

THE EPOCH TIMES LIFE & TRADITION



Shackelford is the president and CEO of First Liberty Institute, the nation's top firm for defending religious freedom.



FATHER'S DAY
**GIFT
GUIDE**

Page 4

7

WAYS TO
TURN DOWN
THE TECH IN
YOUR FAMILY

Page 10

Kelly Shackelford

WHY HE'S OPTIMISTIC ABOUT RELIGIOUS
FREEDOM IN AMERICA **Page 3**

Keeping a Community Together With One Act of Kindness a Day

ANDREW THOMAS

In an effort to keep his community together, one Midas muffler shop owner is encouraging his neighbors to perform one act of kindness a day.

Mark Smith, 57, has lived in Richmond, Virginia, for the past 23 years. Smith describes the city as an ideal place to live because of its diversity, infrastructure, stability, five universities, and its proximity to the beach, the mountains, and Washington. But to him, it's ultimately the residents who make the community special.

"The people here get it. They're very active in the community. They're very involved in the community. There's a diverse group of interests. There's a lot of support. There's a lot of people realizing that it's up to us to move things forward," Smith said.

Good Deeds

Smith is just one of several small business owners actively working with nonprofit organizations on causes they care about.

While at work one day, someone mentioned to Smith that it was a nice afternoon to do a good deed. It led to discuss-

ing how every day is a pleasant day to do a good deed.

To help his community, Smith started a citywide initiative in which residents are encouraged to perform a good deed every day from June 1 through June 30, keep a journal of each deed, and submit the list to Smith at the end of the month.

In return for their good work, Smith will offer a year's worth of free oil changes at his Midas muffler businesses.

"We've got this idea that people need to be shown what to do—they need to be told what to do, I don't buy that. We're very active in our community with all of our stores, with the nonprofits we support, [and] we're very active on local media," Smith explained.

The initiative has received broad support, and Smith is receiving numerous calls every day from people asking how they can get involved. Smith hopes that 1,000 residents will sign up, which would result in 30,000 acts of kindness. He wants his community to rise above the fearmongering, name-calling, and finger-pointing that has permeated the mainstream media.



Mark Smith (R) in one of his Midas muffler shops.

"In the environment we're in with all the anxiety and all the stress and all the unknown and all the 'What if?' I really want to change the narrative. I want to get away from the sky is falling," Smith explained. "We're going to take to other side. Let's get there, work together cooperatively, and let's lead by ourselves."

Community

Smith stresses that good deeds aren't about performing grand or expensive acts of kindness, but are about the power of the gesture itself and the hope that it inspires

and the sense of community it creates. The initiative is based on the honor system and he trusts people will be truthful about their good deeds.

Smith hopes that when people see an act of kindness that it will inspire them to do the same.

"Just do something spontaneous. Buy the guy in line behind you in Dunkin' Donuts his cup of coffee. It's two bucks. Have a heartfelt conversation with a stranger. Just say hi. We're just looking for people to engage. We're looking for people to be positive," Smith said.

Jamaican Bobsleigh Team Push a Mini to Keep Olympic Dream Alive

PETERBOROUGH, England—The Jamaican bobsleigh team is used to training without snow, but the pandemic lockdown has seen its male athletes resort to pushing a car around the streets of an English city to stay in shape, with an eye on Olympic qualification.

Some residents of Peterborough have offered their help to Shanwayne Stephens and Nimroy Turgott as they push a Mini down the road, before realizing it is part of a new training regime to work around the closure of gyms in England.

"We had to come up with our own ways of replicating the sort of pushing we need to do. So that's why we thought: why not go out and push the car?" Stephens, 29, told Reuters.

"We do get some funny looks. We've had people run over, thinking the car's broken down, trying to help us bump-start the car. When we tell them we're the Jamaica bobsleigh team, the direction is totally different, and they're very excited."

The couple said they had been inspired by the 1988 Calgary Winter Olympics men's bobsleigh team, immortalized in the 1993 film "Cool Runnings."

But they said they aimed to qualify for the Beijing Winter Olympics in 2022 and then outperform the 1988 team, who did not officially finish the four-man bob competition after crashing.

"Those guys set a legacy, and a movie came out of it. For me personally, I want to surpass that level, and even go beyond that," Turgott, 27, said.

Turgott, who normally lives in Jamaica, has been staying with Stephens since January, and the pair had always planned to do summer training in Britain, albeit in gyms rather than on roads.

"If you're able to do the same sort of training without the same equipment, then you should be able to achieve more with the right equipment," he said.

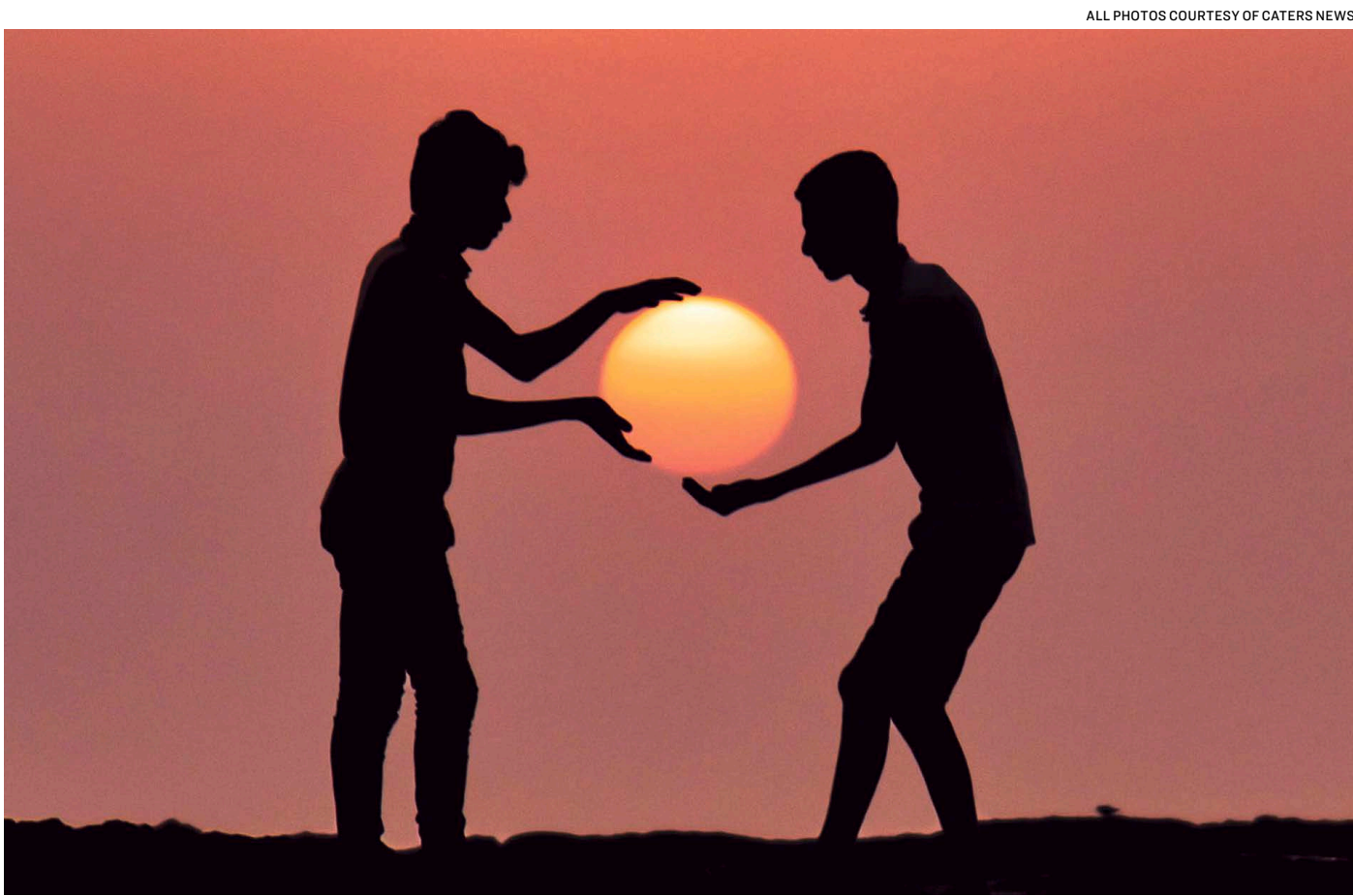
The pair are focused on qualifying for Beijing 2022. While the woman's team competed for the first time in 2018 in Pyeongchang, South Korea, the men's team failed to qualify.

