THE EPOCH TIMES LIFE TRADITION

S K Y L A R P Pools H OF

Owner Alex George enjoys his dual role as attorney and bookseller but he's most comfortable surrounded by his many titled friends at Skylark Bookshop in Columbia, Mo.

Beyond Books:

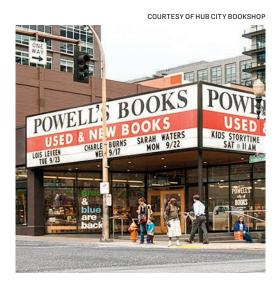
Independent Bookstores Inspire, Connect Community

Powell's Books celebrates a 50-year anniversary this year. They have anchored this location on West Burnside Street in Portland, Ore., for decades.

ANITA L. SHERMAN

"What I say is, a town isn't a town without a bookstore. It may call itself a town, but unless it's got a bookstore, it knows it's not foolin' a soul."

-Neil Gaiman, English author



Enjoy a good read? Many of us do.

The written word, whether viewed on an electronic device, listened to on audio, or absorbed through the rhythm of gently turning pages, still captivates our imaginations and engages a chunk of our busy schedules. We are a nation of readers. According to recent numbers from market researcher and data gatherer Statista, 72 to 79 percent of us enjoy what books have to offer.

Aside from adding to our vocabularies, expanding our knowledge base, and piquing our interests, reading is a known stress reducer. The act of reading temporarily takes us away, introduces us to new places, intriguing faces, plots, and points of view. Generally, even if it's a can't-put-down crime thriller, it's relaxing to read.

I'm a bona fide bibliophile. My office library is filled with shelves of books. I have many friends who are voracious readers. I have grandchildren who are discovering the joy of their own libraries.

discovering the joy of their own libraries. I know that a click away on Amazon will

Delight often replaces the worries we felt as

parents, and an indulgence we would never

have shown our sons and daughters flows

like a river to the grandkids. The dad whose

mother rarely treated him with candy in

his boyhood watches gape-mouthed as she

hands his daughter a Hershey's candy bar.

Let's take a look at these three roles of the

have my choice of reading material to me the next day and for less money. That's not a bad thing. But perusing the aisles of your local, independent bookstore (known affectionately as "indies") has many benefits beyond supporting a local business and finding a good read. It's a mindset and a choice that honors and respects writers and readers. And independent bookstores have a long reputation for their engagement in their respective communities.

Many businesses, including booksellers, took a hit during the COVID-19 pandemic. Even before that, big bookstore names like Borders fell to the wayside leaving many communities devoid of a nearby book source. This may have contributed to independent bookstores staying alive and thriving. Many put on their creative hats to make service and selection at a small store something online can't provide—something desirable for the discriminating customer.

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The Joys and Pitfalls of Being a Grandparent

JEFF MINICK

From that most prolific of authors, Unknown, we have this aphorism: "A grand-parent is a little bit parent, a little bit teacher, and a little bit best friend."

That amalgam of those three little bits into "grandparent" creates one of the greatest joys life can bestow on us. Being a grandparent is as different from being a parent as pepper from salt.

the role of their grandchildren's confidant.

Grandparents

sometimes play

Being a grandparent is as different from being a parent as pepper from salt.

Parent Many grandp ents when M

grandparent.

Many grandparents act in absentia as parents when Mom and Dad are not available for the little ones. One grandmother I know cares for two toddlers a couple of days a week while her daughter and her son-in-law work. From talking with her, and with many other grandparents, she loves this time with the children. Unburdened by housework and other chores, she's able to focus more on the children than their parents do, playing games with them or sitting on the porch

while the kids run around the yard. Best of all—and most grandparents understand this feeling—she leaves at the end of the day, a bit exhausted, sure, but free of additional responsibility.

But there are some pitfalls with playing parent, which may be illustrated by an old joke: "Why do grandparents and grandchildren get along so well? Because they have a common enemy."

That jest may bring a laugh, but it contains a hidden warning. Like many other grandparents, I've learned to withhold criticism of my children's parenting methods unless asked for advice. If it seems to me that a granddaughter spends entirely too much time watching television or a young grandson looks as if he dressed himself in the dark, I've learned to check my criticism and bite my tongue.

Continued on Page 3



11-Year-Old Feels Replaced by Cellphone

Dear June,

I am 11 years old. I have been friends with my cousin (who is 12) since I was 6. But she got an iPhone and my other cousin has one, too. When they are on them, there is conversation, but it is mostly centered on what is on the screen. I feel bad about looking at it and looking at cellphones is somewhat, well ... boring (I don't think I'm allowed to look at them anyway). I do not mind my telling the 12-year-

old cousin to put her phone away, sometimes, and when I do she takes it very well, but at least half the time, before I know it, the phone is out again. And with the other girl and when they are together, I'm not so sure about telling them. ... Also it's hard to find other things to do. There is sometimes at least one baby at my Grandpa's house, but you can't look at babies all the time. I guess I should let them play with the phones without my interference for some time, but when I would like to play, then, I can be at a loss for what to do. I often look so forward to actually playing with them! I feel sort of ... well ... replaced by the phone. Can you tell me something I could to do get us actually playing? But I also don't want them to get bored.

→ Dear Granny Goose,

You sound wise beyond your years. Phones can really monopolize people, so I totally understand why you would feel replaced. The good news is that there is so much to life beyond phones!

It's taken me some months to answer your question because I had to reflect good and hard because I didn't feel I had quite the right relationship with my phone. It's better now, but is something I need to continually work at.

I am very happy to hear you find them boring! I wrote an article a couple years ago about the dark side of social media—that it has addictive potential similar to gambling and



can contribute to low self-esteem. Not to mention it can be a huge waste of time. Over the past few years, I've heard several successful people say that setting clear boundaries around social media (and not getting lost in it) was a part of their success.

So I really worry for the young people today who have uncontrolled access to social media.

It may be very hard for you to win your cousin away from her phone, but everything important in life is worth working hard for.

I'm of a generation that started life before cellphones and the internet. I only really started using the internet in college, and didn't get an iPhone until I was 30 and needed it for work. And boy, I can tell they have changed me.

I can personally attest to the fact that they numb body and mind. If I hold my cellphone up to my ear during a conversation, I can right away Granny Goose | start to feel discomfort next to where I hold it, and if I hold my phone too long, I feel the discomfort in my fingers—kind of numb and achy at the same time. I keep screen time to a minimum with my children since they're all under 6, but one thing I do use screens for is anesthetic. When

my kids have a painful injury, I give them my phone with a puppy video on it and they let me clean and bandage without a peep.

I also find myself reaching for my phone when I'm tired, to boost my energy, or when I'm upset as a way to calm down. I'm working to break from these habits and use more solid coping mechanisms. I've also noticed that using my phone can make

guilty of wasting precious hours on social media. As I'm training myself to use my phone less, I'm finding it really valuable to have time alone with my own thoughts, to reflect on

how to improve my parenting and other relationships, and of course how to answer questions from all you dear readers. As a society, we're very much in the early phases of mass personal technology, and I think most people are

unaware of the damage that's being

done. I know many young people now will not know what life is like without it, and it will shape their lives—their feelings and beliefs and perhaps even their health, without their realizing it. So to parents reading this, I hope we can pay attention to the impact of

social media and personal technology on the body, mind, and spirit of our children, enforce good boundaries, and teach good habits.

So to answer your question about what else to do: What would you get excited about doing?

Some things I would get excited about would be arts and crafts making bead jewelry or friendship bracelets or making gifts or cards for others is fun. You might even be able to persuade your parents to send you to an in-person workshop or purchase an online class.

Another area that can be fun and also very useful for young ladies is to practice doing your hair, nails, and makeup. I now wish I had a few more skills in this area, since I now need to make myself look presentable in a

very short time every morning. Also, learning what is in the products you use is important (although maybe not as much fun), but making DIY personal care products can be. It's also great to learn about your hair and skin type so you know how to take care of them.

