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# THE EPOCH TIMES IFFE & TRADITION



Capernaum Studios founder Tammy Lane directs "Washington's Armor," a trilogy about the life of young George Washington.

# Filmmaker Tammy Lane Is on a Mission to Tell the Story of Young George Washington

Her journey from stay-at-home mom to independent filmmaker

### THALIA ZHAO

bout an hour outside the Dallas Fort Worth International Airport lies the small town of Weatherford, Texas, population 25,000, which boasts some of the state's best peaches. Drive 10 miles north from the city center, and as parking lots start to give way to sprawling plains, you'll soon come across a striking image of Jesus, encircled by angels, and a large sign that reads "Capernaum" above some imagery of a first-century village.

These mark the entrance of Capernaum Studios, where a feature film trilogy is currently in production. "Washington's Armor" will chronicle the young adulthood of America's first president and to do that convincingly, outside of a major Hollywood studio, series director Tammy Lane had to start from scratch. Capernaum Studios, which Lane owns and operates, was built from the ground up on what used to be a part of her father's ranch.

"My dad bought this ranch 26 years ago, and I knew when he bought it that there was something special that was going to happen here," Lane said. "My husband and I both felt it."

Capernaum Studios has come a long way from ranch land. The property, slightly

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PUBLIC DOMAI

COURTESY OF CAPERNAUM STUDIOS

Detail, "Life of George Washington—The Soldier," depicted at the Battle of the Monongahela on July 9, 1755. Lithograph by Régnier, 1854.

"Young Man Reading by Candlelight," 1628–1632, by Matthias Stom.



### To Read, or Not to Read

### SEAN FITZPATRICK

The quality of reading is closely connected to the quality of the thing read—both the written material and the object that presents the writing. In other words, there is an element brought to the reading experience as a whole by a good volume, with fair print, crisp pages, and a sturdy cover. But the book, especially in its most traditional forms, is a thing threatened in the age of screens.

The question of book or Nook, of novel or Kindle, of ink or e-ink, is a real question these days. To read, or not to read, is the question, however. The dichotomy is based upon the difference between the physical and digital experience of reading—and it's a difference that can make all the difference.

#### From Paper to Plasma

Despite how individual judgments may lean, screens are by general judgment convenient, and therefore the tablet is becoming a trendy way to read. While its convenience hasn't statistically caused an increase in reading books, it's making physical books a less-common commodity. Of all the endangered things in the modern world, the book seems to be getting rather short shrift.

The shift from paper to plasma can compromise the literary and educational experience of young people, especially those who are already compromised by screens. The reasons aren't difficult to grasp. Nothing compares to the feel and smell and weight of a proper book.

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# Filmmaker Tammy Lane Is on a Mission to Tell the Story of Young George Washington

Her journey from stay-at-home mom to independent filmmaker



Tammy Lane first became interested in the life of George Washington after reading David Barton's "The **Bulletproof George** Washington."

### Honoring **Our Veterans**

Throughout the month of June, we will be publishing stories about veterans, in honor of what they have done for America, in defense of our liberties.

If you know veterans and have been touched by their heart and heroism, tell us about them and what they mean to you.

Or if you are a veteran yourself, please tell us about your story. What are some of your most memorable experiences? What was life like in the service? How did your service affect your life?

We look forward to hearing from you!

Send your story by end of June, along with your full name, state, and contact information to Tradition@epochtimes. com or mail it to: Life & Tradition, The Epoch Times, 229 W. 28th St., Floor 7, New York, NY 10001

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larger than 40 acres, includes film sets, indoor sound stages, and a theater, along with housing and food service facilities for cast and crew. It has been the setting for many productions, including "The Chosen," and will be used by PAX TV for their weekly shows

The sets within the studio come from different times and locations in history. The First Century Village and Garden Tomb depict biblical settings, while sets like the Fort represent scenes from colonial America. There are more contemporary sets, too, such as Main Street and Disaster Town.

These eclectic sets, tailor-made for her own productions over the years, are a reection of Lane's own creative interests as a director and filmmaker.

### A Calling

However, for someone who's invested so much in her craft, it may be surprising that Lane never planned to make movies at all. Lane, who got married at a young age, said she started praying and doing a Bible study with her best friend to seek guidance on the purpose of their lives. They held these sessions while their children were at school, and after about a school year's time, Lane began receiving images—"downloads," as she called them—in her head, paired with certain sounds and music. Most importantly, each of these visions came with a strong impulse to film.

"I had to get a camera and all that, which my husband was just like—'What are you doing?' He didn't get it at first," she said, laughing.

But that didn't stop her. Her first vision was soon realized in 2003, a music video starring her son in a cowboy outfit. From then on, she filmed and wrote compulsively, eventually moving on to direct drama classes at her church.

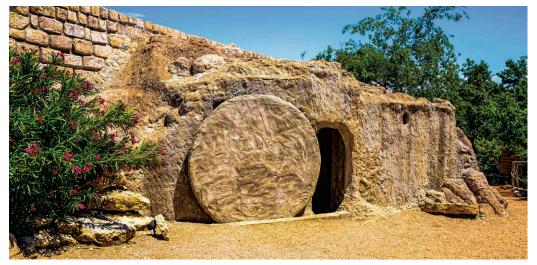
Around this time, a spacious house had opened up on her father's ranch. Lane began to use this house to host Christian retreats, which soon became her next creative outlet. She began to expand her repertoire to live productions and short films, as the retreats offered a steady audience, with each retreat bringing in anywhere from 50 to 100 people.

As her ventures picked up steam, Lane's father donated 40 acres of his ranch to support his daughter. This land would become Capernaum Studios, where Lane was free to build whatever she needed to make her visions a reality.

Today, "Washington's Armor" is Lane's largest project as director. Her best friend, who did the Bible study with her all those years ago, is now one of the project's producers.

"It's been a long journey, but I have a lot to learn still," said Lane. "God had a lot of work to do on me to get me to this point."

Going from stay-at-home mom to independent filmmaker was—and in some



The Garden Tomb set at Capernaum Studios



Capernaum Studios has a variety of sets, including a first-century village.

ways, still is-difficult, says Lane. Without the financial backing of a large studio, many of her earliest staff were volunteers. And whenever life got in the way for her volunteers, Lane often had to handle all the work for a production by herself, from scriptwriting to serving food. Other industry operations, such as distribution, marketing, and raising money for productions, still pose obstacles from time to time.

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### My dad bought this ranch 26 years ago, and I knew when he bought it that there was something special that was going to happen here.

Tammy Lane

Aside from business challenges, Lane also had to get used to making public appearances as director, which she found uncomfortable at the beginning.

"I don't like any attention on me. I don't want to be in front of a camera, which now I have to be a lot, just doing interviews," she said. "I'm definitely an introvert."

Through making appearances over and over again, speaking and being interviewed gradually became more natural to Lane. But whenever she felt like she was finally done with one thing, it seemed that another would pop up right away to test her resolve,



Tammy Lane with her father, Bobby Cox, during his visit on the set.

patience, or compassion-or any combination of the three.

"On our last shoot, we had a fire and it actually burned down one of our sets," Lane said. "Nobody got hurt, and thank the Lord they didn't."

The shoot had been for "Washington's Armor," where the crew had been filming a few scenes inside of a wooden cabin. One morning as the crew was setting up, the cabin's interior caught fire. Although the cast and crew were unharmed, the fire burned down a large portion of the set and forced Lane and her writers to rework their script.

"Now we've got some new scenes that we wrote in that [are] outside the cabin. And I think it's going to be better than it was. God turns things for good if we can just hold it together," she said.