"The last Olympics, we missed it by one slot. And now we are using that experience as our motivation moving forward," Turgott said.

By Will Russell
From Reuters



Jamaican bobsleigh team members Shanwayne Stephens and Nimroy Turgott push a Mini Cooper in Peterborough, England, on May 29, 2020.



ALL PHOTOS COURTESY OF CATERS NEWS

Here Comes the Sun

Photographer captures unique images of silhouettes at sunset

ROBERT JAY WATSON

Ever wished you could reach out and touch the golden and orange light of a sunset? Indian photographer Mitesh Patil has figured out a way to do just that through the magic of silhouette photography.

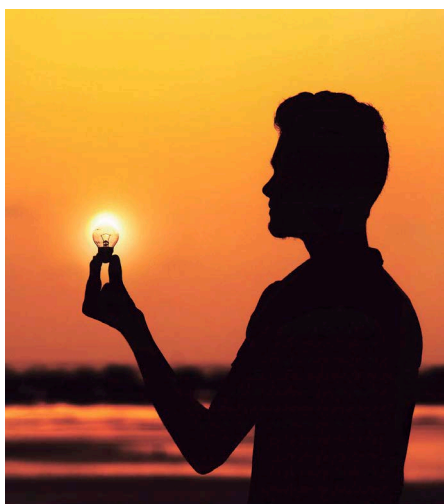
Patil, a 22-year-old mechanical engineering student from Dahanu, north of Mumbai, has come up with a method of photography to combine the setting sun with figures in his photographs to create spectacular illusions.

With good-quality cameras and a little help from Adobe Lightroom photo-editing software, Patil is able to enhance the natural silhouettes of his beachside subjects and use them to good effect next to golden setting suns amidst pink and yellow skies.

"I love silhouettes taken during a sunset so that's when I take most of my photos," Patil said. "I only get a few minutes to get a perfect shot. If I miss the moment, then obviously I have to wait until another day."

In some of his perfectly positioned pictures, figures hold the sun on their backs or pass it between each other as though it were a glowing hot beach ball. Still other photos feature the sun creatively interacting with everyday objects, like a light bulb or a lantern, bringing them to life.

But it's not just about fancy Photo-shopping; the photographer has to be completely in tune with the light and timing. "The best time to photograph a sunset is half-an-hour before and



Photographer Mitesh Patil, 22, creates images of stunning sunset silhouettes in Dahanu, Maharashtra state, in western India.

after the sunset," Patil explained. "Fifteen minutes before the sunset is the time for a perfect golden yellow and orange color."

What makes shooting silhouettes so interesting is the unpredictability and spontaneity of the process. He has figured out a technique that works, though the best time to shoot "may vary depending on the weather. For example, if the environment is hazy the sun sets 10 minutes before it touches the horizon," he said.

The silhouette photographer also dabbles in subjects unrelated to illusionism, and with some success; Patil won first prize for a photography contest on the website Halla for an image of a boy trying to catch a drop of water with his mouth from a beachside faucet. "The photo itself talks about the story behind it, to save our resources," Patil said.

Patil has been gratified by lots of positive responses on his Instagram account and other social media. "I receive many messages all over the world in appreciation of my art," he said. "It feels so good to read them and I try to reply to them all. I don't understand how to express my gratitude towards people."

His advice to up-and-coming photographers is to work hard and love what you do. "Practice as much as you can, the more you practice the more you learn. Photography is a field where you need to be patient, as it may take you days and even months to get a perfect shot," he shared.

Reason for Optimism

Kelly Shackelford on religious freedom in America

CATHERINE YANG

As the nation becomes a little less religious year after year, religious freedom has also increasingly come under attack, though sometimes quietly in the background. But the recent pandemic and state shutdowns have shone a spotlight on why it matters.

People started to see their liberties taken away, and wondered whether a shop owner had any right to protest an order that her business close, or why a parent could be handcuffed for taking his child to a park.

Things came to a head early April when a drive-in church service organized for Easter Sunday in Louisville, Kentucky, resulted in criminal action against attendees—even though participants adhered to CDC guidelines, with cars parked six feet apart and congregants staying inside their vehicles.

"We call this lawsuit the shot heard around the world," said Kelly Shackelford, president and CEO of First Liberty Institute. It's the nation's top firm for defending religious freedom, and Shackelford's focus for the past 30 years.

"Everybody was watching this. Everybody was wondering how we lost our constitutional system," Shackelford said. "And then we get this really powerful opinion saying this is wrong. This is a violation. Our Constitution is in play, and this is a massive violation of the Constitution."

"It was a clear grand slam victory," he said. "And that was, I think, the first reminder to everybody, and comfort to everybody, that we hadn't lost our freedom in the midst of a very difficult time."

Shackelford started hearing from people who said they hadn't realized what religious freedom meant until this case.

"All of a sudden, it dawned on them," Shackelford said. They had become increasingly worried about the fate of their freedoms during the shutdown, and after seeing this lawsuit sent Shackelford messages of thanks.

What houses of worship are now facing has in a way reminded Americans why religious freedom is our first freedom, and central to all our other freedoms. If you don't have the freedom to live in accordance to your beliefs, everything else is up for debate too.

People who have left authoritarian countries certainly know this: Shackelford often meets people from Eastern European nations who will hand him a check and tell him that even though they are not religious themselves, they know how important religious freedom is. They saw religious symbols disappearing in their home countries, and the loss of every other freedom soon thereafter. And they want to join the fight to preserve this liberty in America.

Despite these disappearing symbols around the nation, Shackelford has cause for optimism. After a landmark Supreme Court decision last summer, Shackelford believes we're seeing the beginning of a sea change.

"I really believe, assuming we do our job right here in the next 5 or 10 years, I really believe every American is about to have more religious freedom than they've ever had in their lifetimes," Shackelford said.

Our First Freedom

Gifted in logic and rhetoric, while in high school Shackelford was deciding between becoming a pastor or a lawyer, and asked his youth minister for some advice. He told Shackelford that there were a lot of good Christian pastors, but maybe they needed more good Christian lawyers. Shackelford took stock of himself and decided that he would probably "do better at dispensing justice rather than mercy" and eventually applied to law school.

He found a lot of encouragement that he was on the right path. Shackelford says that he was really just an average student of average intelligence, and still rather than spending extra hours studying, he spent what time he had at church helping with ministry, because that's where he felt his heart was. Despite that, he had the highest raw GPA in his graduating class, and being in the top 5 percent he was able to clerk for a federal judge for a year, inviting plenty of job opportunities.

"I felt like I was being shown: keep your heart for ministry, but use law," Shackelford said.

In law school, Shackelford developed a passion for religious freedom cases and wanted to use his legal skills to help pastors, churches, ministries, to uphold the nation's founding principles, and maybe go to seminary school part-time. He had little interest in the job offers from big law firms after his judicial clerkship.



Kelly Shackelford is the president and CEO of First Liberty Institute, the nation's top firm for defending religious freedom.

"Two weeks later, two partners in major law firms that I'd never met called me out of the blue and asked me to lunch. They said, 'Look, we've been donating our time to religious freedom and we're now getting so many calls it's hurting our ability to make a living. We were wondering, would you be willing to come on and do legal cases, help churches, pastors, religious freedoms, our founding principles? And you could even go to seminary part-time,'" Shackelford recalled.

“Seven years ago I think we had 40 cases. Last year we had over 300, and that's turning away cases.”

Kelly Shackelford, president and CEO,
First Liberty Institute

The two lawyers paid Shackelford's clerk-level salary out of pocket, and at the beginning, it was just him and one other person. Now First Liberty Institute has grown to 50 employees, a team of summer interns, a competitive fellowship program, and a network of top lawyers in every state across the country who are more than enthusiastic to donate their time to First Liberty Institute because of the opportunity to defend our founding principles. In the past two decades, the nonprofit firm has won more than 90 percent of its cases, and the number of cases has increased considerably, unfortunately, because of the increased hostility toward religion.

"Seven years ago I think we had 40 cases. Last year we had over 300, and that's turning away cases," Shackelford said.