In the fashion department, learn your skin tone and what colors and shades best flatter it.

And cooking! When I was your age, I spent many breakfasts reading nutrition-oriented cookbooks and this really helped me learn to prepare healthy meals, which I've found to be a super valuable life skill

If your situation allows, getting some exercise together-walking, swimming, biking, and rollerblading are fun and healthy.

I asked another 11-year-old for ideas of what to do and she said play hide-and-seek but hide in really challenging spots, do a makeover, have a snowball fight (in winter), bake a pie, or play Truth or Dare (as long as the dares aren't gross or harmful).

Given what you described, it may be very hard for you to win your cousin away from her phone, but everything important in life is worth working hard for. I would start by asking her what she might like to do. Have patience when she goes back to her phone; maybe bring an activity you can do or a good book you can read alongside her.

And a final thought: If sometimes you ask your grandfather if he needs help with anything or you volunteer to watch the baby for a bit, you will contribute greatly to the over all happiness of your family, and I think you will find this makes you feel good as well.

Thanks for your question.

Sincerely,

Do you have a family or relationship *question for our advice columnist,* Dear June? Send it to DearJune@ EpochTimes.com or Attn: Dear June, The Epoch Times, 5 Penn Plaza, 8th Fl. *New York, NY, 10001*

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

A Grandfather's Last Moments

BERNADETTE BONANNO

Forty-two years ago, I witnessed something that has softened the blow of losing loved ones. Although I was able to see the inherent blessing it had been to my life, it took years to be able to share this story.

In 1979, I was a sophomore in college, heading home for Easter break. As we crossed the Throgs Neck Bridge in New York City, I asked my friend to drop me off at my grandparents' house in the Bronx. Although my grandfather had been diagnosed with cancer, he had recently replaced a roof for a neighbor. Being naïve, I didn't think anything could stop Grandpa.

Entering the house, I noticed my grandfather had lost his round belly and his black-rimmed glasses seemed too big for his face. As soon as he hugged me, the weight loss seemed insignificant, and I was glad I had decided to visit.

The next day, my dad came to get me. Grandpa was having a hard time walking so I decided to stay. I went to the corner deli and bought a jar of Ragu and a pound of spaghetti. It was the first time my Irish grandfather had eaten pasta. He liked it and we had a good laugh. I didn't

Although grandfather had been diagnosed with cancer, he had recently replaced a roof for a neighbor. Being naïve, I didn't think anything could stop Grandpa.

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writer Alex Haley

once noted.



know it, but this would be his last meal Grandpa loved his flowers. He asked me if the crocuses were up yet. I didn't know what a crocus was, and it didn't occur to me to pick one for him. Facing this final stage of life, I was strangely disoriented.

Grandpa began hallucinating. He was young again with his five children. He addressed his oldest son as if he were speaking to an Eagle Scout. Then he began scolding his sons, Red (my dad) and Jimmy, "Get over here, Red! Jimmy!" (This made me laugh, as I had always guessed my dad was mischievous as a boy.) His voice softened as he sweetly

cooed to his two daughters, "Hop up on The author's my lap." I wanted to comfort him, so I grandfather, hopped up on the bed.

For the next few days, unable to move his weakened body, my grandfather became unresponsive. But when his pastor came to visit, he sensed his presence and reached out to greet him.

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That night I couldn't sleep. I got up and sat with Grandpa. At about 2 a.m., his face grimaced with pain. So, I lifted his head and gave him his pain meds. Then I gently laid his head back on the pillow to rest.

Suddenly, his eyes opened without the slightest trace of pain. He effortlessly sat up by himself. He appeared incredibly happy and surprised to see something beyond the corner of the room. He gazed forward in awe and held out both arms as if he were reaching for a precious loved one. He wore the most peaceful, joyful smile I have ever seen. My jaw literally dropped as I stared at him in complete amazement. Then he calmly laid back, and after three quick breaths, he passed.

For years I have asked myself, "What did Grandpa see?" Was it our creator, angels, or his mom and dad? Of course, I don't know. But without a doubt, I am certain when our life here on earth comes to an end, there is something prepared for us that will bring a smile and a peace unlike any we have ever known.

Bernadette Bonanno lives in Albany, N.Y., and can be reached at bernadettebonanno@gmail.com

The Joys and Pitfalls of Being a Grandparent

To their grandchildren, grandparents fulfill many roles: parent, teacher, best friend

Continued from Page 1

A harsh rebuke of a grandchild can bring equally disastrous results. Reprimand your grandson for his table manners, and you may get a look from Mom that could turn water into ice.

If you're over 60 years old, then odds are you are a walking encyclopedia of knowledge and experience. You've faced disasters and death, you've fought your way through the thickets and obstacles of life, and you've experienced your ups and downs. In other words, you've been around the block a few

Many grandparents have the time and opportunity to share this treasure house of proficiency with the younger set. They teach Johnny how to fish for trout, they entice him into the kitchen and share their recipes for gazpacho and omelets, they take him into the backyard, set up a cardboard box, and show him how to hit a target with his new Red Ryder BB gun.

During the school closures of the pandemic, many grandparents undoubtedly stepped up to the plate to help teach their grandchildren, supplementing the distance learning classes of the computer with instruction in math, history, and other subjects. They became formal teachers who bonded with their grandchildren because of their time spent together.

But it's the wisdom passed along from generation to generation that is most important. As Robert Ruark wrote in "The Old Man and the Boy," his homage to his grandfather, "The thing I like best about the Old Man is that he's willing to talk about what he knows, and he never talks down to a kid, which is me, who wants to know things."

Best Friend

Instead of "best friend," I would prefer "confidant." For various reasons, children often seek the advice of grandparents rather than siblings, friends from school, or their parents. They recognize the wisdom bestowed by many years, and they trust this person who held their hand as a toddler, taught them to ride a bike without training wheels, slipped them treats before supper, and guided them through the perplexities of seventh-grade English composition. This role of mentor and adviser can bring

grandparents their share of troubles, sadness, and tears. Whether it's an 11-year-old crying over his school report card before showing it to Mom or a haggard, repentant 16-year-old confessing she joined in the bullying of a classmate online, the grand-



parent ends up bearing some of the burden of these moments of trauma.

And yet these confidences, however painful to witness, bestow honor on any grandparent privileged to serve in this capacity.

The Other Side

Family rifts sometimes separate grandparents from their grandchildren. Whatever happened, whoever instigated the break—the parents, the grandparents, or the grandkids themselves—this rupture often brings regret and sorrow to those cut off from the family.

I know several people caught in this sad situation. A woman whose daughter refuses to allow her to see her grandchildren, a troubled teen who despises his grandfather, grandfathers who, having long ago abandoned their children, now have no communication with their children's children: These and other divides can be heartbreaking, especially for those desperate to repair and restore their relationships.

For those suffering daily from this agony, William Blake's line from "The Divine Image" comes to mind: "Mercy, Pity, Peace, and Love." Those are the four ingredients for which these suffering souls hope.

Keep in Touch, Literally When Possible "Nobody can do for little children what grandparents do," writer Alex Haley once noted. "Grandparents sort of sprinkle fairy dust over the lives of little children."

We can sprinkle fairy dust over all our grandchildren, little or not, with letters, phone calls, and emails. And if you're one of the fortunate ones who are with your grandchildren right now, I urge you to stop whatever you're doing and sprinkle some of that dust around the house. Give those grandkids a kiss on the head and an extraspecial big hug, even that teenager who becomes stiff as a board when embraced. Especially that teenager.

