

# THE EPOCH TIMES

# LIFE &

# TRADITION

BIBARYS IBATOLLA/UNSPLASH

In books we find  
new and old friends.



Like the food we eat, what we put into our  
brains is just as crucial to our health.

## A Return to Books and Reading

Unlike the ephemera of today's articles and blogs, great books inhabit the mind forever

JEFF MINICK

Years ago, I owned a bookstore in Waynesville, North Carolina, where we sold used and new books, and a healthy collection of children's literature.

One summer afternoon, a woman accompanied by two adolescent grandchildren entered the store. While the kids browsed the shelves, the grandmother and I visited at the checkout desk. At one point during our cordial conversation, she looked at her grandchildren, both of whom were absorbed in books, smiled, and said, "You know, I don't really care what they're reading as long as they're reading."

Only the desire for a sale—like most independent booksellers, I always needed cash—prevented my reply: "That's like saying, 'I don't care what they're eating as long as they're eating.'"

What we put into our brains is just as crucial to our health as what we put into our bodies. An example: Once at Waynesville's public library, I was standing behind a young woman, age 16 or 17, who handed the librarian a book she was returning and said: "This should have a warning label on it. It's put images into my head that won't go away."

The book was Thomas Harris's horrifying "The Silence of the Lambs."

What we read does indeed matter. And so do those books we don't read.

### A Love Neglected

A talk with a New York friend prompted this article. We were speaking by phone, and she mentioned that in the past year she had been reading fewer and fewer books.

"I'm online a lot," she said, "and I'm reading articles and blogs there, but I'm not really reading real books. And to me, there's a big difference between engaging with a book and reading some column on my laptop."

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## Flipping the Script on the Abortion Narrative



COURTESY OF RYAN BOMBERGER/BU

### CATHERINE YANG

When Ryan Bomberger was 13, everything he knew about his origin story changed.

He already knew he was adopted—his adoptive parents and siblings are white, and he's biracial, he said with a laugh, but every adoptee goes through a process of wondering why they were given up for adoption. So to realize his birth mother couldn't keep him because he was the product of rape was shocking.

"It was devastating to think of," said Bomberger, a creative professional and co-founder of pro-life nonprofit The Radiance Foundation. "You throw in a rewrite of your origin story to the most violent form of con-

ception and that was really hard for me."

"But because I was so loved by my parents, I turned that pain into something very constructive," Bomberger said.

Bomberger was adopted at just a few weeks old into a family that showed their love through actions and service to their community around them. He was the first of the children they adopted; almost every year after that, over the next 12 years, his parents adopted another child.

"So even though I was conceived in rape, I was adopted in love, and so I grew up in a family of 15, where out of 13 children, 10 of us were adopted," he said. "We're white, and black, and biracial, and Native American, Vietnamese, some with physical dis-

abilities, some with learning disabilities, but all adopted and loved."

### That Fringe Example

Bomberger's shock turned into gratefulness, not bitterness. "That 'Wow, she was courageous enough to go through that, horrific experience and still give me life, still give me the gift of adoption,'" Bomberger said. His loving upbringing had given him the foundation to see that life is a gift, and that life has purpose.

A few weeks later, for an eighth-grade persuasion speech assignment, he spoke of his own story from a pro-life stance.

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Ryan Bomberger is a creative professional and co-founder of pro-life nonprofit The Radiance Foundation.

# A Return to Books and Reading

Unlike the ephemera of today's articles and blogs, great books inhabit the mind forever

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Her comments reminded me that I was reading fewer books as well. Even in my busiest days 30 years ago, when my wife and I were raising children, running two businesses, and working other jobs to try to pay down our debt, I read more than I do now. Because I write reviews for a regional weekly, The Smoky Mountain News, I do read, but I consume those books for work and under a deadline, and not for pleasure.

Since my childhood, reading had brought me a special joy. No—more than a joy. Reading books was my avocation, perhaps even an addiction. Always I'd had a book going, sometimes two or three at the same time, but after my conversation with my friend, I realized this lifelong habit had, in the past year, seemingly vanished. Instead, I now spend several hours a day, off and on, skimming sites on the internet, looking for the latest news about the pandemic, riots and unrest, and the presidential election.

This is absurd.

Time to become a reader of books again.

## The Reset

Part of my problem, which began about 20 years ago, has to do with modern fiction. I'll still pick up the suspense novels of certain authors, or stories that have to do with bookstores and librarians, or novels by authors I've long loved like Anne Tyler, but otherwise, most fiction written nowadays leaves me as cold as today's snow in my yard. Fantasy, romance novels bordering on pornography, tales from abroad, and stories about murderers or deviants crowd the new arrivals shelves of my local library, and all would be as welcome in my home as ... well, as Antifa wanting to make my place an autonomous zone.

The political folks I read several years back also hold little interest for me. Time and again, their books have ridden home with me in my Civic, only to gather dust on the floor by my desk. Their arguments these days are all too familiar to me from my online excursions and are often dated as well.

In terms of new books to read for pleasure and edification, then, history and biography will become my companions. Like reading, history has also been a lifelong passion, and the past, I believe, will shine a light on my present and give me the fortitude to face future trials. Should it arrive in the mail on time, I'll start this project next week with Michael Walsh's "Last Stands: Why Men Fight When All Is Lost."