The nature of the cases has changed as well. It used to be that the government would pass a law, and someone would bring a case forward because it interfered with their religious freedom in some way. The cases in the last few years are ones Shackelford wouldn't have believed could be real two decades ago. Now people face authorities who tell them they can't practice their religion (like a resident who faced eviction for hosting a Bible study in his apartment), or require them to do things that violate their religions (like a baker compelled to decorate a cake with a message that went against her beliefs). And perhaps in our increasingly secular culture, nonreligious bystanders don't always grasp the gravity of this.

"Our founders understood this when they called it our first freedom, because they understood that the one thing that a totalitarian regime will never allow are citizens who hold allegiance to one higher than the government. So whenever that type of oppression starts to come into place, one of the first battles will always be religious freedom. They'll be these people that won't bow their need to the government because they actually have a god bigger than the government. And when you lose there, you'll lose everything, and they understood that," Shackelford said.

So in addition to winning cases—and the right ones, to set significant precedents—First Liberty Institute puts a great focus on education and sharing compelling stories of major cases.

"If we win these cases and win for people's freedom, and they don't know they have them, what really have we won?" Shackelford said. "So it's very important that people be empowered to know the freedoms that they do have."

Originalism

A milestone decision happened in 2019 when Supreme Court judges ruled the Bladensburg Peace Cross could stay as is on government-owned land (American Legion v. American Humanist Association). It's a 40-foot-high World War I memorial on a patch of grass nestled in the middle of a busy three-way intersection in Maryland, and to tear it down would have in fact been hostile to religion, though everyone around the country has seen similar events with the disappearance of Nativity scenes and menorahs.

About a month later, the town of Tega Cay, South Carolina, put up a monument to honor fallen police officers, and the city hall received complaints because the text was a police officer's prayer. In response, the city scrubbed instances of the word "Lord" off of the monument. That upset even more people.

"Well the city council at that point didn't know what to do, so they just pulled the whole monument down," Shackelford said. Someone alerted First Liberty Institute about this, and they sent the city council a letter about the Bladensburg Peace Cross decision.

"What the decision says is, we don't tear things down in public because they have a religious symbol," Shackelford said. "They hadn't seen [the Bladensburg decision]. So what they did in this little South Carolina city is they put the monument back up with the full prayer with no deletions, no scrubbing of any of the words. And that's an example of the law was there, they just didn't know."

If the Bladensburg case sounds simple, it really isn't; it was a departure from about 50 years of precedent in terms of hostility toward religion in public.

"What we're watching change that has been very significant is the judges," Shackelford said. The current administration has been careful to vet judges who adhere to "originalism," he explained, which means the judges look to the original meaning of the Constitution or the statute in question. "Some people would assume that's what they always do, but it hasn't been."

"What we're seeing happen is we're going back to the founding principles in the Constitution," he said. "So the opinions are starting to change in that direction, and the result is we are starting to have real success in the religious freedom arena, the likes of which I haven't seen in 30 years. I feel like we're right at the beginning of some incredible changes, really positive changes on religious freedom."



Micah Long, a high school senior graduating from Dana Hall School, poses for a portrait in her prom dress in Milton, Mass., on May 16, 2020.

All Dressed Up, No Prom to Go To

BOSTON—Like Cinderella, Emily Appleton dreamed of going to the ball and dancing with her Prince Charming. But the pandemic spoiled everything.

Now, all the high school senior in South Shore, Massachusetts, can do is stare at the dark blue prom dress hanging in her bedroom since December, and commiserate by phone with schoolmates who are also facing an uncertain future during the pandemic.

An outdoor photo shoot by a Reuters photographer last month did at least give her and her friends a chance to dress up and pose for the camera.

"It's definitely bittersweet," said Appleton, 17, a state swimming champion bound for college in the fall.

The high school prom—short for promenade dance—is an American rite of passage, usually held in April through June before graduation. Plans for the event can be as elaborate as weddings, with dresses bought months in advance, stylists organized to fix hair and makeup, and limousines hired to take the partygoers to the party.

But those plans have been dashed for many of the seniors of 2020, with lockdowns that may extend through the autumn.

Boston high schoolers and best friends Lucie Mareira and Shea Mikalaukis showed up to the photo shoot in long dresses, their hair tied up. Instead of high heels, they wore practical flip-flops to trek around Ponkapoag Pond in Canton.

"It was a relief to get it off our shoulders, and not feel the constant sadness of not having a prom, to know others felt the same way," said Mareira.

"By doing the photo shoot we're helping other people by saying we're going through it, too," said Mikalaukis, an aspiring nurse.

The teenagers said they were getting through the dull hours of 24/7 lockdown by exercising, baking, journaling, or chatting.

"Everyday feels like Sunday" was a common refrain.

"Surreal," said Melina Bertsekas, from Lexington. "I'm still kind of in denial."

Caroline Afonso, however, was relieved.

"The drama around prom is so stupid. The actual prom is boring," said the Dedham teen.

With little certainty about how or if colleges will reopen in the fall, teenagers are stuck with few options. Paying high tuition fees for online classes makes little sense—but neither does taking a gap year to stay at home.

But lessons from the lockdown are gems.

"You learn who your real friends are," said 18-year-old Lauren Norton.

From Reuters



Father's Day Gift Guide



BARBARA DANZA

This Father's Day is one unlike any other. Our current way of life looks different than in years past and many dads find themselves spending a whole lot more time at home than they used to.

Times like these make us appreciate the dads of the world even more.

This is a great year to celebrate with homemade cards, homemade treats, and gifts that enhance Dad's experience at home. Here are some ideas to consider.



Office Enhancements

For the dad working at home, perhaps a few new touches to his home office space would make all the difference in his day-to-day. Here are some ideas.

1. For the productivity hack that will take Dad's work to the next level: the **Datexx Miracle TimeCube Timer**, \$19, [Amazon.com](https://www.amazon.com)

2. So Dad can see what he's doing: **TaoTronics Table Lamp**, \$39.99, [Amazon.com](https://www.amazon.com)

3. To keep Dad's core engaged and his posture straight while working: **Gaiam Balance Disc Wobble Cushion Stability Core Trainer**, \$21.98, [Amazon.com](https://www.amazon.com)

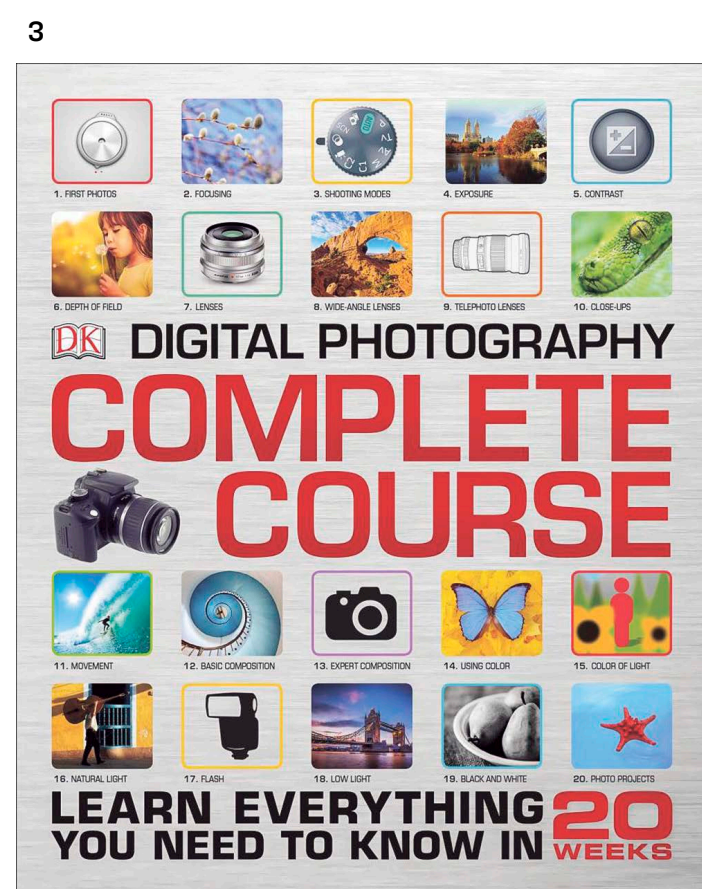
Hobby Starters

With some extra time on his hands, perhaps Dad has shown interest in a new (or old) hobby. A gift that advances his prowess in his chosen interest is both thoughtful and supportive. Perhaps something like the following would fit the bill.

