

LIFE & TRADITION

THE EPOCH TIMES

Authentic Purity

Shen Yun Showcases a China Before Communism



A performance by Shen Yun Performing Arts classical Chinese dancers.

SHEN YUN PERFORMING ARTS

Rooted in tradition and honor of the divine, the performance presents the best of classical Chinese culture

CATHERINE YANG

In order to see some of the best art of Western civilization, you have to look up. On the ceilings of palaces and churches are sweeping scenes of the heavens, of allegories and saints and divine beings in all their magnificence—feats of technical and technological innovation, a mastery of skill coupled with a flourishing of human creativity and imagination that rivals anything invented today.

Most famous of them all, perhaps, is Michelangelo's fresco on the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel. Rather than a scene of heaven,

the story of humanity plays out across the center panels of the ceiling, from the creation to the fall to the salvation of man, with semi-divine onlookers observing from the corners.

Art at its best touches our humanity, answering our deepest questions, helping us to find meaning in life.

"You think, 'What would heaven be like? If there was a heaven, what would that be like?'" said Jared Madsen, a longtime emcee of Shen Yun Performing Arts, a New York-based classical Chinese dance company. "This seeking for the divine, seeking for something higher—that's really what you see throughout a lot of Chinese culture and throughout a lot of our performance.

"The great thing is, in our performance, you can have somebody who not only seeks, they actually get to go to heaven. They get pulled up and they get to fly into heaven. They get to see the [celestial fairies], and they have a whole experience like that.

"These are things I think every human is thinking about, that we're all wondering about. And we get to actually see this on

Art at its best touches our humanity, answering our deepest questions, helping us to find meaning in life.

the stage—it's amazing."

Madsen is referring to a unique—and patented—production element of Shen Yun, which presents Chinese culture from before the advent of communism.

While the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) takes as its purpose to "struggle against heaven, earth, and man," traditional Chinese culture is the opposite, centered around the belief in harmony between heaven, earth, and humankind.

Scenes of celestial palaces, of the Creator coming down to set into motion 5,000 years of civilization, of divine beings coming to the aid of the good and faithful, of human beings from history to modern-day grappling with these deep questions relating to the purpose of life—all of these become a living work of art rendered in expressive dance, brilliant costumes, and a digital backdrop that extends the screen into the cosmos. Shen Yun brings together the kind of brilliance in imagination and mastery of skill and technique that is required to form a masterpiece.

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More Than Just the Basics: Educating Our Children For Life

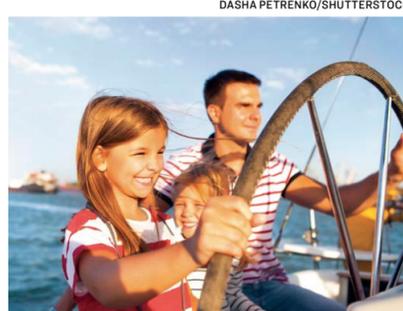
JEFF MINICK

Hear the word "education," and most of us conjure up images of classrooms filled with students bent over their math books, learning grammar and spelling, exploring the parts of a cell, reading about the Battle of Yorktown, or puzzling over "Hamlet."

By the time they graduate high school, we expect these same young people to possess some competence in mathematics and science. After 13 years of schooling, they should know something about our nation's history and the stories of the

men and women who helped create our country. They should be familiar on some level with the best of our literature and be able to write clean, well-organized prose devoid of confusion, misspellings, and errors in grammar.

These are the basics of education that produce successful adults and good citizens. Lacking these tools, many young people find themselves facing disadvantages in life, not just when seeking employment but crippled as well by their inability to think critically and to understand the world around them, everything from our Bill of



Take note of, and encourage, your children's interests.

Rights to the causes of inflation.

Most parents and teachers rightly wish to equip students with these fundamentals, which is why we engage in an ongoing debate about the ability, or inability, of our schools to provide such an education. We want our kids to step off that graduation stage with more than a meaningless diploma in hand.

But to truly prepare them for the future, we might broaden our ideas about what constitutes an education.

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‘Authentic Purity’

Shen Yun Showcases a China Before Communism

Rooted in tradition and honor of the divine, the performance presents the best of classical Chinese culture

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“It is a cultural show but at the same time it goes much deeper than that. ... It connects to something at the root of humanity,” Madsen said.

This is the authentic, traditional Chinese culture that the CCP doesn’t want you to see.

The Truth About China

Shen Yun’s mission is to “revive 5,000 years of Chinese civilization,” according to the company’s website. The ancient Chinese believed that this civilization was divinely inspired, passed down from the gods, and they kept it intact for five millennia—until the bloody communist coup in 1949. And after the CCP took power, it launched the Cultural Revolution, which rooted out traditional culture by smashing temples, burning books, and brutalizing innocents. All told, the CCP’s rise to power resulted in at least 50 million to 60 million deaths.

Much was lost, and the culture in China under the communist regime was warped, but the historical legends, myths, and characters lived on in the memories of some in China and abroad. In 2006, artists from around the world—including some who fled China—came together in the land of the free to form a company whereby they could express a culture that was all but lost, and present it on the world’s stage.

Traditional Chinese culture is rooted in divine thought, Madsen says—Buddhism, Taoism, and Confucianism. Central to the culture is respect for the divine, and the belief that good people are blessed and evil is punished.

This holistic view of humanity is what initially drew Madsen’s interest in Chinese philosophies, back when he was in high school. In our modern-day, technology-dependent, and largely secularized world, questions about where we come from, the purpose of life, and what awaits us beyond aren’t ones that are explored in day-to-day conversation. But Madsen found some answers—sometimes to questions he hadn’t even imagined—in the ancient philosophies that he began to read, and he developed a great fascination for China.

“And then I went to China,” Madsen said. This was in the 1990s, and the reality was bleak. “I quickly realized these amazing things that I was reading about in various books about Confucianism and Taoism—right at the very moment I landed in China, it was a wakeup call: ‘Oh, this is a communist society.’”

In a sense, when Madsen encountered Shen Yun, it was like coming home.

Beauty That Lifts the Soul

Dante, the poet supreme, wrote that beauty awakens the soul to act.

Shen Yun principal dancer Evangeline



“For me, the form of art that can broaden people’s minds, that can evoke their humanity and move their hearts toward kindness, that’s beautiful.”

Evangeline Zhu, principal dancer, Shen Yun Performing Arts

Upcoming Shen Yun Performances

July 7–25: Stamford, Conn.
July 27–29: Colorado Springs, Colo.
July 31–Aug. 1: Greeley, Colo.
Aug. 3: Rapid City, S.D.
Aug. 6–7: San Antonio, Texas
Aug. 6–8: Salt Lake City, Utah
Sept. 4–5: Richardson, Texas
Sept. 18–26: Houston, Texas
Sept. 22–26: Orlando, Fla.
Oct. 2–3: Portland, Maine
Oct. 5: Spokane, Wash.
Oct. 9–10: Kansas City, Mo.
Oct. 16–17: Worcester, Mass.
Nov. 1–2: Albuquerque, N.M.
Nov. 4–7: Denver, Colo.
Nov. 8–9: West Palm Beach, Fla.
Dec. 28–30: Fort Lauderdale, Fla.

Zhu feels the same. Beauty is not just pleasing to the eye. A pure and transcendent sort of beauty, what the medieval and Renaissance scholars and artists might refer to as objective beauty, or what the Romantics might call the sublime, can move the soul. “There is a crucially important aspect of art, and that is its aesthetic principle,” Zhu said. “What is beauty? What isn’t beautiful? The arts are all about beauty, but the particular standard of an art form is very important.”

“But, in today’s world, people don’t agree on what is ‘beautiful.’ We say it’s in the eye of the beholder, or it’s my taste. Given that, I think the mind and moral understanding of the artist is as important as their skill.” To express transcendent beauty, the artist must seek to understand what it means.

Shen Yun takes this quest of understanding beauty seriously; its very name means “the beauty of divine beings dancing.” Even the costumes—couture embellished with more detail than any audience member will ever fully catch—are done with respect to authenticity, created after the dynastic dress that was said to be inspired from the heavens.

“For me, the form of art that can broaden people’s minds, that can evoke their humanity and move their hearts toward kindness, that’s beautiful,” Zhu said.

Classical Chinese dance is famously expressive and lends itself well to storytelling through dance. Shen Yun’s performances include around a dozen storytelling dances, each set to an original composition of ancient Chinese melodies performed by a Western classical orchestra, with a few Chinese instruments mixed in. These tales tell of love and heartbreak, of joy and tragedy, the relationship between a parent and child, and of heroes demonstrating honor and courage as they defend their people. Zhu has seen many an audience member move to tears through her performance.

“Dance is a form of communication,” she said. “It transmits something beyond language, and through the senses, you communicate and impress upon the audience something profound.”

“What are you going to communicate? ... I think this is important for an artist to think about.”

Inspiring Goodness in People’s Hearts

What those audience members tend to leave with are inspiration and hope.

