

# THE EPOCH TIMES

# ARTS & CULTURE

TRADITIONAL CULTURE

## Oval Office Authors: Presidents, Pens, and Paper

Four presidents' works stand the test of time

JEWEL SAMAD/AFP VIA GETTY IMAGES



Which president's literary legacy had the most impact? The Oval Office of the White House in 2010.

These presidents possessed the talent to set words and thoughts ablaze.

JEFF MINICK

Many of our modern presidents have written books. When running for office, they frequently publish political manifestos outlining their vision for America or autobiographies describing obstacles they've overcome to reach the top. On leaving office, they reverse this process and write of their days in the White House, the crises they faced, the grace and courage with which they conquered adversity, the friends they made, and the foes they vanquished.

Only time will tell whether the books of these men will continue to draw readers in future years or will instead gather dust on library shelves, studied only by historians and biographers. "Where's The Rest of Me?: The Autobiography of Ronald Reagan," an account of his early life and his time in Hollywood is, for example, out of print. And though a bestseller now, Barack Obama's memoir of his presidency, "A Promised Land," may find few fans 20 years from now.

Yet if we travel back in time a century or two, we discover several presidents whose prose had a profound effect on the country or whose literary talents still attract admirers today. Among these are Thomas Jefferson, Abraham Lincoln, Ulysses S. Grant, and Theodore Roosevelt.

### The Virginian

Surrounded by a platoon of men who possessed a talent for oratory and persuasive writing, Thomas Jefferson nonetheless stands out as the most gifted man of letters among his contemporaries. In addition to the Declaration of Independence, which stands alongside the Constitution as America's foundational document, Jefferson's work includes the book "Notes on the State of Virginia," his draft of "The Virginia Statute of Religious Freedom," which he considered one of the great accomplishments of his lifetime, and numerous letters that historians now regard as minor masterpieces about democracy and America.

In his education and training, Jefferson accrued advantages that many of his presidential heirs lacked. He received the best available education of his time, undergoing rigorous instruction in the classics, law, and oratory. He studied at the College of William and Mary, and later "read the law" with the prominent attorney George Wythe. Moreover, he lived in the company of men and women who were attentive to speech and the written word, thereby further enhancing his talent for communication.

In 1776, Congress created a "Committee of Five," which included John Adams, Benjamin Franklin, and Thomas Jefferson, to write a proposal for independence. Though many in the Continental Congress wanted Adams to write the first draft, he was so impressed with Jefferson's abilities with pen and paper that he urged him to become the chief architect of what would become the Declaration of Independence.

That Jefferson was proud of his work as a writer may be seen from the inscriptions on his tombstone, which he wrote himself.

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MUSIC

# Harp Dreams



MICHAEL KUREK

I cannot remember the first time I took notice of a harp, but I must have been a very small child. In those days, it was not uncommon to see a symphony orchestra on television, and my eyes invariably went to the harp, the most exotic-looking thing on the stage, at least until the long-haired conductor came to the podium. The harp would usually be given its turn to shine, both visually and musically, in a fantastical waterfall of tones.

And then there was "Mickey and the Beanstalk," a segment of Disney's 1947 film "Fun and Fancy Free," with its Golden Harp character—a beautiful, singing woman whose back was somehow attached to the column of a harp. The role was beautifully sung by a popular teen star of the day, Anita Gordon. What a mesmerizing instrument! Famous for the harp, of course, was also Harpo Marx, one of the Marx Brothers comedy team, who wasn't faking it! He could actually play the harp pretty well.

Perhaps no other musical instrument has evolved through so many versions.

Composing for the Classical Harp

In more recent years, though I do not play the harp, I have been commissioned by members of both the American Harp Society and The World Harp Congress to compose harp music to be played at their national and international conferences. I have immensely enjoyed attending these conferences. The sight of rows and rows of glistening, often gilded harps (some in natural wood or black lacquer) all lined up in the vendor hall is magical to see. It is only matched by the sight of several hundred harpists who, unlike their counterparts who play other instruments, seem to float around the conference halls, as if they themselves have been transformed by

playing the instrument.

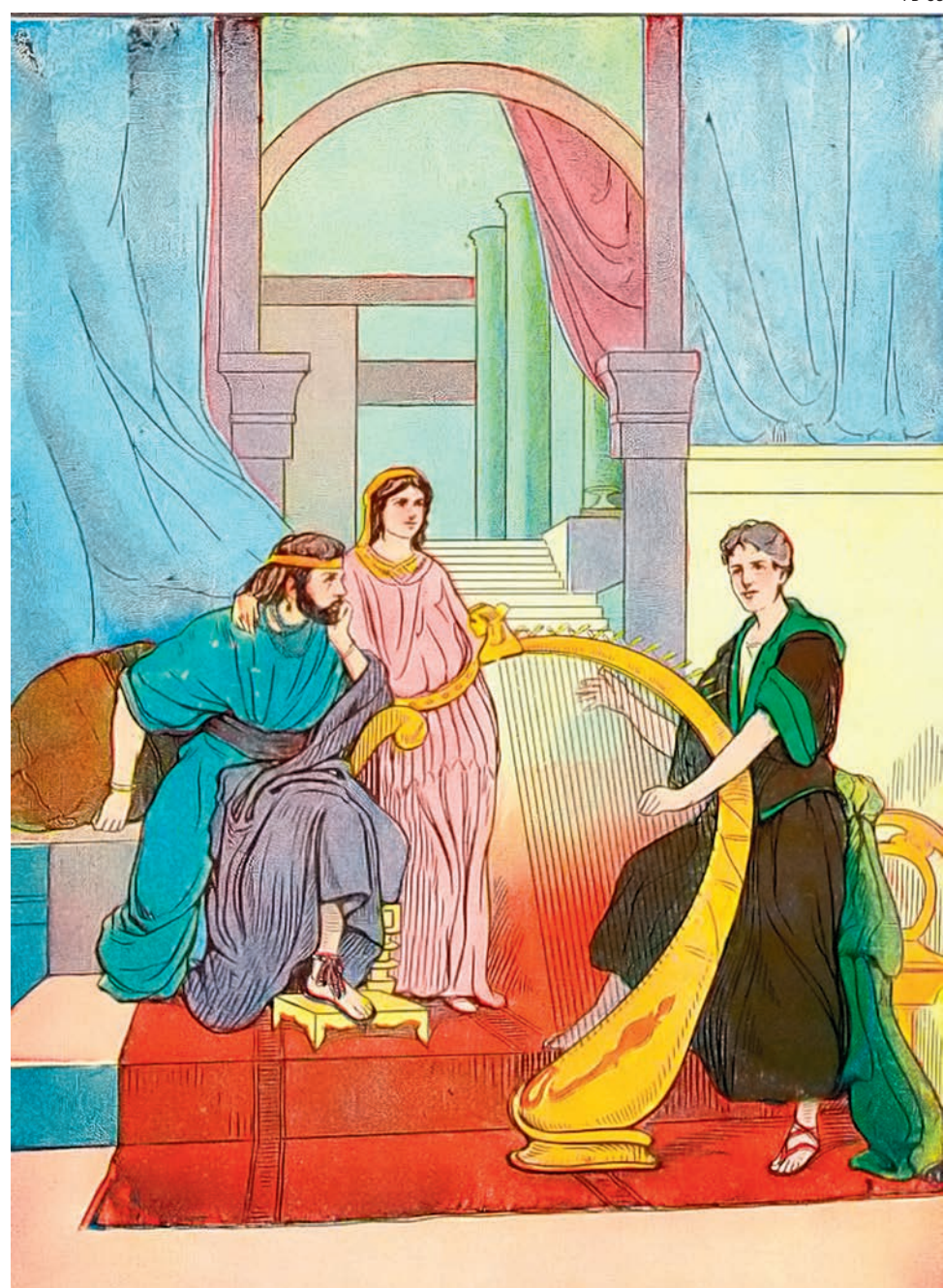
I have enjoyed composing for the harp, partly because (and I'm only half joking) it is almost impossible to compose anything that sounds really bad on a harp. However, it turned out that there is a pretty steep learning curve to write down its music, with many more notes and several special notational symbols not used for other instruments.