1. For the dad who's taking his strolls to the next level: **Teton Sports Oasis 1100 Hydration Pack**, \$46.38, [TetonSports.com](https://www.tetonsports.com)

2. For the dad taking notice of the birds in the yard: **Droll Yankees American Bird 8" Green Songbird Feeder**, \$29.95, [USAb2c.com](https://www.usab2c.com)

3. For the dad interested in photography: **"Digital Photography Complete Course: Learn Everything You Need to Know in 20 Weeks"** by David Taylor, \$30, [Amazon.com](https://www.amazon.com)



Backyard Fun

Fun for Dad to enjoy with the whole family, a backyard game or two would make a perfect gift this Father's Day. Check out these items, all made in the USA.

1. **Victory Tailgate Cornhole Boards**, \$179.99, [Victory Tailgate.com](https://www.victorytailgate.com)

A neighborhood favorite, these solid wood cornhole boards are "constructed out of premium grade birch veneer plywood and hand finished with a 7-stage sanding and sealing process." They're available in a vast array of fun themes and designs.

2. **St. Pierre Manufacturing Corp. American Professional Horseshoes**, \$65, [StPierreUSA.com](https://www.stpierreusa.com)

This high-quality set was designed by a world champion horseshoe pitcher. "Its unique shape and exclusive trademark design make it superior to other horseshoes," according to the company. This product is available in stores such as Dick's Sporting Goods, Ace Hardware, and Wayfair. See their website for a full list of retailers.

3. **Aerobie Pro**, \$9.99, [Aerobie.com](https://www.aerobie.com)

Tell Dad to go long! The Frisbee-like ring was used to set a Guinness World Record and has been a popular addition to outdoor fun for decades. It can be found at a number of retailers including Target and Amazon.



Home Entertainment Upgrade

Separating work and leisure when both happen at home can be challenging. Encourage Dad to relax and unwind with some enhancements to his at-home entertainment options.



Optoma Projector HD146X, \$549, [Optoma.com](https://www.optoma.com)

Turn your living room into a movie theater with this impressive cinema-quality projector. Dad can connect a video streaming device, gaming console, or Blu-ray player to play games, stream videos, and share photos, all in the comfort of home.



Bose QuietComfort 35 Wireless Headphones II, \$349.95, [Bose.com](https://www.bose.com)

For the dad who would like to watch his shows even though the house is teeming with family members.



Athleisure

Between the home office, the grocery store, and an evening stroll around the block, Dad's need for professional wear has likely dwindled in recent months. Stylish but comfortable is the perfect choice for this year's Father's Day. Here are some classic suggestions.

1. **L.L. Bean Men's Carefree Unshrinkable Tee, Traditional Fit Short-Sleeve**, \$19.95, [LLBean.com](https://www.llbean.com)

2. **Lands' End Men's Serious Sweats Full-Zip Hoodie**, \$59.95, [LandsEnd.com](https://www.landsend.com)

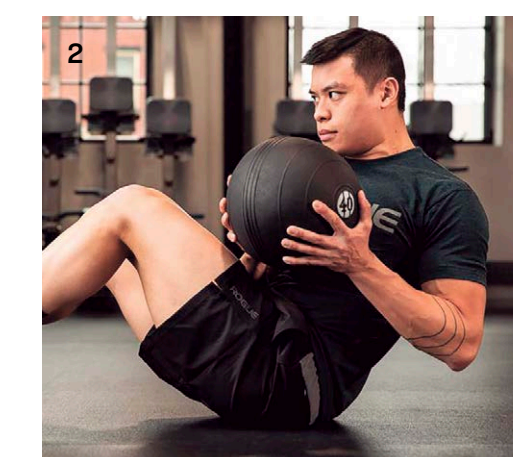
3. **Olivers Convoy Short Sleeve Henley**, \$98, [OliversApparel.com](https://www.oliversapparel.com)

4. **Old Navy Go-Dry Cargo Tech Joggers for Men**, \$49.99, [OldNavy.Gap.com](https://www.oldnavy.gap.com)



Home Fitness

With many gyms still closed, Dad may be looking for new ways to stay fit. Perhaps one of the following—both made in the USA—would do just the trick in upping Dad's fitness game.



1. **Bosu NexGen Pro Balance Trainer**, \$179.99, [Bosu.com](https://www.bosu.com)

The textured dome and its four quadrants, allow for precise body positioning. Dad can work on cardio, agility, core, strength, or mobility exercises.

2. **Mondo D-Ball Medicine Balls**, starting at \$19.95, [D-ball.com/medicine-balls/](https://www.d-ball.com/)
These gym basics come in a wide variety of weights and are "designed to last a lifetime."

Sleep Enhancers

Sleep during stressful times is important. Help Dad catch more z's with one of the following:

1. **Homedics SoundSpa**, \$19.99, [Homedics.com](https://www.homedics.com)

A choice of five soothing sounds or white-noise option will lull Dad to sleep in no time. Has a built-in automatic off timer.

2. **Nodpod Weighted Sleep Mask**, \$42, [NodPod.com](https://www.nodpod.com)

Dubbed "the weighted blanket for your eyes," this simple bedtime addition may be just the thing Dad needs to get himself a good night's sleep.





JAMES H. SMITH - CARTO

▲ Singer-songwriter Katy Mantyk has recently released her first single.

Heaven Sent a Songbird

Singer-songwriter Katy Mantyk has come to lift our spirits

J.H. WHITE

MOUNT HOPE, New York—Katy Mantyk is a special soul.

The first time I heard her play was at Foundry42, a coffee bar a couple hours from New York City. She played an acoustic version of “Search No More,” which became her first international single, released just a week ago.

Her performance surprised me. I had gone with a group of friends in the way that friends go to events to support each other. But I had no idea who Katy Mantyk was.

As Katy played “Search No More,” those of us listening hung on her notes and sweet spirit.

“Search no more, this is what we’ve been waiting for...”

Applause and cheers followed her last lingering chord. Even the Instagram video I shot on my phone that night still brings me back to that moment—a combination of life and peace, feeling and calm—a heartfelt sense of well-being. Those at the coffee shop, we breathed together, teared together; we healed together. That’s what Katy does when she sings—she makes you whole.

“When I first started writing music, I didn’t have this strong desire to be on stage or show my talents,” she told me when we sat down together recently. “It comes from a different place—just wanting to give people something that could help them feel good, feel better, uplift their spirit, make them think about important things in life, like the divine, and who we are, and how we can be better people.”

Katy’s beautiful folk-pop songs send encouraging words that embrace us, like an unexpected friend showing up with a helping hand when you need it most.

“Her music sounds lovely; I know it’s good for my soul,” said one of Katy’s fans, filmmaker Jessica Kneipp, in a phone interview. “I do listen to her music if I’m wanting to tap into my inner strength or remember ‘every-one struggles a bit,’ let things go or ‘step back and think a bit bigger about things.’ I’ve actually sent [Katy’s music] to lots of people personally in

my life who had been either going through a death or a difficult breakup from a partner. I’ve sent it as a remedy so their heart can feel good. It’s good music to prescribe.”

Katy can do that because music makes Katy whole. She just extends her own personal healing through music to us.

“[Songwriting] has really healed me too—spending that time with music, searching my soul and my own philosophy to create songs that are beautiful and meaningful,” she says.

In Harmony With Her Nature

Katy grew up in the most northern tip of New Zealand, surrounded by beaches, native culture, and the bonding magic of music.

“New Zealanders are quite down-to-earth, open-minded, and spiritual people in general,” she says. “New Zealanders love music; native New Zealanders, the Maori people, are amazing musicians and singers and love singing together. That’s part of a culture that I got to enjoy and take part of as well. I really love that culture.”

Katy’s mom told her that before she could talk, she was listening to music, singing along and clapping. In grade school, Katy learned many Maori songs with beautiful melodies that she can still remember to this day. In church, music and worship went hand in hand.

“Our church was the kind that sang really joyously, clapped their hands and praised the Lord,” she says. “There was always group singing in my life. I loved joining with people and singing together. It’s a beautiful energy.”

One of the schools Katy attended had a church joined to it, and inside was a grand piano. Both of her parents were teachers, so Katy would stay late after school, teaching herself piano. “I was just a little girl in this big empty church playing the piano to my heart’s content and nobody bothered me,” she says. “I’ve been fortunate to explore music in a really comfortable way and a really loving environment.”

Katy learned the guitar on her own as well, with some help from her older brother.