Recently, after a long hiatus, people who had planned to see Shen Yun perform at Lincoln Center, only for the shows to be canceled mid-tour because of the pandemic, finally got the chance. In Stamford, Connecticut, on June 26, Shen Yun kicked off a new season.

“It’s very spiritually uplifting,” Chris Fiene, an engineer, said. “After the pandemic, it’s very joyful to finally experience a show with other people and see them enjoy it as well.”

John Connor Blow walked out of the theater with his arms raised, expressing his gratitude. “I was moved to tears in joy,” said Blow, who had dreamed of seeing Shen Yun all last year. “And it’s changed my life.” “You can feel a connection from me to the dancers and the situation they’re trying to portray. I feel wonderful. It’s an incredible experience,” said Diego Mansilla, a professor at the University of Massachusetts. He and his wife, Adel, had waited nearly three years to see Shen Yun, prolonged by the pandemic, but it was worth the wait.

Some of Shen Yun’s dance pieces portray tragedy, but also the triumph of the good of humanity, Diego said. No matter the adversity depicted, the ending of each story brought goodness and hope.

Adel said this was something that would stay with them in their daily lives, a reminder “to make sure that this bad side never wins inside of us ... [and] that the goodness they [the performers] show—to keep it inside of me and make the conscious choice that I don’t want to be with the bad forces.”

“They’re doing so much to show it to us, to inspire ... this authentic purity,” she said. “How can I come home and be mad about things? I can’t. ... I feel like I’m responsible now to continue what they gave us. They gave with so much effort.”

NTD contributed to this report.

The Epoch Times is a proud sponsor of Shen Yun Performing Arts. For more information, please visit ShenYunPerformingArts.org

Shen Yun
principal dancer
Evangeline
Zhu.

More Than Just the Basics: Educating Our Children for Life

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Practicalities

Science fiction writer Robert Heinlein once wrote:

“A human being should be able to change a diaper, plan an invasion, butcher a hog, conn a ship, design a building, write a sonnet, balance accounts, build a wall, set a bone, comfort the dying, take orders, give orders, cooperate, act alone, solve equations, analyze a new problem, pitch manure, program a computer, cook a tasty meal, fight efficiently, die gallantly. Specialization is for insects.”

Heinlein’s list may be a little too comprehensive for most of us, but surely that 18-year-old heading off to college or into the workforce should possess the skills to tackle a variety of similar tasks. Here’s my list modeled on Heinlein’s:

“A high school graduate should be able to operate a washer and dryer, bargain shop in a grocery store, look for clothing in a thrift store, scrub down a bathroom, balance a checkbook, understand the fundamentals of savings, investments, mortgages, rental contracts, principal and interest, change a flat on his car, make minor house repairs, care for a pet, show up on time for classes and for work, recognize the dangers of alcohol, recreational drugs, and tobacco, reject bad advice, and not let others lead him astray. Most of all, he should leave home knowing that in the eyes of the law he’s an adult and has to assume responsibility for his life and actions.”

Building to Strengths

Perhaps your daughter Samantha dislikes higher math but loves biology and anatomy. Perhaps you live in an upscale neighborhood and drive a Lexus, and expect your 17-year-old, Tom, to enroll in a prestigious college and enter a profession, yet he appears much more interested in learning

about carpentry and building after his summer stint with a construction crew.

While we must work to shore up some of our children’s academic weaknesses, we should at the same time encourage our children to follow their passions, to pursue what they love, and to play to their strengths.

In “The Curmudgeon’s Guide to Getting Ahead,” a book of advice for upper-level high schoolers and college students that I highly recommend, Charles Murray writes, “Two accomplishments will, if you pull them off, almost surely produce happiness: Find work that you enjoy, and find your soul mate.”

In addressing the subject of work, Murray poses a list of considerations for readers that focuses not on a particular profession but on the things they especially enjoy, as in “You enjoy being outdoors,” “You enjoy risk,” “You enjoy solitude, thinking things out all my yourself,” and so on.

In other words, he asks young people to first identify their passions, the things that make them happiest, and “then start thinking about a career” that matches those interests.

Marriage and Family

Murray’s second key to happiness is to find a soul mate, by which he means a spouse.

My son’s high school basketball coach, a physician, usually drove some members of this homeschool team to the away games. On the road, he would discuss everything from current events to the meaning of life with the boys, a staple of these trips that the team found both amusing and enlightening. Once he spent the long drive telling them what qualities they should look for someday in a wife. I never learned the specifics of that particular talk, but when I heard about it, I realized how rarely that topic had ever come up between my sons and me.

Lessons From Livy on How Great Civilizations Rise and Fall

LAWRENCE W. REED

Two thousand years ago, an eminent Roman historian coined the popular aphorism, “Better late than never.” His name was Titus Livius, anglicized as simply Livy. True to the aphorism, he wrote much that deserves overdue attention today.

Livy’s life (roughly 59 B.C. to about A.D. 17) spanned the most consequential period in the thousand-year history of ancient Rome. He witnessed the last decades of the crumbling old Republic and the rise in its place of the imperial autocracy we know as the Roman Empire. He was in his early 20s when the last great defender of the republican heritage, Cicero, was assassinated by a henchman of the tyrant Mark Antony. Livy observed the entirety of the reign of the first emperor, Augustus. He is best known for his history of Rome, “Ab Urbe Condita,” described both in his day and in ours with such terms as “monumental” and “magisterial.”

What little we know of the man himself suggests he was somehow financially well-off, independent, and reclusive. He was schooled in rhetoric, philosophy, and history. He never served in any public position, though apparently, he personally knew Augustus. Writing his massive history of Rome absorbed his adult life.

Though Romans at the time of his writing held his work in high regard, we

know that some parts of Livy’s historical accounts were surely based on minimal records, old and dubious oral stories, and even legend. After all, he wrote 2,000 years ago about people and events of as much as eight centuries before his time.

“I hope my passion for Rome’s past has not impaired my judgment,” he opined in his introduction to “Ab Urbe Condita,” “for I do honestly believe that no country has ever been greater or purer than ours or richer in good citizens and noble deeds.”

“The old Romans,” wrote Livy of his countrymen before the beginning of the Republic, “all wished to have a king over them because they had not yet tasted the sweetness of freedom.” But then in 508 B.C., Romans mounted a truly historic revolution of both ideas and governance. They overthrew the monarchy and established a new order that ultimately included a Senate of nobles, popularly elected Assemblies, the dispersion of centralized power, term limits, a constitution, due process, habeas corpus, and the widest practice of individual liberty the world had yet seen. Before they lost it all less than five centuries later, they experienced a remarkable rise and fall. Readers will find many articles about Rome at FEE.org/rome.

From Livy, we learn about Rome’s pivotal wars against the Carthaginians, the Samnites, and other peoples of the Italian



Many young adults leave home with no idea of what to expect in a marriage, or what to look for in a prospective spouse. Having such conversations is important.

No matter what our marital status, here is a subject worthy of discussion with our children. Despite the decline in the number of marriages in the past 20 years and our falling birth rates—we are now well past replacement levels of population—marriage and the family remain foundation stones for our society. Even more importantly to us as individuals, marriage, home, and children can provide the greatest and most profound joys of our lives.

Many of our children leave home with no real sense of what they might look for in a prospective husband or wife, or the wide variety of delights and hardships bound up in marriage. Even when they see us as role models in our parenting and in our commitment to a spouse, conversations about such topics, which are surely as important to their future happiness as algebra or chemistry, might bring broader understanding of this partnership.

Goals

I was once a teacher. Occasionally, because of some comment in class about grades and status, I would take a break from the subject at hand to explain some things to the students. Right now, I would tell them, academics loom large in your sense of accomplishments and failures, but in the next few years, all of that will pass away. You’ll enter the adult world, where employers and co-

workers care nothing about your high score on the National Latin Exam. Instead, they’ll be far more interested in your other qualities—your personality, your competence, your performance, and your character.

Please don’t misunderstand me, I’d tell my students. Academics are important, and you’re at an age when you should be learning as much as you can. This opportunity likely won’t come again, so take advantage of it. But keep in mind you have abilities and strengths that may have little to do with books and classes, and your future success depends on developing all those talents as well.

The goal of education is to help our young people reach their potential and to develop all their gifts, not just to succeed academically. To give them the equipment to flourish and so to live as happily as possible, we need to keep the big picture of education in mind.

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.

Pure Joy

Throughout life, sometimes we bring it to others, and sometimes we receive it

BERNADETTE BONANNO

I pity anyone within earshot of my voice whenever I see our grandbabies. They elicit pure joy in me. My voice rises to such an annoying pitch that the dog starts barking.

Years ago, I read a story about a woman who brought joy to thousands of strangers while working in a large department store in New York City. For 30 years, her job was to sit outside the fitting room of the lingerie department and count the items each customer carried in and out. She’d often accompany women in finding the correct size and fit for their undergarments. Many



Agnes Rabita, the author’s husband’s grandmother.

were cancer survivors who had endured radical mastectomies.