## Old Masters, New Friends

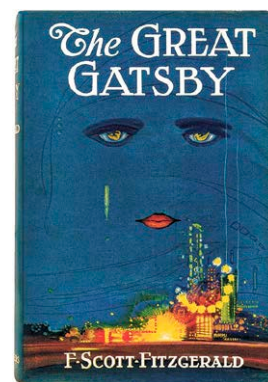
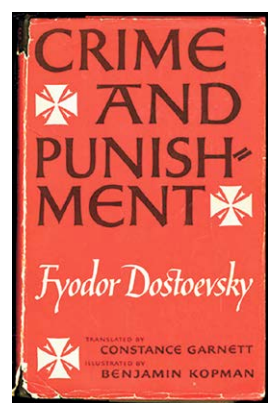
C.S. Lewis once wrote, "It is a good rule after reading a new book, never to allow yourself another new one till you have read an old one in between."

I doubt whether I can meet that standard, but confess my negligence of old books distresses me. In my 20s and early 30s, I read many of the masters: Tolstoy, Dostoevsky, Conrad, Chaucer, Cervantes, Dickens, and so on. Later, I taught some of these writers as well as Austen, Emily Brontë, Shakespeare, Christopher Marlowe, and Sophocles to the homeschooled students in my seminars.

Again, for the past year or two, I have read few older writers, and again intend to change my ways. Having come across mentions of Sir Walter Scott's "Ivanhoe" many times over the years without ever having read it, I have begun that tale of England set in the time of Richard I. I've only read the first 30 pages or so, but I've enjoyed the slow pace, the revived memories from my graduate school days when I studied Medieval English history, and some remarks that seem apropos to our current political climate 200 years after Scott wrote them. Here he describes the animosity between the Norman conquerors of England and their Saxon subjects: "The royal policy had long been to weaken, by every means, legal and illegal, the strength of a part of the population which was justly considered as nourishing the



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The memorable characters in books such as Dostoevsky's "Crime and Punishment" or Fitzgerald's "The Great Gatsby" lend these novels enduring power.

Please tell us about your favorite great books—the ones that have stayed with you and perhaps changed you for the better. Email [tradition@epochtimes.com](mailto:tradition@epochtimes.com) or mail to Life & Tradition, The Epoch Times, 229 W. 28th St., Floor 7, New York, NY 10001.



most inveterate antipathy to their victor." Sound familiar?

Up next may be Dostoevsky's "The Devils," which I once promised myself to read but never did; some ancient Greek plays I've never explored; perhaps Eliot's "Middlemarch;" and Hallford Laxness's "Independent People," recommended to me by a friend who knocks back book after book.

## Inspirational Readers

That friend lives in North Carolina. Three others, one in North Carolina, one in Virginia, and one in Minnesota, also remain voracious readers, despite all the temptations of our digital age. Whenever I speak with them by phone or in person, the talk inevitably turns to the novel, biography, or history they're now reading. Having awakened to my own stunted literary state, I intend to bring something to our conversation the next time we speak.

So why should we wish to emulate readers of books in this digital age? Why decide to make books important again in our lives as opposed to the constant blur of online articles?

Because most of what we read on the sites and blogs we visit is ephemera. Here today and gone tomorrow. Most of what I write, for instance, fits in this category snugly as a foot in a shoe. I have no delusions about my articles and pieces I send to various publications; most will be read, perhaps appreciated, and forgotten within a week.

## The Bibliophile Is Back

But books—good books, great books—inhabit the mind forever. Here's an example: Almost 50 years ago, I read Larry Woiwode's "Beyond the Bedroom Wall." This novel, now largely forgotten by today's readership, had a massive impact on me. Woiwode's story of the Neumiller family has haunted me for years, and even today, two copies of his novel, one of which I gave to my mother and retrieved after her death, sit side by side on my bookshelves.

As for the Great Books, characters like Heathcliff and Catherine in "Wuthering Heights," Raskolnikov and Sonya in "Crime and Punishment," the characters in "The Great Gatsby," Henry V in Shakespeare's play by the same name: These and a host of others inhabit my brain like old friends, loyal, always ready to be summoned up when I need or want their company.

This year, I resolve to expand that circle of friends.

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. He is the author of two novels, "Amanda Bell" and "Dust on Their Wings," and two works of nonfiction, "Learning as I Go" and "Movies Make the Man." Today, he lives and writes in Front Royal, Va. See [Jeff Minick](#) to follow his blog.

## DEAR JUNE

On Family and Relationships



## Dinner Conversation Topics: Does Anything Go?

Dear June,

Is there such a thing as appropriate topics to only converse about in mixed company anymore? Or does anything go?

My husband and I have a 12-year-old daughter that we homeschool. On a regular basis, we open our home for dinner to get to know the other families from the co-op better. Two months ago, we had a family over for dinner. After the husband talked about overcoming an illness, the outgoing mother shared of her experiences of her water breaking during each of her three children's births. The kids' ages ranged from 8 to 13. It wasn't like this was a recent experience. This struck me as odd that she would share this personal event in front of the husbands and kids. It seemed to me this should be a "ladies only" conversation. I inquired with my husband and daughter after they left how they felt about the conversation. My husband admitted it made him feel uncomfortable. My daughter was "grossed out" and kept wishing the mother would stop talking.

The next month when we had another family over for dinner, the same situation occurred. After the husband shared about healing from a recent injury, the mother, whose youngest is nine, shared about her labor experience that led to a C-section. I politely tried to cut her off, explaining that I have a queasy stomach when it comes to medical procedures. The mother steered the conversation from the gory medical details to the disappointment of not experiencing a natural birth. Neither

the husbands or kids were participating in the "family dinner." Again, I felt this was a topic to be shared in private and not at a group dinner.

I will extend some grace, knowing that the pandemic is causing many of us to feel an impact from lack of social connectivity.

My husband and I had our only child when we were 40, often making us 10 to 15 years older than the other parents with a child our age. Am I outdated to think there are topics which you refrain from talking about in mixed company?