“My eldest brother is really gifted; he’s way beyond me,” she says. He was 16, she was 10, and she’d spy on him

playing, “just an annoying little sister,” she says. He’d show her a few chords, and she’d go and practice on her own.

“Then I started figuring out songs. I had a good ear, so I could listen to a song; even really young, I could just hear a song or a melody and I could instantly play it on a piano, a recorder, or a guitar,” she says.

Even as young as 5 years old, she remembers being able to play back a song on a recorder. “Finding the right notes, it was like a fun puzzle.”

In high school, Katy was in the art room one day when she heard “a really folky, bluesy, soulful African American singer and beautiful guitar work. It moved my soul immediately; I was hypnotized by it,” she says.

The artist was Ben Harper, and Katy began learning his songs right away. This was before the days of YouTube tutorials, where you could look up how to play someone’s song. So she’d listen, press pause, play, and on, figuring out each part bit by bit.

“That would be the defining start of my personal style: a little bit country and folk, a little bit soulful,” Katy says.

Though she loved making music, Katy never thought being a singer-songwriter was a real career option for her to pursue.

“I’m very shy. I didn’t really like performing on stage, even though I loved playing,” she says. But when she realized that she could become a sound engineer, and record and make music behind the scenes, she was ecstatic. She then entered a two-year audio engineering degree program.

“Making music as an engineer or a producer seemed like a practical solution to being part of that world,” she says. “That was one of the best times of my life.”

Not only was Katy learning the technical skills of a sound engineer and producer, but something else unexpected was quietly happening behind the scenes.

“I met tons of amazing people who became like soul mates to me. They loved music and helped me come out of my shell. They encouraged me, pushed me to not be so shy and make music rather than be intimidated,” she says. “I started writing songs, trying to create songs that had a beginning and end. It felt really natural to do.... I guess I had that secret wish in

my heart all along, to be honest, but I never took that seriously or considered it something I would really do.”

Finding the Way

During her study of audio engineering, some other stars aligned for Katy that she had been waiting for. A few months earlier, Katy was at a New Year’s Eve party in Opononi, at the very northern part of New Zealand. She was 21, in the beginning of her adult life.

“I was feeling really lost about what life was supposed to mean, and what I’m supposed to do with it,” she says. She left the party and went for a walk; she happened upon a cliff, overlooking the ocean.

“I walked out to the edge of the cliff, and the sky was so vast, and incredibly beautiful evening. The stars were really bright; it was a very beautiful, bright, bright, open sky. And then the ocean below me spread really far; there was nothing else I could see. It was quite dark, but just sparkling light in the sky and reflection on the ocean,” she says. “It really brought me closer to the divine at that point, to the Creator, because when you see that kind of beauty, it does remind you of how incredibly beautiful creation is.”

She asked God for the meaning of her life, though she wasn’t even sure who God was anymore. “I used to think I knew, but I’d become a little more humble about my understanding of what the divine might be or mean. I humbly asked the universe, the divine, the Creator, ‘Wherever you are, please help me find my meaning of life so that I can live what I was destined to do and not lose my way.’ I wanted to find a way; that was my prayer.”

A couple months later, a friend in her audio engineering program introduced her to Falun Dafa, a Chinese meditation practice with slow-moving, tai-chi-like qigong exercises. “He told me about its universal principles of truth, compassion, and tolerance. He said look into any religion or spiritual practice, they all have this similar guide,” she says. “That sounded like a good thing to try to be. I read the book and found it just so incredibly profound.”

Katy had battled with depression on and off for years—“feeling lost

and not understanding what was my driving force in life,” she says. But she always “strongly believed there are more magical and divine forces in the universe than just us human beings living on this little speck of dust.”

As she practiced the exercises and applied the teachings of truthfulness, compassion, and tolerance to her life, her whole being began to change. Within half a year, her health problems, such as chronic back and sciatica pain, pinching nerves, dead legs, and terribly painful menstrual cycles, all disappeared. Her asthma cleared up, and she threw away her inhalers.

“The energy in the book was so powerful,” she says. “I tried smoking pot, and I literally felt a black cloud of smoke come over my mind, around me and the environment. It was the worst feeling I had ever felt.” She never smoked again.

Her bouts with depression also melted away. “In my mind, those strange thoughts, confusing depression thoughts, and negativity were clearing out too. I was a lot happier and healthier. So, I kept doing it because it’s good, because it’s real.”

The spiritual practice also began to shape Katy’s songwriting. She began learning about traditional Chinese culture, which highlights the healing qualities of music. The Chinese character of medicine, for example, includes the character for music.

“The way I understand it is that the person making the music has to be in a really good state of mind with really good intentions,” she says. “Their energy, a real energy, not just a hypothetical, but electric energies are given to the listener, especially if it’s in a live setting.”

Katy realized that living by those principles could help her improve her inner world, which consequently could be infused into her music, elevating herself and those listening. “I’m not a classically trained musician, but self-taught, so I do feel very humble about my skills. People could criticize my skill level,” she says. “So what I try to do is create something really good at my level of ability. The strongest elements that I can bring out are beautiful melodies with clear messages and clear lyrics.”

Kindergarten teacher Tili Nesbitt—another fan of Katy’s whom I spoke to on the phone—echoed this healing, empathetic quality that her music exudes. One night after a long day, Tili said she felt empty and somewhat hopeless. She had recently discovered Katy’s music and turned it on as she walked to the train station. “It completely resolved the feeling; it completely lifted whatever

it was. I felt like: ‘I’m not alone in this—Katy knows,’” Tili said. “Katy touches upon this universal struggle, aspects” of what we all contend with in life, and then she throws in the solution. You can feel that she’s always bringing in universal principles in her lyrics, virtues, compassion, letting things go and just going with the flow, finding your way. I feel like Katy reaches parts of me like no other artist really does.”

Music Can Be Medicine

As Katy grew as a person and songwriter, she would be faced with a personal tragedy. Music became her only way forward.

Katy will be releasing a song called “Shooting Star” later this year. I asked if she’d be willing to tell the story behind the song.

“This is really hard to talk about,” she says. Tears welled up in her eyes; she forced a slight smile. “It still hurts.”

The song starts like this:

“As the leaves drift down in fall and the bone cold wind blows in I know seasons come and go but you are always on my mind.”

Katy wrote the song after her sister-in-law—and dear friend—had ended her own life.

“It crushed us and broke our hearts. A lot of people loved her very much, and it broke all of our hearts that we couldn’t help her come out of that dark place and that she felt the only answer was to end her life. It’s so not true. It’s not true. She would’ve had a beautiful future. She would’ve gotten through that hard time,” Katy says.

Questions loomed over Katy’s family. “Was it our fault? Could we have done something? Were we just ignoring her suffering? There’s a lot of pain there for us to live through, especially for my brother who lost his best friend and wife,” she says.

Katy wrote the song for self-soothing but also to encourage her brother and family that they’ll get through this tragedy. She says, “I feel like my brother got to a point of feeling what’s the point of living because the pain was so hard to bear. I wanted to write a song, reminding myself and him that there’s hope, that we’ll feel love again, that life will still be beautiful and can go on even though we miss her dearly.”

Six months later, Katy’s brother pulled his wife’s stereo out of storage. He played the CD that she had been listening to before she took her life. He was devastated. One song was called “Suicide Is Painless,” and it repeats those lyrics throughout.

“That’s just so appalling and such a wicked, wicked message to have in your music. There’s so much mental illness in the world today. The kind of music people are listening to, it can make them sick,” she says.

Katy likens it to eating junk food, which hurts the body, or healthy food, which nourishes it. Similarly, positive, nurturing music uplifts and stabilizes the mind; negative messages can tear you down.

“The type of music that a person creates is usually connected to their innate character, their personality, and their beliefs,” she says. “I’m a really hopeful person; there are a lot of things to be hopeful about in life. I do like songs to have some hope or solution.”

Like the Dao—the cosmic philosophy of harmonizing opposites—Katy’s catalog of music also finds a balance. The next song she’ll be releasing is an upbeat, happy summertime song called “Free as a Bird.”

“Wherever I go, I go with all my heart. It’s so exciting when the journey starts”

Katy’s music career is just starting, and I think we’re all pretty lucky to be invited on that trip. If you’re looking for an artist who lifts you up with beautiful melodies, sings stories rich in ancient wisdom as timely today as ever, and offers transparent truth wrapped in gentle kindness, then search no more. Katy Mantyk might just be the best I’ve ever heard.