For three decades, sensitivity and kindness were her trademarks as she assisted in restoring a sense of confidence and femininity. I guess we all do what we have to do in life, but some people do it with grace.

As far back as I can remember, I have wanted to be “talented.” I’ve tried sports, sewing, calligraphy, gardening, and crocheting to no avail. One year, I decided to take piano lessons. It was painful for my husband and sons who are naturally gifted musicians.

I finally gave up my quest for talent and

decided to find joy in whatever I am doing, however well I am doing it. The result: Life is much more enjoyable.

Agnes Rabita was my husband’s grandmother. Although she stood a mere 4 feet 5 inches, she was a powerhouse. She humbly and generously devoted her life to her marriage and family while successfully running a restaurant with her husband. Her kids, grandkids, employees, and neighbors loved her dearly.

Although Agnes was dealt her share of trials in life, she woke up every morning and got to work, making the most of each day. She taught me that true joy comes from

trusting that you are where you are supposed to be and doing what you are supposed to be doing.

In 1981, we went to visit Grandma Agnes at her home. The TV volume was turned up as a boxing match between Larry Holmes and Leon Spinks had just ended. I had no idea that Grandma loved boxing. With spunky animation, she recounted the fight for us. Her little fists were up and throwing punches in the air as she recalled every detail of the three rounds. Describing the knockout, she swung the dishcloth off her shoulder. As you can imagine, everybody got a kick out of Grandma Agnes!

Two days before Agnes passed away, my mother-in-law went to visit her at the nursing home. Agnes was peacefully lying on

her back in bed with her eyes closed, smiling. Grandma knew what she was doing. She was going home, and it made her smile.

Sadly contemplating the nearness of her mother’s passing, my mother-in-law asked, “Mama, why are you smiling?”

In classic Agnes style, she softly sang to her daughter: “When you’re smiling, when you’re smiling, the whole world smiles with you. When you’re laughing, when you’re laughing, the sun comes shining through.”

I suppose we are all given opportunities to both bring and receive joy from the moment we arrive to the moment we depart.

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Peinsula. He also informs us of the rivalry between Sulla and Marius, the tumultuous last days of the Republic as strong men fought each other for power, the murder of Julius Caesar, and the self-serving machinations of Augustus. Livy celebrated the courage of his ancestors; in fact, he originated the phrase, “Fortune favors the brave,” which is still used commonly today as a maxim and a motto.

Livy believed the value of history is greater than the knowledge of names, places, and dates, as this passage of his indicates:

“There is this exceptionally beneficial and fruitful advantage to be derived from the study of the past, that you see, set in the clear light of historical truth, examples of every possible type. From these you may select for yourself and your country what to imitate, and what, as being mischievous in its inception and disastrous in its effects, you are to avoid.”

His interpretation of historical events suggests he possessed an admirable understanding of human nature. Consider these remarks:

“There is nothing man will not attempt when great enterprises hold out the promise of great rewards.”

“He will have true glory who despises it.” “Men are only too clever at shifting blame from their own shoulders to those of others.”

“Men are slower to recognize blessings than misfortunes.”

“The state is suffering from two opposite vices, avarice and luxury; two plagues which, in the past, have been the ruin of every great empire.”

“There is nothing that is more often clothed in an attractive garb than a false creed.”

“Things turn out best for the people who make the best out of the way things turn out.”

The tendency of people to envy those with wealth, whether ill-gotten or well-earned, is nothing new in history. Centuries before Livy, the 10th Commandment received by Moses warned, “Thou Shalt Not Covet.” Livy noted how destructive the envy motive can be:

“True moderation in the defense of political liberties is indeed a difficult thing; pretending to want fair shares for all, ev-

ery man raises himself by depressing his neighbor; our anxiety to avoid oppression leads us to practice it ourselves; the injustice we repel, we visit in turn upon others, as if there were no choice except either to do it or to suffer it.”

Perhaps in part because he observed the corrosive impact of envy, Livy expressed skepticism about, for want of a better term, the general public:

“Such is the nature of crowds: either they are humble and servile or arrogant and dominating. They are incapable of making moderate use of freedom, which is the middle course, or of keeping it.”

In my own writings as a historian, and economist as well, I’ve often noted the powerful connection between personal character and the destiny of nations. Livy provides some confirmation in this passage:

“The subjects to which I would ask each of my readers to devote his earnest attention are these: The life and morals of the community; and the men and the qualities by which, through domestic policy and foreign war, dominion was won and extended. Then as the standard of morality gradually lowers, let him follow the decay of the national character, observing how at first it slowly sinks, then slips downward more and more rapidly, and finally begins to plunge into headlong ruin, until he reaches these days, in which we can bear neither our diseases nor their remedies.”

As we think about our own future, knowing something about the past is indispensable. The experiences of those who came before, especially when understood in the context of their times, are fraught with lessons we ignore at our peril. If learning those lessons puts us on a better path, let us learn them now. As Livy would say, “Better late than never!”

Lawrence W. Reed is FEE’s president emeritus, Humphreys Family senior fellow, and Ron Manners global ambassador for liberty, having served for nearly 11 years as FEE’s president (2008–2019). He is the author of the 2020 book, “Was Jesus a Socialist?” as well as “Real Heroes: Incredible True Stories of Courage, Character, and Conviction” and “Excuse Me, Professor: Challenging the Myths of Progressivism.” His website is LawrenceWReed.com. This article was originally published on FEE.org



"Cornelia, Mutter der Gracchen" (1785) by Angelica Kauffmann.

The Hand That Rocks the Cradle: Roman Women and Their Legacy Today

JEFF MINICK

For centuries after its founding in 753 B.C., Rome inculcated in its men "virtus," a word weighted with meaning: manliness, courage, character, and self-worth. Coupled with "pietas," which connoted respect for the gods, their country, and their families, virtus produced the citizens, soldiers, and leaders who would expand the power and influence of Rome from a tiny village on the Tiber River to lands as far-flung as England, Egypt, and Syria.

When we read of the Roman heroes of the monarchy (753–509 B.C.) and the republic (509–27 B.C.), some of them near-mythical figures such as the founder Romulus or the doughty warrior Horatius Cocles, others historical personages such as the great general Scipio Africanus or the philosopher-statesman Cicero, we see these virtues reflected in the actions of these men. In his epic poem "The Aeneid," Virgil blends together virtus and pietas, then pours that mixture into his archetype of a Roman hero, "Pius Aeneas," or "Pious Aeneas." Here is the warrior who leads the surviving Trojans from their burning city, the man of destiny who along with his companions searches the Mediterranean for a new homeland.

In movies such as "Gladiator" and "Quo Vadis," writers and directors give us glimpses into the men who once practiced these virtues, for whom virtus and pietas were the foundation stones of character and "dignitas."

But what of Roman women? Were they also taught a code of sorts? Did they too live by a set of values cherished by the culture at large? Did they not have a hand in the making of Rome? And can we moderns, particularly the women among us, connect with them today?



William and Ariel Durant, authors of "The Story of Civilization."

Roman Women: A Quick Look
Though theoretically a patriarchal society—the father, for example, possessed the power of life and death over his wife and children, though he rarely exercised this right—Roman women had greater freedom than their counterparts in Greece and, for that matter, in many other parts of the world.

As Will Durant informs us in the volume on Rome in his massive work, "The Story of Civilization," a free Roman female could shop in the marketplace, she wasn't confined to women's quarters at home, and she played an active role in managing the household servants and finances. She might sit weaving at her loom, an image of respect and reverence much like our American idiom "motherhood and apple pie," but she might also own a business and could inherit money.



A leaf from Virgil's "Eclogues," "Georgics," and "Aeneid," circa 1470.

Though forbidden to vote, Roman women nonetheless influenced the government through a variety of devices.

Though forbidden to vote, Roman women nonetheless influenced the government through a variety of devices. Durant gives several examples of this hidden power in his "Story of Civilization." Complaining of their growing power and affection for luxury, for instance, Cato (234–149 B.C.) once lamented, "All other men rule over women; but we Romans, who rule all men, are ruled by our women." When the free women of Rome stormed the Forum and protested a law that forbade them to wear gold ornaments or multicolored dresses, Cato denounced them, saying in a speech reported by the historian Livy that "from the moment that they become your equals they will be your masters."

Cato lost the argument. The women mocked him and held firm in their demands for their luxuries, and the law was repealed. As time passed, women won even more personal freedom. According to Durant, "Legislation kept women subject, custom made them free."

Feminine Virtues

Despite this increasing liberty, most of these female citizens continued their devotion to their husbands and their children well into the time of the empire. They spun their wool, oversaw the education and rearing of their sons and daughters, and worshipped the household gods. Durant points to the epigraphs on their tombs to show the devotion of husbands and children to these women. "To my dear wife," reads one, "with whom I passed eighteen happy years. For love of her I have sworn never to remarry." Another such inscription reads, "Here lie the bones of Urbilia, wife of Primus. She was dearer to me than life. She died at twenty-three, beloved by all. Farewell, my consolation!"