As you look at a harp, you see a row of vertical strings that must be plucked, and you wonder how harpists know which string goes with which note. Not only that, it is not as easy as it might appear to properly pluck a high-tension harp string to get a good professional tone out of it.

Close inspection reveals the secret that the seven C strings, one in each octave, are red and all the F strings are black or blue, which harpists use to orient their hands when placing them on the instrument. But exactly how far to leap to distant strings to play other pitches depends on muscle memory and peripheral vision, since harpists must also read their sheet music and cannot always look away from it to their hands.

My respect, even awe, for the art of playing the harp grew even more when I learned that not only must both hands simultaneously pluck the strings on either side of the instrument, but there also are seven pedals, which both feet are frequently pressing up or down to one of three positions. The one D pedal, for example, simultaneously re-tunes all seven of the D strings (one in each octave) to flat, sharp, or natural tunings, until that pedal is changed again.

The harp has just seven strings for each octave, analogous to the white keys on the piano. To get a "black key" note, the pedals must be changed, and then perhaps changed back right away. The only other standard instruments that use both hands and feet to actually sound additional notes are the pipe organ, which also has pedals, and the rock/jazz drum set. The coordination required to use all four appendages, hands and feet, quite independently is not unlike the rest of us trying to pat our heads and rub our tummies at the same time, but times two!



David plays the harp for King Saul, an illustration from "The Boys of the Bible," by Hartwell James, published by Henry Altemus Co.

The Harp's Rich History

Perhaps no other musical instrument has evolved through so many versions, from David playing the harp to soothe the spirit of King Saul to the small, hand-held lyres from the ancient Greeks, to the modern pedal harp that matured to more or less its present form in the late 19th century.

Several varieties of smaller Celtic and folk harps still exist today, and they are more popular than ever. The modern classical concert grand harp I've been discussing is the big one, around six feet tall, with 47 strings and about six and a half octaves in range, just a little less than the piano.

We do not find much use of the harp in the Classical era by composers like Mozart and Haydn, nor even in Beethoven nor, still later, Brahms. But many other mainstream Romantic-era composers readily adopted the instrument. One thinks of all those luscious harp solos in Tchaikovsky's ballets, for example.

But to hear the full showcase of what a modern concert grand pedal harp can do, I would recommend listening to a good harp concerto, like the sumptuous Concerto for Harp and Orchestra in E-flat Major, Op. 74 by Russian composer Reinhold Glière (1875-1956). Though composed in 1938, it lies squarely in the tuneful, 19th-century Romantic tradition.

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart wrote only one piece for the harp, his Concerto for Flute and Harp in C major, K. 299 from 1778, but it is completely delightful and regarded by harpists and audiences alike as a great contribution to the harp repertoire.

If you start to look for it, you'll notice how many times harps pop up in classic films, either on screen or in the score. One of the most notable of the latter is the use of nine harps (count 'em, nine!) in Bernard Herrmann's gorgeous soundtrack to the 1953 movie "Beneath the 12-Mile Reef," where they create an underwater paradise. Likewise, Herrmann used the harp to



A classical harp with pedals visible at its base.

paint the sea in the 1947 film "The Ghost and Mrs. Muir."

Notable among the harp's on-screen appearances, also from 1947, is the stunning performance of a harp solo by Cary Grant (as Dudley the angel) in "The Bishop's Wife," also starring Loretta Young and David Niven. The hands you see on the strings, though, were not those of Grant, but of Denzil Gail Laughton (1921-1985) who was best known as a jazz harpist but did a great deal of playing for film and television. Laughton's hands were photographically substituted for Cary Grant's with what appears to be some skill for the technology of that day.

