

THE EPOCH TIMES LIFE & TRADITION

Guilarte wants people to know that the price of socialism is 'human dignity.'

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The author's new lilac bush.

Essential Gardening

Local nurseries provide life, beauty, and new growth

CECILY HASTINGS

Taking to a garden in the midst of a crisis is not a new concept. My mother got her first start with gardening by creating her own victory garden of edibles during World War II. She went on to enjoy it until the end of her life, and shared the love of gardening with her three children.

And yet, with this current worldwide crisis underway, one decision in particular made by our state leaders in California could not be more appreciated. That was to exempt the closure of home-improvement and gardening shops from the retail shutdown.

I've been a lifelong gardener. But in recent years, as we've prepared to build a new, smaller home, interest in my own garden has seriously waned. Last year—as the magnolia trees we planted 14 years ago have flourished—the sun to our backyard was so limited that my handful of rose trees had hardly a bloom.

Even before the virus struck, another life-altering event brought new hope to our garden. My husband, Jim, at age 91, decided to quit driving. With energy and fitness to spare he offered to renovate the backyard so it would be attractive next year when we put in on the market. It was an offer I could not refuse!

When I was looking for shade-loving plants at my favorite nursery I came across a beautiful lilac bush. Lilacs, I discovered the hard way decades ago, need full sun. But on an impulse, I bought it anyway, keeping in mind our future and much larger garden of our new house.

Jim nicknamed it our 'Victory Bush.'

When I got the lilac bush home, I decided not to plant it, but instead transplant it into a large pot we could move around the garden to capture the sun it needs to bloom again. My new Pocahontas Canadian Lilac requires a special sunny, yet cooler, location to thrive in Sacramento. But I will do my best for now to find the perfect spot, and allow Jim to nurture it to perfection. Given it will be the first plant in our new garden, we can easily find it the perfect permanent home.

Jim nicknamed it our "Victory Bush," and every spring when it blooms in March and April we will be reminded that our state, country, and the world overcame the worst calamity most of us have ever known—be it to our health, the economy, or our own businesses.

My escape from working too many long hours has been to visit the nursery. It takes my mind off the pressure of keeping our family healthy and our business afloat.

Even while ensuring my mask is secure and keeping distance from fellow shoppers, it lifts my spirit to see so much life, beauty, and new growth taking place all around. Even if gardening isn't your thing, this might be a good time to give it a try. There is lots of great advice online, and the fresh air and sunshine in our backyards is refreshing and health giving.

Whether it is growing vegetables from seed or starters, planting colorful petunias and impatiens, or putting in your own Victory Bush—there is no time like now to enjoy the many pleasures that gardening offers to those of us lucky enough to have our own patch of soil.

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8 Tips for Navigating the 'New Normal'

BARBARA DANZA

There's a lot of talk these days about the "new normal." Depending on where you live, the various social distancing strategies, face masks, gloves, disinfectants, hand sanitizers, canceled plans, and emergency government powers have us all grappling with a new way of life.

While we pine away for the old normal, here are eight ideas to make the best of this current reality.

Prioritize Rest

With more downtime on your hands, allow your body to experience periods of true rest. This means resting your mind as well. Detach from your phone, turn off the news, and allow your mind and body to calm down and rejuvenate without disturbance from external inputs. If you're finding it difficult to get a good night's sleep, audit the kind and quantity of content you're consuming and don't sleep with your phone in your bedroom.

Enjoy Solid Nutrition

The visits to the kitchen are likely frequent these days. Make sure yours is stocked with a colorful variety of clean, whole foods, along with some fun, special treats to keep you going. I have personally found my local specialty markets to be better stocked and much more reliable than the chain grocery and big box stores during this time.

Embrace cooking, prep grab-and-go snacks, and nurture your body and those of your family members with the good nutrition everyone needs to stay strong and healthy.

Go Outside

Every day, or as much as possible, go outside and move your body. Walk, run, play hop-scotch—whatever—just move in the fresh air. If the sun is shining, soak it up. Notice the beautiful nature all around you. Breathe.



Hug Your Family

Maintain a warm, affectionate, loving, and supportive atmosphere at home with lots of hugs and appreciation for each individual you live with. Generous hugging has a way of staving off squabbles and bickering. Many times, when someone is lashing out or not being their best selves, they could really just use a hug. Don't let the messaging of this crisis impede your inclination to give out hugs at home.

Observe Your Life

As you move through this time, try to observe objectively what's working and what's not. How's working from home working for you? What are you learning about your children's schooling and education? How are you coping with being furloughed or laid off? What about this situation is disturbing you? What about this situation are you enjoying? What are you learning about yourself?

Give Others Grace

People handle crises differently. What's more, this particular crisis is impacting different people in different ways. Fear, depression, anxiety, stress—these are not emotions that tend to bring out the best in anyone. So, lower your expectations of others.

Cut people slack. Give your loved ones a longer rope. Don't take things too personally. When you find yourself offended or affronted, look within and see if you can learn something about yourself from the encounter.

Journal

If you don't already keep a journal, now would be a great time to start. Apart from documenting your personal experience during a period that will go down in history, writing can be both comforting and enlightening. Something relieving happens when you take the ideas that are swirling in your mind and put them down on paper. Allow yourself the space and privacy to write freely.

Additionally, when you shake up your habits, your routines, your normal—inspiration has a way of showing up. Perhaps you'll happen upon an idea for something you're compelled to make or do. Have a place to capture any inspiring ideas that come.

Discern the Truth

The world is going through a monumental experience. Sharpen your ability to discern the truth and make rational decisions for your family with a clear mind. An understanding of history and access to a variety of information sources is critical. If you find yourself triggered or operating in an emotionally heightened state, your ability to think clearly will be compromised. Do what you need to do to calm yourself down. Digest information objectively. Think for yourself. And, of course, wash your hands.

Physician Explains the Most Beneficial Approach to Quality Family Time

ANNIE HOLMQUIST

By now we've probably all heard about the father arrested for playing catch with his daughter in a park. Regardless of whether you think the lockdown should continue, be lifted, or if you're undecided on the issue, most people would agree that this incident was a bit heavy-handed. After all, one of the good things about this coronavirus is that families are spending more quality time together.

Quality family time is something long touted by physician Leonard Sax. Before this coronavirus, Sax made a name for himself by encouraging common-sense parenting. Putting away screens, making time for family dinners, and minimizing extracurricular activities were some of his suggestions for ensuring families and children thrived.

Sax isn't changing his tune now that this coronavirus has given families abundant time together. He recently encouraged parents not to give into the siren call of screens, instead encouraging them to try a list of activities *The Wall Street Journal* recently put together. A favorite at his house was creating a radio program with free BBC sound effects (bbcfx.acropolis.org.uk/).

Sax wrote: "You may answer that creating a radio program with my daughter will very likely involve looking at a screen, unless we choose to use an old-fashioned microphone and recorder. This objection raises an important point. When my daughter and I are using a computer to create a radio program, we are creating content. When a parent and child are looking at cute videos on YouTube, they are consuming content. We have good evidence that when a parent and child create content together, they are building a bond, and that's great. But when a parent and child are consuming content, the benefits are reduced. And when a child is watching a screen



Try your hand at making something together, such as a birdhouse.

alone, while parents engage in their own screen ... then that's not good."

Sax makes a great point. In times like these, it's easy to spend time together, but it is how we spend it that makes the difference in our children's lives. Actively creating takes more effort than consuming, but the return on investment is much more powerful when we do the former.

Whittaker Chambers recognized this as well. A former communist spy turned *Time* magazine editor, Chambers wanted to escape the detrimental mindset of communism and give his children something better. As a result, he and his wife bought a farm and went to work tilling the land and raising animals alongside their two children.