You can find Katy Mantyk at Facebook or KatyMantykMusic.com

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

The Unstoppable Momentum of Giving Back

It started with 2 best friends and a bucket list of 127 items to accomplish in a year

ANDREW THOMAS

Dillon Hill, 21, was doing homework one evening during his freshman year of college at the University of California–Davis when his phone rang. His childhood best friend Chris Betancourt was on the other end of the line; he told him that his cancer had returned. He only had approximately a year to live unless he received a bone marrow transplant.

Betancourt had been diagnosed with cancer at age 11. During the treatment process, Betancourt and Hill found that playing video games was tremendously therapeutic. After Betancourt went into remission, Hill went on to found the organization Gamers Gift while in high school, which has donated 75 gaming consoles and 225 games to kids in children’s hospitals.

Now that the cancer was back, Hill was somewhat in denial about the severity of the prognosis. Both Hill and Betancourt decided to take action, so they created a bucket list for Betancourt.

“That was kind of our way of doing it. OK, [one] year left, but let’s do it well, and feeling if we responded dramatically, that would somehow subdue the cancer or something like that. It was kind of a weird way to fight it,” Hill said.

Betancourt’s bucket list was 127 items long and included activities such as eating the world’s hottest pepper and skydiving. To let the world know their story, they made a video to explain who they were and what their mission was. It went viral, and subsequent videos would update people on their progress.

Hill quickly realized that fulfilling Betancourt’s bucket list would be a full-time job and decided to drop out of college to spend as much time as possible with his best friend.

“That year isn’t going to be spent with me sitting in lecture halls. That time can be spent doing stuff together, so let’s give it a shot,” Hill recalled thinking.

One of the biggest highlights of their experience was when the duo got free matching tattoos. Betancourt got a second tattoo with a Danny DeVito quote from the television series “It’s Always Sunny in Philadelphia,” which read “I don’t know how many years on this earth I got left. I’m going to get real weird with it.” DeVito saw a picture of the tattoo, and the two had the opportunity to have breakfast with him.

Betancourt also had the opportunity to fly a World War II-era plane over their hometown as the sun was setting.

He also fed the homeless during Thanksgiving.

“It was nice to be able to see his reaction to his bucket list helping other people,” Hill said. “That was the first time I think all of us kind of realized that other people could benefit from what we were doing.”

The Match

As often as they could, they would mention a call to action to sign up to be a bone marrow donor during their videos. Number four on Betancourt’s bucket list was to break a world record, and the two decided to break the world record for the most bone marrow donor sign-ups in one day.

Inspired by the ALS ice bucket challenge, the duo started Lemons for Leukemia; they reached out to celebrities and people with

large social media followings and asked them to film themselves biting into a lemon, share the video on social media, and challenge others to do the same. One particularly memorable video involved a young kid filming himself at his kitchen table.

“It was not necessarily interesting because of what he did, but it was more so interesting to see this little kid doing something for someone else,” Hill said. “To see that we motivated this young kid to do this was eye-opening in a lot of ways.”

Celebrities such as Dwayne “The Rock” Johnson, Gary Oldman, and Danny DeVito all participated. Hill and Betancourt were ultimately able to get over 8,700 people to sign up in one day.

As a result of their efforts, Betancourt received a bone marrow donor match in March 2018.

By the time Betancourt discovered he had a bone marrow donor match, he and Hill had crossed off approximately 40 items from the list. The last item they crossed off was making a documentary about Betancourt’s journey announcing the news about the donor match. Betancourt entered treatment in August 2018, and he’s currently in remission.

Hill took away numerous important life lessons from the bucket list journey with his best friend, but one in particular stands out. Hill realized how many people face tremendously adverse situations every day, and how lucky Betancourt was to get an opportunity for another shot at life.

Inspired by the ALS ice bucket challenge, the duo started Lemons for Leukemia.

Giving Back

Hill has continued his documentary series “One List One Life” under the brand name Live for Another. He wanted to keep the momentum going and felt it would be unfair to not continue the mission after Betancourt went into remission. Hill saw a picture online of a young cancer patient named Lexi who was undergoing chemotherapy treatment on her birthday with a huge smile on her face. Hill reached out to Lexi and told her about Betancourt’s bucket list documentary.

Lexi came up with her own bucket list, and Hill put in tremendous effort to help her cross the items off the list.

Lexi got the opportunity to meet a cheetah and visit Yosemite, for example. But the most impactful item on the bucket list was Lexi’s wish to be on a billboard to help get her an appearance on the Ellen DeGeneres Show. Hill reached out to a local company and got 11 billboards with Lexi’s photo on them. He picked her up at the airport, and took her around so she could see all of the billboards with her face on them.

It reminded Hill of how people had helped him and Betancourt.

“It really felt like we did a good job of continuing the momentum, and having a really huge positive impact on someone else’s life in the same way that everyone else did on our lives,” Hill said.

ALL PHOTOS COURTESY OF DILLON HILL



(Left) Dillon Hill (R) dropped out of college to spend time with his friend Chris Betancourt (C) after he was diagnosed with cancer a second time.

(Right) Dillon Hill with Lexi in front of their billboards. (Below) Dillon Hill (R) started his mission of giving back in high school.



Getting Ready to Homeschool? 6 Things to Think About This Summer

BARBARA DANZA

So, after months of virtual school at home and with an ever-evolving picture of what back-to-school might look like in the fall, you find yourself considering becoming an all-in, bonafide home-schooler.

Welcome to the other side!

One advantage of a summer full of canceled plans is you have time to wrap your head around what homeschooling might look like for you and your family. This may not be something you've ever considered doing before, but if you're like most homeschoolers I know, you'll look back one day and wish you'd done it sooner.

Of course, that's quite a leap from where you might find your thoughts today. After all, this is a big decision, requiring a significant shift in the way you think of "school" and education and your role as a parent. The fears and doubts that come up will likely be plentiful.

As someone who has been there, I'd like to suggest some things to think about this summer in preparation for your new season of homeschooling.

Seek Out Inspiration

One sure-fire way to get pumped to homeschool (and restore your faith in humanity) is to check out the multitudes of inspiring homeschool parents and experts who are sharing their journeys, struggles, philosophies, and ideas online. Search online to get a peek at what's possible. If you've never fallen down this rabbit hole, prepare to be amazed at the beauty, creativity, and diligence of today's homeschooling parents. It's simply wonderful. Your family is in for a magical shift.

In addition, find local families who are homeschooling. Facebook Groups are probably your best bet; search your town, county, state name, and "homeschool" in Groups, and you'll likely find many people to connect with and build community with.

Look Back at 'School' With Fresh Eyes

It can be helpful, before you set off along a new path, to know where you've been. Just as it's good to know what you want in a homeschool, it's good to know what you don't want.

With the benefit of some separation, look back upon your experience with the school system objectively, with fresh eyes. Public school is the standard path for most in the U.S. Many consider the experience a right of passage, what "everyone" does, warts and all.

With the smallest amount of research, though, those who learn about the true



Know that you are the very best possible teacher your child could ever have. No one knows your child like you do.

history of the public school system and its current practices and standards are quite surprised, to say the least. I highly recommend starting with the works of former New York City teacher John Taylor Gatto for an eye-opening look at what you're leaving behind.

Additionally, think back to your own experiences with school and those of your children. Was school a good learning environment? Did you learn a lot in school? Did you like school? Is that the best option for education? Be as objective as you can and understand the true nature of the pros and cons for your children and your family.

Understand Your 'Why'

With a sense of where you've been and a glimpse at where you're going, begin to formulate an answer to the question: Why am I choosing to homeschool my children?

Your current "why" may simply be to avoid the impacts of the school's pandemic response. If you plan to send your children right back to school in a year, you may choose a different strategy from someone who plans to homeschool more long-term.

When you know your "why" it can inform the detailed decisions you make in your homeschool.

Read Up

As the popularity of homeschooling has continually grown, so have the resources available to homeschoolers. You're starting this journey at a wonderful time. The sky's the limit. Of course, this abundance can also be a tad overwhelming.

There are many homeschool books out there. I recommend starting with "The Brave Learner: Finding Everyday Magic in Homeschool, Learning, and Life" by Julie Bogart and "The Well-Trained Mind: A Guide to Classical Education at Home (Fourth Edition)" by Susan Wise Bauer and Jessie Wise. These two different books both provide a broad overview of homeschooling ideas and point to other resources that you may find more fitting to the style you're aiming for. Consider these jumping-off points that will send you well on your way.