Fuddy Duddy

→ Dear Fuddy Duddy,

There most certainly are topics that are appropriate for mixed company and those that are not (details of childbirth are not appropriate in my opinion). However, it's also true that in certain circles, people are comfortable sharing very intimate information.

I can't say why people feel it's permissible to discuss intimate information, other than it can feel good to talk about one's personal life, and culture has been trending toward informality for a few generations now. Certainly pandemic isolation may also be blunting our social graces.

I do think it shows a basic lack of respect and/or awareness to discuss topics that make others present feel uncomfortable. However, as you said, we need to have grace for others because most people don't intend for their conversation to bore, disgust, or offend.

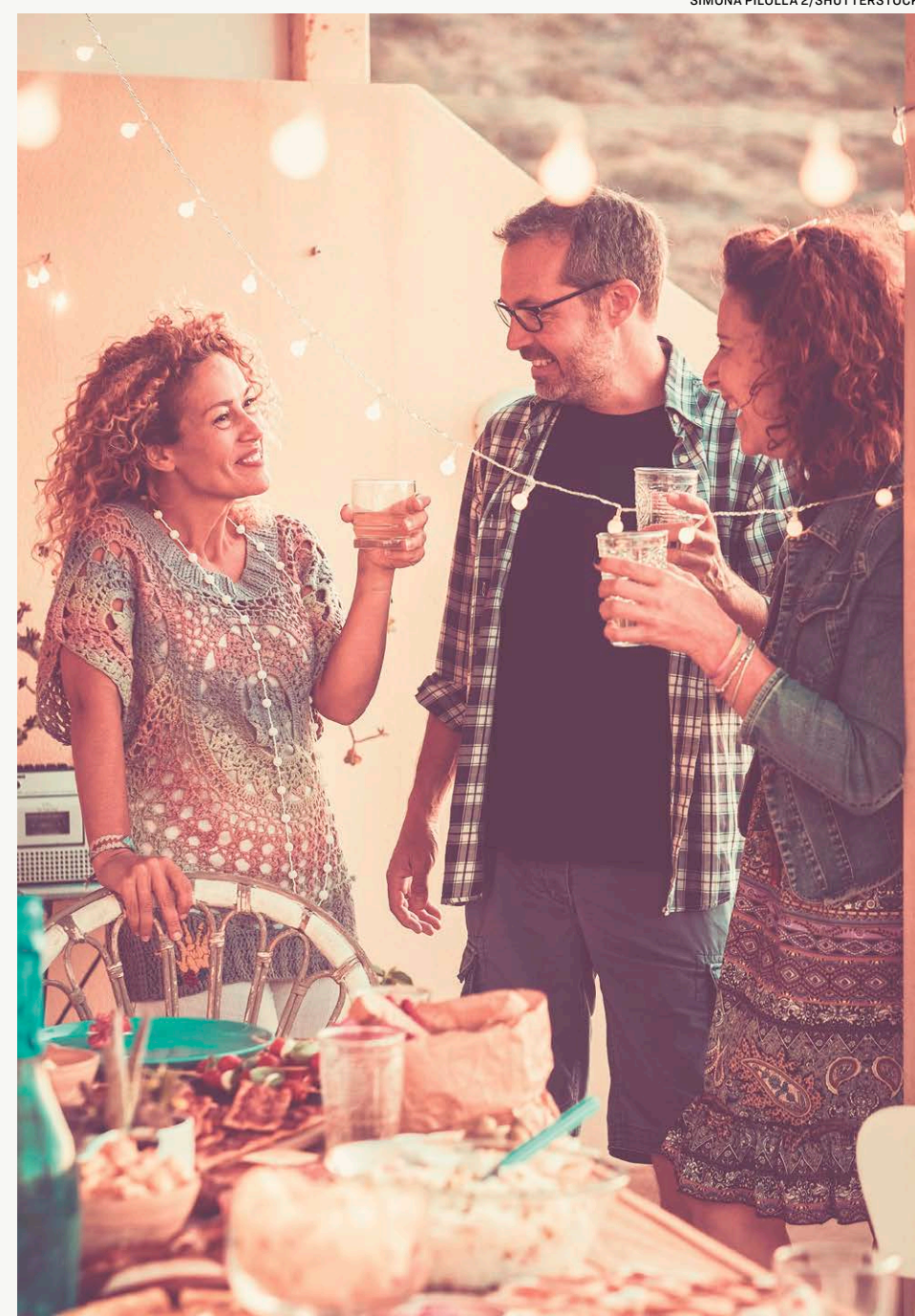
At the table, where the audience is captive, my rule of thumb would be that conversation should be as pleasant and engaging as possible for everyone.

Descriptions of things with an ick factor are not suitable. I would say childbirth should be ladies-only for sure (I really cannot imagine any man of my acquaintance being interested in the details of this event). As for illness recovery, this is probably not interesting to most youngsters and so better discussed in adults-only conversation, of course with consideration for the interest of others.

Dinner conversation is often the result of where our minds have been during the day, so when we cultivate some knowledge and appreciation for the beautiful and amazing things in this world, our dinners will be lively and interesting and broaden everyone's perspectives.

I would love to hear from readers what topics of conversation you have found enjoyable for the table, and maybe our older readers can chime in about what they were taught about table conversation etiquette. Please send suggestions and topics to [tradition@epochtimes.com](mailto:tradition@epochtimes.com).

Sincerely, June



Dear June,

I have recently been able to find the contact information for a dear friend. When I last wrote to this friend, she was going through a tough emotional time. I often wonder if in my zeal to share all of my news, I neglected to express concern for her situation. Though I really cannot remember exactly what I wrote in the letter, I do know that I have not heard from her since. (Note: We have both moved several times since that last communication and did not have cell phones yet.)