Jeff Minick has four children and a growing platoon of grandchildren. For 20 years, he taught history, literature, and Latin to seminars of homeschooling students in Asheville, N.C. He is the author of two novels, "Amanda Bell" and "Dust on Their Wings," and two works of nonfiction, "Learning as I Go" and "Movies Make the Man." Today, he lives and writes in Front Royal, Va. See JeffMinick. com to follow his blog.

Mississippi 6-Year-Old Calls 911 to Tell Sheriff's Department: 'I Love All of Y'all'

EMG INSPIRED STAFF

A little girl in Mississippi had to make a phone call to 911, but when dispatch answered, she hung up.

The concerned operator called back right away, and 6-year-old Mylah picked up. What she said next made the Covington County Sheriff's Department's day.

Sheriff Darrell Perkins got the message and was greatly moved by the 6-year-old's kind gesture.

A recording of the phone call was later posted on the department's social media

"Hello, this is 911, we had a call from this number," the operator is heard saving. Mylah told her, "Hey, um, I need y'all to tell the sheriff, tomorrow.'

"Tell the sheriff what?" asked the operator. "That I love him and I love all of y'all," replied Mylah.

"OK, I will make sure that I get that to him, "OK," said Mylah.

Sheriff Darrell Perkins got the message and was greatly moved by the 6-year-old's kind gesture. Everyone at the department said they just had to find out who the little girl "It touched my heart in such a way, I had

to locate her and say thank you in person," he told The Epoch Times. "It's not every day a public servant hears something like this. He did just that, stopping by Mylah's house with a surprise of his own: a basket filled with art supplies, paint, and coloring

books for her. In return, he got a big hug from the little girl, who starts first grade in just a few weeks. And she presented him with a drawing of a red heart.

"I needed to tell them that I love the sheriff, and I appreciate what they've done," Mylah later told The Epoch Times. "And I love all of them."

The sheriff also told the newspaper: "We in law enforcement see and hear so much negativity.

"This makes our job easier with wonderful comments, and positive social media. This an experience of a lifetime, and something I won't ever forget."

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

Maine's 'Lobster Lady,' 101, Shows No Sign of Quitting

LOUISE BEVAN

Those who know Rockland. Maine's "Lobster Lady" claim the 101-year-old local legend may be the oldest person in the world still lobstering and she shows no signs of quitting.

Virginia "Ginny" Oliver has lived on the same street since the day she was born on June 6, 1920. Her late husband, whom she lobstered with for decades, was a resident on that street when they tied the knot.

"Virginia started lobstering with her older brother when she was 8 years old," Wayne Gray of the Rockland Historical Society told The Epoch Times. "She's been lobstering on and off for 93 years."

One of three siblings, Virginia spent childhood summers on an island with her family. Her father ran a lobster pound and would send 8-year-old Virginia to pilot a lobster boat and fetch the part-time help from nearby islands. Virginia also helped her father tend his store, selling supplies and gasoline to local lobster

fishermen. "The Lobster Today, Virginia has a daugh Lady," Virginia ter and three sons who lobster, yet at 101, she has no plans to pass the baton. She and her 78-year-old son, Max, have been lobstering June

> husband died 15 years ago. "Virginia has 200 traps in the water of her own; Max has a few more than

> through September since Virginia's

don't like to tell how many lobsters they catch in a season."

Rising before 5 a.m., Virginia drives her pickup to Owl's Head with Max three times a week to board her late husband's boat, named "Virginia," after her. At the wheel, with a fresh sea breeze off Andrews Island, Virginia is in her element.

The mother-son duo is an efficient team; Max hauls pots while Virginia bands the lobsters.

Despite more than nine decades at sea, Virginia never gets seasick and has only had one accident of note: a crab once nipped her finger, requiring a trip to the emergency room and several stitches. Gray shared: "Virginia joked about it, saying, 'That crab would have bitten my finger right off if there

hadn't been a bone in it!"" Virginia told News Center Maine that she quit her job at a printing shop in Rockland when she knew that lobstering was her passion. She surprised her

husband with the news one day. "I had a yard full of clothes hanging

that," said Gray. "Lobster fishermen out," she recalled. "He said, 'How come you got your wash? I thought you went to work.' I said, 'I did, but I just quit! ... I'm gonna go with you.'

Virginia maintained that she will retire when she dies. Max praised his mother's resolve, saying, "She's healthy enough ... she's good all over."

Virginia's long career in lobstering has even inspired a documentary, "Conversations with The Lobster Lady," filmed by Wayne Gray and Dale Schierholt of Rockland Historical Society. Reflecting on her story, Virginia conceded that in a changing world, her life is "altogether different from

most people.' Besides lobstering, Virginia cooks homemade meals for her four children every Saturday night and is revered for her delicious home-baked donuts and pastries. Her secret, she said, is to keep busy.

Virginia is billed to serve as parade marshal in Maine's 2022 Lobster Festival Parade. She'll be 102 years old.

When asked when she plans on retiring, the 101-year-old answered, "When I die."

Independent Bookstores Inspire, Connect Community

Continued from Page 1

At last count, there are around 10,800 bookstores in the United States from chains to the smaller, independent bookstores, which make up roughly 2,500 of

Certainly, there have been closures, but new ones spring up as well. Historically, before the advent of mall chains and online shopping, almost every bookstore in the United States was independent and experiencing a golden book age in the late

'70s. And many of them had a cat roaming freely or a dog curled up in the bay window.

The future of independent bookstores is brighter in my mind than bust. Here are four independent bookstores spotlighted out of the thousands that dot the country, from Powell's—a giant among independent bookstores—to The Open Book, a little gem in my hometown of Warrenton,

From large to small and in-between, independent bookstores go way beyond books. They serve to connect the commu-

nity and to inspire the mind. Their hearts

Anita L. Sherman is an award-winning journalist who has more than 20 years of experience as a writer and editor for local papers and regional publications in Virginia. She now works as a freelance writer and is working on her first novel. *She is the mother of three grown children* and grandmother to four, and she resides in Warrenton, Va. Anita can be reached at anitajustwrite@gmail.com



Family-owned Powell's Books, in Portland, Ore., is so large that it is known as The City of Books.

The Mighty Powell's, Portland, Oregon

owell's Books, which opened in Portland, Oregon, in 1971, is now celebrating a 50-year history (check out their 50 recommended reads). It's known by many as The City of Books. Housing thousands of new, used, and rare editions, for being the world's largest independent able and love books. It's a recipe that's been on their website.

The beginnings of Powell's started in Chicago graduate student, Michael Powell, opening his first bookstore.

His father, Walter Powell, so enjoyed the experience of helping his son with the Chicago store that he returned to Portland and opened his own used bookstore.

In 1979, Michael returned to Portland and joined his father, creating a recipe for bookstores with a new menu: used and new, hardcover and paperback all sharing the same shelves, open every day of the year time-tested and works.

At 50 years and counting, Powell's Books, Chicago with an enterprising University of complete with coffee and gift shops, artists and musicians paying visits, and a myriad of events, is coming out of COVID, despite layoffs and pressure from online sales giant Amazon, in forward motion. Powell's reto support and share the written word with

business with Emily Powell leading the way.

"My grandfather taught me that our job is to connect the writer's voice with the reader's ear and not let our egos get in between. My father taught me not only the love of the book itself but also how to love this bastion of books has the reputation and staffed by folks who are knowledge- the business of bookselling," said Powell

> Powell's may well be the giant on the nationwide block in terms of independent bookstores, but let's take a look at just a tiny smattering of smaller independent bookstores dotting the country, who is running them, and how they collectively continue mains as a third-generation family-owned readers worldwide.

Skylark **Bookshop**, Columbia, Missouri





Skylark Bookshop is a gathering place for book enthusiasts, particularly when there is a special event.

ne of my most favorite reads of late is "Migrations" by Charlotte Mc-Conaghy. When I went searching to learn more about this young Australian writer, I came across an interview with her at a bookstore in Missouri.

