if we could've picked the time, this would have been the best time to do it," she said. I guess making something timeless just takes time.

The Metropolitan Museum's exhibition "The Renaissance of Etching" is showing until Jan. 20.

J.H. White is an arts, culture, and men's fashion journalist living in New York.



WARNER BROS. MGM



PUBLIC DOMAIN

(L-R) George Bancroft, John Wayne, and Louise Platt in 1939's "Stagecoach," directed by John Ford.

Clark Gable and Vivien Leigh star in "Gone with the Wind," one of the most popular movies in American cinema history. It was released in December 1939.

FILMS

1939 – 2019: 80 Years After Hollywood's Golden Year

TIFFANY BRANNAN

Last year, 2019, marked the 80th anniversary of what has been called Hollywood's greatest year: 1939. Although not everyone agrees that one year can be chosen as the peak of cinema, all film historians concede that 1939 was exceptional.

The two years 1939 and 2019 had many things in common. Both ended a decade. Both saw high film-production because of prosperous economies. Both of these years were marked by a number of blockbusters, many of them long-anticipated.

Were any of the recent releases comparable to the 1939 classics that have withstood the test of time? Let's consider the statistics to see whether last year could become another "golden year" in Hollywood's history.

What Was Great About 1939

Because so many films now considered classics were released in 1939, it has been called Hollywood's greatest year. Even those who are unfamiliar with old movies recognize titles from that year. Glance at the Academy Award Best Picture nominees, which included "Gone with the Wind," "The Wizard of Oz," "Dark Victory," "Goodbye, Mr. Chips," "Mr. Smith Goes to Washington," "Ninotchka," "Of Mice and Men," "Stagecoach," "Wuthering Heights," and "Love Affair."

Other successes included "Gunga Din," "The Hunchback of Notre Dame," "Only Angels Have Wings," and "The Roaring Twenties." As stated in the Los Angeles Times, in all, 1939 featured 365 American releases! In 1939, Tyrone Power and Jeanette MacDonald were crowned the King and Queen of Hollywood, having been selected by 20 million Chicago Tribune News Syndicate readers. The former's fame reflected the

fact that his "Jesse James" was the year's top-earning movie.

The Quigley Publications Poll, which determined the top box office star every year, named Mickey Rooney winner of 1939. Riding high from his success as Andy Hardy, the 19-year-old received his first Best Actor Academy Award nomination for his performance in "Babes in Arms" this year.

"Gone with the Wind" remains 1939's crowning achievement, but its fame extends beyond that year. Margaret Mitchell's 1936 novel (which won the Pulitzer Prize in 1937) was considered impossible to film, primarily for its epic length. However, producer David O. Selznick discovered all naysayers when his drama swept the Oscars, dominated 1940's box office, and became the top-earning film of all time. Adjusted for inflation, its earnings have still never been surpassed, according to the Guinness World Records. Many consider it the greatest film ever.

Also produced in 1939 was "The Wizard of Oz," a musical that appealed to all ages. This film made Judy Garland a star and introduced the beloved song "Over the Rainbow." The most-watched movie of all time, it was voted the favorite movie of the 20th century by a People Magazine poll.

Film critic Jack Mathews says that the year was a Hollywood pinnacle, and blogger Sarah Hartzell cites some reasons. The Great Depression was finally ending, so Americans had money for frivolities like movies. With sound films, improved Technicolor, and talented refugees from Nazi Europe, Hollywood had more to offer than ever before. As a result, American ticket sales were 80 million per week!

80 Years Later

In 2019, 106 major U.S. movies were released, according to the Internet Movie Database (IMDb), less than

In 2019, 106 major U.S. movies were released, according to Internet Movie Database, less than a third of 1939's output.

(Left) (L-R) John Boyega, Joonas Suotamo (behind), Daisy Ridley, Anthony Daniels, and Oscar Isaac star in the latest and possibly final "Star Wars" film.

(Right) (L-R) Jeremy Renner, Don Cheadle, Robert Downey Jr., Chris Evans, Karen Gillan, the character Rocket (voiced by Bradley Cooper), Paul Rudd, and Scarlett Johansson in a scene from "Avengers: Endgame."

a third of 1939's output. The 10 top-earning films were "Avengers: Endgame," "The Lion King," "Frozen II," "Spider-Man: Far from Home," "Captain Marvel," "Toy Story 4," "Joker," "Aladdin," "Star Wars: Episode IX—The Rise of Skywalker," and "Fast and Furious Presents: Hobbs and Shaw." Since eight of these films were made by Walt Disney Studios or its divisions, it's not surprising that Disney earned 80 percent of 2019's box office profits.

