

# THE EPOCH TIMES LIFE & TRADITION

FAMILY FIRST

## Building a Healthy, Thriving Family Culture

‘What if the influencers we really need are families?’ asks mom JerriAnn Webb

E. S. ARMSTRONG

The choice was easy. Although it would probably lead to mud-clad children with bugs in their pockets and a wildly different way of living, JerriAnn Webb and her husband, Matthew “Matt” G. Webb, were sure of their decision. It was August 2020—in the middle of the pandemic—and they had decided to homeschool their two children, saddle up and boots on.

JerriAnn, 38, founder of Christian nonprofit Light Breaks Through, and Matt, 44, president of Genesis Timber, are passionate about helping people live with “purpose and hope” and about advocating for the family unit. This was another opportunity to do just that.

“We believe decisions worth doing will always require sacrifice and investment,” said JerriAnn, who believes that healthy families are the true influencers who can rescue our society from spiraling further down the endless road to moral depravity. “The most attractive thing on the planet is a healthy family. Families are the glue that holds society together. When families are fractured, society crumbles.

“There is much confusion today about identity and family as society calls good evil and evil good. I believe learning happens best at home. Homeschooling allows the parent to establish a foundation of identity based on biblical truth. Parents then raise strong children who in turn raise even stronger children.”

**‘Home as the Center of Great Learning’**  
Finding it hard to accept the narrowing freedom and escalating social-distancing norms, even in schools, the Webbs decided to homeschool their kids.

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JerriAnn Webb and her husband, Matthew, with their daughter Jael and son Garrison.



Tending the flock of chickens.

‘Homeschooling has changed our family for the better in every way,’ said JerriAnn Webb.

JerriAnn Webb’s 12-year-old niece Hannah, with Garrison.



JerriAnn Webb’s niece Hannah is also being homeschooled.



Getting dirty is part of the fun.

ALL PHOTOS COURTESY OF JERRIANN WEBB; (BACKGROUND) TON PHOTOGRAPHER 4289/SHUTTERSTOCK; PHOTO ILLUSTRATION BY THE EPOCH TIMES

A young couple may not realize how happy they are, only coming to see it after reflecting later in life.



## Are We Happy Yet? Don’t Just Count the Numbers

J. BUDZISZEWSKI

Are people happy? It’s difficult to know even whether they think they are. Certainly, people are disgruntled lately. According to explosive new data from the General Social Survey, 24 percent of Americans say they’re not too happy, and only 19 percent say they are very happy. A lot of that disgruntlement is about COVID. But consider. The Harris Poll Survey of

American Happiness reported that in 2017, low numbers of people called themselves “happy” (33 percent). But in 2020, the Gallup Poll reported that very high numbers said they were “satisfied with their personal life” (about 90 percent). People didn’t suddenly become happier during those three years; the Gallup percentage was almost as high in 2017 as in 2020. The difference was due to how the question was asked.

As I explain in my new book “How and How Not to Be Happy,” it really is pos-

sible to study happiness—but we aren’t going to learn much from such numbers. People answer differently if you ask whether they are happy or whether they are happy “about” things. They answer differently if you ask whether they’re happy or whether they’re “satisfied.” They answer differently if you ask whether they’re having a “good time” or whether they’re having a “good life.”

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## FAMILY FIRST

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“What if the influencers we really need are families?” asks mom JerriAnn Webb

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They were ready to take some risks, so that their children could do so as well. They wanted their children to test limits, run with abandon, laugh, and play untethered—and without the weighty ballast of fear.

“I tried to reconcile watching them run with freedom and abandonment through our yard fully alive to sitting inside a plexiglass bubble with a cloth strapped across their face in a socially constructed illusion of safety,” JerriAnn said. “Children need the freedom to test limits and laugh and play. Matt and I strongly felt our decision to homeschool was a fight to protect their childhood.”

So, they refocused their priorities, re-routed their schedules, and retooled their library. Then, with the backing of close family, they dove headfirst into the fray. Coming up for air months after their dive, JerriAnn couldn’t be more determined and enthusiastic about their decision.

“Homeschooling has changed our family for the better in every way,” she said. “Academically, our children excelled in every subject. Emotionally, they are at rest as we strive to create a culture of peace and joy in our home.”

A day of school at the Webb household generally starts at about 9 a.m. and ends at about 3 p.m. It includes prayer and Bible study, mathematics, recess, language arts, reading, science, history, music, and the occasional chess game. Not only that, but the family is spending glorious time together, exploring nature, gardening, cooking meals, reading on the couch, trying extracurricular activities, and playing outside—a lot.

However, the schedule isn’t the only thing that has been improved.

JerriAnn is watching as her daughter, Jael, 9, and son, Garrison, 7, flourish in every subject of their academics. She said her daughter, a third-grader, read 68 chapter books in one school year. JerriAnn is looking on as her children’s imaginations blossom and their ingenuity unfolds.

The kids say that they love seeing their parents so much while homeschooling, and there’s no doubt that they like their teacher.

## Teaching Values, Strengthening Family

Together, JerriAnn and her children have been able to immerse themselves in the literature that teaches compassion, empathy, high character, and hard work. They talk about the deeper issues of life. Then, when the children are shoulder to shoulder with others on the playground, they’re

1. Tending the flock of chickens.

2. The collection of books read by Jael and Garrison Webb.

3. Carrot harvesting time.



able to express kindness and empathy.

JerriAnn’s children are growing up stable and secure with the people that they are. And, not least to the benefits of their decision, JerriAnn said her family has grown closer and has had time to become connected in a new and meaningful way.

“Simply put, we are not in a hurry. And when you are not in a hurry, connection happens,” she said.

A thriving, connected family is no meager mark for JerriAnn, and it has been the happy consequence of a decision to homeschool. Yet while she revels in the growth her family shares, she knows that the benefits of a strong family aren’t isolated to their own four walls.

A truly healthy family has the wonderful potential to influence a whole civilization.

## ‘Family Is God’s Idea’

The family is where a child begins to learn values, discern right and wrong, and interact with other people. It’s the foundational training ground from which children blossom into the individuals that step out into the world. Families are the true “influencers” in society.

So, then, whether homeschooling or not, building a healthy family culture isn’t an empty ambition to cast over the shoulder, but one of weight and honor; a noble trust. Just how to do it?

“Family is God’s idea. God’s design,” JerriAnn said. “The first institution God created was family. What if the influencers we really need are families?”

Believing there’s an author to life and how to live it, the Webbs have chosen to base the culture of their family on faith.

Honoring their faith, they learn the high values of forgiveness, love, believing, and hope that form the very culture of their home. They endeavor to see the best in one another; they pray for each other, fight for each other, and work to communicate with each other.

Still, it’s not always pretty. While homeschooling, JerriAnn is having her mettle tested as both a teacher and a role model. Living in close range, the good, the bad, and the ugly are all bound to spill out eventually. In the inevitable

moments of frustration and failure, JerriAnn is both student and teacher. When even “Mommy makes mistakes,” she finds it to be an opportunity to teach her children about character and the need for forgiveness. This is all part of the package, and JerriAnn is loving it.

“Being able to live this out in the routine of daily life with my children hasn’t always been easy, but it has been a gift,” she said.

JerriAnn believes that the best learning happens around the hearth of the home, where parents are able to teach and train children in all aspects: academic, emotional, spiritual, and moral. And, while homeschooling may not be the answer for all families, investing in healthy family life and raising children with faith and character is vital.

“Homeschooling reinforces the idea of the home as the center of great learning, connection, and faith and not merely a place of consumption,” she said. “Society has been programmed to think one cannot learn in the home and learning should be outsourced. This is simply false.

“It’s crucial to build up healthy family culture so future generations live with purpose and conviction. Kids need to know their lives are a big deal, and God has created them for a purpose.”

JerriAnn, herself, is living proof of this. She had examples. She described her parents as models of “faith, legacy, and outrageous generosity,” core values that are now woven into the very fabric of the family.

Today, JerriAnn is finding great purpose in planting heirloom seeds. The truth, virtues, and values that she lovingly teaches that her children were harvested from those who went before her. Now, JerriAnn plants and waters with the hope that those seeds will bear fruit for many generations on the horizon.

*Arshdeep Sarao contributed to this report.*

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## Are We Happy Yet? Don’t Just Count the Numbers

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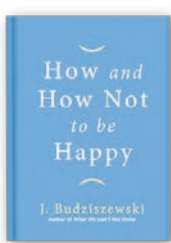
A hundred minor differences in wording stir mud into the water.