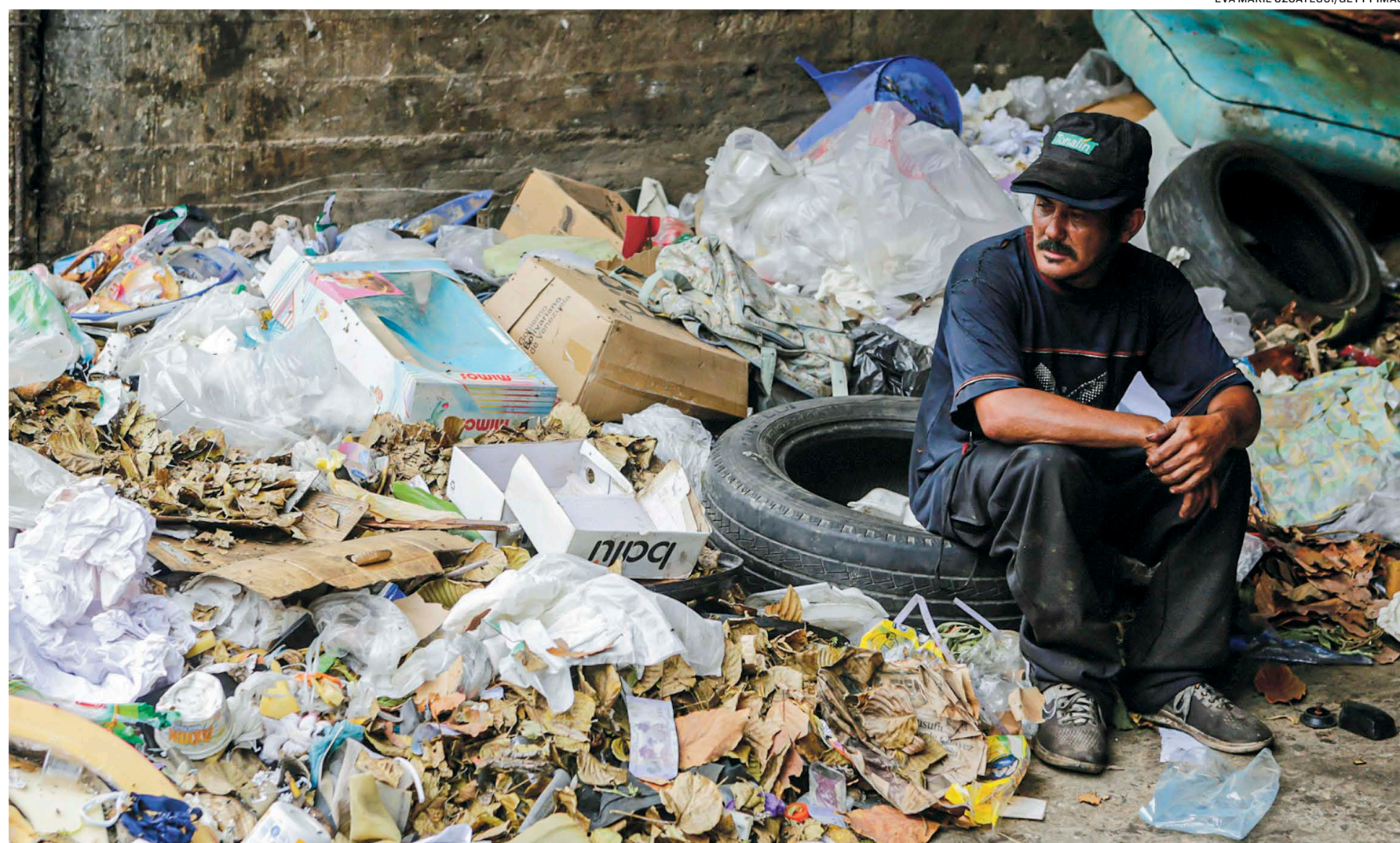
The task wasn't easy by any means. As Chambers explained, they exchanged comfort and consumption for a life of toil and hard work. But in leaving comfort and working alongside their children, they discovered great freedom, satisfaction, and familial closeness:

"In that sense, the farm is our witness. It is a witness against the world. By deliberately choosing this life of hardship and immense satisfaction, we say in effect: The modern world

has nothing better than this to give us. Its vision of comfort without effort, pleasure without the pain of creation, life sterilized against even the thought of death, rationalized so that every intrusion of mystery is felt as a betrayal of the mind, life mechanized and standardized—that is not for us. We fear it if only because standardization leads to regimentation, and because the regimentation that men distrust in their politics is a reflection of the regimentation that they welcome unwittingly in their daily living."

The coronavirus has changed the lives of every American family. In all likelihood, we've left comfort and consumption behind for a while. Unlike Chambers, we didn't choose such a situation ... but might we find benefits along the way? Will creating and toiling alongside our children make family bonds that will far outweigh the comforts we knew in our lives before coronavirus?

Annie Holmquist is the editor of *Intellectual Takeout*, an online magazine and sister publication of *Chronicles* magazine. This article was originally published on *Intellectual Takeout*.



Carlos, 30, sits on a pile of trash where he looks for something to eat in Caracas, Venezuela, on April 10, 2019.

Venezuelan Political Activists Warn US Students About Socialism

CATHERINE YANG

When Jorge Galicia was told that college students in the United States might benefit from his story, because many campuses are pro-socialism, he didn't understand.

Galicia had not long ago spent months in isolation, off the grid, hiding from the state police in Venezuela because he had been involved in political demonstrations calling for liberty. In the United States, he'd sought asylum, knowing someone who is politically active as he is would only face persecution if he went back.

He saw socialist policies impinge on the quality of life back home year after year, and had been working very hard to protest against the flawed system.

"When I came [to the United States] at the beginning, I was really impressed. I saw a really functional, beautiful country. I had only been here two years and saw double the opportunities I had in my whole life in Venezuela," Galicia said. Then he started telling people his story, and from their shocked responses, realized that many Americans have no understanding of what socialism is.

Since last fall, Galicia and a friend, Andrés Guilarte, have been telling their stories to students across the country, in 22 states so far. Their spring commitments are being postponed, but in the meantime, they have been doing online talks.

Dependency and Dignity

Guilarte was also involved in the student movement for liberty in Venezuela. Living under a socialist regime and seeing its policies deteriorate the quality of life around you, Guilarte said it was second nature for students to want to be involved in change, and many students were.

"I was really bold in the movement," he said, getting heavily involved in all of organizations calling for liberty, and being elected student body president because of it. He'd started at university in 2014, and early last year, he went to Washington to intern for the Cato Institute. Then, things took a turn in Venezuela, and the situation went from bad to worse. Guilarte knew if he went back, it could cause problems for him and affect the safety of his family, so he decided to apply for asylum instead.

Guilarte says that people may have heard in general terms that Venezuela is in a bad place, but they seldom realize just how bad it is.

"Socialism invents new ways of miseries you cannot think about," Guilarte said. For instance, people in a neighborhood know what time a local restaurant takes out the garbage.

"And when they do, you'll see two or three families waiting to go through the garbage," Guilarte said. He would see small children eating together out of the garbage, or people going behind garbage trucks to look for food. "That's just one example."

It sounds degrading, and that's the crux of it: He wants people to know that the price of this system is "human dignity."

Policies several decades ago expanded the national government's power, creating social programs on top of social programs until every-



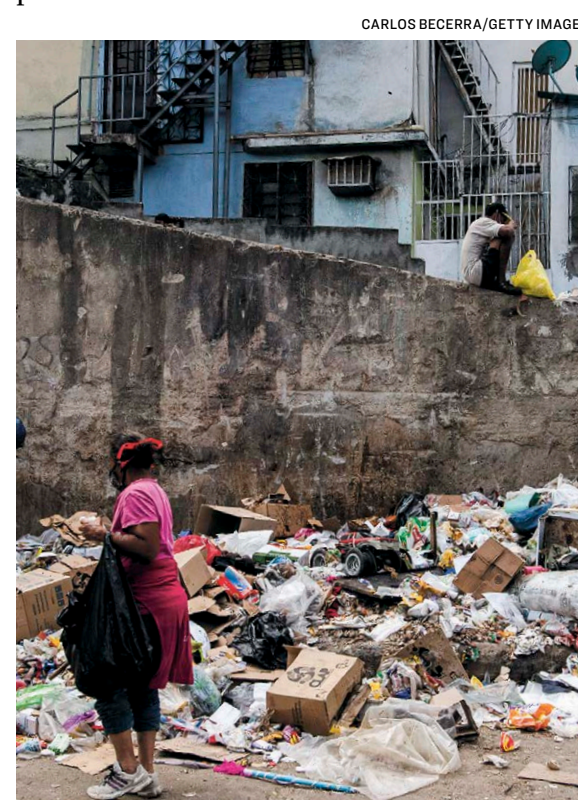
Jorge Galicia and Andrés Guilarte have given talks across the U.S. about Venezuela and the effects of socialism there. They've taken their talks online until they can resume their speaking engagements.

thing became centralized. The result is the lack of spirit, individualism, or independence in the people across the country.

"The longer you are dependent, the harder to let go," Guilarte said. "You reach a moment like right now, where people are down to their most primitive survival skills. We seek food, water, shelter—you have to. The people you see digging through the garbage, they are still dependent on the state."

For Galicia, fear of persecution had been the new normal. He and his best friend had been heavily involved in the student movement and protesting Nicolás Maduro. Then, the police broke into his best friend's home in the middle of the night and arrested and detained him, and Galicia knew he was next. He went into hiding and emerged months later, after his friend's release, but said he's now always looking over his shoulder and living in fear.