American composer Michael Kurek is the composer of the *Billboard* No. 1 classical album "The Sea Knows." The winner of numerous composition awards, including the prestigious *Academy Award in Music* from the American Academy of Arts and Letters, he has served on the Nominations Committee of the *Recording Academy* for the classical Grammy Awards. He is a professor emeritus of composition at Vanderbilt University. For more information and music, visit [MichaelKurek.com](http://MichaelKurek.com)

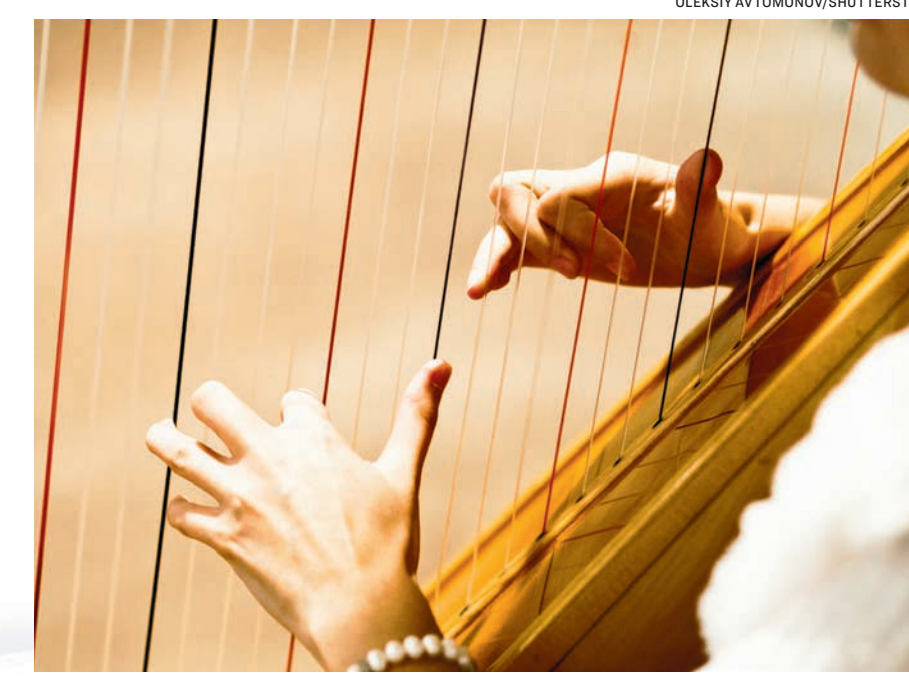
The harp has just seven strings for each octave, analogous to the white keys on the piano.

Three of the seven pedals at the base of a harp. These shift a pitch to flats, sharps, or naturals.



CAROL BLAKER/SHUTTERSTOCK

OLESKIY AVTOMONOV/SHUTTERSTOCK



Harp strings are color-coded.

## What People Are Saying



I read The Epoch Times daily. I still like hard papers [...] and I still like to grab that paper in my hand, but I get more printed versions of stories than ever before. You guys have done an amazing job, and really—I think there's such a void in media, especially newspapers. They slant so solidly one way that there are very few papers that I can really feel that I can rely on, and The Epoch Times is one.

SEAN HANNITY  
Talk show host



The Epoch Times is a great place where you can understand traditional values in a way and in a tone and through content that is accessible. It's smart.

CARRIE SHEFFIELD  
Columnist and broadcaster



I congratulate you and The Epoch Times for the work you are doing, especially with regard to keeping the menace of the communist threat in front of us.

DR. SEBASTIAN GORKA  
Military and intelligence analyst and former deputy assistant to the president



I rely on The Epoch Times newspaper for factual and unbiased news coverage.

LARRY ELDER  
Best-selling author, attorney, and talk show host



It's our favorite paper. It's the first one we read. Thank you so much for your reporting of the news.

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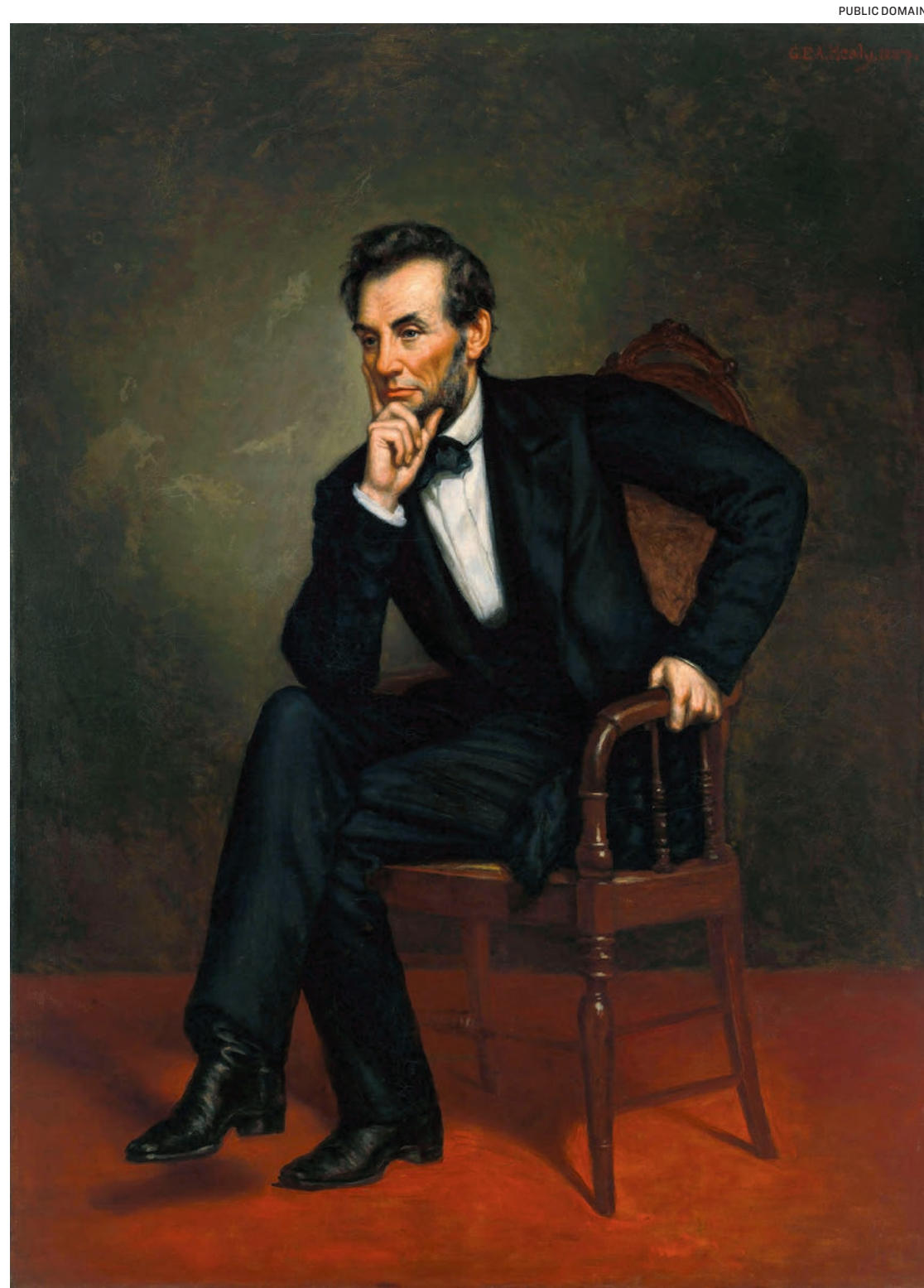
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Known as the "Edgehill Portrait," this painting of President Thomas Jefferson by Gilbert Stuart was the result of two sittings: in 1805 and 1821. Purchased with funds provided by the Regents of the Smithsonian Institution; the Trustees of the Thomas Jefferson Foundation, Inc.; and the Enid and Crosby Kemper Foundation. The painting is owned jointly by Monticello, Thomas Jefferson Foundation, Inc., Charlottesville, Va., and the National Portrait Gallery.