It’s difficult even to know how we’re feeling. All day Tuesday, Mr. Jones snaps at everyone around him, yet he may be the last to know he’s in a grouchy mood. “I’m fine! Leave me alone! Stop badgering me!”

Knowing whether we’re happy or unhappy is even harder. A young husband and wife may be so absorbed in caring for their family that it never occurs to them that they’re happy, yet years later they smile and realize that they were. If things “seem to be going all right” and I’m surrounded by the accoutrements of what my friends all call success, then when I am asked, “Are you happy?” I may answer, “Yeah, I guess so,” yet I may not be happy at all.

The 19th-century economist F.Y. Edgeworth believed that someday we would have instruments to measure happiness just as we have instruments to measure temperature. Today, I suppose we would measure the electrical activity in the pleasure center of the brain.

“Mr. Jones, the readout shows that you are experiencing only 5.6 units of bliss.



**‘How and How Not to Be Happy’**

Author  
J. Budziszewski  
Publisher  
Regnery Gateway

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Are you feeling a bit off today?”

But is pleasure the same as happiness? Most who have thought seriously about the matter think not. Among other things, happiness doesn’t get old; pleasure does.

My own suspicion is that although most people have some share in happiness, not many are simply happy. But the only instrument by which we can measure happiness, or study what it is, is the instrument of thoughtful conversation. Does that mean just asking everyone “What makes you happy?” and crunching numbers with the answers? No.

Why not? After all, most people must know something about happiness. Since we humans have inside knowledge of our minds, it would be impossible not to. Since outside of the most mindless fantasies, there are no such things as happiness thermometers, we could never find out more about happiness if people didn’t already know something about it. Where else but there could we start?

So it makes sense to begin with common opinion. But it doesn’t make sense to end with it. People may know a lot about happiness, but they don’t always know what it is that they know—and they

may not always want to! Common opinion has to be interrogated—and surprisingly, it has to be interrogated by other common opinion. This has been called “connecting the dots” and “assembling reminders.”

Socrates was once confronted with the common opinion that happiness depends on having enormous desires, plus enormous means to satisfy them. One might think that to refute this mistake, he would have to go outside common opinion. Instead, he appealed to it himself. For, in that case, nothing would be happier than constant, fierce itching and constant, fierce scratching—and can’t we all see that this is false?

Making common opinion about happiness cross-examine other common opinion about happiness is the most powerful method for understanding the happiness that we have. It also happens to be the method of classical philosophy, refined over centuries, even though in our time thought unscientific.

No shortcut can be found in happiness surveys; no detour in brain scans; no substitute in Twitter, astrology, or news of the rich and famous. This is what we’ve got. We may as well use it.

*J. Budziszewski, a professor of government and philosophy at the University of Texas, is the author of the new book “How and How Not to Be Happy” (Regnery, 2022). He writes about ethics and politics, and blogs at Under-groundThomist.org*



Angelia Wang in a performance.

## The Virtues That Make a Dancer

Shen Yun principal dancer Angelia Wang shares the secret of real success

CATHERINE YANG

Angelia Wang is iconic. Despite the fact that society at large has long had little working knowledge of the intricacies of classical Chinese dance, within the first decade of New York-based Shen Yun Performing Arts’s creation, Shen Yun became a household name. And Wang, having been with the classical Chinese dance company since 2008, was one of its first recognizable faces.

If you’ve seen a Shen Yun advertisement before, there’s a good chance you’ve seen Angelia Wang.

But she doesn’t associate her career with stardom. Instead, when speaking about Shen Yun, Wang always expresses sincere, heartfelt gratitude. She’s grateful that this American company has given her the opportunity to use her art and talent to express her faith and share a positive message with the world, something she would never have been able to do in communist China.

“I was born in Xi’an, the historic capital of six dynasties,” Wang said in a Shen Yun Creations video. It’s the city of the Terracotta Warriors, and the start of the Silk Road. It’s a city that houses some of China’s remaining iconic pagodas, a place where even every bus stop carries a name with history.

“The ancient Greek philosopher Plato taught that human art is an imitation of divine forms. If you look at the ancient aesthetics [and architecture] of the East and West, they’re about symmetry; they’re bright, grand, and clean,” she said. “As Shen Yun performers, we have a universal understanding of beauty, movements that are grand and long.”

After some 1,400 performances with Shen Yun, Wang knows exactly what it takes to be a Shen Yun dancer.

## Letting Go of Ego

Each Shen Yun performance includes over a dozen dances, a number of which prominently feature props. One year, there was a dance where the female dancers used octagonal handkerchiefs throughout, spinning and tossing them into the air. As a principal dancer, Wang had to perform a feat that included throwing a spinning handkerchief forward and up, performing a front walkover, and catching the quickly returning handkerchief as it fell. It was a difficult technique, and sapped her confidence.

“Every time, while waiting in the wings to go on stage, I would tell myself, don’t be nervous, OK?” She would psych herself up in the wings, tuning out everything around her.

“I remember when I first started to dance, I only thought about myself.”

Then, one night, she set down the handkerchief as she waited in the wings, and only then did she notice that she was surrounded by people who were cheering her on.

“Before that, I had never even realized,” she said. “There were people in the wings



Principal Shen Yun dancer Angelia Wang.

next to me, saying ‘Angelia, go get ‘em!’ Then I looked across the stage to the other side and saw everyone dancing around and cheering me on, as if to say, ‘Angelia, go get ‘em!’ No problem, you’ve got this!”

“At that moment, I felt—I’m not the only one dancing. I’m not the only one performing, everyone is performing together, so why think so highly of myself?”

The realization washed her nerves away, and that performance was unlike all the previous ones.

“I remember that day; when I threw my handkerchief, it felt like it wasn’t me who threw it,” she said. Usually, after finishing the walkover, Wang would frantically be searching for the returning handkerchief, in a rush to catch it in time. This time, as she finished the move, the handkerchief drifted over to land right in her open, waiting hand. Wang wondered, was it the energy of everyone coming together that was supporting it?

“At that moment, I suddenly felt [that] when I let my ego go, I gained something greater.

“When we dance, we talk about the ‘breath,’ and see if we’re breathing together, whether the flow is together. And when everyone gets to their pose at the same time, it feels like time stands still. Then you start to feel each dancer breathing with the music. It’s a subtle feeling, one that feels like something slowly flowing out from a crevice.

“No matter how many people are on stage, whether it be a dozen or 20, when everyone is mindful of each other, you can feel it. It feels like everyone is together. I feel like this is the special teamwork of a group that has been together for a long time.”

## Feminine Beauty

“A woman’s beauty has a gentle, reserved side as well as a majestic side, bright and charming,” she said.

As a longstanding principal dancer of Shen Yun, Wang has had the opportunity to play many of the major female historical figures of ancient China.

A recent and memorable role was that of Wang Baochuan, a Penelope-like figure from the story of “Han Yao,” incidentally set in the dancer’s hometown of Xi’an.

“Han Yao” is a love story from the Tang Dynasty. It’s about a lady who stood by her promise for 18 years, while she waited for her husband to come home from war,” she said. The story-based dance that Wang was performing included the character meeting her betrothed for the first time, the happy marriage, the tragic moment of parting, the 18 years of anguish, and the long-awaited reunion.

It was a role that put her acting skills through the paces.

“The choreographer said, ‘When you hear the music at these points, I want you to be moved to tears. Put in more effort in this regard,’” Wang said. She used regular dance classes as an opportunity to work out her character’s emotions, imagining scenes from her story when she heard different

music during class.

“Should I portray her timidity when she first meets her husband Xue Rengui? Or when her eyes would light up when he’s around? Her anguish, waiting for 18 years? Or when she gave in to despair when her parents arrived?” she said. “Once I have worked with the idea inside myself, I can bring it out through movement and expression.”

What Wang wanted to convey to the audience was the traditional virtue that Wang Baochuan possessed.

“When her husband decides to fight in the war, she is really reluctant to let him go,” Wang said. Despite her reluctance, she packs his things to hand to him as she sees him off and bids him farewell.

“She wants to look back, to reach out, to call out his name, but she tells herself ‘I can’t,’ because she knows that her husband, too, is reluctant to leave.

“Only when he is a good distance away does she turn to look at him,” she said. This is a particularly traditional trait, she added, “enduring without complaint.”

Wang explained the character’s motivations, something she wouldn’t have picked up on if not for her realization of her ego early in her career.