But frankly, so were many others who similarly protested.



People dig into the garbage for food in Caracas, Venezuela, on March 23, 2020. While Nicolás Maduro declared a national quarantine, the international community is concerned about how the country will control the pandemic with its increasing levels of poverty and public health crisis.

"All of these things about political persecution and hiding and not having anything to eat, this was my normal," he said. Not having reliable water, gas, or electricity was to be expected, and utilities failed more with every year. "When I started sharing my story, I started noticing everyone was shocked—that's when I learned that everything I went through was not okay and was not normal at all."

'This Was Progressive'

Socialism doesn't always happen overnight, with a dictator sweeping in and making violent changes. It happened progressively in Venezuela: industry by industry, not unlike what Galicia and Guilarte have noticed about the United States.

In the 1970s, an oil boom changed the economy of the previously stable Venezuela, and during that decade, the iron industry was nationalized, and then the oil industry was nationalized. More industries would soon follow, the start of what Guilarte and Galicia call a "snowball" that Venezuela never recovered from. Along with the nationalized industries came huge spending packages and social programs, which led to dependency on the government, and more spending and dependency, until eventual bankruptcy.

"That's when Hugo Chavez and Nicolás Maduro appeared on the scene, because they were the only ones promising to keep the spending going," Galicia said. He often emphasizes this point, because he hears Americans say they support socialism but not the measures of Chavez and Maduro, without realizing that these dictators are not the ones who put socialism into action.

"They [the dictators] are a consequence of following the wrong ideas."

"It sounds really good when politicians sell it to you," Galicia said. "But when you try to implement it, it destroys lives."

Regardless of how socialism is implemented, and to what degree, the end will always be centralized government, Guilarte said; history has shown that these centralized governments don't work for the people.

The majority of their audiences are curious about what life in Venezuela is like but have little understanding of it, and Galicia and Guilarte are happy to continue their fight for freedom outside Venezuela by spreading the truth and help dispel misinformation.

Millions of people have fled Venezuela, Guilarte said, and they are all around the world, eager to tell their stories so that what happened to their own country won't happen elsewhere.

"We don't want any other society to go through what we have been through," he said.

The current pandemic and the panic buying that ensued in some places has led to Americans sharing photos online of empty shelves in grocery stores with some kind of bewilderment.

"For them in the U.S., this is the first time; for us, it is normal," Guilarte said. "This is because there is a crisis, but it is a temporary crisis. Socialism is an eternal crisis. The shelves will be replenished in a few days, because that's what happens in a market economy. In Venezuela, they won't be replenished, not for days, or weeks, or months."

COURTESY OF JOHANA PATRICIA



COURTESY OF ENAKENO OGBO



COURTESY OF ENAKENO OGBO



COURTESY OF ENAKENO OGBO



COURTESY OF ANNE BEQUETTE



1. Johana Patricia and Miguel Delgado got married on March 21. Despite the last-minute replanning, things were "perfectly imperfect," she said.

2. Enakeno Ogo had six virtual birthday parties.

3. Friends and family celebrate Ogo's birthday.

4. Ogo still found a way to celebrate her 50th birthday with friends and family after the UK's lockdown.

5. Asya and Matt got engaged on March 15 in the U.S. Virgin Islands.

'Love Isn't Canceled': Weddings, Birthday

CATHERINE YANG

About a week before Johana Patricia's wedding, everyone across the country was asked to practice "social distancing" and not gather in groups larger than 50 people, and then no more than 10 people. A wedding seemed impossible, but her then-fiancé, now husband, Miguel Delgado was confident they could overcome the logistics. And they did.

Instead of having a ceremony with family and then a larger reception party, the couple got married on a public access cliffside near Redondo Beach in California with eight guests—as luck would have it, just before public parks and beaches were closed. Their siblings were able to attend, as well as their friend who officiated, a photographer, and videographer. Although their parents all live close by, Patricia and Delgado worried about their health. So Delgado's sister streamed the ceremony so their parents and family, who would have attended the private ceremony, could still participate.

"It was very emotional for them,"

The couple got married on a public access cliffside near Redondo Beach in California with eight guests—as luck would have it, just before public parks and beaches were closed.

Patricia said. They are both close with their families, she said, and their families' happiness must have been mingled with sadness that they were apart. For her, that thought was a little heartbreaking.

"He got ready in one room, I got ready in another room. He left first so that he wouldn't see me and then I made my way there, and we all met there," Patricia said. With fortuitous timing, they got married on March 21. Patricia is grateful they opted for their quick ceremony because looking back, they wouldn't be able to do now what they did less than a month ago. They also got their marriage license a month ago—and now they aren't being issued. They plan to have a reception sometime down the road when more people can gather again, but are reluctant to set a date.

After the ceremony, they went straight home. Patricia's sister dropped off pizza, they toasted with whiskey, and had their first dance in the living room.

They considered redoing the ceremony for others once people could gather again, but realized what they had that day couldn't be recreated.

"It was just so special how it all un-

folded," Patricia said. "It turned out perfectly imperfect for us."

Why Not?

In Iowa, Brooke Van Sickle had been planning a wedding for 15 months that could now no longer take place. Over 250 people were going to meet out of town at a large venue with all the bells and whistles.

"Instead, we did it in our house with just three other couples, so it was only 10 people total including the person who married us and a photographer," Van Sickle said. "We had been engaged for 15 months, and ... we were ready to be married. Our state hadn't done one of those lockdowns yet, so we were still able to at least have a couple people over."

The decorations were already at their house, and they figured, "Why not?" They ran to the grocery store to pick up a random cake they were able to find and a bouquet of flowers.

It turned out to be a relief, Van Sickle said. In the days leading up to the wedding, things were in flux and they didn't know if people could travel, but then once they decided they had to pare down the ceremony, the pressure was off.

"It's just really relaxed, which is nice," Van Sickle said. Their vendors were fantastic and agreed to refund them in full. "It was more of what we were wanting, so for us it was really nice. Planning a wedding is so much drama and stress, and so when you actually came to the day of and have no stress and just be really relaxed and just get to enjoy time together, and share love with those that we love was really nice."

The couple will also host a reception sometime later, as well as a photoshoot of them getting married and having their first dance in empty spaces to remember the event, and Van Sickle will get the opportunity to wear the wedding dress her mother made for her.

"I feel like I need to wear it!" she said. "It might be more of a party instead of a traditional-style reception."

As social distancing extended past March, couples and businesses have had to quickly adapt. Wedding planner Ivy Summer had live-streamed her own wedding several years ago and had been working on a book with case studies and advice when the pandemic erupted. Weddings are all about being social—as much

COURTESY OF ENAKENO OGBO



4. Ogo still found a way to celebrate her 50th birthday with friends and family after the UK's lockdown.

5. Asya and Matt got engaged on March 15 in the U.S. Virgin Islands.

Parties Go On Amid Pandemic

for the guests as for the couple—and people are scared right now, Summer said. Most couples are working to reschedule their weddings after fall, and vendors have been working to keep up. Not all businesses have been able to, though; Summer said she's heard from many couples who found out their venues have closed and filed for bankruptcy.

Event planner Aimee Palifroni has also had clients cancel because of job and financial losses, and said the situations really run the gamut. Many people are rescheduling or going forward with a small ceremony and later reception, but the majority of her clients with summer weddings are going to move forward as planned.

Life Goes On

In the UK, which announced a lockdown on March 23, Enakeno Ogo still found a way to celebrate her 50th birthday.

Her original plans were a classical concert with her mother and friends, some afternoon tea, and a party with family in the evening. With the lockdown, she was stuck at home instead, but her sister planned not one but six virtual parties so different circles

could participate.

"It was awesome," she said. "Lots of dancing. We brought in the same cake six times, and I blew the candles six times, and [we sang] happy birthday six times."

"Much better than my original plans," she said, "although my mum was not able to be with me."

In the Virgin Islands, life went on amid a lockdown, and Asya and Matt got engaged on March 15. On the 29th, they contacted photographer Anne Bequette, who had been self-quarantined at home on St. John. Bequette started receiving cancellations since March 17, when her first bride who was coming by cruise said she would not be going.

The islands are not unaccustomed to disaster: summer is hurricane season, and things close down until it becomes a ghost town. But it was six weeks too early, and the pandemic had taken all of Bequette's business with it.

"I got really excited to actually have a reason to use my camera, because that's my go-to tool when I'm dealing with something traumatic like this," Bequette said. The islands, whose economies rely on tourism, have only

just recovered from the Category 5 Hurricanes Irma and Maria. In the aftermath of that trauma, Bequette channeled her grief into a photo series, a project she learned helped other residents heal as well.