When I tracked her down this month, it was her place of business, so I left a message with her receptionist. After two days of no return call, I called again to get the business mailing address in order to send a Christmas card. I chose to include my contact information "if you want to be in touch."

If I offended this friend in any way, I would appreciate the opportunity to apologize, and wonder if there is anything else I can do, without seeming pushy or presumptuous?

Sincerely, Kathleen

→ Dear Kathleen,

If you have not yet heard from her after the holidays have passed, I

would write to her again. In this letter, I would share your reflections that perhaps you were not sensitive during her time of difficulty and offer your apology if this was indeed the case. This will allow her to see that you do care and value her friendship, and apologizing will also give you peace of mind. It would be good to reiterate that you would be happy to renew your friendship since you truly do care about her, and because you are sincere, I don't think this is presumptuous or pushy.

There could, of course, be other reasons why she has not responded—busyness, or perhaps she's in a profession that's experiencing difficulty or extra work at this time due to the holidays or pandemic.

Sincerely, June

Do you have a family or relationship question for our advice columnist, Dear June? Send it to [DearJune@EpochTimes.com](mailto:DearJune@EpochTimes.com) or Attn: Dear June, The Epoch Times, 229 W. 28th St., Floor 7, New York, NY 10001.

June Kellum is a married mother of two and longtime Epoch Times journalist covering family, relationships, and health topics.

## DEAR NEXT GENERATION:

# The Beauty of 'Wow Moments'

→ Advice from our readers to our young people



My husband and I have two daughters and four grandchildren. Although our daughters did well in school and life has been kind to them, they definitely dealt with a lot of challenges during their school years especially when they were young. I spoke to them about "Wow Moments" to help them through the disappointments in life. I hope this can help other children keep a positive attitude when life doesn't seem quite so "fair".

When my kids were little, I spoke to them about "Wow Moments." Everyone gets a certain amount of "Wow Moments" in their lives. You never know when you'll get to use one of your "Wow Moments." Sometimes you might really, really want something so badly and you worked so hard; but someone else wins, gets picked for a team or a play and you might be really sad. But you are only witnessing someone else getting to use their "Wow Moment."

The thing to remember about "Wow Moments" is that you only get so many. If everything you really, really wanted in kindergarten happened, you might have used up all your "Wow Moments." As life

unfolds, you'll see that what you thought might be the beginning or the end isn't exactly as big as you thought and you might be really happy you didn't use up one of your "Wow Moments" back then.

The really great thing about "Wow Moments" is that they love company. When you see someone use their "Wow Moment," you can be pretty certain they'd really appreciate it if you would join in their celebration. Congratulate them. Be happy you get to witness their special moment just like you'd like to see others happy to see you using your "Wow Moments." Everyone has their own so don't worry if they are using one of theirs. It will not lessen how many you will still have. When you don't get to use your "Wow Moment," just remember kindergarten and know your special moment just hasn't shown up yet because it just wasn't your special "Wow Moment" time.

Some people don't get to use their "Wow Moments" until much later in life—great careers, marriages, adventures. Some people use them up quickly—great school friends when they are young, being asked to a dance. Just keep a positive attitude and keep a look out for "Wow Moments"—yours or others—so you won't miss any of the good stuff in life. Believe in yourself,

be kind, and be joyful for others and you will find yourself in the middle of a "Wow Moment" when you least expect it. Meanwhile, stay on your path you were meant to walk, and life will unfold as it is meant to be.

—Johanne Schwartz

Six words to be of real value to family, friends, in the workplace, and especially yourself:

"What can I do to help?"

—Dave Stellingworth

## What advice would you like to give to the younger generations?

We call on all of our readers to share the time-less values that define right and wrong, and pass the torch, if you will, through your wisdom and hard-earned experience. We feel that the passing down of this wisdom has diminished over time, and that only with a strong moral foundation can future generations thrive.

Send your advice, along with your full name, state, and contact information to [Next-Generation@epochtimes.com](mailto:Next-Generation@epochtimes.com) or mail it to:

Next Generation, The Epoch Times, 229 W. 28th St., Floor 7, New York, NY 10001





(Left) Dias took on many jobs, from cleaning to grocery runs. (Middle) Dias dresses up as Buzz Lightyear for a 3-year-old's birthday party. (Right) Dias also made cupcake deliveries.

## Jack of All Trades

Man pays off \$50,000 student debt within a year by taking on 300 odd jobs

LOUISE BEVAN

A Hawaiian man has achieved a feat that many students may deem impossible. He has paid off more than \$50,000 in student loan debt in just 11 months by saying “yes” to an incredible array of odd jobs.

Kamaka Dias, 27, graduated from the University of Hawai'i at Manoa and made the decision to pay off his debt as quickly as possible after calculating what his expenses under a loan repayment plan would look like. “I think it would have been \$500 a month for 10 years, and I would have paid \$70,000,” the Hilo native told KHON2, “so I was like,

“Nope! I'm not going to do that.”

Dias then launched his mission at the beginning of 2020, calling it “The Race to \$50K.” He worked almost every day, documenting every job, gig, chore, and milestone on his Instagram page as the dollars mounted. Rather than charging for his time, he asked employers to give what they wanted.

Working between Hilo and Oahu, Dias' list of odd jobs soon grew diverse.

“I picked up groceries, cupcakes, flowers, food, weed-whacked, planted trees, cleared bushes, raked leaves, painted, did dump runs. Everything!” he told Hawai'i News Now. However, it wasn't all manual labor for

the industrious graduate. He even officiated a close friend's wedding, walked and bathed dogs, and dressed up as Buzz Lightyear of “Toy Story” fame for a 3-year-old's birthday party.