"Oh, some thought me completely mad," said Alex George, the owner of Skylark Bookshop in Columbia, when he opened his store in 2018.

"I've always thought bookstores are, first and foremost, places of inspiration. The skylark is not much to look at, really, but it has a beautiful song, and has inspired a great deal of wonderful art over the years," citing songwriter Hoagy Carmichael as an

George, a native of the United Kingdom, moved to Columbia 17 years ago. He has published seven novels, three of those, "A Good American," "Setting Free the Kites," and "The Paris Hours," were chosen by the nation's independent booksellers for the "Indie Next List." He is also the founder and director of the Unbound Book Festival held in Columbia, which brings together poets and authors, hosts panel discussions, and brings authors into the classroom, to name just a bit of the programming. Canceled in 2020 and online for 2021, it's hoped to resume in person in 2022.

"It was the enthusiasm for the festival which got me to thinking about opening my own renaissance bookstore," said George who, in addition to being an author and bookstore owner, is also an attorney and runs his own law firm.

"Being a bookseller is better," laughed George, who said his clients already know about his passion for books. And so do his

"When you go into an independent bookstore you get a lot more in return," said George, freely admitting that Amazon could well be knocking out the competition by offering lower prices but the experience of

book purchasing is different. "Talking to knowledgeable staff to get a recommendation is not a small thing ... customers are beginning to understand that, and then there's the experiential pleasure of browsing."

Skylark carries some **15,000 volumes.**

"When I look around the shop ... it's a funny job, we know books can be purchased more cheaply online, we know that to be true. We offer an absolutely first-class experience, we work hard to earn our customer's business." Skylark carries only new books and that is

by design. "I want to have control over the titles we bring in," George said. "If we take in used books you don't know what you will be getting. There are so many new titles coming out every week, we can only stock a fraction. We want to be able to curate the inventory."

In addition to books, the store also carries other items such as journals, T-shirts, and tote bags. And then there are those Blackwing pencils. "We're the only authorized dealer in Missouri to carry them," said George of these sleekly designed pencils reintroduced from their first appearance in the 1930s.

George is keen on discovering new ways to engage his readers, and offers a "book spa."

"It's a gift, a personalized shopping experience—you can come in and sit with one of our staff for an hour, receive book recommendations ... it's book pampering," he said. Independent booksellers receive many advanced reader copies. Publishers distribute them not for sale but to have them read

As an author, George, who is a big fan of mysteries, commits to reading at least 50 pages of the many advanced reader books that pass through the shop.

and reviewed to gauge future publishing

Skylark carries some 15,000 volumes. George credited the community's support for their continued success. "Being a bookstore owner, I feel unique ... a force for good," said George, who frequents other bookstores and keeps abreast of what's going on in the industry.

Skylark was closed several months during the pandemic but found an opportunity amidst the chaos. "We have an amazing website now that we didn't have before. We now ship to all 50 states," he said.

"We are eternally grateful for all the support we received during the pandemic. Folks would send emails, call us up, we're incredibly grateful."

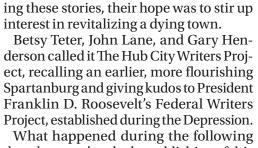
In addition to a robust staff, Skylark has another friendly soul who dishes out affectionate welcomes to visitors—Theo (short for Thelonious), a lovable black dog.

George enjoys the comradery among independent booksellers. "We're all in the same boat pushing wonderfully against the tide."

Hub City Bookshop, Spartanburg, South Carolina



Hub City Bookshop's resident cat, Zora Nelle.



decades wasn't only the publishing of this anthology but also the creation of a bookstore, a publishing house, and a growing network of writers. Their bold and empowered vision brings

us to today where Hub City Bookshop is a full-service independent bookstore that hosts more than 100 events a year, most of them free and open to the public. All following their mission to "cultivate readers and nurture writers."

Recently celebrating their 11th anniversary, they, along with their neighbor Little River Coffee Bar, have been part of the city's renaissance, a cultural and creative hub.

Twice named one of the "South's Best Bookstores" by Southern Living magazine, in 2019, they were selected as "Bookstore of the Year" by the Southern Independent Booksellers Alliance. Lofty accolades for this charming book-

store located in a historic Masonic temple in downtown Spartanburg. Books are cherished here. Established and new authors are encouraged, praised, and supported. At the helm, serving as executive direc-

tor since 2017 is Anne Waters. Hers is a natural fit as her career includes working in regional book publishing for 20 years. She's also taken time to own and run an art gallery, a yoga studio, and raise her son. When her husband's work took him to Spartanburg, she was already familiar

ore than 25 years ago, three visionary folks connected over coffee to talk about collaborating on the creation of a book showcasing stories about the town they lived in-Spartanburg, South Carolina. By telling and shar-

Anne Waters is the executive director at Hub City Bookshop in Spartanburg, S.C. She is holding a special edition of "The Hub City Writers Project," which chronicles its 25-year history from 1995 to 2020.

with the Hub City Writers Project, where she started as a bookshop manager. "I'd never worked in the nonprofit world before coming here," said Waters. "It's a great organization and we owe it all to our board members. It's a wonderful collaboration."

Established and new authors are encouraged, praised, and supported.

Waters was instrumental in bringing a regional booksellers convention to Spartanburg, infusing enthusiasm and energy into the city in northern South Carolina. A strong supporter of the American Booksellers Association, she was pleased that the city was able and receptive to hosting one of their events, which brings hundreds together. Waters attended their Winter Institute held in Baltimore, Maryland

"It's the crème de la crème, a smallish, intimate group. They've done a great job

of incentivizing younger and diverse booksellers. I have such high regard for the publishing industry." An upcoming initiative is a partnership with the Chapman Cultural Center to launch the Watson-Brown Foundation

Southern Studies Fellowship in Arts and "This is very exciting," said Waters of the three-year initiative that will select one

writer and one artist to travel the South on a collaborative project. For Waters, being a part of the booksell-

er's world is a community like no other. "Booksellers share ideas that work, we love the written word, we cherish books almost quaint in a way."

At Hub City, used as well as new books are sold. Their selection is heavily curated, and the knowledgeable staff helps with the bookstore's success.

"We know our customers, we buy for our customers, we buy for our community. It's important to know your marketplace."

At 12,000 volumes, Hub City Bookshop is at the heart of this city's reinvention. Specializing in Southern literature, literary fiction and nonfiction, history, children's books, and titles from Hub City Press, proceeds benefit creative writing education, community outreach, and publishing.

Waters acknowledges that for some, bookstores can be intimidating. "Many consider it as a library so it's imperative to make it comfortable. We want to make books available to everyone."

Ongoing events at the book shop include opportunities to meet and chat with authors. Two were recent guests in a zoom event held in early July, Caroline Cooney ("The Grandmother Plot") and Leah Weiss ("All the Little Hopes"). Weiss, in discussing her forthcoming book, happily talked about a recent road trip that she and her husband had taken.

"I went into 45 bookstores in 20 states," Weiss said. "Independent booksellers are alive and well.

The Open Book, Warrenton, Virginia



The Open Book offers a variety of book clubs for different ages.

American

Booksellers

Association

arrenton, Virginia, located roughly 45 miles west of our nation's capital is my hometown. I wasn't happy when Borders closed but I was ecstatic when the rumor mill in town talked of an independent bookstore about to open.

The Open Book opened its doors in March 2019 to a welcoming and excited community. The two women behind the vision were Cammie Fuller and Rachel Sirene. Both book aficionados, they wanted to fill a gap left when BJ's Books (a used bookstore) closed in 2014 and the big chain Borders was closed in 2011. They felt the timing was right and they were ready.