“Her decision was also based on a sense of obligation to her country. For the sake of a more important cause, she was able to think less about herself,” she said.

“If she hadn’t been mature and resolute in her decision, the Tang Dynasty might’ve lost a famous general and the country would have lost a pillar of state.” Her story is one that those of us living in modern times can still learn from, Wang noted.

“When you overemphasize your own importance, and you want more from the people around you, yet you don’t get what you want, then you feel resentful, you feel society is unjust, life is unsatisfying, and so on.

“But when you don’t put yourself first, and don’t emphasize your own importance, you even consider a smile you receive from others to be a huge blessing, you feel gratified. That’s why the ancient Chinese said, ‘To know contentment is to be happy.’

“Shen Yun wants to portray what these moral values were like and what universal principles were like, to inspire goodness in people. I think everyone has goodness in them, everyone has a side that is divinely connected.”

One of Wang’s teachers and mentors hopes that when people in the future remember Angelia as a dancer, they will remember her not just as someone who dances well, but also as a person with good character.

“To learn art, you must first learn to become a good person,” Wang said. “How your moral character really is will show itself on stage.”

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





The fledgling nation faced hyperinflation during the years 1775–1880. The notes fell in value even before independence was declared, and the Continental Army suffered for it.

## HISTORY

# America's First Experiment With Paper (Fiat) Money

In 1690, the Massachusetts Bay Colony embarked upon a short-lived experiment in unbacked paper money. It didn't go well.

## LAWRENCE W. REED

George Washington—surveyor, farmer, soldier, and statesman—never thought of himself as an economist, but experience taught him a great deal about fiat (unbacked) paper money. When the Congress foisted it on his Continental Army and tried to pay for food with it, his men suffered privation.

By contrast, the nearby British ate well because they paid in gold and silver. A few years later, in 1787, Washington declared that the inevitable effects of paper money were “to ruin commerce, oppress the honest, and open the door to every species of fraud and injustice.”

The hyperinflation of the Continental dollars that Congress printed between 1775 and 1780 wasn't the first paper money episode in North America. Nearly a century before, New England provided the setting for an especially interesting case in economic history. Washington may well have known of it.

The late Austrian School economist Murray Rothbard briefly mentioned it in a 1963 article for the Foundation for Economic Education, titled “Mercantilism: A Lesson for Our Times.”

“Massachusetts has the dubious distinction of having promulgated the first governmental paper money in the history of the Western world—indeed, in the history of the entire world outside of China,” he wrote. “The fateful issue was made in 1690, to pay for a plunder expedition against French Canada that had failed drastically. But even before this, the leading men of the colony were busy proposing paper money schemes.”

The expedition to which Rothbard referred grew out of King William's War (1688–97), which spread to England's North Ameri-

can colonies from Europe. In August 1690, under the command of Sir William Phips, 34 ships and 2,000 men departed Boston on a mission to seize Quebec in New France (French Canada).

The troops were to be paid out of the booty that Phips expected to grab once he took Quebec, but by late fall, he returned to Massachusetts defeated and empty-handed. Mutiny threatened as the men demanded payment. Its treasury depleted, the government of the colony decided on Dec. 10 to emit a sum of 7,000 pounds in paper money.

**The hyperinflation of the Continental dollars that Congress printed between 1775 and 1780 wasn't the first paper money episode in North America.**

The ill-fated Quebec expedition, however, cost much more than 7,000—an estimated 50,000 pounds, in fact. On February 3, 1691, the government belched out another batch of paper and declared that it could be used in payment of taxes.

The Massachusetts paper money of 1690–91 was “backed” only by the good faith of the colonial government, not by specie or land as had been the case for previous paper monies. The troops and other creditors weren't happy about that (the paper instantly began to depreciate) but events in quick succession prevented both a revolt and runaway inflation.

In May, the government passed a law limiting the total emission to 40,000 pounds.

It locked away the printing presses so no one could print any more. In October, it destroyed at least 10,000 pounds of it that had been paid to the Treasury in taxes. Furthermore, by year's end, it levied 30,000 pounds in new taxes for the purpose of retiring the bulk of the remainder. And Phips himself dipped into his personal fortune to buy much of the rest with gold.

Twenty-five years later, the Western World's first experience with paper hyperinflation took place in France. From 1715 to 1720, without any of the provisions that restrained the Massachusetts paper of 1690–91, France printed until its money became utterly worthless.

Debasement of a nation's money is a time-honored occupation of more governments than one can count. Before paper, it took the form of “clipping” coins, sometimes until they became too small to circulate, or by mixing junk metals in with the precious ones. The ancient Israelites were criticized for it by the prophet Isaiah (“Thy silver has become dross”). The Romans financed their warfare/warfare state by repeatedly debasing the currency. The German micro-states famously did it during the Thirty Years' War (1618–48), and so on, and so on. At least the Massachusetts Bay Colony in the late 17th century nipped it in the bud rather quickly.

A gold or silver standard, by the way, doesn't mean paper money can't be printed. It simply means that paper is a redeemable substitute for the real thing. When their money is “backed” by gold or silver, people may prefer the convenience of paper, and have confidence in it, if they know they can redeem it on demand.

Why did Massachusetts embark upon a short-lived experiment in unbacked paper money in 1690? Why didn't it simply do as it and other colonial governments had done

before, namely, immediately offer to redeem the paper into coin or land? The expenses of war don't tell the full story here.

Historian Richard Sylla notes that Massachusetts lost both its charter and its mint in 1684. Until those were restored, it had no choice but to engage in what he calls “monetary innovation.”

Expanding on that thesis, historian Dror Goldberg says that without a charter after 1684, all land in the colony reverted to the King, and no one but the King could offer his land to anybody. Until a new charter could be negotiated, London prohibited the colony from operating a mint, which closed the door to backing the paper with coin. The best that Massachusetts could do was to issue paper with nothing more than a vague promise to redeem it in something of value at some later date.

As Goldberg puts it, “While paper money had to be issued to pay the troops, it had to look as if it was not money.”

To Massachusetts's credit, the paper money of 1690–91 wasn't forced on anyone. The government didn't declare it to be legal tender, meaning no one was required to use it to settle debts. Not even the troops were required to accept it or to use it in any payments. It was quickly limited and retired. All this means that to the extent the paper was successful, it was because it mimicked a hard money standard more than it was a true experiment in long-term, unbacked and irredeemable paper money.

In effect, the notes were short-term IOUs. George Washington's skepticism of paper money still stands. The Massachusetts experience of 1690–91 doesn't make a case for unbacked paper money unless measures are taken almost immediately to either destroy or to back it, in which case one must ask, why bother with it in the first place?

*Lawrence W. Reed is president emeritus of the Foundation for Economic Education (FEE), 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 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.*

## For Additional Information, See:

**“The Massachusetts Paper Money of 1690”** by Dror Goldberg (Journal of Economic History, December 2009)

**“A History of American Currency”** by William Graham Sumner

**“Tracts Relating to the Currency of Massachusetts Bay, 1682–1720”** by Andrew McFarland Davis

**“Colonial Currency Reprints, 1682–1751, Vol. 1”** by Andrew McFarland Davis

**“Mercantilism: A Lesson for Our Times”** by Murray N. Rothbard

**“Monetary Innovations in America”** by Richard Sylla (Journal of Economic History, March 1982)

**“When Money Goes Bad”** (free eBook) by Lawrence W. Reed

**“Where Have All the Monetary Cranks Gone?”** by Lawrence W. Reed

**“The Times That Tried Men's Economic Souls”** by Lawrence W. Reed

seated; he always goes and sits at table one,” Pollozani said. “Since now he always comes in and sits at this table, let's make this the Don Graves table.”

The local war hero stops by every day—on a diet day ordering an English muffin and fruit, but also loving his classic Benedict, bacon, and eggs.

“We recognized that he always wore his hat that says ‘Iwo Jima Survivor,’ and we started asking him about it,” the owner said.

“We got to sitting down and got to discussing about his service in the military, and Iwo Jima, and all that stuff.”

In his honor, they hung above his table pictures of Graves in the military, the battle of Iwo Jima, and the flag-raising.

A history buff, Pollozani gleaned that Graves, growing up in Michigan, first tried to join the Marines at age 16 because of the attack on Pearl Harbor, but was rejected because of his age.

On his birthday six months later, he signed up.