Durant also tells us that many wealthier women engaged in social service and philanthropy in their communities, even funding buildings such as temples and



"Dido and Aeneas," circa 1630, by Rutilio di Lorenzo Manetti.

theaters for their towns.

In times of persecution and civil strife, stouthearted women such as these fearlessly protected their husbands, children, and friends. In his chapter "Epicurean Rome: 30 B.C.–A.D. 96," Durant includes a catalog of some of these more famous defenders of hearth and home during those often tumultuous times: "Epicharis, the freedwoman who suffered every torment rather than betray the conspiracy of Piso; the unnumbered women who concealed and protected their husbands in the proscriptions, went with them into exile, or like Fannia, wife of Helvidius, defended them at great risk and cost."

Mothers

Similarly, most mothers of ancient Rome remain nameless today, their work and their deeds lost in the mists of history. Yet the story of one Roman matron might possibly serve as a benchmark of their maternal arts.

Cornelia, daughter of Scipio Africanus, was the wife of Tiberius Gracchus and mother of their 12 children, only three of whom survived adolescence. After her husband's death, Cornelia made certain that her two sons, Tiberius and Gaius, who as adults would advocate constitutional reforms and be assassinated for those efforts, received the best of educations. She hired Greek tutors to teach them oratory and politics, and saw that others trained them well in the arts of war and horsemanship.

A story has it that a female friend who was visiting Cornelia showed her some jewelry she'd recently acquired and then asked, "Where are your jewels, Cornelia?" Cornelia summoned Tiberius and Gaius, put her arms around them, and said, "Here are my jewels."

We may know little about these wives and mothers, but as Durant tells us, even in those dangerous and decadent days when emperors like Caligula and Nero governed Rome, their "marital fidelity and maternal sacrifices sustained the whole structure of Roman life." Attesting to those sacrifices and the strength and diligence of Roman mothers are the sons they bred and raised, who went on to conquer and rule so much of the world.

Virgil's Women

In his "Aeneid," Virgil creates three women who also served as models for feminine virtue. As they are fleeing Troy, Creusa, the wife of Aeneas, becomes separated from her husband and dies in the conflagration. When Aeneas returns to find her, Creusa's ghost appears and nobly urges him to flee, prophesying that he will found a nation and find a new wife.

On his journey in search of this homeland, Aeneas meets Dido, queen of Carthage, the city that later became Rome's mortal enemy. In the widowed Dido are some of those character traits Virgil would have noted in the wealthy women of his time: beauty, wisdom and insight, passion, and a willingness to use power.

The goddess Venus, protector and benefactor of the Trojans, is also the mother of Aeneas. Like all good Roman mothers, she watches over her son, strives to shield him from harm, particularly from the spiteful queen of the gods, Juno, and eventually makes clear her love for her son.

American Counterparts

"It was Rome, not Greece, that raised the family to new heights in the ancient world," writes Durant. We might add that Roman mothers and wives played a vital role in attaining those heights.

The legacy of those close-knit families and the unknown devoted parents who created and maintained them is still in evidence today. Flash-forward in time 2,000 years, and despite our cultural confusion, the modern wives and mothers whose names will never appear in history books remain the bedrock of both the American family and our society.

That tired-looking pregnant mom with three small children in the pew ahead of me at church this morning is heir and keeper of the old Roman virtues of motherhood. Her gestures and whispered words to her little ones told me that she, like her Roman counterparts, loved her children, was overseeing their behavior and education, and was teaching them to honor their God. Wrap her in a tunic and stola, send her back to the Rome of Julius Caesar, and she would find honor as a virtuous woman.

In 1865, the now largely forgotten American poet William Ross Wallace wrote a poem containing the lines "The hand that rocks the cradle is the hand that rules the world." It was true for the Romans. It is true today.

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.

PARENTING

10 Things Every Father Should Know

PARNELL DONAHUE

Steven, the father of a 2-year-old boy, wrote me to ask: "What do I need to know to be a great parent?" What a great question; and one I hope all men and women who are expecting a child ask. First, let me say, it isn't possible to learn much about being a parent without having kids. That's why you so often hear "great lessons" in parenting from childless people. You know the "If that were my kid, I would do—" kind of advice. They are the ones with red faces when they do have children. I can't tell you how many times I heard parents say: "I was an excellent parent until we had kids."

I'm reminded of what William Osler (1849–1919), the father of modern medicine, and the first chair of medicine at Johns Hopkins, said about studying to be a doctor: "He who studies medicine without books sails an uncharted sea, but he who studies medicine without patients does not go to sea at all."

Let me reword it: "He who gives parenting advice without reading books sails an uncharted sea, but he who gives parenting advice without having a child does not go to sea at all."

With that in mind, I sent the following note to Steven:

"You are right, Steven; try to learn as much as you can about parenting. As a pediatrician for 40 years and father of four kids and grandfather to 14, I have learned some things that might help you.

1. Be the person you want your son to become, because, like it or not, he will become you!

2. Sit down at a table with your wife and whoever else is in your family, and have dinner, breakfast, or lunch with them at least five times a week (15 to 20 is even better). As soon as children can sit in a high chair, they should join you at the table; for you, Steven, that was about two years ago. All electronics should be turned off to enhance your family's conversation. Don't let anything interrupt your family's meals; make them last!

3. Read to him at least 20 minutes two times a day. More is better. If you haven't registered him to get free books from Dolly Parton's Imagination Library, do it now!

4. Put him to bed at the same time every



▲ End the day with a bedtime story. It will put a smile on your child's face.

Tell him often how much he pleases you and how much you love him.

night. Make sure he goes there with a smile on his face by ending the day with a bedtime story. Make it just one, or he'll have you up until dawn reading one book after the other.

5. One hour of TV or other screens a day is far more than enough, (The American Academy of Pediatrics says two hours, but I think that's way too much), and keep TVs, computers, cellphones, and any other electronic devices out of his bedroom even when he's 15 or 18!

6. Don't worry if he doesn't like to eat something, or if he seems not to eat anything. From age 2, he should eat only at mealtimes. If for some reason a meal is delayed by more than two hours, give him a fresh fruit snack. When mealtime comes, put the food you and his mom are eating on his plate and say no more. Toddlers and little kids don't eat much, so if he doesn't eat what's on his plate don't comment, nag, beg or in any way pay attention to it. He will eat more at the next meal.

7. If he is not toilet-trained, you need to get on that. Dads, not moms, should train boys. You both have the same plumbing, stand and show him how to use it. Get him a little step stool to stand on, and he'll catch on in a day or two.

8. When he is going to be exposed to a new experience, or one in which he may not feel comfortable, tell him what to expect and advise him how to react. If he fails to follow your advice, tell him quietly, when you get him alone, what was expected and what the consequences will be if he fails again. Also remind him of any positive effects from

doing what you expected. But tell him only once. Counting to 3, 10, 100, or 7 times 70 rarely is effective.

Rare is the child who needs physical punishment; kids of every age, even teens, want direction and desire to please their loving parents. There are many other consequences for misbehavior. Be inventive. When he is older, second grade and up, ask him what he thinks would be an appropriate reaction. Don't be surprised if he is stricter than you might have been!

9. Tell him often how much he pleases you and how much you love him. Demonstrate that love by being a parent—adviser, teacher, confidant, good role model—but not a friend. He needs friends his age, and so do you!

10. Get involved in an organized religion and attend services regularly. If your place of worship has a child care center, take him there, if not, he can be with you. And for heaven's sake, don't take a box of juice or Cheerios! He won't starve to death or die of dehydration in an hour. You'll have to stop sometime, so why start?"

I haven't seen Steven in many years, but the last time I talked to him, he, his wife, and three kids were doing fine.

Enjoy the children in your life, and may God continue to bless you and your family!

Dr. Parnell Donahue is a pediatrician, military veteran, author of four books and the blog ParentingWithDrPar.com, and host of WBOU's "Parenting Matters" show. He and his wife Mary, have four adult children; all hold Ph.D.s, two also are MDs. Contact him at Parenting-Matters.com

HOMESCHOOL

Setting Yourself Up to Homeschool

BARBARA DANZA

If you are one of the many parents about to embark on your first year of homeschool, you may be wondering what you can do this summer to set yourself up for success. (That is, assuming you choose to begin this fall. Ah, sweet freedom.)

While there is no definitive way, as homeschooling is by nature something that you can customize for the needs of your family and individual children, here are some suggestions.

Shift Your Mindset

Homeschooling requires a bit of a mindset shift away from the traditional model of school and into an environment of individualized, family-centric, free learning. School and homeschool are two very different things. Many homeschoolers call the process of letting go of the school mentality "deschooling."

Read Up

You're entering the homeschooling world at a time when resources are abundant. Let your beach reads this year be homeschooling books. I recommend "The Well-Trained Mind" by Susan Wise Bauer and "The Brave Learner" by Julie Bogart. There are countless other books that dive deep into specific aspects of homeschooling, and I encourage you to allow yourself to fall down the rabbit hole this summer.