For Lane, all of her trials were part of a divine training course, with each level she conquers pushing her to new heights.

"It was really difficult each time, each level, you know?" she said. "And I would think, 'Man, that was the hardest thing I've ever done!' And then I'd get the next one: 'Oh no, that was the hardest thing I've ever done!""

Herjourney also has its highlights, though, and it's these highlights that convince her that she's still walking her destined path in her work. For instance, when she started out, there were many times when she wouldn't have the money to hire staff for the entire term of a production.

"I remember trying to hire two people in 2005, and I had enough to pay them a few months and that was it," said Lane. "But I knew that God wanted me to do it. ... So I



just hired them, and then he provided. He provided every single time.

#### 'A New Hollywood'

Another positive sign that Lane has seen is the growing number of creatives like her who are rolling up their sleeves to make what they want to watch. While they may not be featured on late-night talk shows or backed by billion-dollar budgets, they are

incredibly passionate about what they do. "Everybody is trying to find an avenue to create content that is really good quality content and that doesn't tear down our society. And so I think there is a new Hollywood, and there's a ton of filmmakers," she said. Lane sits on the board of the CONTENT film festival, which focuses on fostering community among Christian creatives and others looking to bring back more traditional, values-based content. Recently, she and the board have been in discussion to host the festival twice a year instead of just once due to increased demand.

"I love to see other filmmakers do well. I love to see them be successful because I get older. You grow, you learn, God works on vant to watch their shows!" she said. "So I think [our] film festival ... cultivates that aspect of it so that we can all encourage each other and we can band together to get some great stuff out there."

### 'Washington's Armor'

For "Washington's Armor," Lane wanted to look at the life of the United States' first president through a more introspective lens, focusing on his emotions, thoughts, and faith as he grew into the man from the history books.

"[For] the story that we're doing, [George Washington had to have killed his first person, his first man in battle. What would that have been like? It's not something you want to do, but it's something you have to do," said Lane. "So I don't want to take that lightly."

To get a detailed look inside Washington's head, the "Washington's Armor" team centered their interpretation of the president around his personal journals. This was then supplemented with biography and research texts about colonial America to create a lifelike version of the president in a believable setting.

Other characters in the show received the same treatment; their personal journals and writings were used as the main source for their interpretations wherever possible. And what these people wrote—or didn't write—gave Lane great insight as she constructed her characters.

"Christopher Gist, who [was Washington's friend,] would write his journal, and he would say, 'Yeah, I killed three birds today,' and the next day, 'Yeah, I killed a deer today," said Lane. "He's very simple, and this very earthy guy."

One blind spot in the team's quest for primary sources, however, was the letters between George Washington and his wife, Martha Washington. Mrs. Washington burned all the letters between herself and her husband shortly after his death.

"That was super disappointing when we found that out," Lane said. "I can see why she did it, because she knew that he was [going to] be who he became, and she didn't want the whole world knowing all their personal stuff. But I really wanted to know!"

Lane first became interested in the life of

George Washington through reading "The Bulletproof George Washington," a book by David Barton that examines the president's life through the prism of faith. What fascinated her most was not that Washington was some kind of spiritual paragon, but that he was able to achieve monumental feats despite his human flaws.

"I don't want [my interpretation] to be fluff, I want it to be him as a regular human being, which he was," said Lane. "He was a great man but he did make mistakes."

The first movie in the trilogy, which is currently in production, will be titled "The Journey" and follows Washington's life from ages 21 to 23. At the close of the trilogy, Washington is a 26-year-old man poised to become one of America's finest generals. She chose this period in his life to tell the story of how Washington grew into his own, and to share the lessons he had to learn as a young man before he could become a great one.

"You do things when you're young that you're not necessarily going to do when you you," said Lane. "If you have a calling and you're following the path, you're going to go through all these challenges that are going to prepare you for what your future holds.' What Lane admires the most about Wash-

ington is his sense of duty, both to his nation and to his faith. His duty to the nation was something he was widely known for, whether it was riding into battle while seriously ill or refusing to become king of the United States. His faith was lesser known, but something that was easy to see through the pages of his journal. The general made many references to providence and even wrote down his prayers.

"He would ask the Lord, and he would just make a decision and leave the conseguences to the Lord, whatever that decision was. Sometimes it was right, sometimes it was wrong. He made some wrong decisions, but we learn from that as well," Lane said. In creating "Washington's Armor," Lane hopes to make people more aware of the

spiritual facet of Washington's life. "It was necessary, he felt, for us to have the blessing of God and know what God

wanted." "I want [people] to know that God was active in his life, and I would love for this story to be told in the schools again. It was actually told in the schools," she said. "The 1920s was the last time it was told, so it's the

untold story for our generation." At the time of writing, "The Journey" was slated for a Thanksgiving 2021 release, with parts two and three—"The Battle" and "The Choice," respectively—still in queue for production. Currently, "Washington's Armor" has an ongoing Indiegogo campaign to raise money for the continued production of "The Journey" after the fire that burned

down their cabin set. To many independent filmmakers, a project of this size might be daunting. But Lane's words about the future of "Washington's Armor" exude steady confidence, rooted in the strength of her conviction.

"It just gives us an opportunity to trust the Lord," she said. "I really love to see the miraculous stories, like the story that we're telling, and how impossible it was for this story to happen—but it did, because God was in it.'

### To Read, or Not to Read

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A book is reliable, tactile, and, well, real. It's proportioned to the human body in a way that computers aren't.

The stuff of the digital realm is by nature mutable. The stuff of a book is permanent, or in any event, enduring. Its printed pages aren't subject to the whirlwind of copying, pasting, deleting, or remote modification. It's, in the end, more real because it's more concrete, more constant, and gives an experience that partakes more fully in reality—a preferable thing in good education and good literature.

But, in any case, why discard the book so summarily? Books haven't lost any argument, have Hyperlinks beckon. There is a they? There hasn't even been an argument. The problem is that technology always seems to get a free pass. Has anyone posed the question, "Are we sure that we as a society want to effectively abolish things like handwriting, chalkboards, encyclopedias, newspapers, library stacks, and, for that matter, the book?" Society takes it for granted that if some new-fangled technology is new-fangled, it must be better.

### How We Read

Research on the subject is, as it often is, mixed. Some studies find that digital reading results in less retention. Other studies suggest no discernible difference between a digital or analog experience. But what is clear is that readers aren't only what they read, but also how they read. And what is more real is the better choice no matter what the data may indicate.

Whoever heard of getting lost in a Kindle? What is the draw, then? Is price the motivating factor? Perhaps, but cheaper isn't necessarily better. "The Brothers Karamazov" is worth its weight and the space it takes on the shelf. Books need to be taken seriously if they are to be read seriously. They need to be valued, and therefore they should carry value. Or perhaps saving the trees sit well, feel well, or read well on a is the reason? It's no argument screen. The great and good works either. The earth metals used to were written as books, and books make e-readers and tablets aren't only rare, but also highly toxic. Trees are a renewable resource. The energy that goes into cooling fans and broadband servers isn't.

### Of all the endangered things in the modern world, the book seems to be getting rather short shrift.

A tablet may be fine for a sports update or a news flash, but should it be used for Homer or Shakespeare or Tolkien? The material and the medium should harmonize and bear some proportion to one another. Is there anyone who didn't feel a sense of solemn and serene accomplishment reshelving the tome that is "David Copperfield"? Can the same be said for one who reads Dickens's glorious THE END and then powers down the screen?