# Fighting for Her Twins' Life

Despite being told that her twins would die the day they were born, after 22 weeks of gestation, Kayla Marie Ibarra refused to give up

## LOUISE BEVAN

A mom from Canada who went into labor with twins at just shy of 22 weeks gestation was told by her doctor that they would die the day they were born. However, she refused to give up on her babies, and against the odds, her baby girls pulled through, heading home after 115 days in the NICU.

Now, mom Kayla Marie Ibarra advocates for life at 22 weeks gestation for other premature babies and their parents.

Ibarra and her husband—who have been together since the age of 18 and were already parents to a toddler, Noah—found out they were expecting twins during her six-week ultrasound.

“I was bawling my eyes out and my husband was laughing,” Ibarra told *The Epoch Times*. “He and my mom had suspected twins, based on how sick I was and how quickly I was already showing. I couldn't even grasp it.”

Ibarra described her pregnancy with the twins as “smooth sailing” until the 20-week mark, at which point a gush of fluid convinced her that her water had broken. “The hospital said it [hadn't], but because of that, I was pushed into the high-risk category with bi-weekly ultrasounds,” she shared. “I didn't even make it to my first bi-weekly ultrasound at 22 weeks, because I went into labor at 21.5 weeks.”

Ibarra did not receive the response she expected, or hoped for, from her primary physician.

She said, “When I went into labor, the doctor told me, ‘The twins will be born today and they will die.’ I said, ‘Excuse me?’ and she said, ‘Babies this gestation simply do not survive. It's impossible.’”

“I told her I absolutely refused to birth my living children and hold them while they died.”

In a story she shared with *Love What Matters*, Ibarra added, “She told me she wouldn't let me see the twins, or hear their heartbeats, because it was a ‘waste of time.’” Too angry to pray, Kayla waited with her family in her hospital room.

Her labor lasted four painful days and she begged for medication, which she was denied. To add more trauma to the situation, Ibarra was diagnosed with pneumonia. Yet, when active labor began at 22.2 weeks on Sept. 27, 2018, hope came in the nick of time. A new doctor entered the room and informed the couple that they could transfer to a hospital in London, Ontario, to deliver the twins. “For the first time in four days, I felt a small glimpse of hope and victory,” Ibarra told *The Epoch Times*.

Luna and Ema were born in London at 9:12 and 9:29 p.m., respectively. Luna weighed just over 14 ounces and measured 11 inches long; Ema weighed 1 pound and measured 12 inches long.

Ibarra said she had never seen babies so small.

From being told the babies were a lost cause to the flurry of activity that followed their birth, Ibarra and her family were in shock. The first 40 days in the NICU were the roughest, said Ibarra, who called it “very touch and go.”

“Luna was very sick, and we didn't think she'd make it most of the time,” she explained. “She was resuscitated four times and Ema was resuscitated once.”

“[But] the day they were born, I saw the fight written all over them. Every single time, they came back after being resuscitated.”

The twins were in the NICU for a total of 115 days and were discharged even before

“We got to respect our military veterans, especially Don Graves, because he's a flamethrower,” said Pollozani, a police officer. “The life expectancy of a flamethrower was like 13 minutes.”

“He's well known within the DFW region here at Fort Worth, and people have a lot of respect for him.”

Graves once lugged a 72-pound flamethrower onto that nasty beach with a Marine on either side to assist, the survivor recalled. His task was to take out pillboxes where the enemy was fortified.

He saw legendary Medal of Honor awardee John Basilone shot dead 100 feet to his right. “We couldn't move, we couldn't get up,” Graves said. “The kids were getting killed. Every time they would go over the top, they'd drop.”

It took three grueling days to reach their goal: Suribachi, 540 feet away.

Graves saw the iconic Iwo Jima flag raising, said goodbye to his friends, and shipped off the island.

## “

**[The doctor] said, ‘Babies this gestation simply do not survive. It's impossible.’ I told her I absolutely refused to birth my living children and hold them while they died.**

Kayla Marie Ibarra

ALL PHOTOS COURTESY OF KAYLA MARIE IBARRA AND TWENTYTWO MATTERS



Kayla Marie Ibarra co-founded TwentyTwoMatters, an organization that helps parents advocate for their babies, in addition to offering a list of hospitals that offer life-saving interventions for babies born at 22 weeks.

their due date. Kayla called their homecoming a “victory.”

Since then, her girls have learned to crawl, walk, talk, and feed themselves, all things Ibarra and her husband were told they wouldn't do.

However, the early days as Ibarra recalls were not without their challenges; as she suffered from PTSD watching her babies fight for their lives, but the family was bolstered by their faith.

“We knew no matter how the twins came to us, they were fearfully and wonderfully made in the image of our savior, therefore perfect,” said Ibarra.

Today, the twins are thriving at 3 years old. Luna and Ema, who now goes by Rosie, are developmentally caught up to their full-term peers and their parents no longer adjust their ages.

“They've been approved to start school on time with their peers, based on their birthdays. It's truly remarkable,” said Ibarra.

Describing her girls as “strong and brave,” she continued, “they conquer things maybe children shy away from at their age and size, like the highest monkey bars.

“Luna is full of spunk; she has my personality, which is both amazing and challenging. Rosie is so funny, and we tell her that she's truly Noah's twin, because those two are so much alike!”

To advocate for other severely premature babies, Ibarra started a nonprofit, *TwentyTwoMatters*. The organization provides medical articles and a world map of hospitals that intervene at 22 weeks. They have also conducted radio interviews and worked one-on-one with parents in labor to help them advocate for their kids.

“Because of *TwentyTwoMatters*, that I run with my co-founder, Amy Hyde, we have seen over one hundred 22-weekers saved who were being denied care,” Kayla explained, adding that these babies are capable of so much if given the chance.

“The decision to intervene on a baby born at 22 weeks should rest in the hands of the parents, not the hospital,” she insisted. “Twenty-two does matter, and these children, my children, matter.”

Ibarra also shares updates on family life with her husband, Noah, and the twins on Instagram, @mrskayla\_ibarra.



Twins Ema and Luna today.



The Ibarra family.

**Graves once lugged a 72 pound flamethrower onto that beach with a Marine on either side to assist. His task was to take out pillboxes where the enemy was fortified.**

Of the prayer he uttered on the beach, Graves recounted: “I put my face in the sand. I said, ‘God I don't know much about you. But if you can do for me what people tell me you can, I will serve you the rest of my life.’”

He did just that. Returning home and then getting laid off from a refrigeration factory, he joined a ministry and served the church for 32 years.

Some 70 years after that prayer, Graves walked into Cafe Republic and told his story of sacrifice and patriotism—how he and those he fought alongside did so for love of country and the American flag.

Last year, the cafe helped Graves celebrate his 97th birthday and had a massive turnout.

“The guy's [almost] a hundred years old and just a strong guy,” Pollozani added. “They don't make guys like that anymore.”

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ANNA NAHAREJ/SHUTTERSTOCK

If you can record five things you're grateful for today, you're off to a great start.

## Minding Your Mindset

Practicing gratitude and remembering your hopes for the future can lead you to think more positively

## BARBARA DANZA

Most of us probably understand that our thoughts have a huge influence on our lives. As Roman stoic philosopher Seneca once said, “Everything hangs on one's thinking—a man is as unhappy as he has convinced himself he is.”

If you've taken on the pervasive fear, anxiety, or anger that have become all too “normal” in recent times, take a step back and consider how these thoughts are serving you, and how a change in mindset may make all the difference.

A more positive mindset or one free of such negative attachments will allow you to go forward unfettered, to aim at the highest possible virtue, to use your innate gifts, and to fulfill your God-given potential.

## Recognize Your Thoughts

No one in your life communicates more frequently with you than you do. Imagine being an objective observer of your own thoughts. What have you been communicating to yourself? Are you constantly repeating what you take in from the news or social media? Are you kind to yourself? Are you beating yourself up over what you should be doing or achieving? Objectively observing your thoughts can be an eye-opening experience. It can be helpful to write down your thoughts as they come and see them for what they are.

## Replace Your Thoughts

You'll likely notice some thoughts you repeatedly think that aren't true and aren't serving you in any way. It can become a habit to think the same thing over and over again.

Aim to replace those thoughts with something that's true and that does serve you. If you find fear, replace it with hope. If you find self-loathing, replace it with self-love. If you find resentment, replace it with compassion. Like any habit, you can choose to change your habit of negative thinking and replace it with a more positive outlook.