"Using a camera, I think it's such a fascinating tool. It's a universal language that speaks to the heart, and there's no language barrier in photography," Bequette said.

From that experience, she learned that not just life but love also goes on, even during a disaster.

Asya and Matt met during disaster relief after Hurricanes Irma and Maria, and they both work at the local no-kill shelter, St. John Animal Care Center, where they adopted their rescue dog Calichi.

Bequette, armed with Lysol and other disinfecting agents for the photoshoot she would do from at least six feet away, asked about their story.

"He said it was planned and in the works before the pandemic started making news in China," Bequette said. "The spread of the virus was a reminder to him of how quickly things can change in life and the importance of treasuring those you love. They'd already gone through one apocalypse

"We're all so caught up in the news and social media that we forget what we have right in front of us. Love isn't canceled, nor is hope."

Anne Bequette

together, and this one looming was just affirmation that he wouldn't want to go through with it or life in general with anyone else other than Asya."

"They wanted to continue on with what every newly engaged couple would normally want, which is engagement photos. So we made it happen and we got lucky. The day after our shoot, unbeknownst to us, the entire national park, the beaches, all the trails were closed," Bequette said.

"I think it's really important to remember that amidst this worldwide pandemic that life has not halted. Albeit it must go on in limited and extremely different ways, we have to remember now more than ever to remind ourselves of the little things that we often overlook in the hustle and bustle of everyday life," Bequette said.

"We're all so caught up in the news and social media that we forget what we have right in front of us. Love isn't canceled, nor is hope, and for many, this quarantine time highlighted that, and for me, this photoshoot highlighted and reminded me as well. I love documenting love, and the raw beauty of a moment. It was extra special to capture this photoshoot because it did give me hope."

The Medicine of Mirth: The Healing Power of Laughter

JEFF MINICK

The pandemic has transformed the entire world into a dark and frightening place, with businesses shut down, untold millions quarantined in their homes, human beings around the globe panicked by the virus and the uncertainties of the present and the future. It is a time of tremendous tension politically and personally, a time when you can smell the fear in the air and see it in the eyes of masked shoppers at the grocery stores. Spring has bestowed on us its warmer temperatures, flowers, and green grass, but the incongruities between nature's beauty and the pandemic may only sharpen our black spirits and gloomy thoughts.

Hard times.

The Cure for a Multitude of Ills

Another lady remembered by many of us also endured hard times. As a teenager living in the Netherlands under the Nazis during World War II, she aided the Resistance, lost an in-law to execu-

tion, watched Jews being trundled away to their deaths, underwent bombardment from the Allies, was reduced along with her family to eating flour made from tulip bulbs, ended the war ill with anemia and malnutrition, and found her family stripped of wealth and status.

Audrey Hepburn, movie star and philanthropist of both her time and money, was accustomed from an early age to suffering. What helped her endure and confront hardship throughout her life? Once she said, "I love people who can make me laugh. I honestly think it's the thing I like most, to laugh. It cures a multitude of ills. It's probably the most important thing in a person."

Right now I suspect most of us could use as much laughter as we can find.

Laughter Is Good Medicine

Like some of us who live alone, I have lately spent more time on the phone than normal. Friends and family members bring laughter to me, and I to them, and as we do so, my tension and solitude, at least for a while, leave me. My

friend John and I joke back and forth about politics, my friend Anne and I laugh about personal circumstances, my daughter with her bright sense of humor always brings a smile to the conversation, and her 3-year-old son makes me chuckle just by listening to his voice.

The Mayo Clinic reports that laughter can relieve short-term stress, provide long-term health benefits, and may even improve our immune system.

So how do we find occasions for laughter when news of the pandemic brings us so much gloom and doom?

Coronacraziness
First, we open our eyes to the people and events around us.

Though I infrequently visit Walmart, last week I needed some items I couldn't get in town. While there, I asked a clerk where I might find paper towels. "Lay-away," she said, and so I proceeded to Layaway, where I found two older gentlemen doling out paper towels and toilet paper. I wanted to burst out laughing—have we really come to this?—but

ED FEINGERSH/MICHAEL OCHS ARCHIVES/GETTY IMAGES



Actress Audrey Hepburn (1929-1993) was a big proponent of laughing, saying, "It cures a multitude of ills." Above, Hepburn with her husband, actor Mel Ferrer (1917-2008) on a country road outside Paris in 1956.

thanked them for the rationing and took some paper towels along with the per-customer limit of two four-pack rolls of toilet paper. In a salute to this mega-store, I must add that the charge for those 8 rolls was \$1.20, or 15 cents a roll.

At Walmart, I also picked up some games and puzzles for my Pennsylvania grandchildren, whose mother tells me are bored. After packing my purchases in a box, I started to add newspapers to keep everything from rattling around,

then thought, "No, toilet paper." So into the box went four rolls of TP, with me smiling the whole time.

Another example: At our small ABC store—the sales area is maybe 600 square feet and has three aisles of liquor—I entered last week to find a sales clerk directing everyone to follow the arrows glued to the floor. Though I wanted to laugh, I just thanked him and smiled. Was I the only one who found this cautionary overkill humorous?

Online Laughs

The Internet offers many sites for jokes and laughter. YouTube, for example, is loaded with comedy and comedians. Have the kids seen Laurel and Hardy in "Who's on First?" Have they watched Lucille Ball and Desi Arnaz in "I Love Lucy?" Online, too, are dozens of short videos—search for "jokes for kids that are really funny," for example, and you should have the younger crew bursting with laughter. And how about you? Have you watched comedians like Jim Gaffigan, who weaves into his routine all sorts of humorous reflections on his home life?

The Internet also contains dozens of

sites sporting jokes for people of all ages. Because of a New Year's Resolution I made here at The Epoch Times, I committed myself to writing two grandchildren a letter every Sunday. (I'm terrible at keeping resolutions, but going public had a way of forging my willpower.) Every time I send a letter, I put in a few jokes I find online.

The way I figure it, in this time of stress and storm, my grandchildren need to laugh as much as I do.

There are even online sites for "coronavirus jokes." Here's one: "Prediction, there will be a baby boom in 9 months, and then one day in 2033, we'll witness the rise of the 'Quaranteens.'"

Literary Excursions

Next up is literature. Our libraries and bookstores may be closed, but we can find many humorous stories and poems online. Google "funny stories," and up pops an array of tales for audiences ranging from kids to grandparents. The Internet also provides classic stories like O. Henry's "The Ransom of Red Chief," James Thurber's "The Secret Life of Walter Mitty," P.G. Wodehouse's tales of Jeeves and Bertie Wooster, and

many more.

Poetry, too, can bring smiles. Robert Service's "The Cremation of Sam McGee," Lawrence Thayer's "Casey at the Bat," and even Gelett Burgess's "Purple Cow" for the little ones should crack the gloom surrounding us. Search online for "humorous poems," and up they rise, again in all age categories.

Friends, Family, and Storytelling Time

But the most rewarding opportunities for laughter lie with our fellow human beings. This shutdown offers parents and grandparents the chance to share the history of their youth with the young people around them, including the funny stories they remember from their own coming of age. Now is the time to tell the story of when as a 6-year-old you ran away from home and were chased back to your parents by a passel of pigs and piglets escaped from a farm (yes, it happened to me) or when you appeared on a beach as a teen dressed in shorts and long black socks, and brought hours of laughter from your friends (yep, me again).

Laughter, humor, and comedy bind us

together, relieve stress, and bring some sunshine into this dark time. Rafael Sabatini opens his novel "Scaramouche" with these words: "He was born with a gift of laughter and a sense that the world was mad." Right now the world is as mad as mad can be, and all of us need that gift of laughter.

Here's a bit that I hope will leave you laughing. If you don't get the joke, try reading it aloud.

An Englishman, a Frenchman, a Spaniard, and a German were in a crowd watching a juggler. The juggler noticed the four men were having trouble seeing him, so he stood on a large wooden box and asked, "Can you see me now?"

"Yes."

"Oui."

"Si."

"Ja."

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



“Battle of San Jacinto” by Henry Arthur McArdle, 1895.

HISTORY

The Texas Revolution and America’s Manifest Destiny

ALAN WAKIM

In the late afternoon of April 21, 1836, Gen. Sam Houston sat on his stallion Saracen as his Texian Army slowly marched for battle in two parallel lines near Lynch’s Ferry.

Ahead stood a rise covered in tall grass that stretched across the whole field and concealed their approach. Erastus “Deaf” Smith suddenly appeared on their right flank, astride his horse, and yelled, “Vince’s Bridge is down!” All routes of entry or escape from this battlefield were destroyed.

The men faced only two choices: victory or death!