What makes "Moby-Dick" great isn't that it's compact. It's great because it holds a cosmos within its covers; and the sheer weight of those pages and the voyage through those sounding furrows is an experience in and of itself. The act of reading a good or great work should reflect in some real way what is at hand. In the end, pages are important, because one can only "smite the sounding furrows," to borrow a line from Tennyson, if there are actually sounding furrows to smite. Books have a life of their own, and reading becomes a true joy when readers find their way into that life.

### Immersion

The physical interaction and engagement of annotation, reference, and even page-turning connect readers to the material through the medium far more than a device's digital distance. Immersion in a book is essentially different from immersion online, for a lack of focus often accompanies the latter, which is a large reason behind any educational concern in this arena. The constant reminder that navigation is always possible easily hinders focused engagement. Modern personal devices are designed to distract and ensnare users in the web. One could always be doing something else waiting to be done. Email is just a click away. nagging, incessant feeling to go faster. To skim. To surf. To scroll

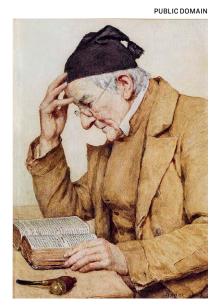
Whereas the book invites one to stay awhile. To stop. To see. To study. There is never a tweet twittering for attention—just another page to be turned when the time comes. Screen readers, like the rest of their digital counterparts, don't breed concentration or absorption. The screen world is a flitting, fleeting world. Modern personal devices are designed to distract and ensnare users in the worldwide web. It's incredible how disconnected our so-called connected society truly is, and such disconnection isn't conducive to the art and discipline of reading.

#### True Joy

As a result that is ever spreading, people are losing appreciation for the mystery of the 2,000-year-old medium called the "book," which may well be part of the current crisis in education and culture in general. The mystery, notwithstanding, is not inappreciable. Books are good. They become like old friends. Books have a life of their own, and reading becomes a true joy when readers find their way into that life. Books interact, inspire, and intrigue—and are free of the frenzy of technology. Timeless literature simply doesn't they should be.

Furthermore, when a person takes the time to amass a library, filling rooms and lining walls with books that are known and treasured, that person becomes open to a profound discovery. Over the years, as those books are collected, read, referenced, marked, thumbed, stained, stacked, lent, or even beheld as a body, a deeper education can take place—the lesson of who the person is who assembled those books, what that person believes, values, and loves. Can a digital library of downloaded HTML's do the same?

Sean Fitzpatrick serves on the faculty of Gregory the Great Academy, a boarding school in Elmhurst, Pa., where he teaches humanities. His writings on edu*cation, literature, and culture* have appeared in a number of journals including Crisis Maga*zine, Catholic Exchange, and the* Imaginative Conservative.



"Reading Man," 1909, by Albert Anker.

Lane directs a scene with the fleeing Capt. Robert Stobo.

# Chinese Refugee Recounts Religious Persecution in China

Chen Yinghua, who fled to Canada, warns about goals and aims of communism

### **MICHAEL WING**

Chinese woman who fled overseas in late 2019 has endured a life many in the West would find unfathomable. Unlawfully incarcerated and tortured in Chinese prisons for her faith, she describes her experience as "hell." In fact, countless

like her have suffered far worse at the hands of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP), and Chen Yinghua, 49, having escaped to North America, calls herself one of the lucky ones.

Coming from a totalitarian state where differing views are suppressed or canceled, Chen is noticing similarities emerging in North America. Speaking to The Epoch Times from her new home in Calgary, Canada, Chen said she hopes the world will soon wake up to communism's true goal: to "rule all humanity and eventually destroy it."

"I want to share my real-life experience with those who still have illusions about communism due to ignorance; with those who are numb and indifferent to the CCP's destruction of Hong Kong, the United States, and even the world; and with those foreign agents who, due to their personal vested interests, are willfully lured in by the CCP to be its accomplice in the destruction of human society," she said.

In China, Chen was a peace-loving model citizen until her views diverged from those of the communist regime, which put her on its blacklist as a "state enemy."

She was a college graduate who later worked for her husband's electrical repair company, and she and her husband had a son together. At the time, they felt that things such as political suppression and torture were just shadowy rumors unrelated to them. But that changed in the year 2000, when she began practicing Falun Gong.

An ancient spiritual discipline rooted in traditional Chinese culture, incorporating teachings based on the core principles of "truthfulness, compassion, and forbearance," Falun Gong is a form of qigong that involves five meditative exercises for cultivating body and mind. It's currently practiced by an estimated 100 million people around the world.

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The officially atheist CCP—under which divergent thoughts are regarded as a threat to its iron-fist rule—has been violently persecuting Falun Gong since July 1999, arresting, torturing, and killing untold numbers of adherents.

Chen says her experience of being persea warning for everyone about what may be about to unfold in the West and particularly in the United States.

"Socialism and communism are a scam," she said. "Socialist changes could happen at any time, and the kindhearted American and Canadian people will lose their most precious thing-free will.

"What kind of future does socialism bring to a country and its people? China and the Chinese people provide a lesson. The current state of the Chinese people is the future of those who want to take the socialist road. You'll see that if you take a step back, communism takes a step forward, and sooner or later you have nowhere to go.

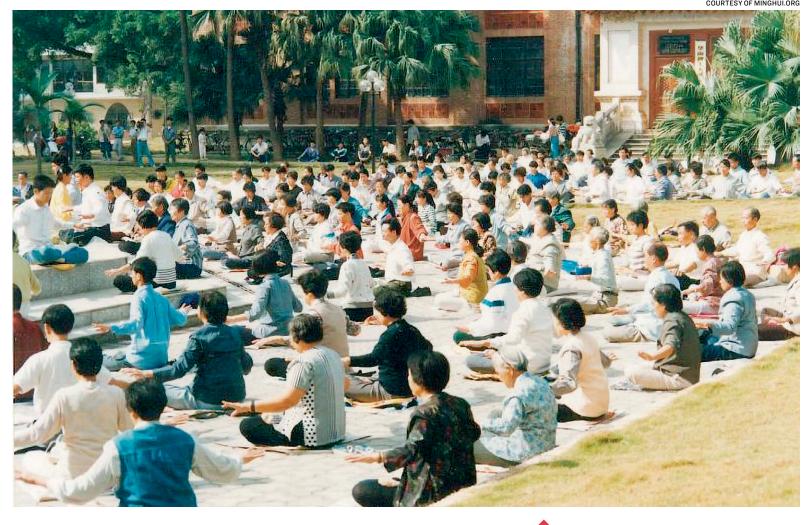
"Westerners are starting to experience the evilness of the leftist push. We have experienced this already in China. The CCP has subtly infiltrated all key areas of American and Canadian society for decades."

### **Ancient Spirituality Meets**

Communism Chen said her mother, Jinling, was the first in her family to practice Falun Gong, starting in 1998, before the persecution.

That was also the year Chen's elder brother emigrated to Canada. "A month after my mom started practicing, all her illnesses were suddenly cured. She had recovered," Chen said. "My mom then recommended it to me. I was 27 years

old at the time."





Chen Yinghua's mother, Huang Jinling, held a press conference on April 14, 2014, for the first time in front of the Chinese Consulate in Canada in order to rescue her. At that time, Chen had been on a hunger strike for 32 days in prison and was dying.

a Party secretary at an oil company, cautioned her before the onset of the persecution. "He told me the spiritual system my mom was practicing would soon be suppressed," she said.