A portrait of Abraham Lincoln in 1860 by George Peter Alexander Healy, created in 1887 from other portraits. Gift of the A.W. Mellon Educational and Charitable Trust; National Portrait Gallery.



A portrait of Ulysses S. Grant, circa 1880, by Thomas Le Clear. Gift of Mrs. Ulysses S. Grant Jr.; National Portrait Gallery.



A portrait of Theodore Roosevelt, 1967, by Adrian Lamb, after Philip Alexius de Laszlo's 1908 original. Gift of the Theodore Roosevelt Association; National Portrait Gallery.

## TRADITIONAL CULTURE

## Oval Office Authors: Presidents, Pens, and Paper

Continued from Page 1

He makes no mention of his presidency, but instead describes his accomplishments as the author of the Declaration of Independence and the Virginia Statute of Religious Freedom, and "Father of the University of Virginia."

Other than the Constitution, no other document has had so great an impact on the American people.

### The Rail-Splitter

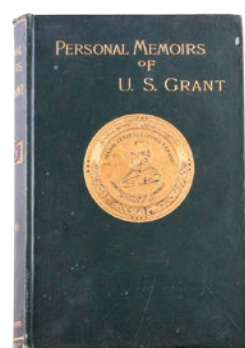
In regard to formal schooling, Abraham Lincoln stands as Jefferson's opposite. Largely self-educated—he attended school for less than a year and later learned the law by borrowing books and studying informally with attorneys. Lincoln found his classroom for composition in the King James Bible and the plays and verse of William Shakespeare.

We see the rhythms and cadences of these two literary influences throughout Lincoln's speeches, especially his Gettysburg Address and his Second Inaugural Address. Unlike so many of our 20th-century presidents, Lincoln wrote these speeches himself, revising them and occasionally reading them aloud to various companions and cabinet members.

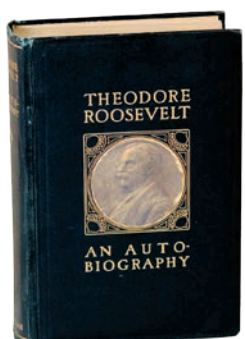
Though ungainly and awkward, Lincoln conquered his audiences and readers through his words. His "House Divided" speech—his listeners well knew the biblical verse "A house divided against itself cannot stand"—may have cost him his run for the Senate in 1858, but helped him later win the presidency. His Cooper Union Address of 1860 was made into a pamphlet and printed in many newspapers. In his First Inaugural Address, we hear the rich rhetoric supplied to him by his lifetime of reading and writing:

"We are not enemies, but friends. We must not be enemies. Though passion may have strained, it must not break our bonds of affection. The mystic chords of memory, stretching from every battlefield, and every patriot grave, to every heart and hearthstone, all over this broad land, will yet swell the chorus of the Union, when again touched, as surely they will be, by the better angels of our nature."

**Other than the Constitution, no other document has had so great an impact on the American people than the Declaration of Independence.**



A first edition copy of Ulysses S. Grant's personal memoirs from 1885.



The first edition of Theodore Roosevelt's autobiography.

The speech failed to dissuade the South from secession, but it is a masterpiece of style, thought, and persuasion.

A short time later, his "Emancipation Proclamation," the document that he helped compose and that brought about the end of slavery, changed the course of American history.

### The General

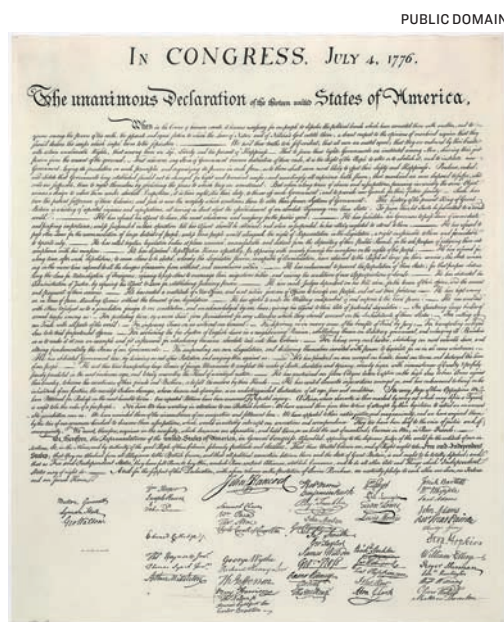
Throughout my high school and college history courses—I majored in that subject—my textbooks and teachers inevitably depicted Ulysses S. Grant as one of the worst U.S. presidents. He was weak, I was told, and misled by underlings, with the result that his presidency was rife with corruption.