Know Thy Children

Pay close attention to the things that make your children light up, the activities they get lost in, the subjects they just can't stop

talking about. Even if these things do not seem academic, like Pokemon or nail polish, there are potentially great learning opportunities tied in. Take note and aim to incorporate their deepest interests into your homeschool days.

Hang Maps

Maps are invaluable. Globes, too. Hang them in central locations and prepare to be amazed by how many times you reference them and benefit from simply having them there.

Display Art

Hang and rotate different works of art you'd like your children to become familiar with. Coupling this with some library books about the author or a YouTube video describing the work will do wonders in opening their minds to the beauty of fine art.

Build Playlists

Add to the ambiance and educational quality of your environment by preparing playlists of classical music. It's very easy to search works by any composer and compile hours of listening. Another genre to consider is cultural folk music. Pairing such playlists with holidays and cultural celebrations is a homeschool win.

Get All the Books

Get those library cards ready, map the routes to all the bookstores in your area, and dust off your shelves. It's time to prepare a feast of reading for the whole family. Plan to indulge in read-alouds, individual readings, and audiobooks galore. Use your local library's request system to set aside books on specific

topics you're covering. Make this a habit with weekly trips to the library or bookstore.

Schedule Trips

You're free from the tyranny of the school calendar—so enjoy it. Book that off-season vacation, those field trips in the middle of the week, that weekend away that coincides with your history unit. The world is your classroom.

Consider Extracurriculars

Homeschoolers have an opportunity to dive deep into their interests. Whether your kiddo loves dance, woodworking, baseball, or the clarinet—call in the experts when there's room for growth. Extracurricular activities provide time to hone their skills and meet other kids. Just because there's no more "school" doesn't mean you need to forego after-school activities.

Pencil In Buffers

You're going to get behind schedule, emergencies will happen, you'll feel burned out, something unexpected is bound to occur. Know this going in, and you'll have everything you need to handle it. Don't overschedule an entire school year that leaves no room for mishaps. Pencil in makeup days and weeks and buffer time to handle the unexpected or to provide a mid-week day off for no reason. (Again, freedom.)

Your Back Pocket

Speaking of mishaps, you may be picturing



▲ Having a map or globe around sparks curiosity. YUSANOV KNYSTANTIN/SHUTTERSTOCK

angely children eager to learn and comply with all of your amazing ideas along this homeschool journey. Children have their own moods, ideas, energy levels, and capacities. Always keep in your back pocket a few tricks of the trade.

Pair math with fun treats, especially long division. When things are dragging, move lessons to the backyard, the park, or the beach. When energy seems low, go for a walk. When in doubt, cancel lessons and call it "reading day" where everyone reads whatever they want.

Start Small—Super Small

As you step out on this amazing journey that is sure to be bumpy at times, start with one tiny, little baby step. You may think the "first day of school," should include reading, writing, math, science, history, music, art, physical fitness, and a foreign language.

Instead, make the first week a slow introduction to your new life. Spend day one opening new supplies and reading a book aloud. Spend day two introducing math and heading to the park. Spend day three reviewing and cheering everyone on. End the week with a field trip or a pancake breakfast. As you proceed, nail down some regularity with language arts and math. Once you're confident there, then gradually add the subjects you deem most important, one at a time.

The most important thing is to connect with your kids, love them, maintain a positive environment, encourage their interests, and walk along this journey together.

COURTESY OF DONN ARTHUR MALWICK

DEAR NEXT GENERATION

How You React to Challenges Will Determine Who You Are

→ Advice from our readers to our young people

Dear next generation,

I would like to tell you to not be afraid to strike up a conversation with an older person. I have worked and volunteered with a lot of young adults who are silent when I'm around them. I'll break the silence by starting a conversation, and then they will suddenly look away from their cell phone or thoughts and perk up, and actually seem surprised—perhaps grateful—that I had spoken to them.

Young people are very isolated now, with all of the omnipresent cell phones, electronics, and so on. At 63 (and from a generation of social talkers), I have a lot of life experiences to share, and once I start chatting with younger folks, they open up and join in the fun!

I little while ago, a young man was bagging my groceries and asked me how my day was going. He had a stutter, and I thought nothing of it, because I was just happy to see a young person start a conversation with me. After chatting for several minutes, he told me that he usually doesn't talk much because people make fun of his stutter. I told him to never feel that he was different from anyone, and that we are all humans with unique characteristics, and to be proud of who he was, and to never stop talking.

As I got ready to push my cart away, he said to me, "Thank you, you have really made my day." He repeated that statement once more as I walked away. He had made my day as well. So don't be afraid to take the time to talk to someone, old or young. (And CALL, not text, your parents or grandparents once in a while—we really like that!) You just might make both of your days brighter!

—Maureen Mathieu, Maine

Spent an hour in the bank with my dad, as he had to transfer some money. I couldn't resist and asked, "Dad, why don't we activate your internet banking?"

"Why would I do that?" he asked. "Well, you won't have to spend an hour here for things like transfer. You can even do your shopping online. Everything will be so easy."

I was so excited about initiating him into the world of net banking.

He asked, "If I do that, I won't have to step out of the house?"

"Yes, yes," I said. I told him how even groceries can be delivered at your door now and how Amazon delivers everything.

His answer left me tongue-tied. He said, "Since I entered this bank today, I have met four of my friends, I have chatted a while with the staff, who know me very well by now. You know I am alone ... This is the company that I need. I like to get ready and come to the bank. I have enough time, it is the physical touch that I crave. Two years back I got sick, the store owner from whom I buy fruits, came to see me and sat by my bedside and cried. When your mom fell down a few weeks back while on her morning walk, our local grocer saw her and immediately got her into his car to rush her home, as he knows where I live. Would I have the human touch if everything became online? Why would I want everything delivered to me and force me to interact just with my computer? I like to know the person that I am dealing with and not just the seller. It creates bonds of relationships. Does Amazon deliver all this as well? Technology is not life ... Spend time with people ... not the devices."

—Maureen Rice, Florida

To the Next Generation:

I was very fortunate to know my grandparents of both my parents and cherished our annual trips to visit them. They were a wealth of information and guidance, with many stories.

It was my dad, my guiding light and the most influential person in my life, [who said] the following words that stuck with me and got me to where I am now (retired in Florida). I hope he would be satisfied with the result, as he has been gone over 12 years.

He was a World War II Navy veteran serving (right out of high school) in the Pacific who, like many, came home and built a life

World War II veteran Arthur A. Malwick Jr.



“**He also said your word is your bond and to always honor your word.**

Donn Arthur Malwick

“**One of the greatest lessons I learned was sitting at the dinner table at 12 years old. I had just finished eating and asked my dad if he would pay me for mowing the lawn.**

Sal de Mauro

for his family and never talked about the war.

He told me no one owes you anything, and if you want to be successful in life, it is up to you. Never quit a job until you have another one, and always do whatever job you have to the best of your ability. He also said your word is your bond and to always honor your word.

—Donn Arthur Malwick, Florida

Dear next generation,

I am a 71-year-old Navy veteran here to tell you life is full of challenges. How you react to those challenges will determine who you are. Be strong, have faith, and believe in yourself. Life is a journey, enjoy it.

Don't get caught up in all the rhetoric you hear and see about CRT, wokeism, and cancel culture. You live in the greatest country on earth. Study her history and know we have made mistakes along the way, but we learned from them. Knowing those mistakes keeps us from making them again. Work hard, be honest with everyone, including yourself, and when you fail (and you will at times), "pick yourself up and get back in the race, that's life" (a Frank Sinatra lyric).

One of the greatest lessons I learned was sitting at the dinner table at 12 years old. I had just finished eating and asked my dad if he would pay me for mowing the lawn. He asked me what I thought it was worth and I said \$3.00. He said OK, took out his wallet, and handed me \$3. I thought to myself, yes. When asked to be excused he said sure, but before you go, how much do you think this meal your mother cooked would have cost at a restaurant? He had me. I said, about \$4? I learned a lesson. I handed it over and never asked again. I learned the value of work, family, and commitment in that one lesson.

—Sal De Mauro, North Carolina

The best present parents can ever give their children is to love each other.

Do not try to be a sister or brother to your kids. They need a mother and father.

I taught school and I think one of the most important lessons I ever gave was teaching them to shake hands. It had nothing to do with my subject. I told them that one day they would be applying to college or would interview for a job and that first impressions could be lasting. I told them to look the person in the eye and give a strong handshake. Then I went around to every student and made them practice. It was a little thing, but I thought it was worthwhile, and maybe we'll be able to do it again now that the pandemic is getting under control.