## Practice Gratitude

An easy way to shift your mindset in a positive direction is to take up a gratitude practice. Take pen to paper (or some digital note system if you must) and record at least five things you're grateful for each day. If you've got air in your lungs, a roof over your head, food to eat, and people to share your life with, you're off to a great start. Get specific, like the smell of the coffee as it brews in the morning, or the warmth of your blanket after a long and busy day.

There's so much to be grateful for; taking time to recognize and appreciate these things is a simple and surefire way to set your mind in the right direction.

## Remember Your Dreams

After the times we've been through, it may be worthwhile to step back and recall who you were before—maybe just before the pandemic, or way back to your childhood, or a time in your life when you were thriving—when you dreamed big and weren't hindered by fears, worries, and limitations.

What were your thoughts then? What were your hopes for the future? What were you aiming for? What gifts and talents did you recognize in yourself? What did you believe your purpose in life was? What brought you joy? What did you find meaningful?

## Set Your Sights on the Future

If you've lost hope for the future, it's time to recapture that hope. Diving deep into your spiritual practice may be the most helpful way to do this. There is hope. You've just lost sight of it.

Once you feel hopeful, set some concrete goals for your future, both long-term and short-term ones, and devise a plan.

## VETERANS

## At a Fort Worth Cafe, a Local Hero Gets His Own Table

Marine Don Graves was the only flamethrower of his battalion to survive Iwo Jima

COURTESY OF THE CAFE REPUBLIC FORT WORTH, TEXAS



## MICHAEL WING

Cafe Republic on North Beach Street in Fort Worth, Texas, holds a special place for someone who once prayed on a beach during the Battle of Iwo Jima.

That someone is Don Graves, 97, who joined the Marine Corps in 1942 at age 17, before shipping off to fight alongside 335 other Marines, of whom only 18 came off the island.

In his 2nd Battalion, Graves was the only flamethrower to survive.

He started coming into Cafe Republic in 2019, soon after owner Jimmy Arta Pollozani first opened its doors, the proprietor told *The Epoch Times*.

“He comes in and he doesn't wait to be



## FAMILY

# Strong Foundations Make Strong People:

## Building Virtue in Our Children

JEFF MINICK

The 7-year-old darts through the dining room carrying his plastic shield and wooden sword, and yelling “Up, men! Up and at ‘em!” Close on his heels is his 5-year-old sister, barefoot, wearing a tiara on her head, floating in her princess dress, and carrying a spatula for her scepter.

Grandpa sees a little boy still dressed in his pajamas who’s acting out one of the stories they’d read the previous evening about King Arthur and his knights of the Round Table. He sees a little girl who has watched several Disney movies, old and new, and is play-acting as one of the heroines.

But how do they see themselves?

Here, we must engage in guesswork and supposition. Odds are likely, however, that in his imagination, the boy is decked out in glittering armor and is cutting down a band of wicked enemies with that mighty Arthurian sword, Excalibur. And surely the girl sees herself as a good-hearted and honorable princess, her flimsy dress transporting her to a palace, her spatula a magic wand that can protect the good and the virtuous from evil-doers.

In such games as these, we see the yearning for nobility and virtue aroused in our children by imagination, play, and education.

And there are many, many ways we can cultivate this garden of goodness so that it blossoms in adulthood.

### First, Vigilance

“Eternal vigilance is the price of liberty” runs an old saying. It’s also the price of good parenting.

In his recent interview with Jan Jekielek of The Epoch Times, author and speaker Rod Dreher addressed several current topics, particularly our slide here in the West toward a soft totalitarianism. Near the end of that conversation, Dreher urged parents to prepare their children for the coming troubles and suffering such a dictatorial government might bring.

“You want them to become young men and women of vision, faith, and courage.”

Dreher also warned about the problems of indoctrination in so many of our schools, the teaching, for instance, of critical race theory and gender issues even to elementary school children. These, as he pointed out, undercut the home and the family.

In addition to keeping an eye on the schools, today’s parents also face a challenge never imagined by their ancestors:



Through play we can see children's yearning for nobility and goodness.

**Our kids need to be taught hope. Without hope, there is no resilience, no grit to carry us forward; without such tools, we can't expect our young people to find the courage and vision to fulfill their potential.**



Rod Dreher, the author of “Live Not by Lies” and a senior editor at The American Conservative.

SAMIRA BOUADOU / THE EPOCH TIMES

“A child gets moral notions from the fairy-tales he delights in, as do his elders from tale and verse.”

Charlotte Mason, educator

social media. Facebook, TikTok, Twitter, texting, and other tools of communication are some of mankind’s great accomplishments, but they can also be dangerous, especially for the young. The friends and strangers who appear on these devices can offer advice that can diminish or even destroy the teaching of parents.

To raise virtuous children, we must remain acutely aware of the power of these electronic mentors and guard against their negative influence. That’s of the utmost importance if we want to give our kids a sound moral grounding.

Now let’s head in a more positive direction.

### Foundations From Literature

Educator Charlotte Mason (1842–1923), who is still a force among homeschoolers, once wrote, “A child gets moral notions from the fairy-tales he delights in, as do his elders from tale and verse.”

Fairy tales, fables, stories from history and religion: Parents have a vast array of books available to them for the preschool set. Such books crowd the shelves of our public libraries and bookstores, and nearly all of them bring both entertainment and moral lessons to the little ones.

As the children grow older, they’ll encounter plenty of other literary works that will strengthen this early foundation. “The Childhood of Famous Americans” series, the stories of writers such as J.R.R. Tolkien and C.S. Lewis, William Bennett’s “The Book of Virtues,” and Louisa May Alcott’s “Little Women” are just a few of the hundreds of volumes that should appeal to young readers. And when our students become more nuanced in their thinking, we can introduce them to writers like Dostoevsky, Tolstoy, Dickens, Twain, and Austen.

These and other classics are wonderful for teaching the virtues because they don’t beat readers over the head with right and wrong. Instead, they illustrate, often in profound ways, the messages of good and evil.

### Say No to Despair

As we all know, it’s been a tough two years. Our society has undergone a series of disasters, and in some cases, we have personally suffered them. These trials hardly need repeating here.

The anxieties born from these ordeals, particularly the lockdowns, masks, and fears induced by coronavirus, have wreaked havoc among our kids. Many of them have fallen behind in their schooling, huge numbers are suffering from depression, and all of them, just like the rest of us, have emerged from these tribulations bearing wounds and scars.

Our kids need to be taught hope. Without hope, there is no resilience, no grit to carry us forward; without such tools, we can’t expect our young people to find the courage and vision to fulfill their potential.

To help them become warriors, to grow into adults who can stand up for the right

and at the same time, show mercy and compassion when needed, we might consider turning our meal times and our dining room tables into a classroom. Our textbooks would be the day’s headlines, and our inspiration would be Socrates, who used questions and logic to try to discover truth.

Depending on the age of the children, we could discuss openly and honestly the issues of the day, examining the fallacies and misinformation that plague so much of what we read or see on the news and leaving aside the bitterness and enmity so common in today’s dialogue.

### Philosophy 101

Alchemists once sought out the mysterious philosopher’s stone in hopes of using it to change base metals into gold or silver. Some also believed that a tiny piece of this stone dissolved into a liquid could become a medical cure-all.

While the philosopher’s stone was a myth, philosophy and religion can help bring out the riches that lie within our children and keep them healthy, at least mentally and spiritually. We might raise all sorts of great questions in our dining room seminars: “What does it mean to live a good life? Why is prudence considered one of the four classical virtues? Are there justifiable limits to free speech? What qualities will you look for in a spouse? How will you live out your faith in a secular society often opposed to religion?”

Raise such questions, and parents and children learn more about one another.

### The End Game: Engagement

“Only connect” is the much-quoted epigraph of E.M. Forster’s “Howard’s End.”

Connection will constitute one of the great benefits of raising children “of faith, vision, and courage.” When we make these efforts, we not only help build their character, but we deepen our bond with them. When they are grown, we should also hope that bringing them up with a moral framework will connect them more strongly to their own family, to friends, and to the culture around them.

That young King Arthur will then possess the moral skill-set to wave a metaphorical sword and protect his loved ones as well as the weak and the persecuted. That princess will find herself with the power to stand in the gap and defend others against injustice and oppression.

As the old adage runs, “Mighty oaks from little acorns grow.”

And heaven knows our culture has need of some mighty oaks.

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](http://JeffMinick.com) to follow his blog.