Though there is truth in these charges, historians have since corrected some of those impressions. They acknowledge the bribery and corruption practiced by some associated with Grant's administration, but also credit him with fighting the Ku Klux Klan in the South. He also attempted to resolve Western conflicts with Native Americans—he appointed Native American Ely Parker as Commissioner of Indian Affairs—and strengthened ties with Great Britain, largely due to the diplomacy of his Secretary of State, Hamilton Fish.

Cheated by a business partner after he'd left the White House, nearly broke, and then told by doctors that he was dying of throat cancer, Grant spent the final year of his life desperately writing his memoirs of the Civil War to provide for his family after his death. With the encouragement and backing of Mark Twain, he finished his two-volume work just days before he died. Again with Twain's assistance and generous royalty payments, "The Personal Memoirs of Ulysses S. Grant" became a bestseller and brought financial security to his wife, Julia.

That autobiography, which focuses primarily on Grant's military career, is today considered one of the finest nonfiction works in our literature. Grant's spare writing, his ability to describe complicated battles, and his comments on various leaders remain valuable both as a guide to the Civil War and as a model for writing.

Though Mark Twain clearly had a vested interest in promoting Grant's "Personal



"The Declaration of Independence," July 4, 1776, a copy of the 1823 William Stone facsimile.

Memoirs," many critics would agree with his evaluation of the book:

"I had been comparing the memoirs with Caesar's 'Commentaries.' ... I was able to say in all sincerity, that the same high merits distinguished both books—clarity of statement, directness, simplicity, unpretentiousness, manifest truthfulness, fairness and justice toward friend and foe alike, soldierly candor and frankness, and soldierly avoidance of flowery speech. I placed the two books side by side upon the same high level, and I still think that they belonged there."

Magnanimous praise indeed from a high peer of American literature.

### The Dynamo

Of all our presidents, Theodore Roosevelt was as much a writer as a politician. Many today who know something of his life mark him as a bibliophile extraordinaire who often read two or three books a day and who consumed tens of thousands of books in his lifetime, surely making him the most well-read of our chief executives.

Besides reading a library of books, however, Roosevelt was also a prolific author. In his lifetime, Roosevelt wrote and saw published over 30 books. The range of topics was vast, running from biographies of English Lord Protector Oliver Cromwell and the prominent American senator Thomas Hart Benton to works as diverse as "The Naval War of 1812," "The Wilderness Hunter," "The Rough Riders," "Progressive Principles," and "A Booklover's Holidays in the Open."

Perhaps best-known of his works is "Theodore Roosevelt: An Autobiography," published several years after he'd left the White



House. This memoir, which is still in print and which may be found online as well, weaves together incidents and major events of Roosevelt's life along with his philosophy for living. At the end of "Chapter II: The Vigor of Life," for instance, having addressed such topics as "bodily vigor" and courage, he writes these sentences about a man seeking to acquire fearlessness:

"Let him dream about being a fearless man, and the more he dreams the better he will be, always provided he does his best to realize the dream in practice. He can do his part honorably and well provided only he sets fearlessness before him as an ideal, schools himself to think of danger merely as something to be faced and overcome, and regards life itself as he should regard it, not something to be thrown away, but as a pawn to be promptly hazarded whenever the hazard is warranted by the larger interests of the great game in which we are all engaged."

Athlete, hunter, cowboy, soldier, husband, father, politician, president, and writer—Roosevelt played the great game and played it exceptionally well.

### Words and Deeds

A famous Latin tag, "Facta non verba," translates into English as "Actions, not words." Generally, this adage holds true. We judge others more by what they do and less by what they say they will do.

These presidents were all men of action. The job demanded that of them. Fortunately for the rest of us, they also possessed the talent to set words and thoughts ablaze, and by those fires helped shine a light on the American Dream.

"Give what you can, with what you have, where you are," Theodore Roosevelt once wrote.

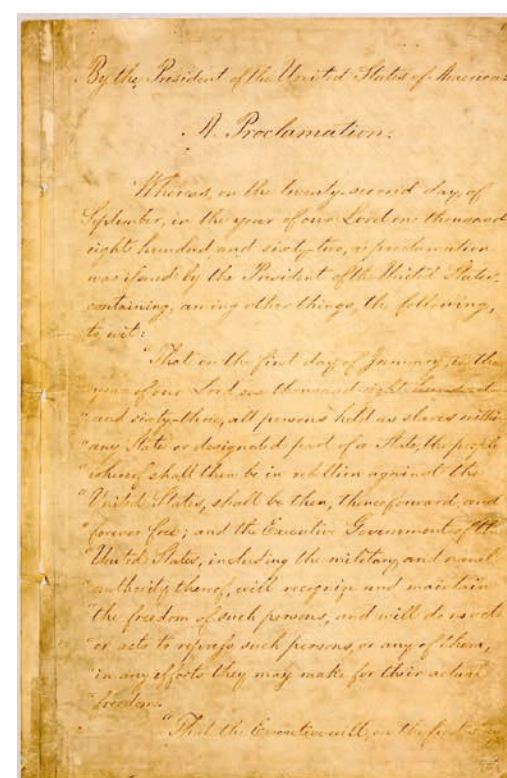
By their example and by their words, these four presidents urge us to live by that axiom.

Jeff Minick has four children and a growing platoon of grandchildren.

For 20 years, he taught history, literature, and Latin in 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](http://JeffMinick.com) to follow his blog.

The Oval Office of the White House in 2017.

**Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation changed the course of American history.**



On Sept. 22, 1862, President Lincoln issued the Emancipation Proclamation. The five-page original document is held in the National Archives Building.



# Odes to Fathers, Courtesy of Baroque Artist Bartolomé Esteban Murillo

ELIZABETH LEV

Art lovers can spot Bartolomé Esteban Murillo's trademark Madonnas from across a room. The Spanish painter's ethereal, raven-haired, porcelain-skinned portrayals of the Virgin Mary tenderly embracing her son or hovering on heavenly clouds grace museums across the world. Yet for every innovative image of the Mother of God that the Baroque artist painted, he produced an equally pioneering depiction of fatherhood.