The store was packed on opening day. Brian Noyes, the owner of local Red Truck Bakery, was there for a signing event for his first cookbook—"Red Truck Bakery Cookbook: Gold-Standard Recipes from America's Favorite Rural Bakery," which had recently been released.

He also brought along sweet things—cake and shamrock cookies baked by his staff. It was a festive and joyous occasion supported by local officials and heralded by book readers young and old. As the months passed, the shelves be-

came fuller and word continued to spread about Old Town Warrenton's newest bookish business neighbor. And then there was COVID-19 hitting hard just a year later. By this time, Fuller

was running the bookstore herself with part-time help. "We never closed," she said, but while customers weren't allowed inside, Fuller got in the delivery business taking books

to customers and eventually greeting them curbside to hand them their purchases. "It was a challenging and hard time," but Fuller has survived, and The Open Book is fully open again.

"I always had online capacity from day one," Fuller said, admitting that it really kicked into gear during the pandemic. "For me, it was difficult pivoting to online. The

There are several cozy corners in The Open Book, located in Warrenton, Va., where customers can sit while browsing through a prospective read. Owner Cammie Fuller is pictured here.

amount of time for each sale seemed to take longer and there was only one person here." While a major technological shift, now, it doesn't matter where in the country you

are, she'll gladly send you your purchase. Fuller chuckles. A children's librarian for more than seven years before launching the bookstore, she said the genesis of the store's name is "a bit comical."

Fuller believes that books can change people and communities.

"At times, I do struggle with not being an open book myself," she said. But you'd never consider this lady an introvert; she is there most days to greet familiar and new customers with bright eyes and an engaging smile.

"The store is meant to be a welcoming

looking for," Fuller said.

What kinds of books does Fuller like? "I have a lot of favorites in different genres, generally more fiction, nature, and science if it's nonfiction." The Open Book caters to a variety of book clubs for different ages. The adult book club generates a list nearly a year ahead from titles that Fuller finds to ones the group suggests. She purposely will add titles that give members a chance to explore new authors and subject matter, perhap

nudge them out of a reading comfort zone. Fuller is ferocious about protecting her family time. "There's no question that it has changed the family dynamic," Fuller said, "but it is working."

"I figure out a way to be there. Priority is family," she continued, whether it's fishing, family time, or baseball games. "To lose that connection would be devastating."

Her caring and commitment to family spill over into her generous and giving nature at the store. Fuller was one of the organizers of the Warrenton Wizard Walk, a day of fun and magic for the entire family.

"It's meant to bring the community together," said Fuller of the day-long July event where wizards and magical characters in books came alive along the town's main street. Several of the stores participated in different activities.

"We're the unicorn block," laughed Fuller, knowing how popular the mythical horse is to many of her younger customers.

Fuller, like many of her bookseller colleagues around the country, believes that books can change people and change communities. Many of those owners were good mentors to Fuller when the shop opened, freely giving her advice and support.

"Booksellers are so cool. I'm so excited with the people I meet, they are awesome and there are fantastic shops all over the country."

The Open Book is young but the future is place for readers of all genres, to have the bright. They've had one brand year, a COspirit of an open book, to find what you are VID year, and now the doors are open wide.

Founded in 1900, this is a

national not-for-profit trade organization that works with booksellers and industry partners to ensure the success and profitability of independently owned book retailers and to assist in expanding the community of the book.

333 Westchester Avenue Suite S202 White Plains, NY 10604 BookWeb.org 800-637-0037 info@BookWeb.org

Mark your calendar for the next Independent Bookstore Day, a one-day national party that takes place at indie bookstores across the country on the last Saturday in April. Every store is unique and independent, and every party

authors, live music, cupcakes, scavenger hunts, kid's events, art tables, readings, barbecues, contests, and other fun stuff, there are exclusive books and literary items that you can only get on that day.

is different. But in addition to

DEAR NEXT GENERATION

Kindness, Generosity, and Bear Hugs

→ Advice from our readers to our young people

ur dad taught us kindness, giving, and best of all hugging. He was a bear hugger. He owned his own business and treated all of his employees as family.

We went to church weekly. We didn't have much when we were younger but we knew no different and it didn't seem to matter. Dad was growing his business while Mom worked nights as a nurse. Their work ethic was impressive, with lofty goals.

Their business grew, as did their financial independence. As kids we never really realized their wealth because we lived a fairly simple life. Working hard and giving generously to anyone who needed it. My dad was that guy that would give you the shirt off his back.

To this day, God rest both their souls, I'm thankful to them for instilling those traits in us. My children were fortunate to have both my parents in their lives. My grandchildren had their "big gramma' until April of this year and they loved her dearly. Telling my grandchildren stories. showing them pictures,

helping them to understand kindness to others, giving of their time and money, and learning a proper bear hug is so important.

I'm grateful to my mom and dad for all the lessons, memories, and joy they passed onto us. Keep life simple, spend quality time with family, be frugal, care about and for others, and make sure those bear hugs count! (Not an easy task with COVID!)

—Lisa Butler, California

Respectfully listen to those of opposing viewpoints.

As a teenager I made disparaging remarks regarding the other political party. My father, who was a local politician, chastised me. He told me that Democrats need Republicans and Republicans need Democrats—they are each extreme in their own way but together they draw each other to the center where most of America lives. As I've aged, I've seen the wisdom of that

It's very easy to become blind to the problems of our point of view. We can be



The bond between grandparent and grandchild is a special one.

We didn't have much when we were younger but we knew no different and it didn't seem to matter.

self-righteous and stubborn, believing our position is 100 percent accurate and any other perspective is shortsighted or even ignorant. When we reject considering another opinion we do so to our own detriment. Political correctness can rob us of our ability to analyze another standpoint, and either amend our own stance or be reassured that what we thought to be true was indeed right. Listening to the reasons someone thinks differently than we do increases our knowledge and gives the other person the dignity of being heard, even if

we don't agree with them. There is a temptation to listen only to form an argument—which isn't really listening but instead is quarreling. To really listen we must try to crawl inside another's mind and investigate how they came to the conclusion they've reached. Ask questions to discover why they believe what they do and how they came to that belief. Refuse to argue by simply stating, "I don't agree but I see some validity in why you hold that to be your position. Perhaps, after I've thought about this further, we could have another discussion."

Civility in disagreement is a benchmark of a mature person. Strive to display wisdom, respect, and honor the age-old adage, "we can disagree without being disagreeable."

—Jill Wagner, North Carolina

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, 5 Penn Plaza, 8th Fl. New York, NY, 10001





(Left) Myles Peterson, 18, CEO and founder of the Terracore Plastic Company, holds a Terra-Panel plywood alternative board. (Right) The Terracore Plastic Company's storefront.

Teen Entrepreneur Turns Plastic Waste Into Innovative Product

LOUISE BEVAN

An industrious Canadian teen has put his money where his mouth is when it comes to plastic waste.

Pooling savings from three jobs, he started a company that turns post-consumer plastics destined for the landfill into affordable building materials—thereby offering a revolutionary in-house solution to the pileup of waste plastic, filling "the role of Chinese recyclers" after China banned the import three years ago.

At 18, Myles Peterson of Castlegar, British Columbia, is CEO and founder of the Terracore Plastic Company. And the young innovator's first product, a promising alternative to plywood, is already on the market.

In an interview with The Epoch Times, the young entrepreneur said, "Unlike companies that purchase recycled plastic instead of waste plastic, we are able to take advantage of the ban to ensure not only a lower price for our customers but to make sure that no plastic goes to waste."