Set Up a Structure

As you head toward your first day of homeschool, starting slowly and simply will be key. Rather than drawing up an elaborate schedule that will lead to certain burnout by day three, aim to establish a lovely rhythm to your days. Additionally, stay flexible. It takes some time to find your groove and what works for each member of the family. Take it easy. Take it slow.

As the year progresses and you see what works and what doesn't, get systems in place that help you thrive and continue to tweak your daily, weekly, semesterly rhythms to best create a homeschool life you love.

Hint: When it all breaks down—the systems, the rhythm, the joy—just read books. Read aloud, read individually, put on an audiobook. Tomorrow's another day.

Have Faith

Finally, know that you are the very best possible teacher your child could ever have. No one knows your child like you do. No one is rooting for your child to thrive harder than you are. No one is more qualified to facilitate their education.

You don't need to be a trained teacher or an expert in any subject whatsoever. You simply need to create an environment where your child can thrive and to be resourceful in finding the tools, materials, experts, and communities to help your child learn best. You just need to walk side-by-side with your child along this learning journey.

You simply need to love your child and do your best to support his or her education, and that will be leaps and bounds beyond what they could ever possibly acquire anywhere else.



FOR KIDS ONLY

THE EPOCH TIMES

Week 23, 2020

A DREAM OF SUMMER

Mary N. Prescott

West wind and sunshine
Braided together,
What is the one sign
But pleasant weather?
Birds in the cherry-trees,
Bees in the clover;
Who half so gay as these
All the world over?
Violets among the grass,
Roses regretting
How soon the summer 'll pass,—
Next year forgetting.

Buds sighing in their sleep,
"Summer, pray grant us
Youth, that its bloom will keep
Fragrance to haunt us!"
Rivulets that shine and sing,
Sunbeams abetting,—
No more remembering
Their frozen fretting.
Sweet music in the wind,
Sun in the showers;
All these we're sure to find
In summer hours.

WHAT DID THE BEACH SAY WHEN THE TIDE CAME IN?

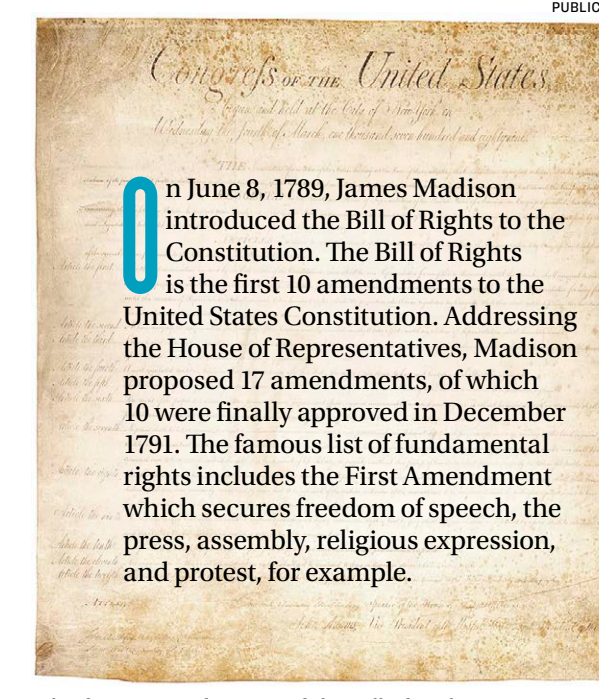
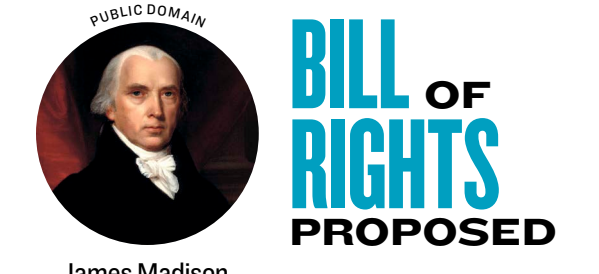
LIDVIA OLEANDRA/SHUTTERSTOCK

“Keep your face to the sun and you will never see the shadows.”

HELEN KELLER (1880–1968), AMERICAN AUTHOR AND EDUCATOR

OLYA HUMENIUK/SHUTTERSTOCK

This Week in History



The first page of a copy of the Bill of Rights.

By Aidan Danza, age 13

BIRDS OF THE AMAZON RAINFOREST (PART I)

BLUE AND YELLOW MACAW

Another large bird, the blue and yellow macaw can be 32–35 inches long, which is only a little smaller than the harpy eagle. However, the blue and yellow macaw is much more lightly built, weighing around 2–4 pounds. The name is fitting—the blue and yellow macaw is blue on the back and head, while yellow on the belly and underwings. Its face is white with some black marks. Normally, the blue and yellow macaw will stay in pairs or small flocks. They scare easily when not guarding the nest, flying at the slightest disturbance while squawking like mad. When a predator comes along while the macaw's at the nest, however, the macaws will defend the nest ferociously.

Interestingly, the blue and yellow macaw will live around 30–35 years. They normally eat things like seeds, nuts, and fruits, and use both their feet and their strong, heavy bills to eat their food. Their famous squawks and screams are known the world over for their loud nature, but these loud calls are actually a quite refined method of communication.

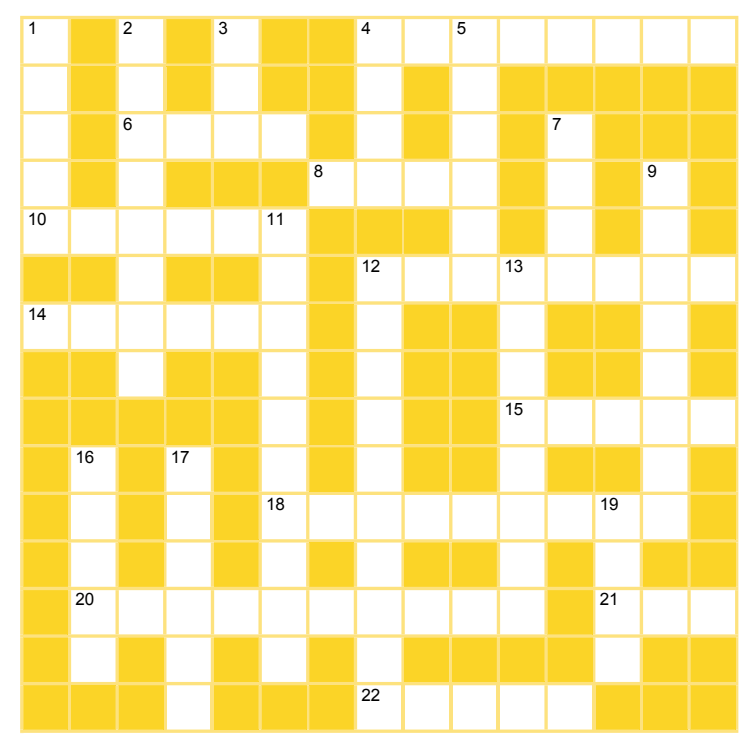
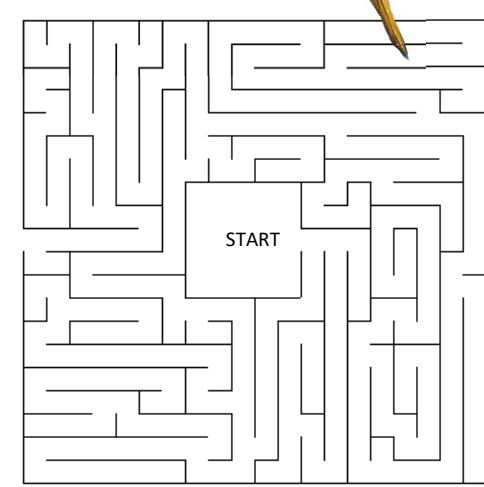
HARPY EAGLE

This enormous eagle earns the title of "Largest raptor in the Americas," and is around 35–41 inches long and weighs 10–20 pounds. Its face is odd for an eagle—with large, forward-facing eyes like an owl's, a massive, dangerous-looking bill, and large feathers extending off of the back of its cloudy gray head. Its body is largely black above and white below. Its long legs hold huge, bright-yellow talons.