At 4:30 p.m., the two four-pounder cannons known as the “Twin Sisters” fired the first shots of the Battle of San Jacinto, the final climactic engagement of the Texas Revolution. Future Texas President Mirabeau Lamar and his mounted riflemen charged the Mexican left flank while a Texian band played “Will You Come to the Bower?” The infantry fired a single volley before Gen. Thomas Rusk ordered the men to immediately charge and attack the enemy before they had time to organize their lines.

Screaming, “Remember the Alamo! Remember Goliad!” the advancing Texans swarmed the camps and breastworks of the startled and weary Mexican soldiers.

What followed was a complete rout that sowed the seeds for a future war between the United States and Mexico and culminated in America fulfilling its Manifest Destiny.

Mexico further crumbled as its leaders feared the growing power of Texas and its reliance on America.

Prelude to War

Since the beginning of time, powerful nations the world over initiated policies of expansion and colonization. After 1492, Spain, Portugal, Holland, France, and Britain vied for control of the New World as they colonized the Americas. Spain possessed a vast empire that stretched across both North and South America. Slowly, they began to lose their colonial possessions.

When France sold Louisiana to the United States in 1803, a dispute began with Spain over the territorial boundaries. With the signing of the Adams-Onís Treaty in 1819, the dispute was finally settled. Two years later, Mexico declared its independence from Spain, installed an emperor, and established its own empire out of the former Spanish Viceroyalty that stretched from the modern-day Panama-Costa Rica border in the south, to the modern-day California-Oregon border in the north.

Texas was a barren land with no infra-

structure. In 1821, there were 2,000 Tejanos living in the run-down villages of Bexar (San Antonio) and La Bahia (Goliad). Forty thousand Indians from 31 tribes also lived in Texas and frequently raided areas across Mexico. The government couldn’t control these hostile Indians.

When Stephen F. Austin petitioned Texas Gov. Antonio Martínez to establish an Anglo-American colony in Texas, Martínez agreed to the request, assigned Austin the title of Empresario and granted him lands for 200 families. Mexico had other motives for granting Austin’s request. They wanted the Indians tamed or defeated, and more importantly, westward expansion of the United States blocked.

A thriving Texas would accomplish both.

Power Struggle in Mexico

Between 1821 and 1824, political developments in Mexico would have a lasting impact on future events as a power struggle ensued between centralists and federalists. Emperor Agustín de Iturbide was forced to abdicate, and the Central American states seceded from Mexico. A provisional government was formed and drafted a federalist constitution. Centralists began fomenting trouble. What followed was decades of uprisings, riots, rebellions, civil wars, coups, and wars of secession.

Those who believed in monarchy, aristocracy, Roman Catholicism as the established religion, and the educated upper class controlling the reins of a strong central government were centralists. Those living in or near Mexico City were typically centralists. They feared giving power or voting rights to the illiterate masses, most of whom were Indians or mixed races. Centralists excluded the lower classes from government positions.

Those who believed in universal male suffrage, autonomy for the provinces, secularism, democracy and congressional representation were federalists. They despised the privileged elite, many of whom were Spaniards. Federalists passed laws to remove elitists from power, confiscate their wealth, and deport or exile Spaniards living in Mexico. Those living in the outlying provinces, including Texas, were typically federalists.

Texas: A Growing Power

For the next decade, Texas grew and prospered while Mexico languished from internal strife. The Anglo-American population exceeded 20,000. Austin pleaded with Mexican authorities to assist in their commercial enterprises. Infrastructure between Texas and Mexico was badly needed. Ports along the Gulf Coast needed to be built and expanded.

The authorities agreed but couldn’t initiate the requests for two reasons: lack of funds and government instability. Texas had no choice but to expand its commercial ties with the United States, which greatly worried Mexico.

Mexico further crumbled as its leaders feared the growing power of Texas and its

reliance on America. A boundary commission sent to inspect Texas in 1827 greatly alarmed its members. While the Anglo population greatly expanded in numbers and their colonies flourished far beyond their expectations, the Tejano villages were left dilapidated and under constant siege by the Indians. Harsh recommendations were made to prevent Texas from seceding, and laws were passed in 1830 restricting immigration from the United States. These and other laws further alienated the Anglo-Americans in Texas.

In a costly move that added fuel to the fire, Stephen F. Austin, the ever-loyal Mexican citizen who always defended the government, was falsely accused of treason in 1834 and imprisoned in Mexico City.



An illustration of the final assault on the Alamo.

Call for Annexation

American politicians, diplomats, journalists, and businessmen increased Mexico’s anxieties when they called for the annexation of Texas. U.S. diplomats sent to Mexico City offered to purchase Mexico’s northern states. Those offers were bitterly rejected by the Mexicans.

It was during these tumultuous years that Gen. Antonio López de Santa Anna, a wealthy federalist who proclaimed himself the “Napoleon of the West,” emerged as the country’s best hope for leadership and stability. Spain hadn’t recognized Mexico’s independence. When it invaded Mexico in 1829, it was Santa Anna who successfully led the attacks that resulted in victory. He was a national hero who fought to preserve the federalist system. Seen as the savior of Mexico, he was elected president multiple times.

Once in office, Santa Anna often abused power by persecuting his opponents, and consolidating his own power with a centralist system. When he revoked the 1824 Constitution and replaced it with his own “Seven Laws” in 1835, several Mexi-

can states openly rebelled, most notably Yucatan, Zacatecas, and Texas. In May of that year, Santa Anna led an army into Zacatecas and ruthlessly annihilated the insurgency.

Stephen F. Austin was released from prison and departed for Texas in July of 1835. He felt betrayed by Mexico, which changed his attitude towards Texas’s future. He now supported the insurgents who advocated rebellion against Santa Anna and his centralist government.

“Come and Take It”

The Mexican Army in Texas made efforts to strengthen their position against the hostile Tejanos and Anglo-Americans. Soldiers departed Bexar (San Antonio) for Gonzales and demanded the surrender of a cannon they possessed. The people refused, and on Oct. 2, fired their rifles and cannon at the soldiers. A flag that displayed a star and cannon was unfurled with the words: “COME AND TAKE IT.”

The first shots of the Texas Revolution had been fired.

Two months later, the new Texian Army attacked Bexar and captured the Alamo. Gen. Martín Perfecto de Cos surrendered his forces and evacuated Texas with the promised guarantee he’d never return to fight the Texans.

The Alamo

Santa Anna was outraged. He mobilized the Mexican Army and personally led them into Texas to crush the rebellion. His army captured Bexar in February 1836 and laid siege to the Alamo. Among those trapped were Col. William B. Travis, Capt. Juan Seguín, Col. Jim Bowie, and David Crockett. Seguín was tasked with slipping through enemy lines with Travis’s letter to Gen. Sam Houston. Texian leaders held an emergency meeting in the town of Washington-on-the-Brazos.

Before Santa Anna’s invasion, the Texans wanted autonomy within a federalist system and the restoration of the 1824 Constitution. With the open war now being waged against them, the Texans voted for independence on March 2. Four days later, the Alamo fell, and Santa Anna ordered the murder of all captured Texian soldiers. The same fate awaited the Texans who fought at Goliad. On Palm Sunday, the captured soldiers were marched outside of town and slain.

Santa Anna chased the Texans across southeast Texas. Fleeing residents burned everything they couldn’t carry in what came to be known as the Runaway Scrape.

Houston’s 910-man force consisted of farmers, frontiersmen, militiamen, former U.S. soldiers, American and European immigrants, and Seguín’s Tejanos. Houston knew his untrained, undisciplined men were no match for the Mexican Army. He trained them during the retreat and baited Santa Anna deeper into Texas, farther from his logistics and supplies, and closer to the Texas-U.S. border.

San Jacinto

Houston’s men were ashamed of the retreat and wanted no part of it. They preferred to stand their ground and fight. By mid-April, they were on the verge of mutiny and accused Houston of cowardice. Although he wanted to continue eastward and provide additional training to his men, Houston was told he’d be relieved of his command if he retreated any further.

He settled his army near modern-day La Porte and pitched camp in a position he believed provided the best advantage. Behind them and to their left were marshlands surrounded by the San Jacinto River and Buffalo Bayou. Protecting their right flank were his mounted riflemen.

When Santa Anna arrived, he also positioned his camp near marshlands surrounded by water. Both armies were only 500 yards apart.

On April 21, Santa Anna expected an attack at dawn that didn’t materialize. Later that morning, Cos, the same man who surrendered the Alamo in December with the promise never to return, arrived to strengthen Santa Anna with 500 soldiers, all of whom were exhausted and hungry from the long, forced march. Santa Anna’s force numbered 1,250, and an additional 1,000 soldiers led by Gen. Vicente Filisola were expected to arrive.