Shortly thereafter, state media and television began broadcasting propaganda reports during prime time to turn public opinion against Falun Gong. The Chinese DNA samples were mainstream society, brainwashed after taken from her. Such nerations of suppression, was soon on board with the state-run narrative about the practice.

"The communist regime said civil servants were prohibited from practicing; they would be fired and wouldn't have a place to earn a living. For those who had been sentenced, they would also be fired from their job," she said.

"The CCP doesn't care about your life after that. Some were taken to the brainwashing centers to be 'transformed.' If they don't transform, they have no place to survive. "Once you're affected by the CCP's tyr-

anny, you'll quickly lose your family, your job, and all your relatives. No matter how high your social class is, you might become cuted for practicing her faith should sound a prisoner at any time, and you may even be killed."

### The Crime of Belief

Chen said she was arrested for the first time in 2003 for the "crime" of distributing Falun Gong informational materials, such as CDs and brochures counteracting the CCP's slanderous propaganda. She said no warrant is needed for police to enter a practitioner's home, nor are charges needed to detain them—possession of Falun Gong materials is the key "evidence," which can lead to multi-year prison sentences.

"They have no formalities. The police first arrest a person, then collect the so-called evidence," she said. "These supposed pieces of evidence are like a rubber band that can expand or shrink to fit what they want to do with you. If they want to expand it, they'll expand it. If they want to hide it, they'll hide it. If they want to release it, they'll release it. When they say it's a political case, it's even more serious than petty crimes. If they say there's nothing wrong, then everything's fine.

"Actually, the arrest process is also a looting process. The police usually confiscate money while making an arrest. The higherups want evidence, while the ones in the lower ranks want your valuables."

Chen said her crime was that her thinking differed from the CCP's. While in a detention center, a policeman told her: "You're different from the other criminals. They

In 1999, Chen's father-in-law, who was did commit a crime. But for you, it's just

that your thinking was different from ours.' She was tortured in prison before being released. Her second

arrest was in 2013. "The police put a black sack over my head," she recalled. "I don't know if they were worried

that I would be recognized or that I would recognize them. When they stuffed me into a vehicle, I shouted.'

She was taken to Nanjing Detention Center, where she was again tormented before being released. Her third arrest, in 2014, led to a four-year prison term at Hebei Women's Prison No. 13, in Shijiazhuang city, Hebei Province.

"Being imprisoned for four years made me experience darkness like never before, even though I resisted the persecution as much as I could,"

she said During her multiple arrests, she said, large volumes of blood and biometric sampli is uniform for Falun Gong and other religious detainees. According to the U.S. State Department's "China 2020 Human Rights Report," an NGO noted in a report that this procedure "could indicate evidence of illicit organ trafficking."

The prisons, detention centers, and labor camps unlawfully holding Falun Gong adherents and other prisoners of faith aim to "reeducate" or "transform" them, with force and coercion, to extract a "guarantee to stop practicing."

During her detention, Chen went on a hunger strike to protest her unlawful arrest. As a result, she was force-fed several times, with each session lasting two to

three hours. She was also torturously tied to a "tiger bench" and had tubes rammed through her nose, causing considerable bleeding and vomiting.

Other routine tortures included depriving her of sleep, not allowing her to use the bathroom or wash, coercing criminal inmates to choke her unconscious or beat her head against a wall, and more.

"None of the torture could change me," she said. "What really destroyed my will was the officials making things difficult for other prisoners who sympathized with me. Someone was reprimanded and punished by many supervising policemen for sending me two lucky clovers to try to comfort me." The time finally came when Chen heard beatings from the corridor outside her cell, and under the pleading of other prisoners, Jocelyn Neo and Arshdeep Sarao contribshe caved and signed a statement saying

A file photo from 1998 shows Falun Gong practitioners meditating publicly in Guangzhou City, Guangdong Province, China, before the CCP launched its brutal campaign to persecute the spiritual group in 1999.

#### After four years of "hell," Chen was released

Freedom at Last Chen was extremely lucky in that her relatives, including her mother and young son, had made it overseas and reached out to officials in the United States and Canada to bring political pressure to bear on the

education" sessions.

she would give up her faith-an

act she describes as a form of

Without her faith, she said, life

was "meaningless and worth-

less." Moreover, she was forced

to endlessly repeat her condem-

nation of Falun Gong, reassert-

ing her guarantee in daily "re-

spiritual death.

prison where she was incarcerated. Such international exposure would em-

barrass the CCP on the global stage, so it's likely that prison authorities dared not kill her or harvest her organs, nor harm her too severely, for fear of being held accountable. The vast majority of prisoners of faith, however, lack such international support and suffer horrors beyond imag-

ination. After her release, Chen obtained a visa and traveled to Canada in 2019, where she eventually became a refugee. On the flight, she suddenly experienced what it meant to be truly free.

Upon reuniting with her family in Canada, her son didn't recognize her, as so many years had passed, and Chen saw that her own mother had aged prematurely.

Chen sent some photos back to practitioners in China, and they replied: "You're free now. We really envy you."

The persecution is vast in scale, and Chen's account ex-

poses but a fraction of it. The persecution at large remains obscured by CCP censorship and those willing to toe the party line.

Warning the world from her home in Calgary, Chen said: "Living in Canada, you can feel that this is a place for humans to live in. In China, it's not a place for humans to live in. That place is hell. There are people in that place too, but they don't dare to say they're humans because there are 'beasts' waiting on the sides. This is how evil it is.

"If people are not able to take action to resist and push back against the CCP, what the Chinese people are facing today will be everyone else's tomorrow.'

uted to this report.



four-year sentence at the detention center of Shijiazhuang prison, in Hebei Province, where she suffered wounds on her face during multiple violent force-feeding sessions.



Chen Yinghua being unlawfully detained at the Nanjing Detention Center in China in July 2013 for refusing to give up her faith in Falun Gong.

## A Journey of Healing in the Air Force

### ANDREW THOMAS

The best leadership comes from experience, and often from adversity. Active duty airman Sean Douglas, who found his passion as a mentor in the U.S. Air Force, is telling his story to encourage others to become their best selves.

Douglas enlisted in the Air Force on Sept. 12, 2001, in the immediate aftermath of the terrorist attacks on the United States the day before. At his first duty station at the Royal Air Force base in Lakenheath, England, he was a young 19-year-old airman entering a "work hard, play hard" culture. He experienced a deep camaraderie with his colleagues, and they would often drink together off-duty.

### **Resurgent Trauma**

In 2003, Douglas deployed to the Middle East for the first time. In the early days of the War on Terror and the Iraq War, past childhood trauma started to re-emerge in his consciousness.

When he was in second grade—following his parents' divorce-his mother got remarried. In third grade, the psychological and physical abuse began. His stepfather would throw him across tables, beat him with belts and paddles, and the police were at the home frequently. After his mother reached a breaking point, she fled with his siblings and him in the middle of the night while his stepfather was in jail.

In the ensuing years, Douglas struggled to put down roots in his new homes while eluding his stepfather.

"Before I was 18, I lived in 11 different houses and attended eight different schools because we'd get evicted, we'd move around a lot, we'd try to leave, and he'd find us," Douglas recalled.

While he was stationed in Lakenheath, he stopped experiencing emotional attachments with the women he met socially. When he finally did allow himself to have feelings for a woman who would become his fiancée, it ended in a split after she had been unfaithful. He didn't feel welcomed anywhere, except in the military, and he turned to alcohol to cope, have fun, and enjoy the camaraderie.