When the inflation of recent years isn't taken into consideration, many 2019 films broke financial records. "Avengers: Endgame" is the highest-grossing film of all time. "Joker" is the highest-grossing R-rated film ever. "Spider-Man: Far from Home" became Sony's top-earning film. "The Lion King" became the highest-grossing animated film, highest-grossing musical, and highest-grossing remake. "Toy Story 4" became the highest-grossing G-rated film ever, and "Frozen II" had the biggest opening weekend for an animated and musical film.

In addition, 2019 was the first year when eight films earned over \$1 billion.

The Golden Difference

In 2019, the film industry was very different from that of 1939. However, some things have always remained the same. Movies are still a favorite American entertainment, since, whether viewed in the theater or at home, they provide escape from reality. The film industry has expanded since the 1930s, with a larger foreign industry and more independent companies. However, the biggest films still come from the main Hollywood studios that have dominated for decades.

Can 2019 compare to 1939? It brought many long-awaited films, such as "Frozen II," the sequel to the record-breaking "Frozen"; remakes of beloved Disney Renaissance films

"Aladdin" and "The Lion King"; the fourth entry in the popular "Toy Story" franchise; and "The Rise of Skywalker," the culmination of the 42-year "Star Wars" saga. It also brought us many critically acclaimed films, such as the controversial "Joker" and the nostalgic "Once Upon a Time in Hollywood." As in 1939, there were many blockbusters.

The main difference between these years is the type of entertainment being produced. Most 1939 films were original stories by Hollywood writers or adaptations of popular plays and novels. In contrast, almost all of 2019's major films were sequels, remakes, or installments in franchises.

Although many 2019 films were considered family movies, few modern films can compare with the decency of 1939 movies. From 1934–1954, the Motion Picture Production Code ensured that all films complied with decency standards, which made them appropriate for all ages. Since no nudity, profanity, or excessive violence was allowed, there was no need for age restrictions in those pre-Rating System days. Remarkably, filmmakers still managed to make entertaining and vastly successful movies without unacceptable content. In 2019, the many PG-13 and R-rated films excluded millions of audience members.

Hollywood may still know how to make financially successful films, but it has forgotten the art of making original, wholesome entertainment.

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.



2019 LUCASFILM LTD.



DISNEY/MARVEL STUDIOS VIA AP



Mark Jackson grew up in Spring Valley, N.Y., where he attended a Waldorf school. At Williams College, his professors all suggested he write professionally. He acted professionally for 20 years instead. Now he writes professionally about acting. In the movies.

POPCORN & INSPIRATION

'Mr. Smith Goes to Washington': Fighting the Good Fight

MARK JACKSON

Who hasn't heard of the movie "Mr. Smith Goes to Washington?" I never saw it. I needed to. What I discovered via a little research was that iconic film director Frank Capra and iconic American painter Norman Rockwell are basically two sides of the same coin. And that the coin could arguably be labeled as propaganda, since the government at one point funded some of Capra's work.

Their art had largely to do with elevating World War II draftee morale by establishing enough pride in our hallowed American way of life to motivate young men to go fight the Nazis and safeguard our American freedoms. Capra and Rockwell are the movie and painting equivalents of the rosy glow of country house wood-burning stoves in midwinter dusk, reflecting off the smiley faces, carrot noses, and corn-cob pipes of neighborhood frosty snowmen.

Rockwell's work, regardless of the fact that he was a master draftsman, was always considered "cutesy," and Capra's movies were often derided as "Capra-corn." And yet, they summed up—better than anyone before or since—the folksy essence and upright values the founding fathers bequeathed to America.

The Story of Mr. Smith

The supremely patriotic, small-town, idealistic, and spectacularly green Jefferson Smith (James Stewart), leader of the Boy Rangers, is appointed as junior senator because of his unparalleled (and therefore useful) naïveté, by his state's senior senator Joseph Paine (Claude Rains). Young Smith is to fill the unexpired term of a recently deceased senator.

It turns out that Senator Paine, a presidential hopeful, is also a childhood friend of Jefferson Smith's dad, and a hero to Smith. Paine shamelessly uses his emotional leverage to sway Smith, who is the very definition of a patsy, to come to Washington.