Houston was well-aware of the expected reinforcements, due in large measure to the capture of a Mexican courier three days earlier. Maj. Lorenzo de Zavala Jr. translated the dispatches that revealed Santa Anna had split his army and that he personally led only a small force. Houston knew an attack must be made before Filisola and his reinforcements arrived. To prevent that, Houston ordered Deaf Smith to destroy Vince’s Bridge. Once completed, nobody would be able to get in or out of the battlefield.

It was now late afternoon. A council of war voted to fight that very day.

Houston instructed Seguín’s Tejano force who were eager to avenge friends and family killed at the Alamo to place cardboard in their hatbands so that in the confusion of battle they would not be mistaken for the enemy. The late afternoon shadows stretched across the field, the Twin Sisters were placed in the middle, and the men prayed. The time came for the final showdown.

Aftermath

The Battle of San Jacinto lasted only 18 minutes. The victorious Texans continued to slaughter their enemy for hours; 650 Mexicans were killed, the rest captured. Texian losses were nine men killed.

Cos and Santa Anna escaped, only to be captured within the next three days.

Houston kept Santa Anna alive and forced him to dispatch orders to Filisola, which far outnumbered the Texian Army, to retreat to Bexar. Filisola continued past Bexar and marched across the Rio Grande.

Two treaties, signed by Santa Anna at Velasco, ended hostilities and forced the Mexican Army to withdraw across the Rio Grande.

Santa Anna was subsequently released. Although humiliated, his political career was not over.

Mexico City refused to accept the Treaties of Velasco. Texas independence was never recognized, nor did hostilities end.

Mexicans insisted on reconquering Texas and threatened invasion for the next nine years. The army received preferential treatment in funding for such an expedition. Mexico invaded Texas twice in 1842 and captured San Antonio. They would later withdraw.

Because of Mexico’s threats, the Republic of Texas received very little investment and remained deeply in debt. With no money in the treasury to fund projects, the Republic of Texas accepted annexation by the United States in December 1845.

In April 1846, U.S. and Mexican soldiers fought a battle in disputed territory between the Rio Grande and Nueces River. Both nations declared war.

The Mexican-American War ended in victory for the United States. In 1848, both nations signed the Treaty of Guadalupe-Hidalgo. Mexico gave up territory that consists of the American Southwest for \$20 million. In 1854, Mexico sold additional land to the United States in what came to be known as the Gadsden Purchase. The Mexican people would continue to suffer from rebellions, uprisings, and revolutions well into the 20th century.

In 1848, Britain and the United States agreed to split the Oregon Territory at the 49th parallel. The United States had achieved its Manifest Destiny. The boundaries of the contiguous 48 states have remained static ever since, thus ending American expansion on the continent. Alaska is another story.

Alan Wakim is the co-founder of “The Sons of History,” a YouTube series and weekly podcast. He travels to interview and document historical figures and sites for his video series. He holds a business degree from Texas A&M University.

‘The Voice’ Reveals More Than Vocal Talent of Shining Stars

Joel Fulco joined her father on stage when she was 2 and has been singing ever since

LINDA KC REYNOLDS

It is often said, “It takes 20 years to become an overnight success,” and that timeline proved to be true for Joel Fulco, 23, of Lancaster, California, when Blake Shelton and Nick Jonas of “The Voice” turned their chairs for the young artist, while she performed Cher’s “Gypsies, Tramps & Thieves” on March 2 during the blind auditions.

“Stepping onto the stage was amazing—so amazing, it still seems surreal,” Fulco said after her performance. Putting a lot of heart and hard work into her audition, she grew more and more nervous while nearing the end of her song and no chairs were turning.

“It was definitely nerve-racking!” she said. “I finally see Blake hit his button and it was like a wave of relief that washed over me. It was only until then that I could settle into my performance and really enjoy it.”

Jonas turning around was an extra bonus. “To see that he was blocked—it was just a series of overwhelming emotions in that whole few seconds,” Fulco said.

To merely be chosen to step on the stage of “The Voice” has perhaps been every singer’s dream since the show first aired in April 2011. The \$100,000 grand prize is a great motivator; however, the dream of going further is colossal.

Fulco’s performance had a mysterious allure. Shot mostly from behind with quick cuts of silhouettes, her face was not fully revealed until Shelton turned his chair.

Obviously stunned by her youth, coach Kelly Clarkson commented that Fulco’s voice sounded “weathered” when she eventually did turn her chair. Shelton and Clarkson bantered back and forth about Fulco’s voice sounding “seasoned and mature beyond her years.”

“So, you’re calling her an old lady?” Shelton teased.

As a young girl, Fulco didn’t think she had a place on stage as a vocalist, since her voice was deeper than any female she had heard, but at least she could still play guitar.

“Cher was my first encounter of someone who has made it with a similar voice to me, so I looked up to her my entire life,” Fulco said. Touring the world with her family, she said she never really felt settled down. “I can relate to that song [“Gypsies, Tramps and Thieves”], it really hits home for me!”

Family

At the age of 2, Fulco joined her father, Joey Fulco, on stage, and she has been singing ever since.

“My dad has always been my greatest mentor and guiding light through this whole journey,” Fulco said.

“I noticed at a very young age there was something very special and powerful in her voice,” her father said. “She has always been very disciplined and determined.”

There is so much more



Todd Michael Hall and Joel Fulco during battle rounds on NBC’s “The Voice.” Fulco won the battle, and Hall was saved by coach Blake Shelton.

to this shining star than her beautiful brown locks, beaming smile, and rich voice.

When Disney needs to cast a new princess for its next blockbuster, they need to look no further than Fulco. She embraces the best features of our beloved characters; beautiful, kind, caring, free-spirited, strong, adventurous, determined, and definitely talented.

“My dad has always been my greatest mentor and guiding light through this whole journey.”

Joel Fulco

When asked years ago why she didn’t try to compete in music shows, she said she wouldn’t want to play without her family.

“I’ve been a musician all my life, it’s the only job I have ever had,” she said.

Although her family was looking on, “The Voice” was the first time she has ever performed alone in public.

The tight-knit family formed their own band, “The Fulcos,” and have often been referred to as a modern-day Partridge Family. Recently, their family dynamics have changed and gave them the opportunity to explore new venues. Her brother Jesse, 21, plays bass, guitar, sings, writes, acts, models, and dabbles in video production. Tyler, 14, plays drums, guitar, piano, and sings. Her father plays guitar, piano, sings, records for other musicians, and also writes music. The revised family band now includes Matt Fullove on drums and Loren Riley on piano and keyboard.

“Home Away From Home” Big Shotz, a local bar and restaurant owned by Stephen Morreale, is their favorite place to play in Southern

is intended to be sung,” has often been said and written of her genuine, heartfelt performance.

When the world seemed to become politically divided, the family put their creative juices together and wrote “Star Spangled Through and Through,” uniting all walks of life. With the help of friends, they produced a grassroots, pro-American music video.

The family distributes money from tip jars and donations to the homeless, along with food, water, and clothing on holidays and in harsh weather. Seeing another need, they rallied the community to help clean up several of the “not-so-pretty areas” throughout the Antelope Valley.

“The community has always been there for us, especially when we needed them. It’s our way of giving back. We are so thankful for every one of them and their support,” Fulco said.

‘Voice’ Battles

For “The Voice” battles, Fulco went up against Todd Michael Hall, 50, singing Tina Turner’s “The Best.” And the best, they both were. Fulco won the battle and Hall was saved by Shelton.

“We are a very close group, we live together 24/7

for days. It’s a competition but at the end of the day, you don’t want to see anyone go home,” she said. She can’t speak for other teams, but says Team Shelton is tight-knit and has a prayer circle, lifting each other up before performing. “Every-

one says a little something, it is very cool.”

During knockouts Fulco sang Linda Ronstadt’s

“When Will I Be Loved” against Levi Watkins, 14, who sang “I Ain’t Living Long Like This” by Waylon Jennings. Although it was said that both gave perfect performances, Blake chose Fulco once again,

saying that he wants to continue exploring her country/rock edge. Both contestants said having guest coach James Taylor, was another unbelievable experience.

Part of the success and popularity of “The Voice” is not only the talent revealed, but the stories and dreams shared from all walks of life across America.

No matter how far Fulco goes on “The Voice” or obstacles she encounters in life, as always, she will rely on her faith and continue sharing her talent, heart, and voice.

Linda KC Reynolds began her photography career in the United States Air Force. After serving six years, she worked full-time for Northrop Grumman on the B-2 Stealth Bomber and now freelances for various aerospace companies and other venues. She is passionate about free speech, musical production, and sharing people’s stories.