Unlike most other raptors, which like to go for smaller, more manageable prey like rats, squirrels, ducks, and mice, harpies eat much bigger things, including sloths, monkeys, possums, parrots, iguanas, and snakes. To catch such prey, the harpy eagles have proportionally shorter wings and longer tails than other eagles do, making them very agile for such a large bird.

The Amazon rainforest is like an animal city. Just like our cities, our concrete jungles, the trees of the Amazon rainforest stretch higher than most of the trees in the world and support life on most parts of it, from the forest floor to the canopy.

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

Easy puzzle 1

3	7		
63			
3	3		
+	-	x	÷

Solution For Easy 1
 $L = (C + C + C)$

Medium puzzle 1

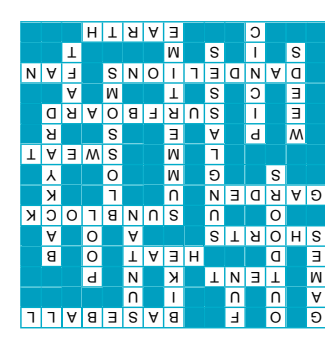
8	13		
94			
6	8		
+	-	x	÷

Solution for Medium 1
 $8 + 8 + 8 \times 8$

Hard puzzle 1

10	32		
40			
10	29		
+	-	x	÷

Solution for Hard 1
 $01 + 01 + (82 - 82)$



Across

- "Field of Dreams" sport (8)
- Carnival sight (4)
- "It's not the _____, it's the humidity" (4)
- Favorite summertime pants (6)
- Beachgoer's need (8)

Down

- Doubleheader pair (5)
- Location of summertime activities (8)
- BBQs, Beach outings, ballgames, etc. (3)
- Summertime ride (4)
- It fades in the fall (6)
- Swimming location (4)
- Where lightning bugs roam (8)
- Sunscreen for your eyes (10)
- Memorial Day to Labor Day (10)
- They scent the summertime evenings (8)
- Gardener's woes (5)
- Outdoor meal (6)
- Tom Sawyer's vessel (4)

- Summertime veggie place (6)
- It may soak your shirt (5)
- Wave rider? (9)
- Honeybee's breakfast meal? (10)
- Summertime need (3)
- Our planet (5)

7 Ways to Turn Down the Tech in Your Family

BARBARA DANZA

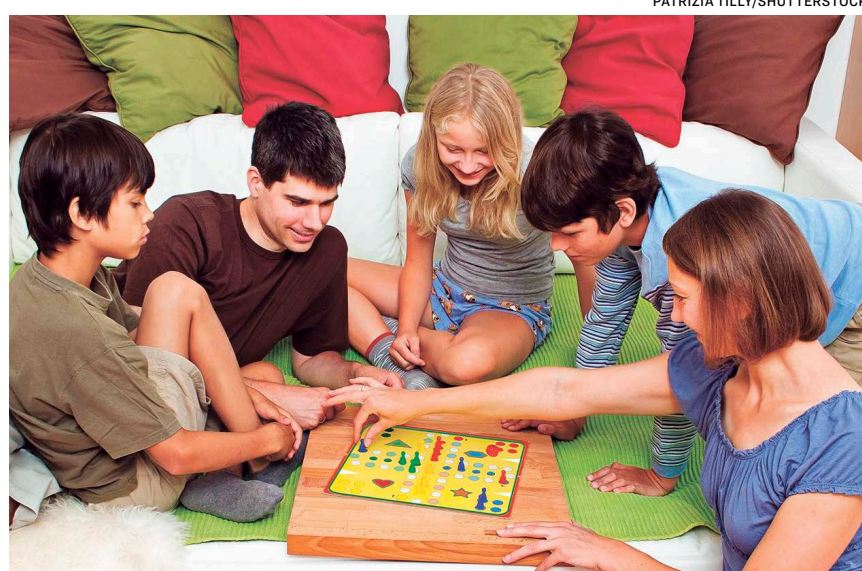
The start of summer is an opportune time to take a look at your family's use of technology and, perhaps, turn it down just a bit.

For all of the convenience, opportunity, and access to information today's technology provides, the potential effects of stealing our time, hampering our relationships, and impacting our physical and mental well-being are becoming ever more obvious as this technology works its way into every facet of our lives. Especially troubling are the potential effects on our children as they are developing.

Responsibly using technology for its benefits while avoiding its pitfalls requires some attention. A fun approach is to intentionally incorporate decidedly low-tech ways of life into our every day. Here are some simple ideas.

Resist the Morning Check

Morning sets the tone for the day and parents set the tone for the family. Try to replace checking your phone first thing in the morning with different, analog activity like meditation, exercise, reading, drinking coffee, tidying up, showering, and so on. Aim to ease into the morning and appreciate the real, physical world around you



Board games encourage laughter and interaction; they're a great way of bonding with family and friends.

before diving into the world on your screen.

Spin Some Tunes

No really, spin them, on a record player. Your kids are sure to get a kick out of this ancient machine while you enjoy music with a warmth and special quality unique to vinyl.

Get Out Into Nature

The beauty of our natural world has so much to teach us if we'd only shift our gaze away from the glow of a screen and out to what's all around

us. A daily walk makes getting out into nature an easy habit to establish. Schedule as many summer outings like picnics in parks, trips to the beach, hikes through the forest, and more.

Burn Candles

While you may not see electric lighting as particularly high tech, you may be surprised at what a relief it is to dim artificial lights and utilize natural candlelight. Transitioning to candlelight at night may become a calming and delightful ritual for you and your family to enjoy.

Write With a Pen

Writing with a pen (or pencil) is a different experience than typing on a keyboard. Encourage your family to handwrite journal entries, letters, to-do lists, and so on. Let the creativity flow and the distractions diminish.

Send Letters Through the Mail

Speaking of writing, the next time you or a family member wishes to catch up with a loved one, encourage sending a handwritten note through the mail. Your loved one will be delighted and the impact of your words will be more meaningful than if quickly sent via email.

Replace Video Games With Board Games

This may be a challenge for many families. The difference between getting lost in a video game versus playing a board game with family or friends could not be starker. The latter encourages all involved to laugh together, centers focus in the real world, and enhances relational bonds.

There are many ways to reduce the reliance on technology for your family. Summer is a wonderful time to put those in place and ensure that your loved ones aren't missing out on the real things right in front of them.



What Can Subscribers Expect From The Epoch Times?

1. Truthful news at a time when fake and twisted news is widespread.
2. News and issues that matter instead of trivial or sensational stories.
3. True independence without spin and free from political agendas and influence.
4. Positive and inspiring aspects of stories that give people joy and optimism—like a life companion or friend for people to lean on.
5. Truthful reporting on the most important topics: coverage of U.S. news that other media do not report, or report in a biased way; threats to America’s security and sovereignty that other media often choose to omit; and more.
6. Traditional journalism that upholds virtue, ethics, and morality in the face of degenerated and corrupt journalistic practices.
7. Exposure of the pervasive, worldwide influence of communism—an imminent threat that seeks to destroy traditional values and break apart stable societies.
8. Reports on traditional cultures and ancient wisdom that hold the keys to unlocking better health, well-being, and enduring happiness.
9. Encouragement of integrity, humanity, and hope.


What are some fundamental differences between The Epoch Times and other media?


1. The Epoch Times is the first and only media that exposes the true nature, impact, and ultimate goal of communism. We explain its damage to our moral foundations and traditions. We also discuss the outcomes of socialism and its impact on countries’ economic and political stability. We believe that the media has a duty to be upright and responsible to society.
2. While six corporations own 90 percent of media outlets in the United States (according to Business Insider), The Epoch Times is independent of any influence from corporations, governments, or political parties. Our only goal is to bring our readers accurate information and to be responsible to the public.
3. The Epoch Times is nonpartisan and values-based. We believe true journalism is based on moral principles. We focus on important issues and on policies and their impact, not partisanship. We report the truth in the midst of the biased media environment. We don’t follow the unethical trend of agenda-driven journalism, but instead use our principles of Truth and Tradition as our guiding light to report honestly.


Read More Frequently Asked Questions on our Customer Service Portal for Subscribers

service.TheEpochTimes.com


Manage Your Account Details
 • Shipping address • Contact details
 • Billing information • Billing history


FAQ
 • Can I change my subscription plan?
 • How will I be billed?
 • How can I pause my subscription?
 • And more


Buy a Gift Subscription
 The holidays will be here soon!


E-paper Settings
 • Manage your e-paper logins
 • Reset your password

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.