The teenage CEO, who works almost 11 hours a day in his factory, credited smart decisions, hard work, perseverance, a little luck, and—most importantly—the support of his father and grandmother as instrumental to his success. Peterson, who loves cooking, music, and watching "Star Wars" movies in his little free time, said he also managed the time to recently finish a course in psychology at the University of Alberta. Peterson said it all began when he went on a trip to India to attend his boss's wedding. He correlated the smog he saw in India to the burning of trash plastic. After discovering that inhaling microplastics can cause

felt compelled to do something. "I decided to start a company to fix the underlying issues, provide decent jobs, and ensure that plastic gets re-

severe neurological problems, the teen

cycled properly," he said. "The best way to use this plastic is to keep it out of the environment by keeping it in use, and I thought that the best way to do that is to put it into building materials.

"It took me months of working very long days to come up with a composition of various components, primarily plastic with some wood, alongside other materials, that was strong enough to compete with plywood."

Recalling how he grew up without much money, Peterson said his life wasn't easy, but he's "beyond grateful" to his father and grandmother's support.

"At one point, after my parent's divorce, my dad and I lived in an unfinished trailer where we used an old stepladder to get through the door," he said. "There was one

running sink connected to our neighbor's well; we couldn't afford anything else. "These circumstances fueled my desire to become successful, and hopefully help

others like me along the way."

After his father became unable to work due to a misdiagnosed illness, Peter-

son took his first job at McDonald's and was promoted to be the department head. Jobs at Humble Bean and Waf-Pho followed, both during

and after high school. With savings and a solid ambition, Peterson left his hometown and moved to Camrose, Alberta, in late January to start his business.

became his norm. Peterson's first product, the Terra-Panel, is a waterproof, weatherproof, UV-resistant, and plastic-composite panel capable of outperforming plywood. To make them, raw plas-

tic waste is shredded, washed, dried, mixed with wood chips and additives, melted, and pressed in a 90-ton press.

The finished panel—which costs about 30 percent less than plywood—can be cut, screwed, and nailed just like regular plywood, but can withstand freezing tempera-

"It's the only thing on the market that combines cost-effectiveness, weather resistance, and strength," he said.

In advising

dreams, he said, 'Pick a

goal, make a

plan, and work as hard as you

can to achieve

your goal.'

others to take

risks for their

ALL PHOTOS COURTESY OF MYLES PETERSO

The global plastic waste crisis is a persistent issue, and the ever-evolving trade laws are changing the landscape.

In January 2018, the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) banned the import of 24 grades of solid waste, including post-consumer plastics, placing a huge and immediate strain on other countries' own waste man-

agement and recycling capabilities.

Yet Peterson, with his innovative vision, sees light at the end of the tunnel.

"By doing end-to-end recycling in-house, Terracore fills the role of the Chinese recyclers," he said. "We purchase bales of unsorted waste plastic from a municipal facility [Centra-Cam, Camrose] which is very economical, and process it to end up with cleaned, separated, ready-to-use plastic.

"Companies around the globe that are ready and willing to innovate are not only able to benefit from the ban financially, but can do good to the environment by increasing the percentage of plastic that is actually turned into new products."

Very quickly, long working hours Peterson is now selling Terra-Panels from his company's storefront and welcoming inquiries from investors. Terracore is in talks with multiple construction companies about using the panels in homebuilding projects, "all of which look very promising at the moment," he said.

> In advising others to take risks for their dreams, he said, "Pick a goal, make a plan, and work as hard as you can to achieve your goal."

"Putting in hard work to try to reach the next goal is, was, and will continue to be the No. 1 most important thing contributing to everything I do," he said.

tures and be left outdoors without fracturing. Arshdeep Sarao contributed to this report.

Man Battling Rare Cancer Marries Love of His Life







Gabriel Vivas marries Natalie Sturgeon in a ceremony held at Staten Island on July 15, 2021.

LOUISE BEVAN

A paramedic diagnosed with a rare cancer and given just 6 to 12 months to live had two main items on his wish list: to marry the love of his life. and raise enough money to prevent her from struggling with mortgage payments on their new home.

Gabriel Vivas, 30, already beat testicular cancer. Yet after being diagnosed with Ewing's sarcoma/ peripheral primitive neuroectodermal tumors, a rare neuropathic bone cancer, he quickly realized his priorities in life. On July 15, Gabriel and his sweetheart, Natalie Sturgeon, said "I do" in an intimate ceremony in Staten Island, New York, accompanied by family and close

Speaking to The Epoch Times via email, Gabriel described his wife as "strong-minded, funny, and very intelligent."

"She is honestly out of my league," he admitted, "so I landed lucky big

Family friend Amanda Dasaro rallied a crowd of Staten Islanders to organize the couple's dream wedding in just one week, SILive reported. Funded entirely by donations of time, money, and services, the ceremony was held at The Stone House in Clove Lakes Park.

All eves were on Gabriel as he walked the aisle with the help of a cane and a suitcase in his free hand containing Natalie's wedding ring. His stunning bride followed, meeting Gabriel at the altar.

Natalie claimed she always thought her wedding would be "characteristic of whatever rela-

tionship I was in at the time." Her shared vows with Gabriel were exactly that. It was "more than a wedding," she reflected, "it's a show of support for him."

Marveling at the efforts of his loved ones. Gabriel said he used every ounce of strength he had to dance, have fun, and wed the woman of his dreams. "We were OK with a backvard wedding," he said, "but people really gave us a dream to remember." Seeing everyone's contribution

and efforts, Gabriel said he was

"amazed" and "grateful."

She is the reason I strive to push myself, she helps me when I'm down.

Gabriel Vivas

The newlyweds forewent a honeymoon; Gabriel was fitted for a chemotherapy port not long after their vows. A GoFundMe page is raising funds for Gabriel's journey and Natalie's future, yet despite their hardship, the couple remains focused on the positive.

"I hope everyone around the world, no matter what battle they are having, cancer or not, [knows] that it's OK to be scared and expect the unknown," said Gabriel, "but to have patience and keep your hopes up ... miracles have been made and unexplained."

Natalie, originally from California, moved to New York for pre-med

studies but instead became an EMT before enrolling in nursing school. The couple met at work, and Gabriel, born and raised in Brooklyn, was immediately won over by Natalie's

After a year of friendship, it was Natalie who suggested they take the next step forward during a trip to Disney World. Gabriel playfully made her wait a week for an answer. He was also there when Natalie lost her mom to cancer.

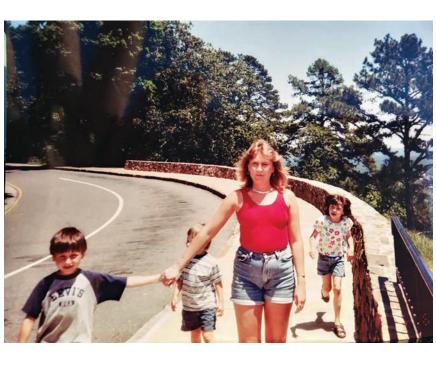
"She already dealt with this once. and I don't want to end our life dream so early," he reflected. "I wanted to grow old with her. She has her dad on her side, but at least I know she has a huge new family to support her if I am to pass earlier than expected."

Gabriel was a healthy, hardworking, social, family-oriented man before his diagnosis, claiming his life at 30 was "what I would say people strive for most of their lives.'

Today, he can no longer walk or run, has trouble eating, and has lost the strength for everyday activities. Yet, while he knows his family and friends hide their fears behind their hope for a miracle, he feels nothing but love from every angle.

Natalie's love, and her courageous mindset, give Gabriel the mental strength he believes is crucial for his ongoing battle. "She is the reason I strive to push myself, she helps me when I'm down," Gabriel said.

"I am still here and fighting for my life," he said. "No one in this world is ever alone. I just want to live long to help more people in need and spend more time with my new wife. She is the world to me."