Singer, songwriter, and musician Joel Fulco.

Image: Justin Wong

My Quarantine: Lessons and Observations

JEFF MINICK



From old show tunes to classic American folk songs: they pop into my head, and I roar them out. Andrea Bocelli, step aside.

Everyone living under “stay-in-place” orders, formerly known as house arrest, shares in common a sense of isolation, but otherwise, our experiences are unique. While I live alone as the caretaker of my daughter’s four-bedroom home, which we hope to put on the market this spring, you may live with an abundance of relatives or friends. During my house arrest, I have tried to stay upbeat; like some of my friends, you may belong to the doom-and-gloom school. At any rate, here are some lessons I’ve learned and ways I’ve endured the CCP virus, commonly known as novel coronavirus.

Pleasures

SINGING. I’ve discovered I can still belt out a tune. A house empty of most of its furniture nicely amplifies the voice, and as I putter about, making coffee, washing dishes, or packing up for the inevitable moving day, I sometimes sing. And I mean I sing LOUD! Old show tunes learned as a child from my mother’s record collection, songs from the 1960s and 1970s, the lyrics of some classic American folk songs: they pop into my head, and I roar them out. Andrea Bocelli, step aside.

SOLITAIRE. A bout of solitaire a couple of times of day eases the mind and passes the time. I started two weeks ago with a deck of cards purchased from Dollar General, and that pack is now looking a trifle worn. The minor triumph of winning a game brings a smile.

Contacts and Encounters
TELEPHONE. To break up the silence, I’ve spent more time on the phone, calling my children, my siblings, and a few friends. Though I never took any particular pleasure in talking by phone, it has helped keep me sane and in touch with the outside world.

MEANINGFUL GESTURES. Yesterday, having grown weary of the house, I drove into town and picked up a few items at the grocery store, where I softly sang or whistled my way through the aisles, hoping to bring some cheer to both masked and unmasked shoppers, though it’s more likely they found me either annoying or gone round the bend. Afterward, I headed to the library to return some books. The library’s closed, of course, but one of the librarians spotted me at the return bin, came outside, and chatted for a few minutes. When

you are as alone as I am, such a simple conversation becomes an event.

Scrub-a-Dub-Dub

LAUNDRY. My most detested household chore is doing the laundry. I’m not sure why, but there it is. Since my daughter and her family departed last August, I’ve taken my dirty duds to a local laundromat, where two loads cost me \$8. Ten days ago, when I arrived there with my bin of clothing and towels, the employees were restricting the number of customers who could enter their establishment. I then did something I’d only done once before while on an extended stay in Rome; I left the washing to the employees. When I picked up my bin the next day, all my clothes were washed and nicely folded. Total cost: Only \$12.

Whoa-hoo! I’m never doing my own laundry again.

With this exception: the laundromat is now closed for two weeks, perhaps longer. So I will probably do laundry after all, only this time in the upstairs bathtub.

Models and a Mother Scorned

MODELS. Remember all the modeling done by “experts” in regard to climate change? If those folks are as off-base at predicting the future as the ones who first presented models for the CCP virus—one of them told us with authority that

the virus would kill 2.2 million Americans—then climate change is bogus. From now on, the only models that interest me are car and airplane kits for my grandkids.

MOTHER NATURE. It’s pleasant in the morning to stand on the back deck, hear wild turkeys far and away, listen to the trumpeting of geese as they fly overhead, and see an occasional deer at the edge of the lawn. It’s less pleasant to find that mice and rats have taken up quarters in the garage, thanks to a missing piece of cushion on the bottom of the garage door. The rodents and I are at war, and I’m confident of victory, but yuck, yuck, yuck.

And given that “Mother Nature” with her microbes is why I’m stuck in this house in the first place, I am hereby stripping her of that maternal title. From now on, it’s Nature pure and simple. Hit the trail, Mom.

Codgers and Flicks

OLD GUYS. Some of the essayists I read online are, like me, nearer the top of life’s ladder than the bottom. And like me, they believe the time has come to get out of the house and back to real life. In “Come Out, Come Out, Wherever You Are,” the 73-year-old Vanderleau writes that he could “quite well be taken by this CCP monster,” but nevertheless sounds the charge: End The Quarantine.

I’m right beside you, buddy.

OLD MOVIES. Though I have written and published a book on films, “Movies Make the Man,” in the last three years, I have watched few movies. I don’t subscribe to any special film services, I can’t remember the last time I was in a movie theater, and my usual source for movies, the public library, is closed.

But just before Easter, I went exploring on YouTube and hit the jackpot. “Good Morning, Miss Dove,” which I have long wanted to see; “Cheers for Miss Bishop,” which was new to me, and “Portrait of Jennie,” which I had seen before and enjoyed just as much on this go-round: watching movies such as these brings a nice end to the day. All are well acted, the stories are real, everyone keeps their clothes on, and no one curses. It’s like time traveling back to my childhood.

Dictators and Demagogues

COMMUNISM AND DICTATORS. The CCP—the Corrupt and Con Party—brought this pandemic into the world. Anyone anywhere who believes that the CCP merits any sort of respect or who still finds some good in communism should be laughed out of the room.

In our own country, miniature dictators have also leapt to the helm, promising to steer the ship of state while stealing liberties and

ruining lives. With the possible exception of Michigan, whose governor has committed numerous outrages, nowhere is this more true than in my own state of Virginia, where Democrat Governor Northam has crowned himself king. In her article, “Is Virginia’s Authoritarian Governor Overstepping His Powers?” Marina Medvin answers that question with a strong affirmative, asserting that Northam ignored data showing that the state might get back to work. Instead, on April 15, he ordered Virginians to continue to stay at home for another three weeks, leaving more businesses to be wrecked, more people to be unemployed, and more lives to be shattered.

Someday, when all of this mess is past us, my grandchildren may ask me, “What did you do in the Great Pandemic of 2020, Grandpa?” I will tell them, “Kids, I fought the good fight by singing, playing solitaire, opposing dictators at home and abroad, and snagging mice.”

A man’s gotta do what a man’s gotta do.

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



FOR KIDS ONLY

THE EPOCH TIMES

Week 17, 2020

Home, Sweet Home!



by John Howard Payne

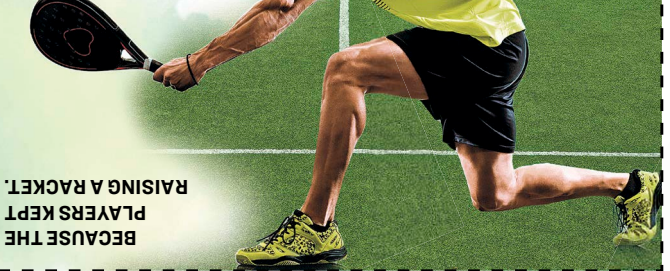
‘Mid pleasures and palaces though we may roam,
Be it ever so humble, there’s no place like home;
A charm from the sky seems to hallow us there,
Which, seek through the world, is ne’er met with elsewhere.
Home! Home! sweet, sweet Home!
There’s no place like Home! there’s no place like Home!

An exile from Home, splendour dazzles in vain;
O, give me my lowly thatched cottage again!
The birds singing gaily, that came at my call,—
Give me them,—and the peace of mind, dearer than all!
Home! Home! sweet, sweet Home!
There’s no place like Home! there’s no place like Home!

How sweet ‘tis to sit ‘neath a fond father’s smile,
And the cares of a mother to soothe and beguile!
Let others delight ‘mid new pleasures to roam,
But give me, oh, give me, the pleasures of Home!
Home! Home! sweet, sweet Home!
There’s no place like Home! there’s no place like Home!

To thee I’ll return, overburdened with care;
The heart’s dearest solace will smile on me there;
No more from that cottage again will I roam;
Be it ever so humble, there’s no place like Home.
Home! Home! sweet, sweet Home!
There’s no place like Home! there’s no place like Home!

WHY WAS THE TENNIS GAME SO LOUD?



ALL PHOTOS BY SHUTTERSTOCK

“
Love your Enemies, for they tell you your Faults.”



BENJAMIN FRANKLIN (1706–1790)

ALL IMAGES BY SHUTTERSTOCK

LIUDACOROLEVA/SHUTTERSTOCK

This Week in History

THE ORGAN TEAMS UP WITH BASEBALL



It’s the quintessential sound of a day at the baseball field. On April 26, 1941, Chicago’s Wrigley Field, home of the Chicago Cubs, became the first baseball stadium to incorporate organ music into the baseball game experience. Organs had previously been

played at hockey games, inspiring the move.

The park’s first organist was Ray Nelson. Today, more than half of Major League Baseball fields have organists. Can you imagine hearing “Take Me Out to the Ballgame” on any other instrument?