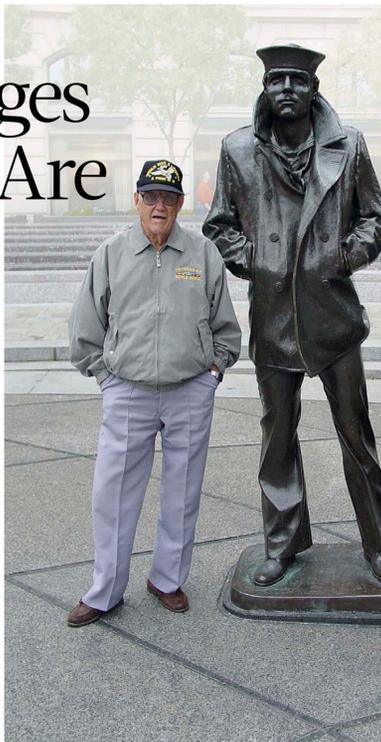
—Ann S. Russell, Virginia

Looking for Your Legacy

I believe we learn who we are from the legacy we receive from our parents. That being said, it's important that you understand your parents' history and the history of your grandparents to embrace how past generations made it work with all the difficulties they had to deal with.

I grew up with a mother who was born in 1918 in Italy. In 1945 during the liberation of Italy, she met my father, a British soldier, and moved to England. She was a woman that was an invalid from a young age and had lived under Nazi occupation and also experienced discrimination in England. She became the mother of eight children, and when the youngest was 4 and the oldest was 13, her husband, my father, died.

She spoke broken English, was extremely poor, but knew what she needed to do for



her family. It didn't come from outside but from within. She did not depend on anything or anyone, or any government. She did get her widow's pension and her child allowance from the government, but this was a small help to take care of her children.

She got a job in a mental asylum laundry as it worked with her schedule to pick up her children after school. This was her life, and although hard, she took great pride and dedication in being a great mother.

There were few luxuries, very few simple holidays, mostly used clothes, but lots of lessons in learning how to look at life for what you can do to make it better, rather than what you can get.

She taught us to work hard and to believe in ourselves. We never looked at our life as if we were poor but lucky to have what we had. She never let us ever feel sorry for ourselves, and today we have followed in her footsteps. In her 60s, she purchased her first home!

All my siblings, in one way or another, have taken our mother's legacy and made a life that's based on "what can I do to make my life better," not "what can I get," or "what can be done for me."

She never saw herself as a victim, although at times she was ridiculed for her accent and spat on for being Italian. She didn't look for pity or someone to stand up for her, she held her head high.

So look to your history to find your legacy within your family, embrace what you may never have seen before, and use it to grow into whatever you wish to be, for that is the gift they gave you to use. No government can take care of you, you have a legacy, a wealth of history to help you build, use it!

—Dr. Dorothy O'Neill, California

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

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

Send your advice, along with your full name, state, and contact information to NextGeneration@epochtimes.com or mail it to:

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

“**This was her life, and although hard, she took great pride and dedication in being a great mother.**

Dorothy O'Neill



Lost, Found, and Returned: Wartime Love Letters

LOUISE BEVAN

Somehow, 38 wartime love letters shared between a doctor who served in Korea and his wife back home in Detroit, Michigan, ended up in a box in a basement in Ontario, Canada.

But luckily, that was not the end of them. Kingsville, Ontario, resident Angela Thompson found the box decades after the letters were written and was touched by its very personal contents.

She tracked down the family of the late veteran, Morris Starkman, and his wife, Betty, reported CBC News.

Morris met his sweetheart Betty on a blind date in 1952. They married on Christmas Day, 1952. Shortly after marrying, the couple was separated when Morris was sent to war. They sustained their long-distance love by writing letters.

Angela had bought a tin box full of old magazines at auction almost eight years ago to make collages. Yet it wasn't until April 2021 that she went through its contents, finding, to her surprise, 38 letters between Morris and Betty. There were also letters from Morris to his sister, Ann.

Angela stopped herself from reading them. "When I realized that they were war letters, 'No, 'No.' I know from my grandparents, like, you don't read that. It's very personal," she told CBC News.

She knew immediately that she wanted to return the letters to their rightful owners.

Tracking down Morris and Betty's obituaries led Angela to the couple's granddaughter, Meredith Starkman of Brooklyn, New York. They connected on Facebook.

Morris passed away suddenly in 1993 before Meredith was born, and Betty died in 2016. Wishing to learn more about her grandparents' relationship, Meredith read the intimate correspondence. Betty had founded



Angela Thompson bought a box of old magazines at an auction almost eight years ago, intending to make collages. It wasn't until this past spring that she finally opened it, and found old wartime letters.



ALL PHOTOS COURTESY OF ANGELA THOMPSON

“**They were very private people and it means a lot to have these letters back in the family.**

Robert Starkman

Michigan's Jewish Genealogical Society in 1985 and the coincidence of the family history connection was not lost on Meredith.

"That's again why this is, like, the craziest story," she told CBC News. "My grandmother's life was dedicated to this kind of thing, literally looking at family lineage. So finding these has been really like a full-circle situation.

"They were very in love," she said. "It's so clear from these letters how much they cared about each other."

Meredith's father, Robert Starkman, Morris and Betty's son, remembers his parents as "wonderful, genuine people." Yet while supportive of his daughter's foray into family history, he decided not to read the letters himself. Robert had been chastised for finding them as a child.

Morris, furious, had warned his boy that the letters were personal. Robert has always obeyed his wishes.

"I was very close to my folks," Robert told the Kingsville Observer. "They were very private people and it means a lot to have these letters back in the family." He said that one day, he wants the letters buried with himself and his parents.

Robert suspects that his parents' love letters ended up in Canada when Betty sold her home in 2013 and moved into assisted living. Marveling at the letters' reappearance, Robert offered heartfelt thanks to Angela for reaching out to his family when she could so easily have disposed of them.

Angela claimed the story turned out like a movie plot.

"It's like finding a treasure chest, finding someone's time capsule and you have no idea who they are or anything about these people," she told the Kingsville Observer.

"And then you find them. I feel relieved these letters are going to where they need to be."

A Letter to Dad, Located in 'Heaven, Cloud 9'

EMG INSPIRED STAFF



Sianna Tully's father.



The letter that Sianna addressed to her father.

As many sons, daughters, and wives across the globe celebrated Father's Day last month, 8-year-old Sianna Tully from the U.K. was missing her dad, who'd passed away when she was just 4 months old.

Unable to spend time with her dad that day, the girl from Braunstone, Leicester, chose to write him a letter instead—which garnered an unexpected response.

When it came time to write the address on the envelope she'd made by hand, Sianna asked her mom, Sarah, where to send it.

"Sianna just came into the room that evening and asked, 'Where does Daddy live?' so she could write the address to a letter she had written," the mother of two told LeicestershireLive.

Sarah quickly came up with an answer to satisfy her daughter: "Heaven, Cloud 9." The mom said Sianna copes with the loss of her father, Tony, by writing him letters on Christmas, birthdays, and Father's Day.

After addressing the letter, they dropped it in the mailbox near their home; and on the following Monday, that letter was found by a postman named Simon, who realized that without any postage, it would likely end up in the trash. He decided to intervene.

"Obviously without a stamp or an actual address on it, if it got put in with the rest of the stuff to be delivered it would just end up getting thrown away in transit somewhere," he told the BBC.

"I spoke to my manager and asked if I could try to get hold of the family to find out more about it and get it back to them." Simon (who chose to withhold his last name) took a photo of the letter and posted it on Facebook, hoping to locate the sender—while also revealing a loss of his own.

"I'm a postman in the Braunstone area," he captioned. "Earlier today I emptied the red pillar box on Bewicke Road and there was a letter in a child's handwriting addressed to their dad in Heaven, Cloud 9."

"I'm trying to find the parents of the child as I would like to reach out to them and with their permission sort out a little something for the child.

"I myself lost my dad last year and as an adult found it hard, so I can only imagine what this child is going through."

The heartrending post soon went viral with thousands of Facebook users commenting. And within 15 minutes of it being posted, notice reached Sarah after she was tagged dozens of times.

The mom was taken aback by the astounding number of moving comments. "I am absolutely overwhelmed by the response of the postman and of everyone who has seen the post," she said.

"I haven't stopped crying since. I never thought for one second that anyone would find it or do anything with it."

The postman and Sianna even got a chance to meet up the next day. The letter was returned to the family, and he gifted her a father-daughter figurine as a keepsake.

Sarah plans to hold onto them in a box for her daughter when she's older—along with printouts of all the heartwarming comments that the letter received.

As for the contents of that letter, Sarah said, "I have no idea what is in it, I always say that's between her and her dad."

Sianna Tully, 8, from Braunstone, Leicester, U.K.



Notes of Hope

EMG INSPIRED STAFF

ALL PHOTOS COURTESY OF PAIGE HUNTER



Paige Hunter holds one of her notes.



A few of the many notes that Paige has written.



A woman in Sunderland, northern England, who once contemplated suicide is now helping others in that dire situation by attaching notes of hope to Wearmouth Bridge, where she came near to jumping, herself, years ago.