In Washington, Smith is initially swept away by the shock and awe of seeing the Capitol dome shining in the middle distance, the engraved prose on hallowed marble architecture espousing high morals, and the aching solemnity of Arlington

'Mr. Smith Goes to Washington'

Director
Frank Capra

Starring
James Stewart, Jean Arthur, Claude Rains, Edward Arnold, Guy Kibbee, Thomas Mitchell, Beulah Bondi, Astrid Allwyn

Not Rated

Running Time
2 hours, 9 minutes

Release Date
Oct. 19, 1939

★★★★★

The epic, constitutional battle of a lone man against the Senate is fantastic.



COLUMBIA PICTURES/MPTVIMAGES.COM

Jefferson Smith (James Stewart) learns that Washington is not as principled as he imagined it to be, in "Mr. Smith Goes to Washington."

Cemetery. He feels worshipful in the presence of the Lincoln Memorial.

Soon, however, he begins to get a whiff of the reek of corruption, and the many shortcomings of the political process, as the machinations of Joseph Paine and Paine's business boss, Jim Taylor (Edward Arnold), become increasingly clear.

Paine and Taylor are attempting some sneakiness, which is why they highly appreciate Smith's guilelessness. He's not experienced enough and is too idealistic to be able to recognize the graft clause in the bill that Senator Paine is attempting to sneak into law. Then Clarissa Saunders, Smith's highly cynical, seen-it-all, knows-the-law-better-than-the-lawyers, wisecracking secretary (Jean Arthur), takes pity on Smith's haplessness with what appears to be an atrophied mothering instinct triggered by Smith's boundless innocence. She schools him in the real-life, low-life operations that go on in Washington.

Smith, now wise to Taylor and Paine's dirty-deeds-done-dirt-cheap, is of course, in true Jimmy Stewart fashion ("This is what we cast him for!" not having any of it, whereupon the two older men and their minions immediately seek Smith's political demise. They try framing him via scandal, using forged signatures, character assassination, and perjuring witnesses. Smith is thus eventually pronounced by a Senate committee as not being worthy to continue to hold his seat.

But now, that fire of righteousness that lived inside Jimmy Stewart starts to shine. Smith won't back down: When the senators turn a deaf ear, Smith, coached by a nail-biting Saunders, exercises his constitutional right, and filibusters up a storm, holding the floor for 23 harrowing hours.

This epic, constitutional battle of a lone man against the Senate is fantastic, but it's marred somewhat by an 11th-hour, deus ex machina, moral about-face by Senator Paine, who apparently intuited the ring of hell he'd be descending to had his Machiavellian schemes managed to bear fruit.

The Takeaways

There are many uplifting takeaways; for one, the notion that lost causes are the only causes worth fighting for.

Many will now find "Mr. Smith Goes to

Washington" ridiculously dated and sappy. In today's world, an idealistic individual such as young Smith—one who learned Lincoln's speeches by heart and believed in them—would get laughed out of town. Not only do we, entrenched in our current cynicism, not know Lincoln's speeches by heart, but neither do we believe in any way, shape, or form, let alone from the bottom of our hearts, that the exalted men, grand speeches, and soaring architecture were originally meant solely for the good of mankind.

The greatest takeaway from this venerable American film, for me, is the tragic scene of honest, kind Jefferson ridiculed and run out of town on a rail, sitting among his luggage in the train station, weeping for the loss of his innocence. The devastation of lost ideals and belief in the fundamental goodness of one's fellow man depicted here is worth its weight in gold, and Jimmy Stewart nails that loss for us.

Equally powerful, but in a restorative, nurturing sense, is Saunders coming to his rescue. For Smith, unwittingly, has done that thing so brilliantly articulated in the 2000 movie "The Tao of Steve" regarding the causes of romantic attraction: Jefferson Smith has "Done a great thing in her presence." She has witnessed the rare, brilliant light of Smith's inner commitment to doing good. And fell in love with it.

Finding him thus emotionally destroyed, she builds him up again, reminding him that Lincoln himself had to fight against his myriad detractors. She makes him believe in himself—by believing in him—and helps him locate his "never quit" inner warrior, his inner hero, and coaxes him to hew to it.

It's a long, lonely fight, that filibuster version of "Hell Week" coming up ahead of them, but she spurs him to fight that good fight no matter what, and gives him the coziness of her love, commitment, and ace-in-the-hole insider knowledge of what he needs to do to win. She preserves his faith (and through him, ours) in democracy. Very inspiring.