**Dias launched his mission at the beginning of 2020, calling it ‘The Race to \$50K.’**

During this period of time, Dias lived with his parents to save money and used every opportunity to be frugal such as choosing not to eat an acai bowl that looked tempting until he finished his goal and could finally treat himself. Word of mouth about his mission earned Dias more and more job opportunities, and by the end of the year, he had logged more than 300 different assignments. “People have been inspired by the hustle,”

he said, crediting huge community support for his success even during the pandemic. One kind donor even gave Dias a car to drive himself to jobs.

To give back to his supportive community, Dias even donated his stimulus check toward gift packs for hundreds of high school seniors.

Dias made his final loan repayment in December 2020. In total, he paid off \$53,757 in just 11 months, proving to graduates with loan debt everywhere that where there's a will, there's a way.

“This journey finally comes to an end,” Dias wrote on Dec. 6 on Instagram. “I'm finally free, the weight is off my shoulder and I can't wait to start the next chapter in my life ... DEBT FREE!”

“I asked for it, so yeah it's on me,” he said of his student loans. “It's my responsibility to pay it back. So, I wanted to show people that if you live a certain way, and you just work hard, you can do it.”

Dias plans to write a book about his experience to further inspire others.



(Left) Rebel Hays (L) and Paul Scott have become good friends. (Right) Rebel leads Paul during a race.

## Guiding Hand

4th-grade star athlete helps blind runner compete in cross-country

LOUISE BEVAN

A fourth-grade star athlete has made headlines for keeping up with high schoolers. The selfless student is a guide runner for a blind, autistic teen who needs a helping hand on the cross-country course.

Rebel Hays, 11, of Fayetteville, Arkansas, stepped up as a guide runner for ninth-grader Paul Scott when West Fork High School put out a call for volunteers.

Named “Fastest Kid in Fayetteville” for his age bracket in 2019, Holcomb Elementary School student Rebel started out accompanying Paul on two-mile courses at the beginning of the season. Connected by a handheld rope, the pair then took on 5K races with an eventual goal of completing a 5K course in under 20 minutes.

As they ran together, the pair also became firm friends.

“Paul and Rebel's story is so much more than running,” Rebel's mother, LouAnn, told The Epoch Times. “Paul is also autistic and so he doesn't have many friends, and so Rebel doesn't just guide him at races.”

They also spend time together, she said, telling jokes and rehearsing card tricks.

Paul, grateful for his young guide's direction, told WCNC that Rebel “directs me, whether there's a ditch or there's hills.” Rebel, he said, “inspires me to run faster.”

“If I don't run this distance, I'm cheating on Paul,” said Rebel, who was practicing every day to keep up, “so I have to run this distance, or this time, no matter what.” The athlete admitted that the going gets tough, but he loves the challenge nonetheless.

“I just wanna do it for Paul,” he said. “I have to do it for Paul.”

In honor of their partnership, West Fork High School shared a tribute to Rebel and Paul on Facebook. Posting last October after a 5K race in which the boys achieved a personal record of 21 minutes, school representatives said, “Rebel Hays [has] been helping Paul all season long. Rebel is a stud runner, but even more importantly, he has a huge heart! Thank you, Rebel! We all appreciate you a lot!”

According to MileSplit Arkansas, which provides Arkansas high school running, cross country, and track and field news, Paul said that his goal this year was to break 21 minutes; although he fell short at the Chile Pepper meet, he achieved it at the Van Buren Pointer Classic, finishing with a time of 20:59:44. With assistance and guidance from Rebel, Paul finished 59th out of 135 runners in the 3A boys race at the state meet in Hot Springs in early November.

Paul still has one more year of eligibility in cross country and has set a new goal of under 20 minutes.

## Wreaths to Remember

Nicole Pompei breathes new life into old military uniforms

LOUISE BEVAN

After the U.S. Air Force switched over to new uniforms, a staff sergeant from San Antonio, Texas, found a unique way to memorialize her old ones. She repurposed the material into a wreath.

Nicole Pompei, 29, a former Marine and active-duty airman, was looking for ideas for what to do with the old uniforms when the Air Force switched from Airman Battle Uniforms to Operational Camouflage Pattern uniforms. In July 2020, she posted her question on a women veterans' Facebook page, where many people recommended making a wreath.

Pompei admitted she had no idea how to create one.

With support from her skilled mother, who helped create the design, Pompei made a prototype. After posting photos in the veterans' group, she was flooded with requests from families who wanted to honor their loved ones in the same way.

Pompei then launched a website called Wreaths by Nicole P. She has crafted more than 200 wreaths since July.

“It just kind of blew up,” she told Fox News.

One of Pompei's most noteworthy commissions to date was from a friend's cousin in who wanted three military uniforms from 1946 repurposed. Pompei admitted feeling reluctant to cut them up but is happy she did.

“Now they have a blended moment that they can hold with them for a lifetime,” she wrote.

Pompei's creations come in a spectrum of sizes and bespoke designs, with some being patriotic with stars and stripes while others are festive holiday themes. Pompei relies mostly on donated military uniforms, supplementing with fabrics that she buys herself. It takes four hours to make one wreath from beginning to end.

The sergeant's favorite aspect of her unique hobby is hearing the stories behind the uniforms and connecting with military families across the country.

“I feel so honored that I can memorialize and honor their service,” she told People. “I have such respect for anybody who has served in the military.”

Pompei's creations have also elicited very emotional responses from a number of recipients.

“I often joke that my motto should be, ‘Wreaths by Nicole P: Making moms cry since July 2020,’” she told KENS5. “I cannot tell you how many times I've had customers tell me the recipient began crying from being so overwhelmed with their gift.”