Paige Hunter, 21, has attached to the bridge more than 1,000 notes—which she hand-writes, laminates, and ties with a string—in a bid to reach as many people struggling with suicidal intentions as possible.

Three years ago, Paige became a rape victim and suffered post-traumatic stress disorder and depression, and it reached a point where she no longer saw the value of life.

She went to Wearmouth Bridge and contemplated jumping when two men in a truck who were passing by stopped and talked her out of it.

"They told me I was worth a lot more than what I was going to do," Paige told The Sun. "They called the police and stopped with me until they arrived.

"I am so thankful to them."

The next day, Paige thought to herself that she could help others in her same situation and save lives like the men in the truck had saved hers.

She began writing notes of hope, laminating them and tying them to the bridge for people to read.

"Pause, stop, breathe. There are better options, and so many people who love

you," read one of the notes she posted.

"Don't give up not now, not tomorrow not ever!" another said.

By the end of 2018, Paige had posted over 40 notes on the bridge and helped save the lives of no fewer than six people in need.

Over the last three years, her notes have tallied over a thousand, and the number of people potentially saved rose to 28.

Paige includes her phone number on

the notes and said she has received numerous messages from strangers thanking her for saving their lives.

Among the ones her notes have reached is Sarah Erica, 25, who was diagnosed with depression and anxiety in 2014; she came across the note during the lowest point in her life.

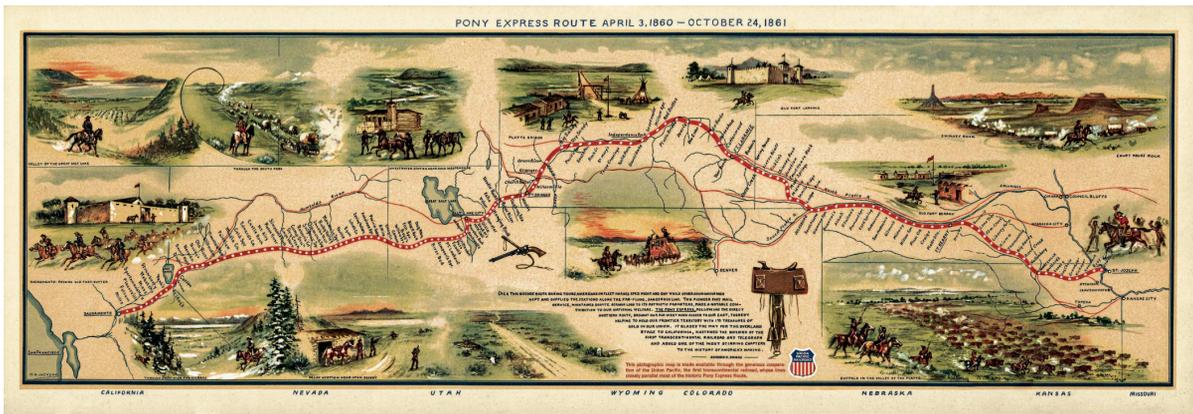
"To see someone who has fought through and through every day has given me motivation to want to carry on," Sarah said, according to The Washington Post.

In 2018, Paige's efforts were recognized by the Northumbria Police, who presented her with an award.

"Paige has shown an incredible understanding of vulnerable people in need of support. She should be very proud of herself," said police chief superintendent Sarah Pitt.

The notes of hope have since been made a permanent fixture on the bridge, thanks to a motion passed by the local authorities.

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 TheEpochTimes.com/newsletter



An illustrated map of the Pony Express route in 1860 by William Henry Jackson. The enterprise was short-lived due to financial reasons, but it fired up the imagination of many an American.

ART EXPLORATION FOR THE YOUNG AND YOUNG AT HEART

Giddyap!

A look at Frederic Remington's 'The Coming and Going of the Pony Express'

ANDREA NUTT FALCE

Art is moving you. Let's think about it. When you read, your mind is transported, maybe to Mount Doom, or the mansion of a sneaky vampire on a stormy night, aboard a submarine deep in the sea, or even into the mind of another man. Through a painting, you may step into a blooming garden, a fiery battle, or even enter into the sorrow of St. Mary. Music literally moves our bodies, not to mention our souls. A movie may engage you so much that you lose track of where you're sitting!

Why Do People Make Art? Art is a special kind of communication. When we make or view art, we are forming a connection. We say to one another: I have seen this thing, dreamed this idea—see it, feel it, know it with me.

Art is a kind of bond, a communion between persons, maker and viewer, and, at its best, between ourselves: the minor creators, and the Creator of all.

Whether you think you're into art or not, guess what? It's into you. It's everywhere around you.

Think of art as a distillation of human thoughts and ideas, bottled up and packaged for you to drink and quench a thirst. Though, not everything packaged in pictures or notes is truly art. Art can be tricky to define. You can identify authentic art by certain criteria. It requires a principled aesthetic (concern for beauty), and it should have the power to refresh, elevate, and even at times, alleviate.

When your three-dimensional world gets reinterpreted and condensed into two dimensions, into sound or into the written word, it's generally the purposeful work of a man or woman. What you experience in such forms isn't always true art, but it's still created with artful purpose. Take for example a Justin Bieber tune: it has a beat, but it's not fine music.

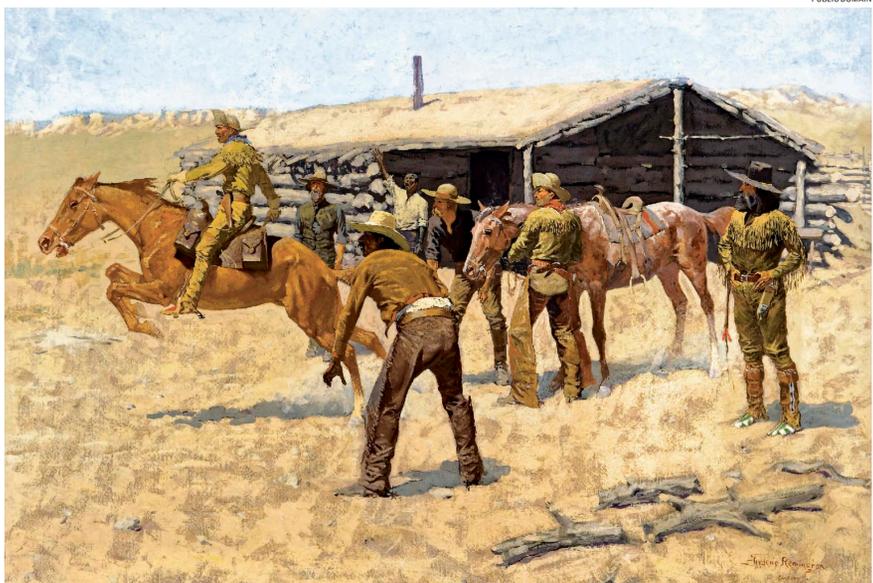
Consider also video games: animated interpretations of life, presented in two dimensions, with a soundtrack. I wouldn't call such creations genuine art, but whatever the label... those games, those tunes, are moving more than your thumbs! Call it art or call it artificial, either way, as fast as the latest viral trend hits a screen, artful productions are urging, pushing, and persuading. Don't just go along for the ride. Know where you're headed!

We are exposed to art and the artful all the time, high and low. If the quality is high and beautiful, art can uplift you. If it's base, it brings you down.

Just as our bodies run better on fine-quality, clean food, our hearts and minds run better on wholesome ingredients. What we choose to consume with our senses stays with us longer than a bite to eat, in fact, it may influence the soul for a lifetime. Better choose the good stuff then!

Building a Nation

So then, let me present to you a piece of art in motion. Painted more than 120 years

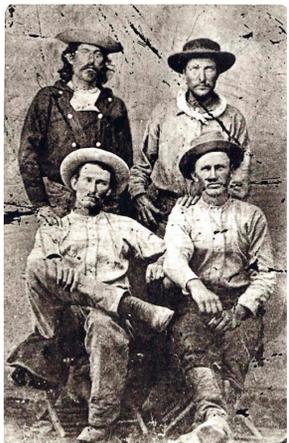


PUBLIC DOMAIN



ago, Frederic Remington's "The Coming and Going of the Pony Express" is perhaps more moving today than the day it was made. This dusty, bustling scene brings to life a group of courageous men striving to build a nation, mid-leap.

The Pony Express wasn't a standard mail carrier service. It was certainly grittier than Twitter, Snapchat, or texts. It was the creative solution to the need for faster communications beyond the Rocky Mountains and between the eastern and greatly growing western United States. A railway system was being built but only extended as far as the Mississippi River. Steamships could carry letters, but they had to go around South America or transfer them on land across the Isthmus of Panama.



Riders on the Pony Express: (standing, L-R) Billy Richardson and Johnny Fry; (seated, L-R) Charles Cliff and Gus Cliff.

The rider-and-horse relay between St. Joseph, Mo., and Sacramento, Calif., guaranteed that mail was delivered in 10 days.

PUBLIC DOMAIN



Frederic Remington (1861-1909). PUBLIC DOMAIN

This dusty, bustling scene brings to life a group of courageous men striving to build a nation, mid-leap.