## GOLDEN ERA FILMS

# For the Month of Romance: A Trio of Valentines in One Movie

TIFFANY BRANNAN

St. Valentine’s Day has just passed, but frankly romantic comedies are never out of season. Whether you watch them with your beloved, your family, or just your dreams, consider that some of the most charming romantic films ever made come from Hollywood’s Golden Age (1934–54).

Beyond iconic romances like “Casablanca,” whose name is recognizable 80 years after its release, countless forgotten masterpieces have equally thrilling love stories, like “The Story of Three Loves” from 1953. If you appreciate dramatic plots, traditional arts, and beautiful cinematography, this film is worth watching.

European travel, graceful ballet, classical music, and love stories: “The Story of Three Loves” offers all of these in three dramas, which span two hours in this artistic anthology film. Featuring an impressive array of Old Hollywood talent, “Loves” is comprised of three separate segments, each with a different cast and production team.

The three stories are connected by the fact that they all begin on a ship bound for America. One of each story’s principal characters hears something that reminds him of a poignant passage in his life, and the segment is a flashback from his memory.

In alphabetical order, the stars include Pier Angeli, Ethel Barrymore, Leslie Caron, Kirk Douglas, Farley Granger, James Mason, and Moira Shearer, plus noteworthy supporting actors Agnes Moorehead, Zsa Zsa Gabor, Richard Anderson, and 10-year-old Ricky Nelson.

Gottfried Reinhardt directed two of the segments, with Vincente Minelli directing the third. Writers John Collier, Jan Lustig, and George Froeschel collaborated on the screenplays, each contributing to two segments. Each of these segments is set in a different European country.

### The Stories

“Jealous Lover” stars James Mason as Charles Coutray, a famous British ballet choreographer. At an audition for his new ballet, he is entranced by the originality of a young ballerina, Paula Woodward (Shearer). However, the audition ends abruptly when she collapses. Afterward, a doctor tells her she has a heart condition which makes it fatal for her to pursue a ballet career. She and her aunt (Moorehead), a former ballerina herself, are determined to find new interests in life.

However, Paula is unable to forget dancing, so she goes to the opening of Mr. Coutray’s ballet. After everyone else has left the theater, she dances on the empty stage, imagining herself in the lead role.

Coutray, watching from the shadows, is amazed by how she improves upon the prima ballerina’s performance. He invites her to come to his studio that very night and help him figure out what’s wrong with his ballet. Although Paula initially refuses because of her health, she eventually agrees to go with him.

As she inspires him to new levels of greatness that evening, they both see the chance to begin a new life of art and love together.

“Mademoiselle” stars Leslie Caron as a young French governess known only as Mademoiselle. Her pupil is a difficult American boy named Tommy (Nelson), who would rather spend his stay in Rome exploring than listening to her recite French poetry.

On his final evening in Rome, Tommy visits an eccentric old woman named Hazel Pennicott (Barrymore), who is rumored to be a witch. He tests her powers by asking her to make him a grown man for a few hours that night. At the stroke of eight, her spell takes effect, turning him into a handsome young man (Granger). Although he now looks mature, his boyish inclinations lead him outdoors, a toy under his arm. However, he runs into Mademoiselle while walking in the moonlight. He is struck by her beauty and finds himself feeling very differently about the sensitive young Frenchwoman and the poetry she loves. They fall in love, yet Tommy knows that the spell will only last until midnight.



MOVIESTILLDB

A lobby card for “The Story of Three Loves.”

“Equilibrium” focuses on Kirk Douglas, who plays former aerialist Pierre Narval in post-war France. The segment begins with his rescuing Nina Burkhardt (Angeli) from the Seine River. He alone knows that her accident was a suicide attempt, so he visits and befriends her while she recovers in the hospital. Nina’s husband was killed in a concentration camp, and she blames herself for unknowingly revealing his escape plan.

Pierre is similarly haunted by the death of his highwire partner during a dangerous stunt, which everyone says he caused through his recklessness. Since then, no partner has stuck with him. Disregarding the pleas of his manager (Steven Geray), Pierre persuades Nina to become his new partner as he attempts to make a comeback as an aerialist.

The profession is incredibly dangerous, but Pierre believes that Nina can do it successfully and find new meaning in her life. While training together tirelessly, both these tortured people unwittingly start wanting to live for each other, even as they risk their lives on the high wire.

### Ballet, Poetry, and the Trapeze

There is more than just a story as part of each drama in the movie. Every segment includes an artistic addition. For instance,

“Jealous Lover” features magnificent dancing from one of the most recognizable film ballerinas, Moira Shearer of “The Red Shoes” fame. All the dancing in this film was choreographed by Sir Frederick Ashton, the acclaimed choreographer from the Sadler’s Wells Ballet, where Shearer was a principal ballerina alongside Margot Fonteyn.

The dance which Paula improvises for Coutray is one of the finest examples of mid-century ballet put to screen. The music is Sergei Rachmaninoff’s dramatic “Rhapsody on a Theme of Paganini,” played exquisitely by pianist Jakob Gimpel. Moira wears a beautiful white costume, which is flattering and feminine yet exquisitely fluid. The backdrop for her lovely dancing is Coutray’s colorful studio, complete with pillars, plants, and artistically dressed statues of dancers.

Although Leslie Caron was a professional ballerina with Roland Petit’s troupe “Ballet des Champs Elysees” before her film debut in 1951, she doesn’t dance in “Mademoiselle.” Instead of ballet or some other performing art form, this segment provides culture in the form of French poetry. As a native French speaker, Leslie Caron beautifully recites French poetry to her student. Young Tommy’s struggles with conjugating irregular French verbs are actually educational to those interested in learning the beautiful language.



PUBLIC DOMAIN

Actress Pier Angeli in 1954.

After watching this movie, you’ll definitely want to use the word “suspensus.” (You’ll understand what I mean once you’ve seen the film.)

“Equilibrium” features a different sort of entertainment, but one which requires just as much physical control as ballet. The story centers around Pierre and Nina’s training as an aerialist team, so there is extensive footage of high wire work. The most impressive thing is that Kirk Douglas and Pier Angeli did most of the trapeze work themselves. Although stunt doubles were utilized in the far shots of aerial flips, you can clearly see the stars’ faces as they do most of the technical work, revealing that they did it themselves.

The stunts require an amazing amount of strength, skill, and timing, so it’s impressive to see actors doing the acrobatics themselves in this era before face replacement technology. These moves are more than interesting asides; they are a vital part of the story, serving to propel the third segment to its dramatic conclusion.

### A Triple Valentine

Most romantic movies only offer one love story, with perhaps an occasional love triangle thrown in for color. “The Story of Three Loves” delivers just what its title promises: three romantic plots in one two-hour film. Just as each segment is different, each couple is different. In “Jealous Lover,” we have passionate artists whose love inspires each other, even as her looming illness threatens their happiness.

In “Mademoiselle,” a powerful spell unites an unlikely couple, separated by years, proving how rarely people truly know the depths of those around them. In “Equilibrium,” a pair of tortured misfits become aerialist partners, while unknowingly helping each other to restore balance to their broken lives.

“The Story of Three Loves” is not the easiest film to find, but you can purchase it on DVD or stream it on Odnoklassniki (ok.ru), a popular Russian social media site comparable to YouTube. Almost any classic film can be found in its video category, though you may have to sort through the numerous uploads to find a copy without foreign subtitles or overdubbed dialogue. (Unlike many streaming websites, ok.ru won’t fill your computer with viruses, so you can utilize it without concern.)

No matter how you decide to watch it, “The Story of Three Loves” is a unique, emotionally stirring delight. Classic film fans and modern movie buffs alike will enjoy this artistic addition to any Valentine’s celebration.

Tiffany Brannan is a 20-year-old opera singer, Hollywood history/vintage beauty copywriter, film reviewer, fashion historian, travel writer, and ballet writer. In 2016, she and her sister founded the Pure Entertainment Preservation Society, an organization dedicated to reforming the arts by reinstating the Motion Picture Production Code.



A studio portrait of American actor Kirk Douglas circa 1949.

“The King and the Beggarmaid,” 1898, by Edmund Leighton.



PUBLIC DOMAIN

SAMIRA BOUADOU / THE EPOCH TIMES



# Offering Boys the Call to Adventure

A conversation with Trail Life USA’s Mark Hancock

BARBARA DANZA



ANASTASIYA.ADAMOVICH/SHUTTERSTOCK

At a time when boys are receiving some disturbing messages from society and technology addiction is through the roof, there has never been a greater need to encourage boys to get outside and have an adventure.