### Let's Make Summer Great Again

### **JEFF MINICK**

Summertime. Now there's a word and a season with

some magic. For most adults, summer brings home-

grown fruits and vegetables, vacations, and a slower pace of life. For me, summer bestows the special pleasure of drinking coffee early in the morning on my front porch before the day heats up, enjoying the chorus of songbirds, and the breeze slipping down from the hills.

For kids, summer means a break from books, tests, and teachers. Even with the COVID pandemic, surely summer delivers a sense of freedom and adventure to the younger crew, who, for a few months, are less regulated by a clock and routine.

After watching how some families with children spend their summers, talking to my own children about their plans for my grandchildren, and remembering what made my own boyhood summers special, I blended some of these ingredients together and came up with the following recipes to help make this summer a special one.

### **Give the Kids Lots of Free Time**

Sure, sometimes they'll complain of boredom—"I can find something for you to do," my mom used to say, and that was a threat, not a promise—but boredom can be good for kids. It forces them to invent their own amusements, to pick up a book, to drift around the backyard looking mopey until they notice the ant war taking place on the sidewalk.

Even more, this freedom allows them to exercise their creative powers. It acts like a gymnasium for the mind, a workout room where there are no instructors or trainers, just a place where they can pretend and dream. One of my granddaughters, for example, has a box filled with tiaras, stoles, and princess dresses, and she often dresses up and glides about

"Every time I went out somewhere and we were drinking, I felt like I could be myself more. I wasn't afraid of what people thought about me. I wasn't so closed off and closed-minded," Douglas explained. But self-medicating with alcohol led to serious consequences. He was always drinking and began pushing his friends away. He started associating with new,

heavy drinkers who would get themselves into trouble. In one incident in 2005, he showed up to duty intoxicated and had to contend with the Uniform Code of Military Justice.

The Air Force put him on probation and placed him in an internal recovery program. A couple of years later, he relapsed into drinking. He got into an altercation and was almost booted from the military. He also had trouble at home and was verbally abusing his wife and stepchildren. She left, and he saw something in himself he abhorred.

"I'm basically my stepfather, except I'm not beating anybody," Douglas recalled.

### **Pulled From the Brink**

Soon after, Douglas found himself on the floor of his apartment on Christmas Eve 2008 with a 9mm handgun in one hand and a bottle of Jack Daniels in the other. His wife had just left around Thanksgiving, and the Air Force was still trying to determine his future in the service. For a moment he contemplated ending it all. Fortunately, his fellow airmen pulled him back from the brink. They got him into therapy, a recovery program, and he began speaking with chaplains. For two weeks, he lived with the supervisor who was in charge of him. He couldn't drink

and wasn't allowed to venture anywhere on his own Douglas also started to work on himself and began to read literature on personal development. His mother gave him a copy of "The Power of Positive Thinking," which led him down a new, more fulfilling path. He stopped hanging out with his reckless drinking buddies and only associated with those colleagues who were helping him. Soon, others began wanting to help and

**His fellow** airmen pulled him back from the brink. They got him into therapy, a recovery program, and he began speaking with chaplains.

mentor him. He himself started to become a mentor, and they urged him to become a drill instructor. He was initially skeptical, but they argued that going back to basic training and becoming a role model would be his best opportunity to move forward. He applied to become an instructor at Lackland Air Force Base in San Antonio and was accepted.

"In the four years that I was there, I figured out how to train, mentor, coach, speak, and be that role model that a lot of people don't have in the military," Douglas said.

### **Personal Development**

Douglas began to connect with his recruits, and he discovered that many of them also came from broken homes and difficult circumstances. It was his own childhood trauma and recovery that made him a more empathetic drill instructor. He subsequently became a resilience implementer and suicide awareness trainer in the military, and he's now respected as a mentor and leader.

Now 37, Douglas is still on active duty in the Air Force until June 18, but he's also pursuing a career in personal and professional development as an author, speaker, mentor, and radio host. He's the author of "Decisions: The Power to Overcome Self Defeating Behaviors" and the founder of Success Corps, a personal and professional development firm.

Douglas said he was compelled to develop a platform to share his story and inspire others. His greatest advice is to tell your story, because it'll give somebody else the fortitude to tell theirs. "It's everything. I've had to own it,"

Douglas said.



the house pretending she is royalty. She has discovered one of the greatest human gifts: imagination.

### Have Them Play Outdoors

Beyond a stand of pines at the back of my house is a yard loud with children laughing, talking, shouting, and screaming. For three or four hours a day, this gang enjoys the fresh air and running barefoot through the grass.

And so should we all. Studies have shown that Americans spend less than 8 percent of their time outdoors. That figure sounds remarkably wrongheaded, but when I consider other homes in my neighborhood, which have front porches no one ever uses and appear deserted except when residents drive away in their cars, that number makes sense.

Sunshine and fresh air are vitamins for us all. Let's make sure our kids get their fill.

### Get to Know Your Backyard and Take the Kids With You

The old observation that people who live in New York City never visit the Empire State Building applies, I suspect, to all of us. Here in Front Royal, Virginia, for example, we have various attractions—the Virginia Beer Museum, the home of famed Confederate spy Belle Boyd, a Civil War museum, a dinosaur park, Skyline Caverns, and battlefields an hour's drive away—yet I would wager many who live here have never visited some of these places.

Introducing our children to local amusements and museums is an inexpensive, fun, and educational way to spend a summer's day. It's also a great time to bond as a family.

### Start a Family Night

Putting aside a night or a weekend afternoon once a week to be together offers another opportunity for bonding. Playing cornhole in the backyard, heading out to a baseball game or a round of miniature golf, taking an hour for charades or a read-aloud, watching a movie: the point isn't the activity, it's the time spent together.

A few nights ago, some neighbors who are moving took a break from loading boxes into a truck to play baseball with one another and with their children. These kids are too young to remember the specifics of this evening later in their lives, but that's not the point. What they will remember, deep in their bones and flesh, is their parents, aunts, and uncles playing with them, helping them

### swing the bat and hit the ball.

Do my sons and daughter recollect me playing soccer with them in the small gravel parking lot of our bed-and-breakfast when they were in elementary school? Maybe, maybe not. But somewhere in their consciousness is the memory that we engaged, that for a few minutes on summer evenings, we kicked a ball around and connected.

Wherever we live—a condo in Miami, a farmhouse in Kansas, a trailer park in North Carolina—we can create activities that give gifts and graces to our children as well as to us, and that will strengthen family ties. And summer is the perfect time to do just that.

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 non-fiction, "Learning as I Go" and "Movies Make the Man." Today, he lives and writes in Front Royal, Va. See JeffMinick.com to follow his blog. This article was originally published on Intellectual Takeout.





Sean Douglas

speaking

Media

Summit.

at the New

Sean Douglas discovered his passion for mentorship as a drill instructor.

# Struggling Single Mom of 7 Turns Her Last \$5 Into Cupcake Company Worth Millions



Mignon Francois runs The Cupcake Collection.

### LOUISE BEVAN

single mom of seven had a "moment with God" when a neighbor called upon her baking skills to fulfill a massive catering order. The order represented her chance out of poverty, but the struggling mom had nothing but \$5 with her.

She used the \$5 to purchase baking supplies. Twelve months later, Mignon Francois was running a business, The Cupcake Collection. Today, the company has an annual turnover of millions.

"I opened my business with one KitchenAid mixer and a dorm-size refrigerator," Francois told Southern Living. "I didn't have any credit or money. ... The very house that my Nashville bakery is located in was up for foreclosure sale on the day that I opened my doors for business."