“Each wreath tells a story,” Pompei said. “Whether it's old uniforms stuffed in the back of someone's closet, to retirements, birthdays, Christmas gifts,” she said, “when I make each wreath, I get to learn a bit about someone's service and I get to honor that service in a unique way.”



Nicole Pompei shows some of her wreath creations.



The Italian painter Canaletto famously painted this view of the Old Royal Naval College in Greenwich, London.

LARGER THAN LIFE: ART THAT INSPIRES US THROUGH THE AGES

## A Maritime Masterpiece: Old Royal Naval College at Greenwich

Greenwich Palace—the birthplace of the Tudor monarch King Henry VIII—once stood on the site where the Old Royal Naval College now stands in Greenwich, London.

Known as “the father of the royal navy,” Henry made substantial investments in his fleets. Located beside the River Thames,

the palace site was ideal for Henry to be close to the docks where his favorite warships, the Great Harry and the Mary Rose, were moored.

Traces of the Tudor palace do remain on the site, but most of the palace was destroyed after it fell into disrepair during the

English Civil War (1642–1651).

In place of the palace is an astounding testament to Britain's maritime history: the magnificent baroque-style Old Royal Naval College, built during the late 17th to early 18th century.

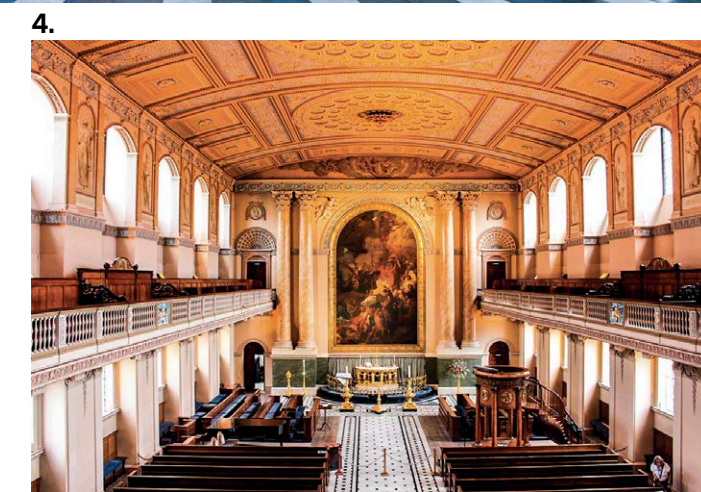
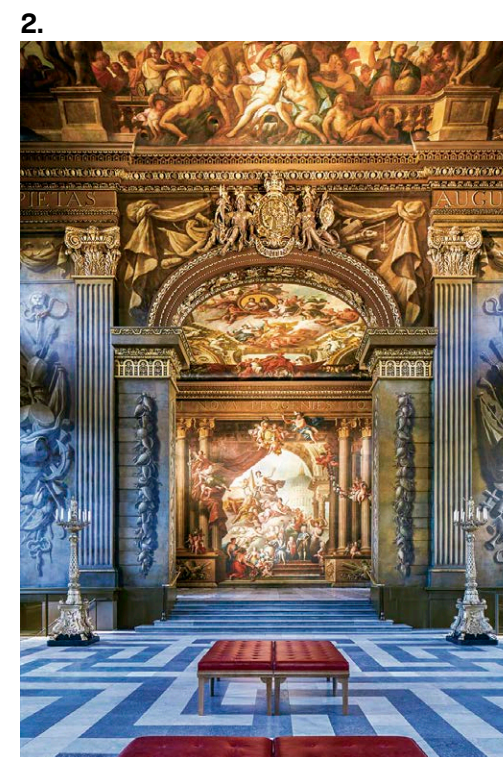
Before her death, Queen Mary II (1662–1694) commissioned the Royal Hospital for Seamen to be built at Greenwich for Royal Navy retirees, although it was more of an almshouse than a hospital. It took over 50 years to build and operated from 1694 until 1869. The hospital became the Royal Naval College from 1873 until 1997.

Although preeminent architect Sir Christopher Wren was appointed architect for the new hospital, he was busily rebuilding over 50 churches after the Great Fire of London, so his assistant Nicholas Hawksmoor completed most of the work.

Wren believed that “architecture aims at eternity,” and as such, he wanted the hospital's design to be timeless, said Will Palin, former head of conservation at the Old Royal Naval College, in an audio recording.

The college complex consists of four courtyard buildings that sit on either side of a path that leads to the River Thames. The purpose of this design was to allow the view of the river from the Queen's House, which was set farther back, to be unimpeded.

Built from white Portland stone, the buildings mirror one another with a series of columns, capitals, pediments, and colonnades, all of which lead to a harmonious design. Under the matching domes are the St. Peter and St. Paul Chapel and the Painted Hall, which is a banquet hall.



(Clockwise) 1. The Painted Hall at the Old Royal Naval College in Greenwich, London, where hundreds of figures feature in Sir James Thornhill's paintings celebrating Britain's monarchs and its naval and merchant might. 2. The proscenium arch connects the lower and upper Painted Hall. On the arch's ceiling are the allegorical signs of the zodiac representing the constellations the seamen navigated by. 3. The upper hall of the Painted Hall in Greenwich, London, depicts King George surrounded by his family to show the strength of his reign and the solidity of the Protestant line. 4. Inside the Chapel of St. Peter and St. Paul at the Old Royal Naval College, Greenwich. 5. The Chapel of St. Peter and St. Paul is located under the left dome of the Old Royal Naval College and the Painted Hall is under the right dome. The Queen's House sits in the distance. 6. The magnificent Old Royal Naval College in Greenwich, London, designed by Sir Christopher Wren and Nicholas Hawksmoor.



Game night is a classic standby and perfect for winter.