To illustrate paternal virtue, Murillo used scriptural examples, and his greatest source of inspiration was St. Joseph, husband of Mary and foster father of Jesus Christ. More subdued in color and gesture than his radiant Madonnas, Murillo's St. Joseph paintings extol the nuanced qualities that typify great fathers.

St. Joseph took a long time to find his place in the history of art. Without a single spoken word recorded in the Bible, he remained absent in early Christian frescos and carvings, eventually appearing as a worried old man crouched in the corner of Nativity scenes.

By the Renaissance era, his iconographic repertoire had expanded to include his marriage to the Virgin Mary, proposing the saint as a model husband. In the wake of the Protestant Reformation, St. Joseph finally took center stage as a subject worthy of his own altarpiece, not as the factotum of the Holy Family but as an engaged, protective, loving father.

Spain did much to launch the image of Joseph as the World's Greatest Dad, spurred by several saints who felt a special connection with the silent yet steadfast figure. Murillo, always ready to take on new iconographic challenges, took advantage of this shifting spirituality to revolutionize the portrayal of Joseph, resulting in some of the most inspiring images of fatherhood in the history of art.

**Murillo's St. Joseph as the Good Father** Murillo explored different paternal qualities—vigilance, devotion, playfulness, loyalty, and forgiveness—in each of his numerous paintings of St. Joseph. His striking 1665 altarpiece in Seville shows a larger-than-life Joseph towering over the viewer, standing next to the luminous Christ Child.

Typical of his style, Murillo arranged a few classical architectural fragments on one side, while leaving the rest of the space uncluttered to focus solely on the two figures. Jesus, perched on the ruins of an ancient altar, nestles close to Joseph while gazing serenely at the viewer, confident in his father's protection. The mauve color of his robe and soft skin emphasize his humanity and vulnerability. Joseph shields the child with his body, looking warily in the distance, seemingly ready to whisk his son away at the first sign of danger. In the Bible, Joseph's prompt reactions saved the infant Jesus by escaping the murderous rage of King Herod.

Murillo rejected the painterly precedent of portraying Joseph as an old, decrepit man, depicting him with dark flowing hair and strong youthful features bearing a striking resemblance to the mature Jesus. Murillo then transformed Joseph from virile defender into a doting father for a private patron who would have commissioned a more intimate version for domestic use. A smaller work from 1670 opens a window into the personal relationship of Joseph with his divine charge. As father of 11 chil-



"Holy Family With a Dog," circa 1650, by Bartolomé Esteban Murillo.

**More subdued in color and gesture than his radiant Madonnas, Murillo's St. Joseph paintings extol the nuanced qualities that typify great fathers.**

(Below left) "Joseph With Infant Christ," 1665–1666, by Bartolomé Esteban Murillo. Museum of Fine Arts of Seville, Spain.

(Below) "St. Joseph With the Christ Child," 1670–1675, by Bartolomé Esteban Murillo.

(Below right) "The Return of the Prodigal Son," 1660s, by Bartolomé Esteban Murillo. Oil on canvas; 41 1/8 inches by 53 inches. Presented by Sir Alfred and Lady Beit, 1987. Beit Collection.

dren, Murillo mastered the art of rendering the pudgy flesh of infants, producing a cuddly Christ Child who appears ready to be taken into the arms of the viewer. Joseph contemplates the boy intently, eyelids lowered, lips slightly parted; he seems to delight in Jesus's physical presence, absorbed in his golden curls, warm touch, and sweet scent.

At the same time, Joseph appears awed by the fact that this adorable infant is also the Messiah. Jesus places a flowering branch in Joseph's hand, an allusion to the divine selection of this man to be the husband of Mary and the guardian of Christ. The wispy brushstrokes give the impression of spontaneous movement, as if this were a candid snapshot where Joseph, caught unawares, reveals the depth and intensity of his fatherly love.

Murillo, who lost his father and mother by the age of 10, practically invented the image of the Holy Family at home. While some of his versions showed the parents at work and the child at play, "The Holy Family With a Dog" from 1650 captures a moment of cheerful respite from the labors of the day.

In a spartan workshop, St. Joseph leaves his carpentry tasks for a moment to play with his son. Jesus, whose only indication of his exalted status is the blue and gold band around his waist and the intensified light on his face, teases a lapdog with a bird. A smile seems to play around Joseph's lips as he points toward the patient pet, enjoying this quiet domestic moment.

Mary also pauses at her spinning to take in the scene, but as she looks at the finch in Jesus's hand, symbol of his future passion, framed against the crossed wooden bars of her spindle, her mind seems to stray to more somber thoughts.

While Murillo portrayed St. Joseph as dark-haired and handsome, he added a few lines across his brow and around his eyes to indicate the passing of youth. Jo-

seph's life was spent in relative poverty, constantly working to sustain his family, and Murillo suggests the great dignity of a lifetime of sacrifice.

## Other Fathers

Murillo's artistic studies of fatherhood were not limited to St. Joseph. In the wake of the Spanish plague of 1649, Murillo painted six large canvases recounting the story of the Prodigal Son. This parable tells of a young man who demanded his inheritance while his father was still alive, only to squander it on raucous living. Reduced to poverty, shame, and starvation, he returned home hoping to join his father's servants.

The star of the story is the father, who without rancor or recrimination welcomes his son home. Of the six scenes, the father features in three, openhandedly giving away his money to the ungrateful boy, dejectedly watching him depart, and, most powerfully, joyfully welcoming his destitute son. In this final panel, the family members stand in shadow as the boy, draped in rags, falls to his knees before the old man. Where the other family members, clad in bright apparel, remain in the shadows of the doorway, the old man, in his robe the color of earth, propels himself toward the boy. The Latin word for earth—"humus"—is the root of "humility," one of the most prized virtues of the age. The father, with right on his side, who has enjoyed the respect and loyalty of all except his son, puts aside his pride to forgive his humiliated boy.

Murillo's images, 400 years later, seem tailor-made for a modern Father's Day. They are emblems of gratitude toward the men who faithfully support, serve, protect, and love their families no matter how difficult the circumstances.