Married young after becoming a teen mom, once on the verge of homelessness, and eventually divorced, Francois describes herself as "everything that you're not supposed to be in order to be a success."

In 2005, she moved to Nashville, Tennessee, with her then-husband and kids. But her husband's new job fell through, and he went to work as a foreman. The income was limited and thus the family was really struggling to make ends meet.

### **Francois describes** herself as 'everything that you're not supposed to be in order to be a success.'

She spent her days in the dark so that her kids—from toddlers to teens—had power when they came home from school. Without utilities, she would buy water to fill the tub so that her children could bathe, and would buy food in bulk, often eating the same staples for a week at a time, Insider reported.

One afternoon in 2007, a neighbor knocked at her door with a request. Francois-who learned to cook from her grandmotherhad started baking after hearing on the radio that bake sales could help alleviate debt. The neighbor wanted 600 cupcakes at \$1 each.

Since she didn't have the budget to purchase ingredients for 600 cupcakes, Francois pledged to make the first batch of 60, investing her last \$5, the family's dinner budget, into ingredients.

"When I closed the door, I had a real come-to-Jesus moment with God and said like, 'Seriously? You offer me this op- Visitors Corp., the Entrepreneur Center, portunity when I don't have any money? I Pathways Women's Business Center, and iterally have \$5 to feed us," Francois said.

"I turned that \$5 into \$60 that day, and that \$60 into \$600 by the end of the week," Francois told Nashville Lifestyles. "I have been flipping that same \$5 into a tune of over 5 million cupcakes sold."

Since founding The Cupcake Collection at the end of 2008, Francois's baking has branched out from artisanal cupcakes to birthday and wedding cakes, with the



Aid mixer and a dorm-size refrigerator.

company now reaping nearly \$1 million in annual sales. Sweet potato, she says, is the bakery's most popular flavor.

But the industrious mom's journey from home baking to cake empire owes to some scrupulous budgeting strategies.

Francois explained how she felt her community had often grown used to rejection from banks.

"Having my money in a bank account at that time, if I had messed up even a dollar, it would have caused me to get a bank overdraft," she reflected. "That's just a vicious cycle of snowballing in a negative way."

Based on personal finance expert Dave Ramsey's advice, Francois adopted an envelope system, allocating money for her "four walls" (shelter, utilities, transportation, and food) before tackling other expenses, "fun money," and savings. Sales profits paid for items on her growing kitchen wish list.

Reducing expenses and saving money became a game for Francois and her kids, and before long, Francois was able to address her student loans and medical debt.

She used the "snowball method"-making the minimum payments only, starting with the smallest debts-to emancipate herself. Letters to debt collectors resulted in settlements of up to 80 percent on her medical bills.

Francois's renewed joy is reflected in her big hair and the bright colors of her wardrobe. "I try to be a bright existence in the world," she told Southern Living. "There's this light on the inside that's shining out for other people to see."

Her journey out of poverty has also inspired her to become an advocate. The thriving business owner, now with a second bakery in New Orleans, helps others realize their financial goals as a board member and mentor at Nashville Convention and Lipscomb University's College of Business.

The Cupcake Collection funds a scholarship at Tennessee State University, and also works with a number of community groups helping combat food insecurity.

Francois's business is both a baking legacy and a testament to the power of hard work. Her mission today, she claimed, is to "be a lighthouse in the community to serve as an example of what good business looks like."

# Making a Difference, One Lawn at a Time

### EMG INSPIRED STAFF

After a man from Huntsville, Alabama, started mowing lawns for free for those in need in his locale, it soon turned into a movement with kids from across the country, and beyond, joining in to give back to their communities—one lawn at a time.

Rodney Smith founded Raising Men Lawn Care Service in 2015 to mow lawns free of charge for the elderly, the disabled, single parents, and veterans. The idea was conceived when he came across an elderly man struggling to mow his lawn one day, and Rodney stopped to help him.

Every single day, I'm outside mowing free lawns for those in need, and it's a beautiful thing to see kids wanting to do the same.

Rodney Smith, founder, Raising Men Lawn Care Service

"That night, I just decided I'll start mowing for free lawns for the elderly, disabled, single parents, and veterans," he told The Epoch Times. "And eventually, that one small act of kindness changed my life forever.

"At first, my goal was to mow 40 lawns by the end of winter, but I mowed 40 lawns so quick that I upped my goal to 100." A month and a half later, he hit the 100-

lawn mark. "And that's when the idea of Raising Men Lawn Care Service came about," Rodney said. He decided to enlist 30 to 40 kids from Huntsville for the endeavor. Soon, more

children started joining—not only locally but nationally, and even worldwide. He started the "50 Yard Challenge," in

which kids are tasked to mow 50 lawns free of charge for those in their community who are in need. Rodney hopes to teach these kids what it means to give back.

"If they accept this challenge, they make a sign saying they accept the challenge and in return, we send them a white Raising Men, or even a Raising Women, T-shirt along with shades and ear protection," Rodney explained.

The challenge awards kids incrementally for their efforts—after 10 lawns, they get an orange shirt; at 20, a green one; a blue one at 30; a red shirt at 40; and after completing 50 lawns, the kids are awarded a black shirt, plus something special at completion. "I personally deliver them their brand

new mower for completing the challenge,' Rodney said.

The effort has already attracted over 1,500 kids worldwide to take the challenge. So far, over 100 have brought the challenge to completion.



(Above) In 2015, Rodney Smith started mowing lawns free of charge for the elderly, the disabled, single parents, and veterans. (Left) Kids 7 to 17 can take up the 50 Yard Challenge.

Share your stories with us at emg.inspired @epochtimes.com, and get your daily dose of inspiration by signing up for the Epoch Inspired newsletter at TheEpoch-*Times.com/newsletter* 

Meanwhile, parents really take pride in he kids making such positive contributions to their community, Rodney said. The endeavor has also beneficially im-

pacted their own lives. Even during the pandemic, more children continued to join the challenge, allowing them to get outside in the sun and fresh air for some healthy, productive exercise. The challenge has helped kids who were

once isolated and lonely to connect with others in their community. "I remember one parent in Michigan."

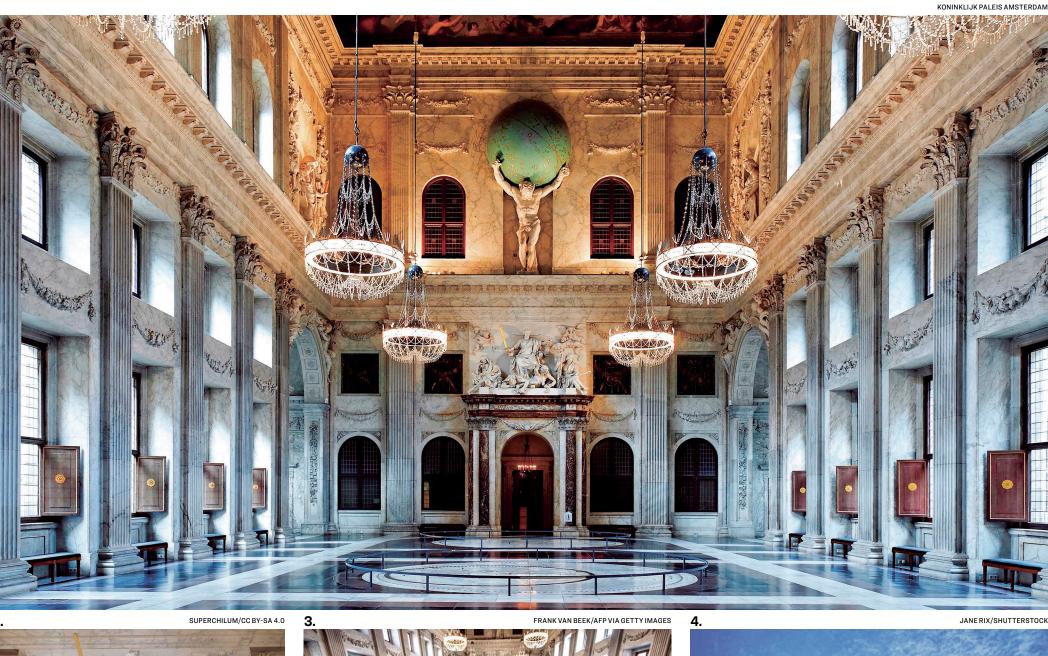
Rodney said. "She told me her son was isolated and he kept to himself. But when he started taking the 50 Yard Challenge, he started becoming friendly with everyone."