Trail Life USA is a Christian, boy-centered scout organization that encourages “good old-fashioned outdoor fun.” I asked CEO Mark Hancock about his organization and for his advice for parents who want to support their sons. Here’s what he said.

**The Epoch Times:** What inspired the formation of Trail Life USA?  
**Mark Hancock:** In 2013, the Boy Scouts of America (BSA) began a departure from their traditional values that ultimately led them to abandon their focus on boys. Hundreds of volunteers around the country began connecting through forums and other online platforms, discussing the need for an alternative for churches and other organizations that would no longer be able to align with the distorted values of BSA.

Out of this grass-roots movement, Trail Life USA arose.

There is also a great need to provide a male-centric environment for boys where they could be guided by good men, grounded in biblical truths, appreciated for their strengths, and inspired to Christlikeness.

**The Epoch Times:** Troops have spread across the nation since its launch in 2014. What do you feel drives parents to involve their boys in your organization?  
**Mr. Hancock:** In spite of the challenges during this period of worldwide pandemic, Trail Life USA has continued to experience unprecedented growth. September 2021 saw our largest increase of members in our history, when 5,000 new Trailmen joined. In 2021, we saw an 85 percent increase in new members over 2020, and 38 percent over 2019.

Truly, we can thank God for this exciting growth while pointing to a number of other factors that might answer the question: Where is this growth coming from? Here are my thoughts:

“In the cultural slide away from firm morals and principles, boys are adrift in a sea of relativism.”

Mark Hancock, CEO, Trail Life USA

Trail Life USA members at a July 4 parade in Fairfax, Va, in 2016.



JSTONKATOV/CC BY 2.0

## 5 Reasons to Encourage Your Children to Journal

BARBARA DANZA

Journaling is a practice that offers numerous benefits to adults, including stress relief, mental clarity, and overall life improvement. The benefits it offers to children and teens go even further.

More than ever, children need an outlet for their thoughts, a receptacle for their big ideas, and a way to express their creativity. Journaling is a simple way to support these needs.

**A Healthy Habit**

The simple act of keeping a record of your days can be a cathartic exercise in the present and an enlightening gift for your future self. A journal offers the benefit of allowing space to flesh out your thoughts and feelings, capture ideas, clarify your intentions, and enjoy activities such as doodling or making lists. It also offers a record to look back on for further understanding and introspection in the future.

Practicing self-expression and self-reflection can lead to greater self-awareness. What’s more, the habits of consistency and diligence that regularly writing in a journal evokes are valuable and transferable to many other aspects of life.

**Encouraging Creativity**

An enjoyable way to introduce journaling is to have your child decorate his or her own journal. Craft items such as colored duct tape, paints and markers, stickers, photos, stencils, and so forth will allow them to turn a simple notebook into a personalized treasure.

Encourage your child to make his or her journal their own. There are no rules about the right or wrong thing to include in a journal. Explain to your child that journaling allows for all forms of expression within. Whether your child wishes to doodle, paste photos, write a poem, jot down the lyrics to a favorite song, or write a traditional journal entry, allow their creativity to flourish. Keep craft supplies close at hand, so that your child always has what he or she needs to make his or her journal their own.

**Improving Writing Skills**

The best way to develop the skill of writing is to write. One way to encourage more writing in your child’s journal is to offer optional prompts. For example: “My favorite part of the day was ...” or “Today, I am grateful for ...” or “Something I’ve been thinking about lately is ...” or “I could have made today better by ...”

**Fostering Gratitude**

The benefits of a gratitude practice on mental health have been well-documented. Children today can use all the help they can get in this regard. Encourage your child to include the things that he or she is grateful for in his or her journal entries. Give your own examples of things that you’re grateful for, from the very simple (the sun shining through the window in the morning) to the very significant (the wonderful family you’re blessed to have). Pausing to reflect on the day, especially with a thought of gratitude in mind, can help children to foster an overall sense of gratitude in their lives. Gratitude can lead to a generally positive outlook on life.

**Results in a Childhood Keepsake**

Your child can keep his or her journal (or journals if they continue the habit for years, as many do) forever. The end result will be a handmade record of their childhood—a precious window into key years in their lives. This will become a treasure for a lifetime. Journaling is a practice anyone can benefit from, but you may be surprised at how



ALENA OZEROVA/SHUTTERSTOCK

Self-expression can lead to greater self-reflection and self-awareness.

beneficial it can be for your children. To encourage them, if you don’t already, start a journal along with them. You’ll reap its benefits while providing the example that will encourage them to keep going.

Boys benefit greatly from having male mentors.

Boys are uninspired. Whereas the innate drive for risk and competition has been recognized in past generations as a strength necessary to move a society forward, it now seems this trait is discouraged in boys. Boys tend to disengage when there isn’t something at stake. Our shift to “everyone wins” and participation trophies leaves boys with the question, “Why even try?”

**The Epoch Times:** In what ways would you advise parents to support their boys?  
**Mr. Hancock:** Find a faith community with a boy-focused outlet for his energy and drive. Appreciate the wonder of boys and their need for adventure, risk, and competition.

**The Epoch Times:** What have you found to be most inspiring about your work for Trail Life USA?  
**Mr. Hancock:** Trail Life USA has a documented history of growing and restoring relationships between boys and their dads, as well as a dedicated volunteer base of men willing to mentor the fatherless. There are so many boys without dads that we believe any legitimate call to manhood must include the call to be a dad or a “dad-like” to a boy without a dad. Single moms appreciate the male-centric model that helps grow their boys into godly men. Trail Life USA also provides great opportunities for developing a “band of brothers” for men, even if they don’t have sons. In a culture that neglects the importance of deep relationships, men are making connections and sharing their lives with other men, growing in faith, finding purpose, and impacting a generation.



## FOR KIDS ONLY

THE EPOCH TIMES

Week 7, 2022



### PRESIDENT LINCOLN THANKS 11-YEAR-OLD FOR ADVICE

On Feb. 16, 1861, newly elected President Abraham Lincoln was heading to Washington, D.C. by train. When it stopped in Westfield, New York, the president greeted the crowd and called out for a young lady named Grace Bedell. He explained that the girl had written to him and advised him to grow out his beard. According to the Philadelphia Inquirer, Lincoln said: “She advised me to let my whiskers grow, as it would improve my personal appearance; acting partly upon her suggestion, I have done so; and now, if she is here, I would like to see her.” A boy in the crowd pointed her out and Lincoln left the train to greet her and thank her before leaving for Washington.



NAGEL PHOTOGRAPHY/SHUTTERSTOCK

### The Poets

by Henry Wadsworth Longfellow

O ye dead Poets, who are living still  
Immortal in your verse, though life be fled,  
And ye, O living Poets, who are dead  
Though ye are living, if neglect can kill,  
Tell me if in the darkest hours of ill,  
With drops of anguish falling fast and red  
From the sharp crown of thorns upon your head,  
Ye were not glad your errand to fulfill?  
Yes; for the gift and ministry of Song  
Have something in them so divinely sweet,  
It can assuage the bitterness of wrong;  
Not in the clamor of the crowded street,  
Not in the shouts and plaudits of the throng,  
But in ourselves, are triumph and defeat.

### WHY WAS THE SOLOIST ARRESTED ON THE MUSICAL'S OPENING NIGHT?



ALL PHOTOS BY SHUTTERSTOCK

“All the world’s a stage,  
And all the men and women merely players;  
They have their exits and their entrances,  
And one man in his time plays many parts.”