"Mr. Smith Goes to Washington" offended senators when it was released; they thought it characterized the Senate as corrupt and populated by thieves. But as unpopular as it was with the political crowd, it did good at the box office, got good reviews, and was nominated for 11 Academy Awards.

FILM REVIEW

'City Joel': An Eleven-Handed Documentary on a Clash of Cultures

IAN KANE

Documentaries portray slices of life that many folks aren't aware of. Unfortunately, many of these films are skewed by social, political, or cultural biases. For instance, when you read the plotline of the typical global-warming documentary, you can pretty much figure that the filmmakers are left-leaning. Whichever way the filmmaker leans, you're likely to get a slanted and less even-handed account.

Bucking this unfortunate trend is director Jesse Sweet and writer Federico Rosenzvit. Their insightful documentary "City of Joel" gives a highly thought-provoking, behind-the-scenes look at a small-town conflict in which two sides seek to enforce their political will upon one another.

The battleground for this turf war is the village of Kiryas Joel (City of Joel), a fast-growing Hasidic Jewish community within the

larger surrounding town of Monroe in New York state. Within the cramped boundaries of Kiryas Joel live 22,000 Satmar Hasidic Jews, a sect of Hasidim that was founded by Rabbi Joel Teitelbaum.

Rabbi Teitelbaum wanted to establish a community for Holocaust survivors, and following World War II had originally settled in Brooklyn, New York. However, due to several factors, including New York's exploding real estate prices, as well as Rabbi Teitelbaum's wanting a more secluded place for his sect to grow, the community moved 50 miles north to Monroe.

But that was back in the 1970s. Through the years, the Kiryas Joel community has expanded exponentially. The reason? Many Orthodox and Ultra-Orthodox Jewish communities are big on having large families, and the Satmar sect is no exception. Due to the extremely high birthrate, the



SAMUEL GOLDWYN FILMS

burgeoning population is running out of housing. After all, the entire village of Kiryas Joel comprises only 1.1 square miles.

Therefore, the community drafted a proposal to annex more land, specifically 507 acres from the surrounding areas. This, in turn, spurred locals in Monroe to form a political-activism group called "United Monroe," which stands vehemently in opposition to the land acquisition.

These events set the stage for dramatic conflict as the Hasidic community strug-

gles to expand and the local activists, in turn, strive to squelch that growth.

While the Satmar Hasidim cite anti-Semitism as the main cause of opposition to their expansion, the United Monroe folks voice a more multifaceted explanation: Their political influence in the area has significantly eroded because the Satmar community acts as a single, powerful, voting bloc. While the locals are mainly Democrats, the Satmar vote Republican.

In addition, the opposition feels that the expansion would have a disastrous effect on the environment, including the natural landscape and assorted wildlife. Sweet and Rosenzvit are very capable and even-handed documentary filmmakers. Throughout the film, audiences are treated to a plethora of insightful and passion-fueled interviews and town hall meetings, featuring people standing on both sides of the turf.

Hopefully, this film will inspire other documentarians to be more equitable and unprejudiced in their filmmaking endeavors.

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

Inside a mega-synagogue in the film "City of Joel."

'City Joel'

Director
Jesse Sweet

Not Rated

Running Time
1 hour, 30 minutes

Release Date
Jan. 3 (New York)

★★★★★

THEATER REVIEW

Following Your Heart

JUDD HOLLANDER

NEW YORK—Few shows start off with as much promise as the new off-Broadway musical “Sing Street,” at New York Theatre Workshop. Based on the 2016 British film of the same name, this stage version still has some kinks to work out as the work progresses, but it is still quite the breath of fresh air.

In 1982, Conor Lawlor (Brenock O’Connor) is a 16-year-old aspiring musician from a troubled family in Dublin, Ireland. Due to the distressed economy, his architect father (Billy Carter) has been out of work for some time, which has strained his already troubled marriage.

Instrumental in making the numbers really come alive is the absolutely superb choreographic work of Sonya Tayeh.

Conor’s older brother Brendan (Gus Halper) has been a virtual recluse for years, while his 19-year-old sister Anne (Skyler Volpe) is under tremendous pressure to complete her studies so she can land a well-paying job.

In the meantime, and in an attempt to save money, Conor finds himself being taken out of his current school and transferred to a free educational institution called “Synge Street.” Run by the Christian Brothers, the school is named after Irish playwright John Millington Synge (pronounced “Sing.”)