On a more profound note, Rodney expressed his belief that he's on a mission from God to continue offering kindness to others.

"God turned something I dislike and turned it into something I love to do," he said. "And every single day, I'm outside mowing free lawns for those in need, and it's a beautiful thing to see kids wanting to do the same.

"No one's forcing them, and they're wanting to get out there and make a difference in their community-one lawn at a time."

Kids aged 7 to 17 can join Raising Men and take part in the 50 Yard Challenge. If you or your child are interested in taking the challenge, you can sign up at: WeAre-RaisingMen.com









LARGER THAN LIFE: ART THAT INSPIRES US THROUGH THE AGES

# The Royal Palace of Amsterdam at the Center of the Universe

### **JAMES HOWARD SMITH**

The Royal Palace was originally the Town Hall of Amsterdam, created in the 17thcentury golden era of Holland. It was a time when Amsterdam and its fleet of ships held a dominant trading position, attracting great wealth to the nation's capital.

When the population grew fivefold, a new town hall was needed to serve the people. Jacob van Campen was the appointed architect. He designed in the Dutch classical style, drawing on the proportions and spatial designs found in classical architecture. Located in the center of Amsterdam facing Dam Square, the Palace is a harmoniously balanced sandstone building, with the façade's focal point being a central bay topped by a domed tower. The Palace was built upon exactly 13,659 wooden poles, which were made from Norwegian spruce and driven into soft ground to carry the weight of the building.

### **Bearing Amid the Cosmos**

At the apex of the west façade, Atlas, a Titan from Greek mythology, stands holding the universe. He reappears in the interior, overlooking Citizens Hall. Each of the four archways leading into the hall from the galleries is ornamented with one of the four elements: wind, water, earth, and fire-the ingredients of all matter in the universe.

On the marble floor are two large, centrally positioned maps inlaid with brass. One outlines the earth's landmasses, and the other is a star chart of the Northern Hemisphere revealing the galaxy beyond. The Hall creates an empowering moment for guests, acting as a compass and providing bearing amid the cosmos. Artworks throughout the Hall then tell the story of Amsterdam as the center of the universe, which today reminds visitors of the prominence the city once held on the world stage.

James Howard Smith, an architectural photographer, designer, and founder of Cartio, aims to inspire an appreciation of classical architecture.







**1.** The Citizens Hall at the heart of the Royal Palace of Amsterdam serves to orient people in the world, the galaxy, and the universe. 2. This relief represents the desire for a just Amsterdam where avarice and envycharacteristics of thieves and murderers—are not tolerated. The skeleton with its hourglass symbolizes Time and the revelation of Truth. In the end, Justice and Truth will always prevail.

3. Inlaid with brass on the marble floor, this centrally positioned map outlines the earth's landmasses. When not in official use, the Royal Palace is open to the public. King Willem-Alexander (C) attends the opening of the exhibition "Universe of Amsterdam, Treasures From the Golden Age of Cartography" on June 28, 2019.

4. An 18-foot-tall statue of Atlas stands on the rooftop and in the main hall, carrying the universe on his shoulders. Atlas symbolizes the universe and the important position Amsterdam held during the Golden Age.

5. For two centuries, the **Royal Palace of Amsterdam** was the largest secular building in Europe and was called the "Eighth Wonder of the World."

6. King Willem-Alexander and Queen Maxima. When the Dutch regained control of Holland, King William I adopted the Palace, and from 1813 to the present, it has been used by the royal family. Today, it functions mainly for state visits, award ceremonies, New Year's receptions, and other official events. The building also plays a role in royal marriages and in the abdications and inaugurations of monarchs

7. The Town Hall in Amsterdam, painted in 1668, by Dutch painter Jan van der Heyden, found in the Louvre, Paris. 8. In the Vroedschapskamer (room of the council), amid the rich interior decoration, the painting over the mantel by Govert Flinck would have reminded the council of King

Solomon, who here is asking God for wisdom in leading his people

that devices are put away there at night, but try to maximize the time they remain there during the day as well. Set clear guidelines for your children regarding when you expect them to store away their devices and when they can be used.

### Background Music

LUCA BAINI/UNSPLAS

A simple hack to deter device use is to keep enjoyable music playing in your home. Having something to listen to may encourage family members to do more "real-world" activities around the house.

### **Cull Your Options**

Audit the apps, alerts, and notifications on your and your children's devices. By turning off all notifications, you begin to change the relationship to your device from one where it tells you what to do to one in which you're in control of it. Keep only the apps you deem essential.

### Switch to Black and White

Studies have shown that by simply switching your phone to black-and-white mode, you'll use it less. It's worth a try if it means regaining more of your life back or keeping your children away from the lure of their devices.

### **Replace the Habit**

As you attempt to change a habit that is probably deeply ingrained, it might be helpful to replace it with something more worthwhile. When you feel the urge to "check your phone," for example, perhaps instead you could stand up, step outside, or get yourself a drink of water. Choose something simple and enjoyable that will actually benefit you.

### **Books in the Bathroom**

I don't mean to get too personal, but do you take your phone into the bathroom? Make the bathroom a no-phone zone, and instead ensure that there are interesting books and magazines available to ease the transition.

### **Screen-Free Challenges**

Make detaching from devices fun and introduce a challenge. Can you and your family go an entire weekend without digital devices? Can you survive a week without Wi-Fi? Work your way up to bigger and more daring challenges and bask in the peace and presence you begin to experience in your family.

### **Offer Rewards**

When all else fails, offer rewards. Most devices monitor screen time. You can set weekly goals and reward success, improving as the summer progresses.

For many, the call of our digital devices was too tempting to resist during a stressful pandemic lockdown, but it's time to let that crutch go and refocus our attention on the real life before us. This is the summer to do it.



Make detaching from devices fun and introduce a challenge. Can you and your family go an entire weekend without digital devices? FAMILY

# Simple Ways to Discourage Screen Time This Summer



### **BARBARA DANZA**

fter months of Zoom meetings and virtual classrooms, not to mention isolation that led to even more screen use L than usual, this summer is the time to cut your family's screen time way back, breathe in the fresh air, bask in the sunshine, and take back your life.

While these digital tools of ours can add convenience to our lives, we're all well aware of their addicting properties and detrimental effects on our minds and overall well-being. If you're looking for ways to guide your family away from their screens as you adjust your own digital habits, here are some suggestions.

### **Phone Basket**

Set up a basket or receptacle in a central location in your home where devices can be stored and charged. At a minimum, ensure

### As you

attempt to change a habit that is probably deeply ingrained, it might be helpful to replace it with something more worthwhile.