Terracore panels are

made from shredded

plastic waste mixed

with wood chips and



(Left) Nicole Adkins and her three children in the 1990s. (Middle) Inside With God's Grace, a free grocery store and mobile food pantry. (Right) Adkins receives a check of \$10,000 from Jeff

From Going Hungry to Running a Mobile Food Pantry

Once in dire straits, Ohio mom now provides food, job training

74-year-old

customer who

'live to see 150'

because of the

affordable,

healthy food

she provided.

told her he'd

LOUISE BEVAN

Alone with three children amidst a divorce, an Ohio mom once gave up most of her own meals to feed her kids.

She'd even been rejected by her local food bank, a hardship that would inspire her to start her own free grocery store 16 years later. In late 2020, mom Nicole Adkins started With God's Grace out of a previously disused building in Northridge, Ohio. The store and mobile food pantry business offer relief nourishment to all community members in need.

They also offer job training and child care to people who need it.

Adkins's philanthropic endeavor began in 2015, just after she and her children got in a better situation. A local church needed help for Thanksgiving, and Nicole's coupon group stepped up, supplying food for the celebration, and the following Christmas. "When a child is going hungry, I know how

that feels," the mom of three told WHIO-TV. "I don't want a child or human being in our She was community going without food." She recalled her lowest point back in 1999, touched by a

as her family van was being repossessed amidst her divorce. "I went eight months eating one meal every third day," she said. Her local food bank wouldn't help, as it looked as though she had a brand-new vehicle. With God's Grace volunteer Betty Har-

mon witnessed how far Adkins has come and how hard she works for others. Wanting to see her rewarded, Harmon and her colleagues nominated Adkins for Jeff's Heroes award, run by local family-owned business Jeff Schmitt Auto Group.

Out of all the nominees, they chose Adkins as their first recipient. The group's president, Jay Schmitt, brought to the store an oversized check for \$10,000—and an

invitation to choose a brand-new car. Flabbergasted, Adkins could hardly believe her eyes.

"I am still in shock ... I don't consider myself a hero, I only follow my heart," she later posted about the moment on Facebook. The new car, she explained, "will be used to drive

to mobile locations and pick up donations." Adkins didn't expect With God's Grace to grow to reach so many. She said she was touched by a 74-year-old customer who told her he'd "live to see 150" because of

the affordable, healthy food she provided. Next up, With God's Grace is starting a community garden offering fresh food to reduce food insecurity among local residents. Volunteers have already plotted eight raised beds on land provided by Vandalia Church, and planted tomatoes,

squash, hot peppers, and broccoli. "The food that we are getting right now is going off the shelves as fast as we get it," Nicole said. "Next year we want to grow [on] the land, and not just in the raised beds ... so the community can plant their own garden and take their own food home."

How to Deal With Procrastination

BARBARA DANZA

Procrastinating? We all do it to some extent. Sometimes procrastination can even be helpful—pointing to a need to reevaluate something or allow more time for something else.

However, all too often, procrastination plays a detrimental role in our lives, leading to a small payoff in the present with a much larger cost in the future. Procrastinating results most frequently in self-inflicted stress, disappointment in ourselves, and missed opportunity.

If you'd like to aim to reduce or eliminate the amount of procrastinating you engage in, consider this.

Avoidance

Take a look at the few most recent instances of procrastination you succumbed to. What was it you were avoiding by putting off what you should have been attending to?

Perhaps you were overwhelmed by too many choices and chose to scroll social media instead; or perhaps you felt discomfort in the prospect of handling a responsibility, so you reorgarelated to the task you needed to do, so gap. you took a nap instead.

There can be a lot of emotional baggage wrapped up in things that may look simple on the surface like paying your bills or reading your emails. Avoidance leads to greater discomfort

down the road, however, while tackling the work at hand most often leads to a great sense of relief and happiness for

making progress on things that matter.

When there's a disconnect between what you believe you should be doing and what you are doing, you experience cognitive dissonance and can even come to distrust yourself and feel disappointed in yourself, sapping your confidence and encouraging more

A focus on progress rather than completion is key. Remember that starting is the hardest part.

It's the gap between who we know we could be and who we currently are in the sand, serving only to widen that

So what can we do?

Short and Sweet

First, recognize that starting to get back on track is the hardest part. So aim to make starting easier. Starting can be simplified by defining it in as small a way as possible.

Instead of setting a goal of getting your email inbox to zero, for example, set a goal of processing five emails or even one email if that's what sounds doable. Even one is much better than none and can be celebrated as progress. The magic in starting small is that you'll experience some momentum and will likely continue past your goal of one or five to make even greater progress.

Other tasks may be more conducive to a small time limit. For example, if you need to begin cleaning your home or you need to plan out a project, try working on it for just five minutes. Set a timer and just do it for that very short period of time.

The key is to simply get over the hump of starting. Once you've started, it becomes clearer how to continue and easier to keep on going. It's just like Isaac Newton said, "An object in motion tends to stay in motion."

Picture Completion

As you begin to make progress on the things you've been avoiding, aim to clarify in your mind what completion should look like. Envision that empty inbox, that clean home, that submitted assignment, or that new creation. Imagine how great it will feel to accomplish your goal and allow that vision to pull you further toward the finish line.

Habits Going Forward

When you can push through the starting line and begin to see progress on your previously avoided responsibilities, it becomes clear what a giant relief it is to stop procrastinating. The pressure that results from going about your life with unfinished business hanging overhead is substantial. When you alleviate that significantly, you can relax more and feel lighter.

Going forward, aim to establish habits that will support your desire to stop procrastinating. Evaluate what you tend to procrastinate on, and put in place systems that will support you're making progress on those. A focus on progress rather than completion is key. Remember that starting is the hardest part.

If you procrastinate on cleaning your home, aim for a five-minute cleaning sprint each morning; if you allow your bills to pile up, aim to pay one each afternoon; if you never get around to projects that are important to you, mark a 10-minute block on your calendar in which that's all you'll look at or think about each day. A fantastic read on that either encourages us to roll up our this idea and others regarding habits is nized your sock drawer instead; or per-sleeves and get to work or stick our head James Clear's "Atomic Habits: An Easy & Proven Way to Build Good Habits & Break Bad Ones."

> Kicking procrastination allows you to have confidence in yourself, knowing that you'll honor the commitments you make to yourself and that you can make progress on the things that are most important. Ready to start?

Michigan Boy Mows Lawns for Those in Need JR Achterhoff, 8, takes '50 yard challenge'



JR Achterhoff is looking to mow lawns for veterans, the elderly, single parents, and people with disabilities-



JR hard at work.

EMG INSPIRED STAFF

An 8-year-old boy in Muskegon County, Michigan, is on a mission to mow lawns for veterans, the elderly, single parents, and people with disabilities for free this summer.

JR Achterhoff, who will soon be a third-grader, decided to take the 50 Yard Challenge, a nationwide charitable activity challenging kids to mow 50 lawns for free, and get a jump on learning to help their community.

He loves helping people. He loves shoveling. He loves raking.

John Achterhoff, JR's father

The 50 Yard Challenge is an initiative of Raising Men Lawn Care Service, which started with just one man who wanted to help a neighbor and then spread across the nation.

On June 25, JR accepted the challenge and mowed the first lawn of his life. Initially, he'd been using an old mower that didn't self-propel, but thanks to a good Samaritan, he now has an awe-

"He loves helping people. He loves shoveling. He loves raking," said John Achterhoff, the boy's dad, MLive reported.

"He loves doing whatever he can to help people that struggle.

Though he enjoys mowing and helping the needy, JR, who has since completed mowing two lawns, said the challenge is a bit hard to complete.

The family is scouting for more people who might want help mowing their grass, as the boy continues with the 50 Yard Challenge. "Really hoping to be able to connect

with some veterans, police officers, firefighters, people with reduced mobility, elderly," said John. They've been at work posting flyers

at American Legion in Whitehall, the White Lake Eagles, and VFW posts in North Muskegon and Montague.

Kathy People is one of the beneficiaries of the challenge. Her front yard was mowed after she saw a post on social media advertising the boy's

"It was cute. He had such a great demeanor about him," she said, according to ABC.