By Aidan Danza, age 13

ALL PHOTOS BY SHUTTERSTOCK

ANIMALS OF EUROPE: BIRDS

(PART II)

It seems Europeans might like their birds best of all their animals.

European birds have been immortalized in folktales, poems, songs, and the culture for centuries. The birds in this article are among the most common birds of Europe.



EUROPEAN ROBIN

European robins live all over Europe. They are unrelated to their namesake, the American robin, that is so named only because of the similar red chests that reminded early American settlers of the bird back home. Like many birds, European robins migrate, often visiting North Africa in the winter and Scandinavia in the summer. Also

like their American counterpart, European robins are superb singers, but are fiercely territorial. Males will evict any other male that encroaches on their territory.

They eat mostly insects, but also worms, berries, and fruits. European robins nest almost anywhere, though they prefer bushes and trees. A female lays two to three clutches (groups) of eggs each year, which are incubated for around two weeks. After the eggs hatch, they are reared by both parents for 14–16 days until the chicks are ready to leave.

EURASIAN BLACKBIRD

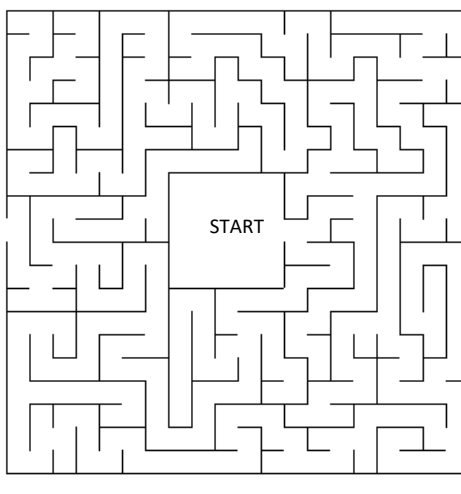
Not to be confused with the red-winged, yellow-headed, and rusty blackbirds here in America, this is the blackbird from the famous rhyme “four and twenty blackbirds, baked in a pie.”

Males are completely black, other than the yellow bill and eye-ring, while females are brown. Males sing to establish and keep territories, and also to attract females. European females lay their eggs in March, eastern and Indian females lay in April, and the introduced

Australian and New Zealand population nest in August, which is late winter there. The nest will be a neat bowl of grass, twigs, moss, and other brush. Both parents care for the eggs and later chicks, for the incubation period of 12–14 days, and leave the nest after 13–15 days living there.

After the nest is abandoned, the chicks continue to be fed by their parents for a few weeks before the chicks become independent. Just like their American cousins, they eat earthworms. They also eat insects, spiders, snails, and slugs, picking through leaf litter or in open areas.

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

1	9
1	9

Solution For Easy 1: 1 - 6 = (1 + 6)

Medium puzzle 1

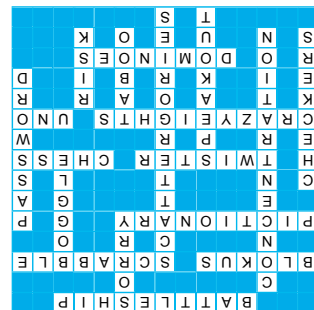
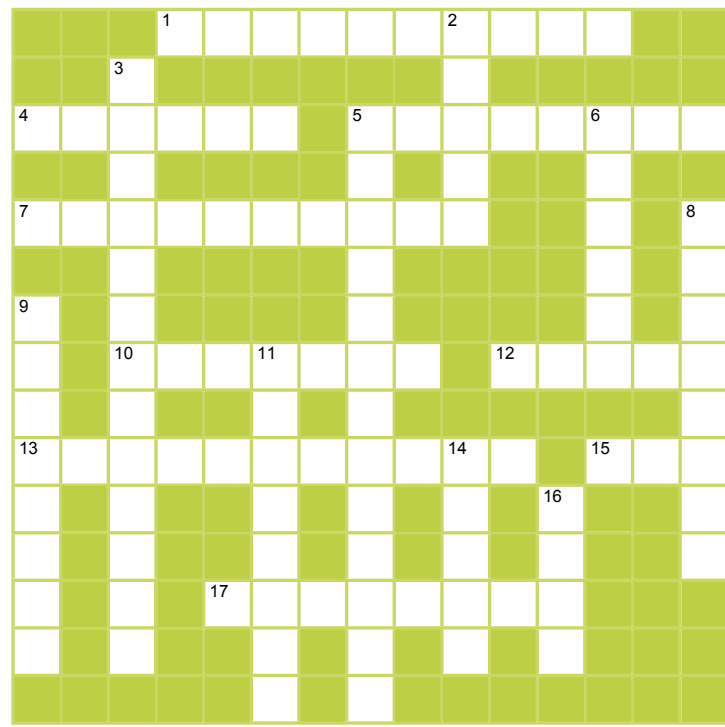
16	19
11	17

Solution for Medium 1: 91 - 61 = (11 - 12)

Hard puzzle 1

13	31
8	15

Solution For Hard 1: 91 - 8 + 61 + 12



Across

- 1 “You sank my _____!” (10)
- 4 Tile-based strategy game (6)
- 5 “Is that a word?” game (8)
- 7 Game in which players try to identify words based on their teammates’ drawings (10)

Down

- 2 I beg your pardon (5)
- 3 “Classic” TV game (13)
- 5 Party game for creative list makers (13)
- 6 The “Qu” cube counts as 2 letters (6)
- 8 60’s game from TV (8)
- 9 “King me!” (8)
- 11 Game with a mouthpiece (8)
- 14 Avoid the forbidden words! (5)
- 16 World conquest game (4)

YOUR MONEY

Why You Might Be Afraid to Spend Your Stimulus Check

NEW YORK—If you got your stimulus payment last week from the IRS and it is still in your account, are you afraid to spend it? Many recipients immediately deployed the money they received as part of the CARES Act—up to \$1,200 per adult and \$500 per child—for urgent necessities, including food, rent, and unpaid bills. Some didn’t even have the deposit register before it was swept away to cover overdrafts, unless they

use a bank that pledged not to do this. If you are lucky enough to not to need the money right away, it may just sit there staring at you from your balance sheet. There are all sorts of suggestions for ways to make use of it: buy gift cards from local businesses, prepay your mortgage, or fund a Roth IRA contribution—but that may not encourage you to budget. When it comes down to it, you may be

too anxious to spend it anyway. Sarah Newcomb, director of behavioral science at fund research firm Morningstar, studies how people react to sudden influxes of cash, known as the windfall effect, and this is not it.

“This is different, coming at a time when people are feeling financially stressed,” Newcomb said. People generally put found money in a category of “fun” and spend it accordingly. When it is expected money like a tax refund, they tend to be practical and do things like pay down debt or make a large planned purchase.

Newcomb said she didn’t yet know what she was going to do with the deposit that had just landed in her own account. Her behavior is akin to those she has studied—it’s not something she is going to spend frivolously.

“I had thought, if I get anything, I want to find a family that needs it, and give it to them,” Newcomb said. “But once it hit my bank account, it was there. It’s hard to let go of money when you feel scared.”

Personal finance guru Lynnette Khalfani-Cox, chief executive of Ask TheMoneyCoach.com and author of “Zero Debt,” is a proponent of simply saving it. Don’t tie it up in prepayments, and don’t feel bad about not contributing it back to local businesses.

“It’s nobody’s job individually to act as a financial Hercules. You don’t have to single-handedly hold up the U.S. economy,” Khalfani-Cox said. “Right now, we just don’t know

how protracted this crisis will be, and more people will be better off conserving cash.”

Not spending has consequences, too. The government intended the stimulus to help get the economy going again. People need for money to move and change hands, and every transaction that gets halted ripples out to affect many people.

One way Newcomb has found that shifts behavior in situations like these is to turn anxiety into excitement—a theory called anxiety reappraisal in a paper by Harvard Business School professor Alison Wood Brooks that Newcomb cites in her work.

“If we could trust that we will find a solution to the virus, then I think we would all feel easier about letting that money go. There has to be a sense that you’re going to be OK. That’s the missing piece,” Newcomb said.

Until that happens, some people are being motivated by the spirit of philanthropy. Certified financial planner Monica Dwyer, based in West Chester, Ohio, has a client who is giving away his check to charity.

“He said that he was going to donate his check to a fund for local people in the restaurant industry, such as waitresses and waiters who have lost their jobs. I thought that was so inspiring, considering that this client is a regular guy who could use the money,” Dwyer said.

By Beth Pisker
From Reuters



Some suggest using your stimulus payment to buy gift cards from local businesses. Above, Cassiano’s Pizzeria in Manhattan has continued to operate during the pandemic.

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