PARENTING

# Screen-Free Winter Family Fun at Home

BARBARA DANZA

The early months of the year tend to offer more at-home time than others (though most of us have been clocking record amounts of time at home of late, haven't we?). With early sunsets and chilly temperatures outside, and with the holidays behind us, it's a great time of year for simple family fun at home. Rather than relying on television and digital devices for your family fun, here are some other ideas that don't involve staring into a screen. Some of them may just turn into your fondest memories. To further avoid the siren call of the television or those other digital devices, accompany these activities with some enjoyable background music playlist the whole family can enjoy. Good music tends to encourage activity flow and a reluctance to turn it off in favor of other entertainment.

gether to complete it. You're all on the same team working toward the same goal. Depending on the size of the puzzle, this is an activity that can stretch over days and weeks. This fun activity teaches children perseverance and patience and ends with great satisfaction.

**Choose a challenging puzzle and work together to complete it. You're all on the same team working toward the same goal.**

**Enjoy an Audiobook**  
No screen necessary—the visuals are all in your imagination if you curl up together to listen to a family-friendly audiobook. The simplest of activities, enjoying a story together as a family is a delight. There are so

many to choose from, but "The Chronicles of Narnia" by C.S. Lewis remains my family's long-standing favorite. Pair your listening sessions with snuggly blankets, cozy candles or a fire, and delightful snacks.

**Cook Together**  
Of course you've eaten many meals together, but how many have you made together as a family? Rather than seeing "make dinner" as a job that needs to be done and one person's duty, make this a family activity in which everyone participates. Involve everyone in different aspects: Choose a recipe, gather the ingredients, prepare the meal, set the table, enjoy the meal (of course!), and clean up after the meal. There are so many lessons inherent in cooking that your children will benefit from, not the least of which is self-sufficiency.

**Camp Out (in)**  
Who says camping is just for the outdoors? Pitch your tent and make some s'mores! Perfect for a weekend night, delight in this break

in the routine by camping out together in your very own living room. For added effects, use only your flashlights for lights and find some outdoor woody sound effects to play in the background.

**Play Games**  
This list would be incomplete without the old standby—game night. It's a standby for a reason. It's so much fun! Set out some snacks and crack open a classic board game to play as a family. Some of my family's favorites include Scrabble, Monopoly, Quirkle, Pictionary, and Blokus. Each of these games is fun and educational.

**Create Something**  
Follow the lead of recent interests that may have emerged in your family and dive into a project together. Whether you're painting, sewing, baking, woodworking, sculpting, writing, knitting, photographing, or video recording, gather some learning resources and get to work. Start and finish a project together. Who knows where this may lead!

HOMESCHOOLING

# Kiwi Homeschoolers: Life on Their Terms

BARBARA DANZA

Daniel and Naomi Morris work together as online business owners and as homeschooling parents in New Zealand. They both grew up in the city, but since meeting and getting married, they've lived on a hobby farm in a small country town while homeschooling their daughters, now age 3 and 5. They blog at OurKiwi-Homeschool.com. I asked Naomi about their homeschooling journey and what advice they'd give to other parents thinking about taking the same leap. Here's what she said.

various styles of homeschooling that are popular. How would you describe your homeschool approach?  
**Ms. Morris:** We love the Charlotte Mason approach to learning and use a curriculum that is inspired by that method. With that approach, we include a lot of art and crafts, poetry, language, and nature study in the early years. Inspired by the Charlotte Mason method, we love to read "living books" aloud to the kids. We love the natural learning that takes place through reading a lot of different, rich literature.

As we live on a hobby farm in the country, our children are often outside in nature. They play alongside us as we work to take care of our large garden, animals, and land.

We want them to have plenty of time and freedom to play, be creative, and make up all kinds of imaginary games. We also really love incorporating a lot of Montessori inspired, hands-on activities as part of our homeschool curriculum.

**The Epoch Times:** What have you found to be the biggest benefits of homeschooling?  
**Ms. Morris:** The biggest benefit is being able to spend a lot of time together as a family and do life together. I love being with my kids and seeing them experience and learn about the world. Our daughters are each other's best friends! It is a joy to learn alongside them and see their curiosity and interest in different subjects. I love that I can give them the resources and time needed to support and facilitate their interests.

We really appreciate the freedom of homeschooling—to travel when we want, to spend more time with extended family and friends, to explore any subject that captures the children's interest.

**The Epoch Times:** There are a number of



The Morris family.

We enjoy being part of our local homeschool community and meeting up with other homeschool families each week for sports, field trips, play dates, and dinners. We love that we can encourage and foster a love of learning in our kids.

**The Epoch Times:** What challenges have you faced along this journey?  
**Ms. Morris:** One of the challenges we've faced is that not everybody is going to be on board with our decision to homeschool, and we must be OK with other people not being OK with it. It comes with the territory.

Another challenge early on was being overwhelmed by homeschool curriculum choices. But after envisioning what style we really wanted for our homeschool, it wasn't hard to find a curriculum that matched that vision.

The only resource we struggled to find was a kindergarten-level French work-

book for beginners. The answer was to make the product ourselves! (OurKiwi-Homeschool.com/product/kindeergarten-french-workbook/)

**The Epoch Times:** What advice would you give to a parent who is considering homeschooling their children?  
**Ms. Morris:** My advice would be to try not to feel overwhelmed or pressured by the decision. First just focus on enjoying time with your kids, reading with them, and going for walks. Give them time to explore their own interests, to be creative, and to just "be."

You will be able to provide the learning environment and type of education tailored to each of their needs. Figure out the goals for your homeschool and what you'd like it to look like. Then find a homeschool curriculum to match those goals.