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE, ENGLISH PLAYWRIGHT (1564-1616)



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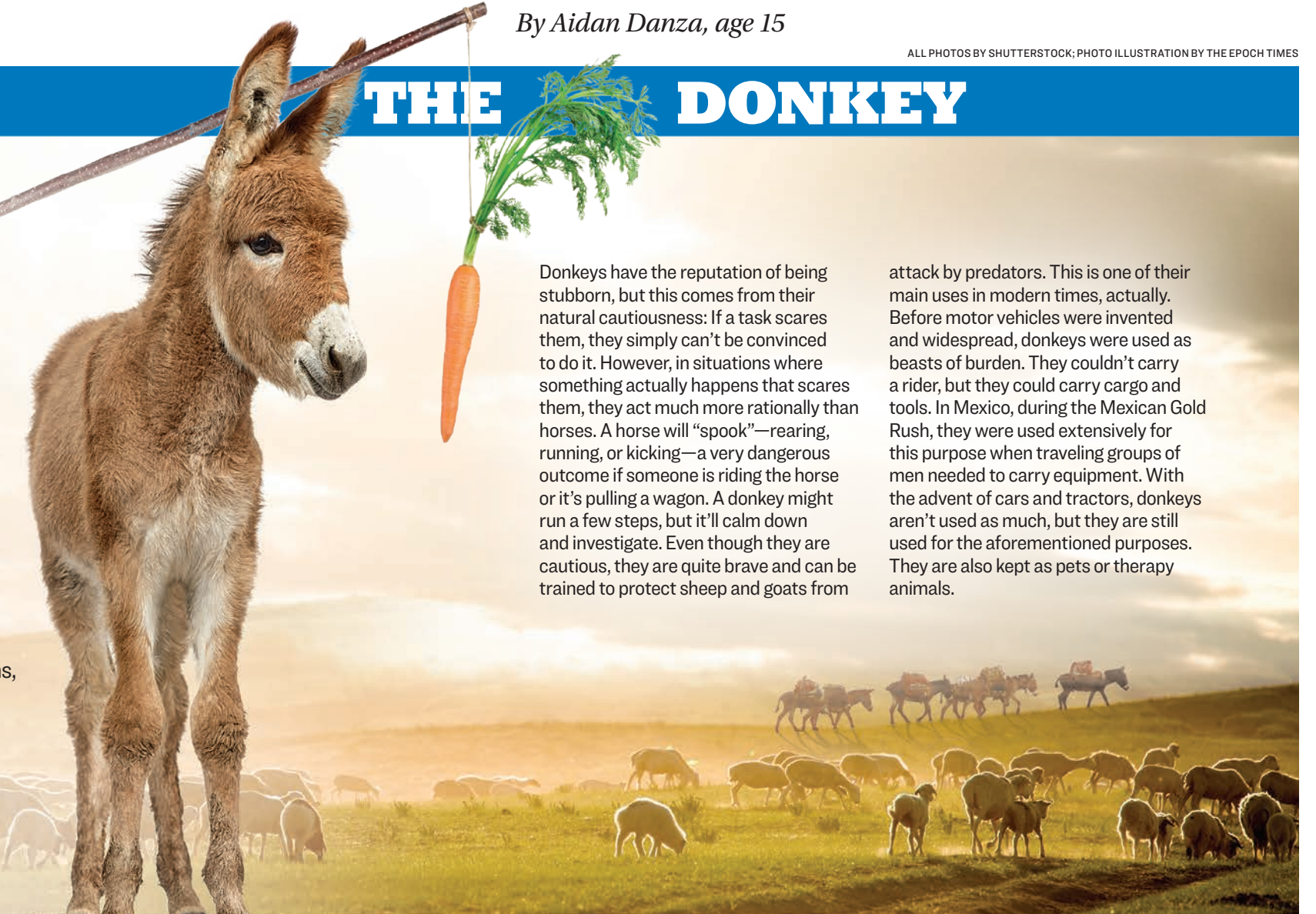
## THE DONKEY

By Aidan Danza, age 15

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**D**onkeys are odd animals. They are similar in appearance to horses.

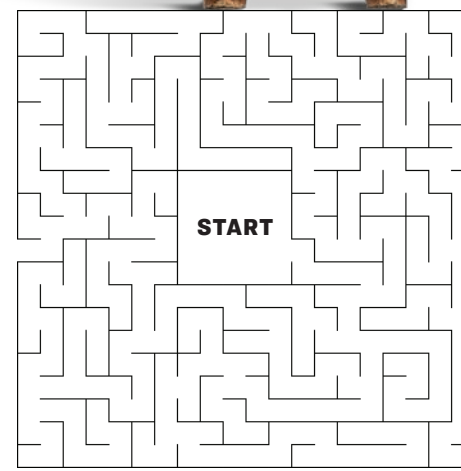
They are placed in the same genus: Equus. Originally, it appears that donkeys came from Arabia and North Africa, but have since been introduced across the world as part of farms, homesteads, and caravans. They come in many colors, just like horses, but by far the most common color is a sandy gray called gray dun.



Donkeys have the reputation of being stubborn, but this comes from their natural cautiousness: If a task scares them, they simply can’t be convinced to do it. However, in situations where something actually happens that scares them, they act much more rationally than horses. A horse will “spook”—rearing, running, or kicking—a very dangerous outcome if someone is riding the horse or it’s pulling a wagon. A donkey might run a few steps, but it’ll calm down and investigate. Even though they are cautious, they are quite brave and can be trained to protect sheep and goats from

attack by predators. This is one of their main uses in modern times, actually. Before motor vehicles were invented and widespread, donkeys were used as beasts of burden. They couldn’t carry a rider, but they could carry cargo and tools. In Mexico, during the Mexican Gold Rush, they were used extensively for this purpose when traveling groups of men needed to carry equipment. With the advent of cars and tractors, donkeys aren’t used as much, but they are still used for the aforementioned purposes. They are also kept as pets or therapy animals.

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

Easy puzzle 1

4	9		
50			
2	5		
+	-	x	÷

Solution For Easy 1  
 $2 \times 5 = (9 - 6)$

Medium puzzle 1

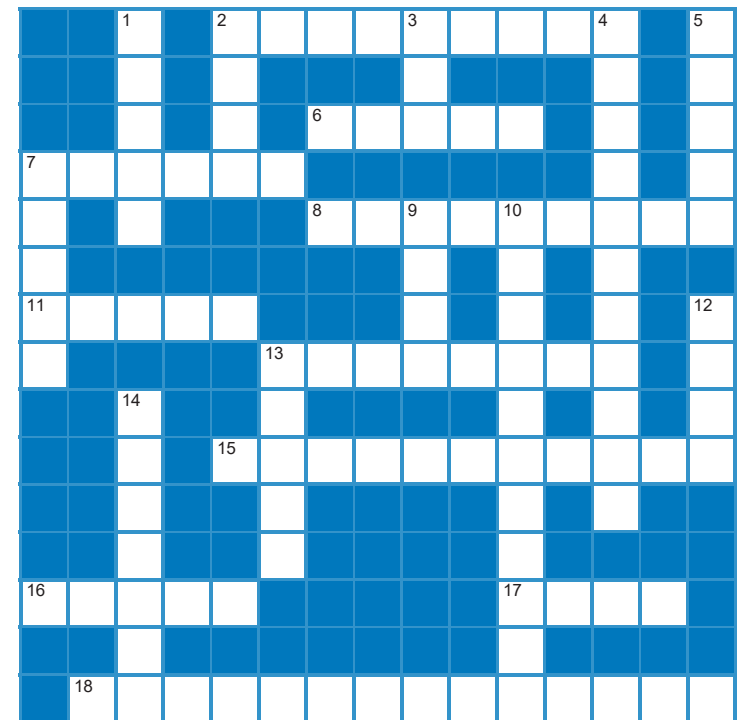
11	16		
60			
4	12		
+	-	x	÷

Solution for Medium 1  
 $7 + (21 - 11 + 9)$   
 $(21 - 9) \times (9 + 11)$

Hard puzzle 1

17	24		
96			
17	23		
+	-	x	÷

Solution for Hard 1  
 $82 - 21 \times (21 - 22)$



**CORRECTION**

In the Feb. 2 edition of “For Kids Only,” the name of the William Blake poem was misspelled. It is “The Tyger.” In addition, the first line of the first and sixth stanzas is “Tyger Tyger, burning bright,” The Epoch Times regrets the error.



**Down**

- It may be wooden (5)
- Wedding reception centerpiece (4)
- “As American as apple \_\_\_” (8)
- Turkey site (11)
- Multipurpose containers (5)
- Sweetener (5)
- Sponge cake ingredient (4)
- They come in a set (11)
- Half of half-and-half (4)
- Baker’s need (5)
- Baked treat often wrapped in fluted paper (7)

**Across**

- Kitchen appliance (9)
- It may be wheat or sourdough (5)
- Quick breads (6)
- Baking gloves (8)
- Shirt protector (9)
- Cake sauce (8)
- Where hot treats sit (11)
- It makes bread rise (5)
- Kitchen mixing tool (4)
- It may be used to add tsp. or a tsp. (14)



**THE EPOCH TIMES**

Epoch Times reporter Charlotte Cuthbertson interviews Yuma County Sheriff Leon Wilmot in the desert by the U.S.–Mexico border.



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- Contact [kwang@epochtimes.com](mailto:kwang@epochtimes.com)



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