"Anything that you can do to encourage the kids to do respectful things, it's a good thing."

Homeschool Is Not School at Home

BARBARA DANZA

If you are one of the ever-growing number of parents choosing to homeschool your children for the first time this year, please allow me to save you from a common misconception that delays families from reaping the benefits of what a homeschooling lifestyle has to offer.

Perhaps you experienced what your children's school termed "virtual learning" or "distance learning" last year, and you're thinking of duplicating what you observed. Perhaps you're simply recalling what your school experience was as a child, and you think you might try to recreate that in your home. Maybe you're envisioning yourself standing in front of a blackboard at the front of a classroom dictating lessons each day while your children sit quietly in their seats until

You could do that. After all, one of the greatest benefits of homeschooling is the freedom to make it whatever you deem best for your family and each child.

However, most families that set off on that road tend to quickly learn that these all-too-familiar trappings of school aren't conducive to the learning and thriving of children and are especially out of sync with a warm, loving home.

The truth is that homeschool—when at its best—isn't school at home, and for the happiest homeschoolers, school and homeschool bear little resemblance to each other.

If you think about it, it makes sense. Many of the habits, practices, rules, and policies you find in every public school exist to maximize safety among a crowd of students and teachers, to maintain order, to elicit obedience, and to control behavior. These are both unnecessary and unpleasant if brought home.

What's more, it's worth recognizing the degree to which public schools have been successful in educating their students over the past few decades. If you're unaware, their record has been poor, to say the least, and deteriorating consistently. While you may find yourself choosing homeschool this year as a result of recent world events, know that the system you're passing on has been deficient for a long time. Why duplicate a failing strategy?

To truly experience the beauty of homeschooling, recall the ways in which you've taught your children the myriad of things they've learned from you. On your watch, your children learned to walk, talk, eat, drink, get dressed, interact with family and friends, and so much more. Perhaps you taught them the alphabet or even to read simple words. Perhaps you taught them to weed your garden or bake a cake. You've instilled in them the values of your family and the character standards you deem important. You could fill pages and pages with what you've already taught your children if you really think about it—and I bet you did it all outside of a standard classroom environment, unconfined by the hours between

What you did probably looked more like encouragement—creating an environment at home and on the go in which your child could immerse him or herself and naturally learn and grow.

Further, think about what you do when you want or need to learn something new. Have you ever taught yourself a new skill or researched the ins and outs of a new hobby? What interests have you explored? What questions have you found the answers to? What skills have you acquired in your life?

The ways in which you approached such learning probably looked quite different from the way education is approached in school. What's more, you likely truly learned rather than simply memorizing enough to pass a test and then forgetting it altogether.

If this is about to be your first year of homeschooling, you couldn't have timed this decision better. There are countless resources to be found and communities of fellow homeschoolers just about everywhere.

Do your research, think about what would be the most wonderful homeschooling experience for your children, for yourself, for your family as a whole, and stay flexible as you learn and grow. Relish the fact that you don't need to duplicate school at home and that you're about to embark on the adventure of a lifetime.



Creating a good environment at home and offering encouragement provides a setting for children to learn naturally.



The lights from the parlor and kitchen shone out Through the blinds and the windows and bars: And high over head and all moving about, There were thousands of millions of stars. There ne'er were such thousands of leaves on a tree, Nor of people in church or the Park, As the crowds of the stars that looked down upon me, And that glittered and winked in the dark.

The Dog, and the Plough, and the Hunter and all And the star of the sailor, and Mars, These shone in the sky, and the pail by the wall Would be half full of water and stars. They saw me at last, and they chased me with cries, And they soon had me packed into bed; But the glory kept shining and bright in my eyes, And the stars going round in my head.







EDISON INVENTS THE

Thomas Edison's original phonograph,

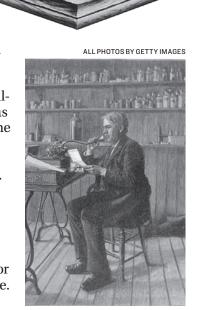
American inventor Thomas Edison invented the phonograph, a recording device that used tinfoilcoated cylinders. It was the first time a machine could record sound. including the human voice, and play it back. For his first recording, Edison recited "Mary Had a Little Lamb." This invention had a major impact on society, as it allowed for entertainment at home Before this invention,

live musicians or ac-

could be enjoyed.

tors were the only way

in which entertainment



Thomas Alva Edison (1847-1931) dictating his morning's correspondence into a phonograph in his lab.

By Aidan Danza, age 15

ROCK DWELLERS

here are many species of animal that raise their young, or live fully, on the bare rocks of cliffs, caves,

and mountains.

GANNET Like many other seabirds, the

NORTHERN

northern gannet nests on cliffsthat is, sea cliffs in the northern regions of many oceans. The cliffs are usually situated on the windward side of a headland, that is, facing the prevailing wind to make flying easier. Their nests are a simple mat of plant life, held together with a "mortar" of droppings. From the cliff, the gannets will take off, and look for schools of fish to eat near the surface of the water. Finding one, the seabirds dive, from a great height, extending their neck and flattening their wings upon their backs, to hit the water cleanly. Once in the water, the gannets will eat

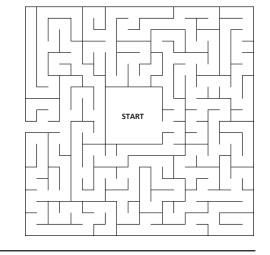
CAVE SWALLOW The cave swallow isn't the only

bird that will nest in caves, but it's the most notable in America. For a cave dweller, is quite visible, because it sometimes nests under bridges, canopies, and in abandoned buildings. It resembles many other swallows in its small feet, wide mouth with short bill, and blue plumage above and buff below. Its nest, like that of other swallows, is and when building is completed, it resembles a mud igloo. The nest is made by collecting small gobs of mud in the bill and piling them up like bricks in the cave. Like all swallows, the cave swallow eats flying insects.

MOUÑTAIN GOAT

Mountain goats live only in North America, in the Rocky Mountains. They are guite a bulky, square animal, with a thick, white coat, and black horns and hooves. The hooves are specialized for better grip on extremely steep slopes. Just like its farmyard counterpart, the mountain goat grazes on a wide variety of plant life. The goat climbs from the beginning: Just a day after birth, it must climb steep slopes just like mother.



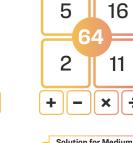


USE THE FOUR NUMBERS IN THE CORNERS, AND THE OPERANDS (+, - AND X) to build an equation to get the solution in the middle. There may be more than one "unique" solution but, there may also be "equivalent" solutions. For example: $6 + (7 \times 3) + 1 = 28$ and $1 + (7 \times 3) + 6 = 28$



Solution For Easy 1

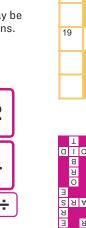
7-8+7×8



2 × (9 + 11 + 91)

(35 - 24) × 7 - 20

20



2 Retired spaceship (7)

3 It keeps people grounded (7) 4 Ploto's largest moon (or an

Underworld figure) (6) All there is (8) It's not a planet (4)

9 Carl Sagan's interest (9)

12 Planet named for the father of the Titans (6)

13 Krypton, e.g. (6) 14 Shooting star (6)

15 It has a tail (5)

16 Our "Big Blue Marble" (5)

17 Elliptical path (5)

There's one on Mount Palomar (9) The International Astronomical Union says it is no longer a planet (5)

Ringed planet (6)

solar system (3)

10 Planet with 14 moons (7)

"The War of the Worlds" base (4)

"Guardians of the ___" (6) It's at the center of the

18 It waxes and wanes (4)

19 "The Winged Messenger" (7)

20 Rock that's 'out of this world' (8)



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