*Elizabeth Lev is an American-born art historian who teaches, lectures, and guides in Rome.*



FILM

## A Father's Day Treat: The Andy Hardy Film Series

TIFFANY BRANNAN

In the late 1930s to mid-1940s, the Andy Hardy movies were MGM's most popular film series. Set in the fictional average American town of Carvel, USA, these films represented everything that was America at the time. In recognition of their popularity, the mayor of Hollywood held a special ceremony at Grauman's Chinese Theatre on Aug. 15, 1941, to present a plaque to the actors playing the Hardy family, whom he dubbed "the first family of Hollywood." In 1943, the Academy Awards gave the series a special Oscar for its "achievement in portraying the American way of life."

The Hardy film series originally centered on the adventures of the whole Hardy family, consisting of father Judge James K. Hardy (Lewis Stone), mother Emily Hardy (Fay Holden), Aunt Milly Forrest (Sara Haden), daughter Marian (Cecilia Parker), and son Andy (Mickey Rooney).

Although the series eventually focused on energetic adolescent Andy, played by the increasingly popular Rooney, Judge and Mrs. Hardy were influential in all the films. One of the most admirable movie fathers, Judge Hardy's characterization proudly honors traditional fatherhood, making the Hardy series ideal for Father's Day.

## The Andy Hardy Series

The Andy Hardy series contains 16 feature films plus a short film featuring Andy and Judge Hardy ("Andy Hardy's Dilemma: A Lesson in Mathematics – and Other Things.") The characters were introduced in "A Family Affair" (1937), based on Aurania Rouverol's 1928 play, "Skidding." The first 15 films were made over nine years, averaging around two films per year. After "Love Laughs at Andy Hardy" ended the successful run in 1946, an attempt to revive the series was made in 1958 with "Andy Hardy Comes Home."

The original Hardy actors returned to play aged versions of their characters, except for the beloved judge, whose death was referenced because Lewis Stone died in 1953. In this film, Andy is now a husband and father, with Mickey Rooney's real-life son, Teddy, playing Andy Jr. Despite its many touching moments, this film failed to recapture its predecessors' charm and thus did not restart the series, as hoped.

The Hardy films were short and uncomplicated, ranging from a little over an hour to an hour and a half in length. They could be made quickly and inexpensively, lacking Technicolor, elaborate costumes, and special effects.

These compact movies are comparable to sitcom episodes, yet the longer running times allowed for more themes and time to develop them. They also gave MGM an opportunity to test and develop new talent, especially young starlets. Kathryn Grayson and Esther Williams both made their debuts in Andy Hardy films, and Lana Turner and Donna Reed also had early roles in the series. Young Judy Garland, Mickey Rooney's frequent musical co-star, played a recurring role in three Hardy movies.

## Father and Son

Most of these films have two main story lines, one involving Judge Hardy and the other involving Andy. (Sometimes a subplot involved Marian, especially in the earlier films.) Judge Hardy's story lines often have legal themes, whether he travels for a special case or works on a local problem. An ongoing story line is the aqueduct project, a major theme in "A Family Affair," which provides occasional story material through the seventh film. In many of the films, the story lines between Judge Hardy and Andy are interwoven.

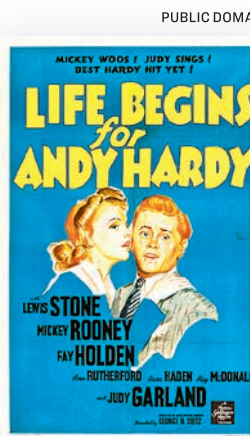
When "A Family Affair" begins, 15-year-old Andy is a confirmed woman-hater. This boyhood misogyny is surprising if you've seen the later films in which young Mr. Hardy is undeniably girl crazy. However, his attitude changes during the first film when his childhood friend, Polly Benedict (Margaret Marquis), returns as a sophisticated, beautiful young lady after years of being away. Andy quickly realizes that he enjoys kissing girls, a passion that endures for the rest of the series with Polly (later Ann Rutherford) and at least one new girl per film!

Predictably, his "hugging and kissing and good, clean fun" get him into trouble, either with financial problems or romantic mix-ups. Representing American boyhood, Andy is a good youth, but he is incorrigible.

(Top left) Ann Rutherford (L) played the sweetheart of Mickey Rooney's character Andy Hardy, who had a penchant for pretty girls, here played by Virginia Grey, in 1939's "The Hardys Ride High."

(Top right) A crowd in Alabama waiting for the midnight showing of a new Andy Hardy picture in 1941.

(Right) There has seldom been a finer onscreen father than Judge Hardy. Andy Hardy (Mickey Rooney, L) and his father Judge Hardy (Lewis Stone), circa 1940, in "Andy Hardy Meets a Debutante."



Judy Garland starred in three of the Andy Hardy films, including "Life Begins for Andy Hardy."

**In 1943, the Academy Awards gave the series a special Oscar for its 'achievement in portraying the American way of life.'**

## Glorifying Traditional Values

The best thing about the Andy Hardy series is that it depicts and glorifies traditional values. The Hardys of Carvel, USA, cherish patriotism not politics, with Judge Hardy naming George Washington and Abraham Lincoln as role models instead of current politicians.

Rather than preaching formal religion, the family shows quiet faith, highlighted by Andy's heartfelt prayer when his mother is sick. Nevertheless, Carvel isn't unbelievably or unrealistically good. The Hardys encounter dishonest people in and outside



Andy Hardy (Mickey Rooney, C) hugging his parents Judge Hardy (Lewis Stone) and mother Emily Hardy (Fay Holden).

## POPCORN AND INSPIRATION

# A Cosmic Canine and Life Lessons

IAN KANE

Frankly, heading into my viewing of director Simon Curtis's 2019 film "The Art of Racing in the Rain," I knew virtually nothing about it—other than it featured a dog, his master, and seemed to be focused on racing. Or so I thought. But due to Kevin Costner's fantastic narration as the canine character Enzo, I eventually realized that it focused on the dog's interesting perspectives on life and used racing to provide metaphors.

The film certainly starts off in an unusual way. Enzo (Butler as old Enzo and Parker as the younger version) is an older dog near the end of life. As his owner Denny (Milo Ventimiglia) sits next to him on a couch, we find out that Enzo admires a particular documentary about how dogs are highly admired in Mongolia and fantasizes about being reincarnated (as Mongolians believe) as a human. Although Enzo knows he's lived a full and happy life, Denny doesn't seem quite so ready to let him go.