Stagecoaches often took over a month to deliver the mail. Telegraphs were becoming established, but there was a gap.

Recognizing the need for stronger communications in a growing nation, Sen. William Gwin appealed to private entrepreneur and stagecoach owner William Russell. Russell enlisted the help of two men, Alexander Majors and William Wadell, to engineer a solution. It took 400 to 500 horses, the creation of about 190 stations in barren places, the acquisition of provisions and firearms, and the hiring of station masters. Majors also had to find young, brave, and able riders. American ingenuity galloped into the gap!

They made it happen in two months! Eighty riders were hired. One of the riders was said to be 14 years old and named Buffalo Bill, ever heard of him? He and each of the brave boys who took on the job received a Bible, pledged not to drink, swear, or fight other employees, and set off through almost 2000 miles of mountains, lakes, deserts, thunderstorms, bandits, wolves, and dangers unimaginable to most kids now.

You should read about it! Frederic Remington painted "The Coming and Going of the Pony Express" in 1900, 39 years after the last ride. His art, and precious history of American fortitude, continue to make the adventure relevant today.

Remington was an American painter who dedicated his talents to scenes of the West. His compositions draw the imagination into rugged places and heroic times. I find they also lead the eye to the horizon line. While peering into the America he painted, may I suggest you gaze a little further? Ask yourself: "What do I see on the American horizon today? How can I help make it more heroically beautiful?"

Andrea Nutt Falce is a happy wife and mother of four. She is also a Florentine-trained classical realist artist and author of the children's book, "It's a Jungle Out There." Her work can be found at AndreaNutt.com



A Pony Express mailing, dated April 13, 1860.



FOR KIDS ONLY

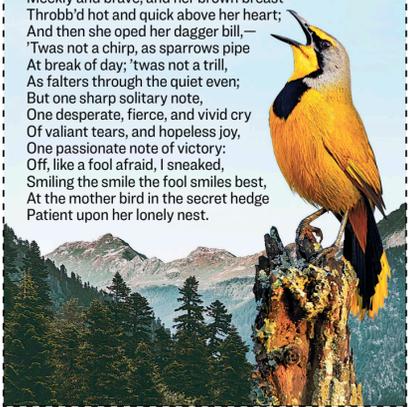
THE EPOCH TIMES

Week 27, 2021

The Mother Bird

by Walter Ramal

Through the green twilight of a hedge I peered, with cheek on the cool leaves pressed, And spied a bird upon a nest: Two eyes she had beseeching me Meekly and brave, and her brown breast Throbb'd hot and quick above her heart; And then she opened her dagger bill,— 'Twas not a chirp, as sparrows pipe At break of day; 'twas not a trill, As falters through the quiet even; But one sharp solitary note, One desperate, fierce, and vivid cry Of valiant tears, and hopeless joy, One passionate note of victory: Off, like a fool afraid, I sneaked, Smiling the smile the fool smiles best, At the mother bird in the secret hedge Patient upon her lonely nest.



ALL PHOTOS BY SHUTTERSTOCK

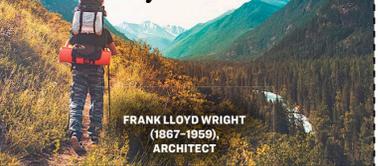
WHAT DID THE BEAVER SAY TO THE TREE?

LI'S BEEN NICE TO YA



ALL PHOTOS BY SHUTTERSTOCK

I go to nature every day for inspiration in the day's work.



FRANK LLOYD WRIGHT (1867-1959), ARCHITECT

DIY13/SHUTTERSTOCK

This Week in History



Henry Rowe Schoolcraft. KEAN COLLECTION/GETTY IMAGES



A 1960s stamp depicting the Great River Road following the Mississippi River.

THE MISSISSIPPI'S SOURCE FOUND

On July 13, 1832, explorer and ethnologist Henry Rowe Schoolcraft led an expedition to the upper reaches of the Mississippi River and became the first to locate its source at Lake Itasca in present-day Minnesota.

The Mississippi River is the second-longest river in America (The Missouri River being the longest). The Mississippi runs 2,350 miles from Lake Itasca through the center of the United States to the Gulf of Mexico.

By Aidan Danza, age 15

ALL PHOTOS BY SHUTTERSTOCK

IDENTIFYING TEENAGE BIRDS

Teenagers are quite interesting creatures, but if they happen to be birds, they can be even more confusing.

They are more properly referred to as fledglings: birds that have just recently had their first flight and have left their nest, and are now uncertainly making their way about the yard, being helped (and fed) by the occasional parent. These fledglings often look very different from their parents, sometimes so different that they look like an entirely new species.



BROWN-HEADED COWBIRD

When I was young, I actually thought I had discovered a new type of bird on the sighting of this strange animal. It resembled a sparrow, with a fat bill, sandy brown head and tail, and a shiny blue body. Ecstatically I photographed the bird with my mother's camera. Somehow or another, I came to realize that this was, in fact, a brown-headed cowbird. This bird was simply a

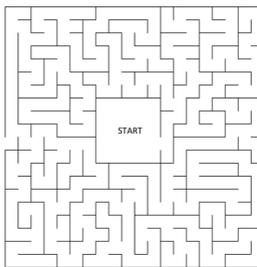


EUROPEAN STARLING

This bird is a very common fledgling. In terms of shape and size, it certainly resembles its parents, but instead of the black, spotted with "stars" of the adult that gives the starling its name, this bird is a sandy brown, similar to the cowbird. It's quite easy to identify, for the starling seems to stay closer to its parents than many other fledgling birds. If watched for a few minutes, a parent will be sure to swoop

in, carrying food for its young. If there is more than one baby in the yard, the visits from adults will be proportionally more frequent. Young starlings are notably fun to observe. When little fledglings attempt to fly, it's usually closer to short hops that can't get far above eight feet off the ground. Occasionally they hit things and fall. Their tails haven't grown in yet, so it's still difficult for the bird to steer.

AMAZING ESCAPES!



USE THE FOUR NUMBERS IN THE CORNERS, AND THE OPERANDS (+, -, AND X) to build an equation to get the solution in the middle. There may be more than one "unique" solution but, there may also be "equivalent" solutions. For example: 6 + (7 X 3) + 1 = 28 and 1 + (7 X 3) + 6 = 28

Easy puzzle 1



Solution For Easy 1: 6 + (7 - 8) + 0!

Medium puzzle 1

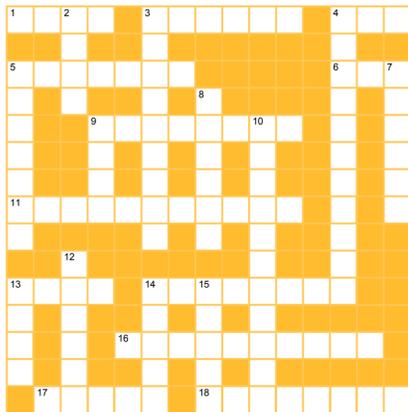


Solution for Medium 1: 9 - 7 + 8 + 6!

Hard puzzle 1



Solution for Hard 1: 22 - 82 + 8 + 0!



Down

- 2 Sleeper's shelter (4)
- 3 Pool alternative (9)
- 4 Summer flier (11)
- 5 Beach (7)
- 7 Outdoor meal (6)
- 8 Flowers (6)
- 9 Beach dirt (4)
- 10 Outside of town (11)
- 12 Mother _____ (6)
- 13 Two-wheeler (4)
- 14 Hiking shoes (5)
- 15 Birchbark project (5)



Across

- 1 Toy with a tail (4)
- 3 It fades in the fall (6)
- 4 Sun protection (3)
- 5 Beachgoer's worry (7)
- 6 Hiker's need (3)
- 9 Prevents a burn (8)
- 11 Hammock activity (11)
- 13 Watercraft (4)
- 14 Where lightning bugs roam (8)
- 16 Where crows roam (10)
- 17 Gardener's woes (5)
- 18 Jog, for example (8)

TRUTH and TRADITION

In Our Own Words



Every truly informed person makes our society that much more informed, and an informed society is one where the people's freedoms are safe.

Jasper Fakkert
Editor-in-chief

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Thomas Jefferson once wrote that “If a nation expects to be ignorant and free, in a state of civilization, it expects what never was and never will be.”

He then closes off that section of his letter with “Where the press is free and every man able to read, all is safe.”

Even though it has been centuries since our third president penned those words, I believe that his vision is still worth realizing. It's why I work at The Epoch Times, and also why I'm truly thankful for every subscriber we have.

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So I'd like to ask a favor—please make some time each week to sit down with The Epoch Times and read a few articles. Know the contents, so that when chatting with friends, family, or colleagues, you can share this information.

No man is an island. Every truly informed person makes our society that much more informed, and an informed society is one where the people's freedoms are safe.

In Truth and Tradition,

Jasper Fakkert
The Epoch Times



THE EPOCH TIMES

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