Transferring to a new school in the middle of the term is rarely an enjoyable experience, and Conor’s situation is no exception. He runs afoul of the school bully (Johnny Newcomb), and gets a talking to from Brother Baxter (Martin Moran). Baxter, who runs the school with an iron hand, explains in a deceptively quiet voice how conformity and following the rules is the top priority.

Things look up for Conor when he sees a beautiful girl named Raphina (Zara Devlin). In an attempt to strike up a conversation, Conor tells her she’d be perfect for the music video he is preparing to shoot. Raphina, who has aspirations to be a model, and who already has a boyfriend, shows quick interest in Conor’s proposal.

Of course, Conor must now write a song and get a band together, as well as come up with a concept for the video. As he attempts to do just that, he and his fellow schoolmates, whom he has recruited as band members, find in their performances the joy that comes with freedom of expression. They are able, through their music and style of dress in the videos, to rebel against the regimentation in their lives.



MATTHEW MURPHY

However, as Conor’s self-confidence grows, along with his attraction to Raphina, he finds himself facing factors both at home and in school that threaten to derail his hopes for the future—including the fact that Raphina is planning to move away to London.

“Sing Street” is all about finding a special connection that makes you complete and allows you to move forward in life. This idea of following your dreams, and being able to express what you truly need, cuts across all age groups and personal situations. It also becomes clear that maintaining one’s own emotional well-being is more important than doing only what’s expected by others.

When it comes to the score, this production can do no wrong. The music by Gary Clark and John Carney—Carney having also written and directed the film version—is excellent, be it a raucous number, of which there are many, or a more soulful tune, such as when Raphina asks Conor to write her “a happy song.” As in the film, the score combines original music and numbers from the 1980s.

▲ Brenock O’Connor (L) and Jakeim Hart in “Sing Street” at New York Theatre Workshop.

‘Sing Street’

New York Theatre Workshop
79 E. Fourth St.
New York

Tickets
212-460-5475 or NYTW.org

Running Time
2 hours, 15 minutes
(including one intermission)

Closes
Jan. 26

Also instrumental in making the numbers really come alive is the absolutely superb choreographic work of Sonya Tayeh, which brings forth moments of slick professionalism in some instances and deliberately awkward efforts in others (as when showing inexperienced high school kids trying to shoot a video for the first time).

Rebecca Taichman’s direction is nicely paced, allowing one scene to flow into the next smoothly and believably.

Unfortunately, the show’s book by Enda Walsh is uneven. Too many characters are introduced without being fully developed. As just about all of these are intriguing, missing the chance to find out more about them hurts the tale’s overall effect.

Another problem can be found with the casting of the band members. While all are brilliant in their respective roles, many look far too old to be believable as high school students.

O’Connor projects just the right amount of earnestness as Conor. He embodies not so much an angry young man as one who, after being beaten down time and again, finally decides to stand up for what he believes in.

Max William Bartos does well as Darren, the “fixer” of the band and Conor’s eventual one-man support system as Conor tries to keep the group going.

Halper presents an interesting picture as Brendan, a young man who was once in Conor’s shoes and sees in his younger brother the person he used to be.

“Sing Street” is a show about finding yourself and having the courage to follow your dreams. It’s a message gloriously delivered in a show that, on a purely emotional level at least, succeeds at every step.

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

Ancient Inspiration for Today

A SHOW THAT CANNOT BE SEEN IN CHINA



神韻晚會 2020
SHEN YUN

Reviving 5,000 Years of Civilization

Based in the U.S., Shen Yun is able to present on the world stage authentic Chinese culture untainted by communism.

Exquisite beauty from the heavens, profound wisdom from dynasties past, universal values from timeless legends all spring to life through classical Chinese dance, enchanting orchestral music, glamorous costumes, and patented digital backdrops. Shen Yun offers an immersive experience that will uplift your spirit and touch your soul. It’s 5,000 years of civilization reborn!

“A fascinating insight into what China’s culture used to be and what I hope one day will be restored to China.”

—Edward McMillan-Scott, former Vice-President of the European Parliament

“Powerful choreography... Truly magical.

A must-see!”

—IN New York Magazine

A great gift for the New Year!

MAR 5–29 LINCOLN CENTER David H. Koch Theater

APR 23–29 NJPAC

ShenYun.com/NY
888.907.4697