### **EDUCATION** Living Books: Essential to a Student's Appetite for Learning

### **TRICIA FOWLER**

Grandma's counter was spread with salads, appetizers, main dishes, and desserts for the family meal. All the second cousins were vying for the coveted positions at the front of the line. The food was blessed and with excessive speed, the entire feast was devoured. It would be comical to suggest that the family needed to be coaxed into consuming the feast.

Consider this: The old-fashioned, family get-together is to eating as "living books" are to educating.

In home educating circles, the living book is an old concept, found in Charlotte Mason principles. The Charlotte Mason educational philosophy demands that information be communicated in well-written literature. One of the characteristics of a living book is its ability to powerfully influence the reader's mind through a direct connection with the author's mind.

### Living Books Go to the Source

All the talk before the family reunion revolves around the food and who is making the iconic dishes. Grandpa always smokes the turkey, and nobody wants it any other way. The same can be said for various subjects in literature. If John Adams is the subject, David McCullough is a modern author who arranged and exposited many of the original documents on this

great man. Likewise, geography is served amazingly well by Richard Halliburton, as geometry

is by Euclid. The authors of living books tend to have an intense gift within their subject area, and reading their work makes their passion contagious. When reading a living book, the author's intensity on the topic should be obvious, and when families are exposed to these great minds, it's as if their subject matter is taught by a great master

teacher. Think of how family recipes typically come from years of trial and error, till the method and ingredients are just to the liking of the family. The recipe becomes an original that is sometimes even kept a secret! The living book is also characterized by this original nature. Has this author lived through the topic of the book? Was the author actively engaged in the activity described in the book? If the book is on history, did this author have access and write from original documents? (The original documents themselves are also classified as "living" in Charlotte Mason-inspired curriculum.) Did the author write during the time frame of the events that occurred? The love and attention the topic is given in a living book demonstrates the author's



Living books bring the subject to life.

The love and attention the topic is given in a living book demonstrates the author's personal investment to make the book just right.

### book just right.

**Living Books Offer Rich** Content Imagine the disappointment if Aunt Betsy showed up at Grandma's potluck with a dozen supplements instead of her layer salad. We like to enjoy our nutrients within foods, not removed from foods, divided into categories, and placed

into capsules. Living books provide just the right mix of literary finesse with concepts. It is not as if any of the "food" is wasted, but as any dietician can explain, nutrient absorption is aided by other nutrients.

For example, in "The Mystery of the Periodic Table" by Benjamin D. Wiker, the narrative behind an imaginary element (phlogiston) whose existence was postulated by scientists can help us understand the periodic table and the French Revolution. This story can also show us the change inherent to the study of science through the scientific method. Without this living book, the French Revolution, the periodic table, and the discovery of oxygen may seem dry and disconnected.

#### **Living Books Require No Preparation**

If cousin Naomi filled her plate at

personal investment to make the the potluck and Grandma grabbed it, dumped her Chinette plateful into the blender, sat Naomi down, and started spoon-feeding her, the joy of the feast would be over for both Grandma and Naomi. When poorly written books containing facts with no connections are forced in a prescribed manner onto a child, it kills the delightfulness of learning for the parent and the student. The parent, by default, benefits just as much from living literature and finds that he or she become a willing student along with the child.

Living books are an intricate part of the feast of learning. It's never too early to start or too late to continue discovering with living literature. These treasures sustain the pleasure of learning in students of all ages. So, pass Aunt Mabel's potato casserole, and let's dig in

### Additional Resources

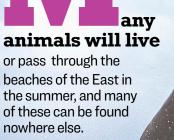
For more information on living books, go to AmblesideOnline.org, which links readers to Charlotte Mason's writings on the subject.

Tricia Fowler is a homeschooling momma in the Midwest. She currently spends much of her time teaching math, feeding sourdough, and helping with whatever is in season on the hobby farm she shares with her husband and seven children.



By Aidan Danza, age 15









Dolphins are often present off the Atlantic Coast. These are usually the bottlenose dolphin, the most common species of dolphin. Often, all that can be seen of these playful animals are their small dorsal fins as they come up to breathe, or are just jumping around. Occasionally, they will jump completely out of the water, and you can see their faces.

Interestingly, there are actually a few distinct types of bottlenose: an offshore type, which stays in the open ocean, and a coastal type, which will be seen near the coast or sometimes in rivers inland. They are classified even further by region. The bottlenose dolphin seen along the East Coast is more specifically called Western North Atlantic northern migratory coastal stock.

### **GULLS**

A laughing gull.

Gulls, or seagulls as they're usually called, are large seabirds that live on beaches. They don't dive into the water, like the more impressive seabirds found in the Far North, but grab food off the surface of the water, steal garbage, or eat shelled organisms such as clams and mussels.

A ring-billed gull

To eat these, they have a special technique that is really quite intelligent for a bird: The gull will fly vertically into the air and drop their catch onto the ground, smashing the shell and leaving the meaty insides

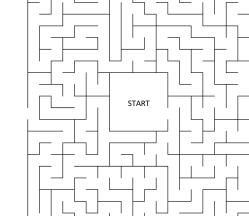
#### exposed for the gull to eat. Gulls mostly eat invertebrates, but they are extremely opportunistic, eating anything they can. Human food is one of their specialties-gulls often grab french fries or sandwiches from unsuspecting human hands.

A herring gull.

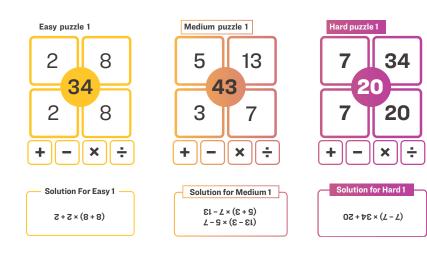
ALL PHOTOS BY SHUTTERSTOCK

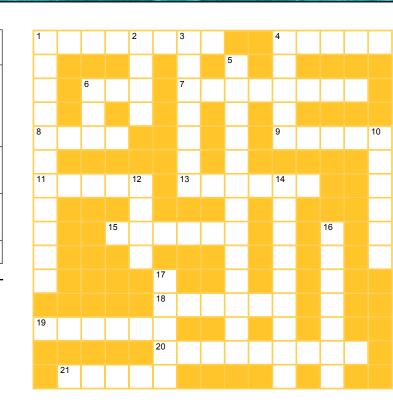
There are three types of gulls on the East Coast that are usually present in summer: laughing, ring-billed, and herring. They are easy to tell apart: Laughing gulls have black heads in summer, ring-bills are small with a black ring on the bill, and herring gulls just look like the stereotypical seagull.





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







### Across

- Pool wear (8) It has to be mowed in the summer! (5
- Kicks (3)
- 7 Beach activity (8)
  - "House" when camping out (4)
  - It appears on your forehead in summer (5) 21 Butterfly collecting, e.g. (5)

**6** Summer cooler (3)

2 Beach "soil" (4)

**5** Bright fliers (13)

Down

**10** Bus, plane, and train trips (6)

1 Vacation location activity (11)

**3** Mosquitoes, gnats, etc (7)

**4** Doubleheader pair (5)

- **12** Summer annoyance (4)
- **14** Escapade (9)
- They work on a mound (7) 17 Part of a simple bouquet (5)
- **11** Our favorite planet (5)
- **13** Summer bronze (6)
- **15** It needs weeding in the summer (6)
- 18 Last month of Summer vacation (6)
- **19** It has two pieces (6)
- 20 It prevents sunburn (9)



**TRUTH** and **TRADITION** 

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