From there, the film retraces Enzo's steps ... or paw prints if you will, from its adoption by Denny as a fresh-faced puppy to when Enzo becomes a beautiful golden retriever with gleaming, soulful eyes.

The pup has an instant symbiotic bonding with Denny, who is an affable, aspiring Formula One driver with a crooked smile. The two seem inseparable. Young Enzo watches all of the up-and-coming racecar drivers' matches, proudly barking out encouragement at Denny as he speeds down various tracks.

But then a pretty young lady named Eve (Amanda Seyfried) comes along and captures Denny's affections. They quickly fall in love and get married. The wedding takes place at the mansion of Eve's well-to-do parents, Maxwell and Trish (Martin Donovan and Kathy Baker). Maxwell considers Denny an underachiever since he hasn't made it to the top his profession yet, after years of racing.

At first, Enzo is somewhat resentful of

Denny and Eve's pairing, even knocking over pictures of them together. But Eve soon wins Enzo over, especially when she becomes pregnant with the couple's first child, daughter Zoë (Ryan Kiera Armstrong and later Lily Dodsworth-Evans).

Over the years, Denny's promising racing career means that he frequently has to leave town for matches around the globe, and so he misses goings-on at home. And when tragedy strikes and he may lose custody of Zoë, his world becomes very dark indeed.

As this all plays out, Enzo makes some astute observations, such as comparing Denny's unusual ability to race high-performance cars in the rain, to his being able to channel calmness and clarity amid the chaos of his deteriorating life.

We also see how loyal and supportive Enzo is during Denny's dark days as the dog recalls many of the things learned, while growing up from a puppy to a now older and wiser companion, through observing Denny. But despite all of this man's best friend's support, will Denny be able to weather the tumultuous storm surrounding his life?

"The Art of Racing in the Rain" is well-paced, with a peppy script, capable direction, and very good acting. But Costner as Enzo is the real hero here, magically drawing together a beautiful tapestry of tribulations and triumphs as if some sort of cosmic, canine guru.

In one racing scene, as Enzo looks on from the sidelines, Denny suddenly turns off the track and into his team's pit. He's behind in the race but oddly has his pit crew change his racecar's tires to those used for rainy weather—only it's not raining. But a few moments after Denny speeds back onto the raceway, a torrential downpour begins, and he soon overtakes all of the other drivers. As his team's leader exclaims from the sidelines, "When it rains, it doesn't rain on him!"

*Ian Kane is a filmmaker and author based out of Los Angeles. To learn more, visit [DreamFlightEnt.com](http://DreamFlightEnt.com)*



(Above) Milo Ventimiglia as Denny and Butler as Enzo in the poster for "The Art of Racing in the Rain."

(Right) Amanda Seyfried and Milo Ventimiglia.

(Below) Milo Ventimiglia as Denny and Parker as Enzo.



### 'The Art of Racing in the Rain'

**Director**  
Simon Curtis

**Starring**  
Kevin Costner, Milo Ventimiglia, Amanda Seyfried

**Running Time**  
1 hour, 49 minute

**Rated**  
PG

**Release Date**  
Aug. 9, 2019

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

### Correction

The review of "The Bridge on the River Kwai" in the June 8 edition misstated the geography of the land where the Japanese prison camp is located. The prison camp is actually surrounded by land. The Epoch Times regrets the error.

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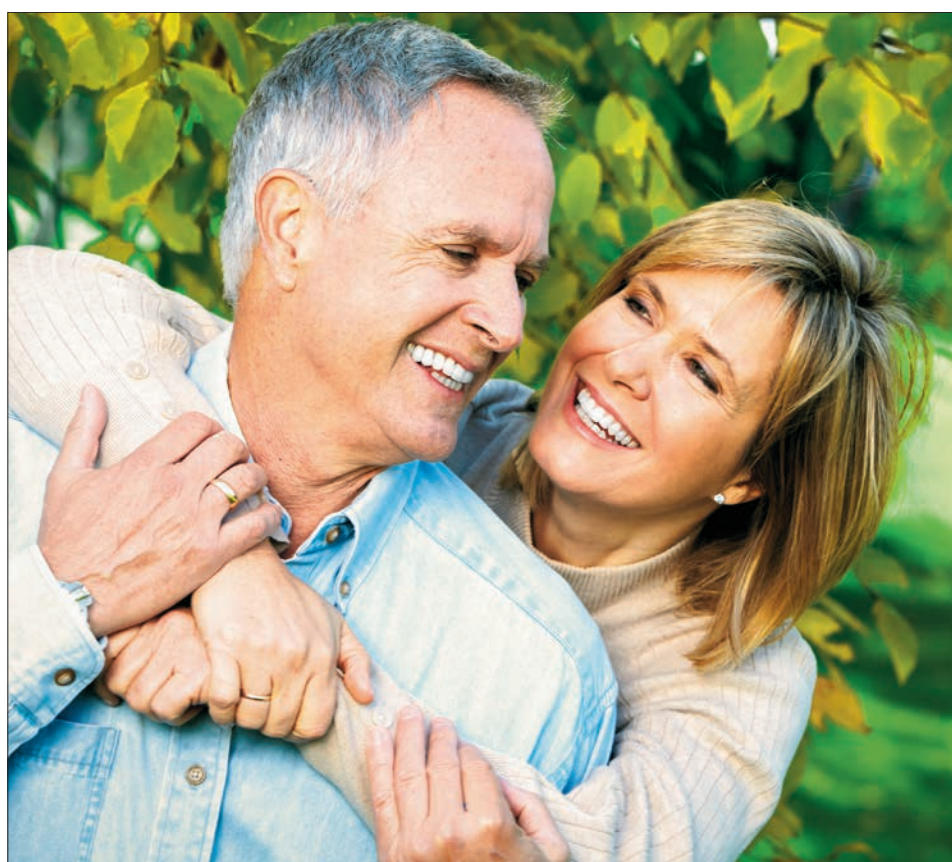
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