You want your kids to love learning, so above all, have fun and enjoy the process.

# FOR KIDS ONLY

THE EPOCH TIMES

**Puppy and I**  
by A. A. Milne

I met a Man as I went walking; We got talking, Man and I. "Where are you going to, Man?" I said. (I said to the Man as he went by). "Down to the village, to get some bread. Will you come with me?" "No, not I."

I met a Woman as I went walking; We got talking, Woman and I. "Where are you going to, Woman, so early?" (I said to the Woman as she went by). "Down to the village to get some barley. Will you come with me?" "No, not I."

I met a horse as I went walking; We got talking, Horse and I. "Where are you going to, Horse, today?" (I said to the Horse as he went by). "Down to the village to get some hay. Will you come with me?" "No, not I."

I met some Rabbits as I went walking; We got talking, Rabbits and I. "Where are you going in your brown fur coats?" (I said to the Rabbits as they went by). "Down to the village to get some oats. Will you come with us?" "No, not I!"

I met a Puppy as I went walking; We got talking, Puppy and I. "Where are you going this nice fine day?" (I said to the Puppy as he went by). "Up to the hills to roll and play." "I'll come with you, Puppy," said I.

**WHY DON'T DOGS MAKE GOOD DANCERS?**  
THEY HAVEN'T GOT TWO LEFT FEET.

NINA BUDAY/SHUTTERSTOCK

**I am fond of pigs. Dogs look up to us. Cats look down on us. Pigs treat us as equals.**

WINSTON CHURCHILL (1874-1965), BRITISH PRIME MINISTER

ALL PHOTOS BY SHUTTERSTOCK

By Aidan Danza, age 14

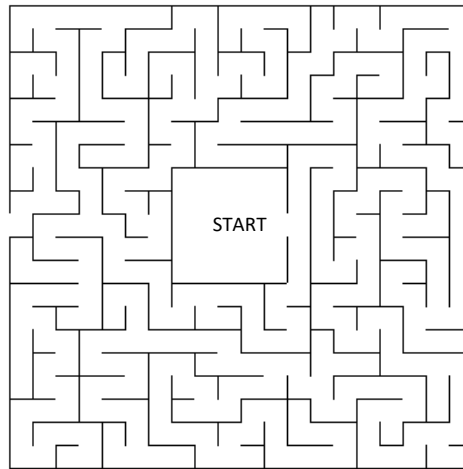
# BEAVERS (PART II)

**B**eavers are large, aquatic rodents that live in forested rivers, marshes, and streams of Canada and the United States. They are very unique in that they build dams, changing their environment to fit their needs (to deepen water near their lodge) while also helping other animals by providing a sort of bridge over a river, as well as creating a lush wetland for aquatic animals.

Most beavers eat "green" wood. Green wood is the inner bark of fresh-cut trees, usually deciduous trees such as aspens, cottonwoods, and willows. These are usually less than six inches in diameter, and wherever there are small saplings to be found they almost always eat these easy-to-cut ones first. They store these trees in the bottom of their pond in the autumn, to prepare for the lean months of winter. Beavers live in ponds, in which they build small houses called lodges. These are made of sticks, twigs, branches, grasses, mud, and whatever else the beaver can find. There, the beaver raises young, called kits, which are usually born in April. They are raised by both parents as well as their brothers and sisters born the year or two before. Most commonly, a mother beaver will have four kits, but this number can range from one to eight.

The beaver's process of felling a tree makes you appreciate its intelligence. Usually, when their tree is about to fall, they slap their tail on the ground a few times (like a lumberjack yelling "Timber!") to alert any other beavers to get out of the way. They will often float the tree downstream, with the current, to exert the least effort possible; they often divert water to form canals to their favorite logging places. The beaver's lodge is also demonstrative of the beaver's mind power. It has two entrances, both of which are underwater, but the actual living area is above the water. The underwater entrances allow the beaver to get at their underwater food stores, while the above-water living area allows the beaver to breathe and live in comfort and relative warmth. The beaver is like the engineer of the animal world.

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

Easy puzzle 1: 2, 10, 60, 1, 6, +, -, x, ÷. Solution:  $(1 - 9) \times (2 + 0) + 9 \times 0 = (1 - 2)$

Medium puzzle 1: 15, 19, 15, 2, 16, +, -, x, ÷. Solution:  $9! \times (2 - 9) - 6!$

Hard puzzle 1: 13, 31, 14, 9, 13, +, -, x, ÷. Solution:  $6! - 6! + 6 \times 6!$

Number puzzle grid with numbers 1-16 and empty cells for digits.

**Across**

6 Loyalty (10)  
7 Selecting with ballots (8)  
11 Presidential term length (4-4)  
13 Promise publicly (6)  
14 Area in Washington D.C. (8,4)  
16 Custom (9)

- Down**
- Via the Internet (6)
  - The Vice President is the president of the \_\_\_\_\_ (6)
  - Promise (5)
  - Head of the Executive Branch of the U.S. Government (9)
  - On radio and TV as it happens (9,4)
  - Formal event (8)
  - Where Congress meets (7)
  - Course (4)
  - Believer's confidence (5)
  - Way to listen to the inauguration ceremony (5)
  - Time of all Presidential Inauguration ceremonies (4)

# This Week in History



**PLANE LANDS ON SHIP**  
On Jan. 18, 1911, American pilot Eugene Ely landed his aircraft on the battleship Pennsylvania in San Francisco Bay. This marked the first time an aircraft landed on a ship. A cheering crowd watched as Ely successfully landed on and later took off from the Pennsylvania. This exciting event marked the birth of naval aviation.



Eugene Ely landing his plane on board the USS Pennsylvania on Jan. 18, 1911.

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