

THE EPOCH TIMES LIFE & TRADITION



Moms Remembering Moms on Mother's Day

A few women recall their mothers' gifts to them—kindness, courage, and sacrifice.

The greatest gift we can offer our mothers, besides gratitude, is passing along their lessons to our children

JEFF MINICK

For me, Mother's Day often brings to mind an old poem by Rudyard Kipling:

If I were hanged on the highest hill,
Mother o' mine, O mother o' mine!
I know whose love would follow
me still,
Mother o' mine, O mother o' mine!
If I were drowned in the deepest sea,

Mother o' mine, O mother o' mine!
I know whose tears would come
down to me,
Mother o' mine, O mother o' mine!
If I were damned of body and soul,
I know whose prayers would make
me whole,
Mother o' mine, O mother o' mine!

Given the violent potential fates of this poor soul, I suspect these lines are aimed more at men than women. Whatever the case, they always

make me think of my mom. I knew without a doubt that no matter what happened, her "love would follow me still." She was my mom, yes, but while she lived she was also a best friend.

As Mother's Day approached this spring, for no discernible reason my thoughts drifted to women and their mothers, specifically to daughters who were now themselves mothers.

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Marxism and Our Libraries: Where Do We Go From Here?

In sign of the times, America's largest library association names Marxist as new president

MATTHEW JOHN

With an announcement that may very well have real repercussions for parents and children across the United States, the country's oldest and largest library association—with over 57,000 members—has made it official: The American Library Association's new president is an avowed Marxist.

In a tweet that broke the news, Emily Drabinski, the ALA's new president-elect, declared: "I just cannot believe that a Marxist lesbian who believes that collective power is possible to build and can be wielded for a better world is the president-elect of @ALALibrary. I am so excited for what we will do together. Solidarity!"

The ALA confirmed the news in an official press release the same day, stating that Drabinski had won a majority of 5,410 votes as compared to 4,622 for her opponent, Kelvin Watson, who ran on a more moderate platform.

Drabinski has been serving as the interim chief librarian at The Graduate Center, City University of New York, while holding a number of library leadership and committee positions in recent years, according to the statement. She will begin her term as president in July 2023.

The ALA, which is a nonprofit organization, describes itself as "the trusted voice of libraries ... for more than 140 years."

The election's outcome, however, will likely only intensify national debates surrounding the political leanings of public library leadership, if not create a crisis of eroding trust.

The flurry of polarized responses to Drabinski's tweet suggests the likely tensions that will accompany her tenure.

Among the congratulatory replies were some that many Americans would find unsettling. "Congratulations Emily," a leading socialist publisher wrote on Twitter. "We're thrilled to have a comrade as president-elect of the American Library Association!" (Notably, the same publisher counts among its achievements "a new edition of the Communist Manifesto, on the 150th anniversary of its original publication," that "quickly became a global bestseller.")

In another tweet, a public library administrator in California who oversees education and family services wrote: "I'm very excited to have a Marxist lesbian as our ALA President. It's about time."

Others were less laudatory, and echoed the likely sentiments of the many Americans who don't identify with the far-left.

"Despicable," wrote one Twitter commentator.

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Moms Remembering Moms on Mother's Day

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I knew what gifts my mom had bestowed on me, but what treasures, I wondered, had mothers passed along to their daughters, maternal gems of example and advice that they in turn would endeavor to hand on to their own children?

I had no idea.
So I decided to find out.
But before I share what I discovered, a note is in order. To all those readers who have loved and lost a child, no matter how young or old, or who have lost a mother, whether by death or by bitter division, Mother's Day can be a purgatory of suffering. For you, I have no words of consolation, no easy aphorisms or balms except to say, "I'm sorry for your loss."

Compassion and Courage

Katharine Miller of Pennsylvania is a 30-something wife and mother of seven. On the eve of her college graduation, her mother suffered a brain aneurysm. She died five days later.

A tender look crept into Miller's eyes as she revisited her memories. "I guess Mom's first gift was kindness," she said. "She was a stellar example of how to treat people, to be smiling and gracious and engaging. When I was young and going off to camp, she told me to make it a point to find the loneliest person in the room and talk to that person."

Miller thought a moment, then added, "She was always telling me to stand up for what was right and for my beliefs, and to be brave. ... She told me I would always face some sort of fear and needed to stand up to it."

Faith

Annie, a wife and mother of four children who also lives in Pennsylvania, is a native of Benin in West Africa, and traveled around Africa as a girl because of her father's work as a diplomat. We spoke by phone, and I could hear the affection for her mother in her gentle voice.

She said: "Many Africans have the support of relatives—aunts and uncles and cousins—but because we were away so much, my mom was often on her own. She and my father were educated—my mother had done graduate studies in French literature—and the world we lived in worshipped money and power, but my mom got us through that with the gift of her religious faith. She was tireless in her defense of that faith, seeing that we went to adoration and confession. But it was more than the sacraments. She lived her faith so that you could see it was real."

Today, Annie does her best to pass her mother's gift to her own children.

Service

The youngest mom I spoke with was in her late 20s, Donna Lagle of North Carolina, wife of a firefighter and mother of two young sons. A former schoolteacher, she's now a full-time mom who also works from home as a sales rep.

Lagle credits her mother for instilling in her a sense of service to others: "She has a love for people and a passion for helping them: family, friends, people at church. It's sometimes a blessing and a curse because she doesn't always leave time enough for herself. Her example has helped me be a better mom, a better wife, and a better friend. A high school acquaintance called me the other day to ask about the products I sell and then opened up to me about her problems. She's struggling

with some things, and we shared. Taking time to serve people was the best thing my mom taught me."

Home Life

Anne of Western North Carolina is a wife, a mother of four, and a grandmother who also worked as a veterinarian. Her mom is 103 years old, suffers from dementia, and lives in an assisted living home 45 minutes away, where Anne visits her at least once a week.

"She set the tone in our household, and not in a dictatorial way at all," Anne said. "I didn't recognize the beauty of it until I was older. It was a calm household with sensible boundaries, and there was a good healthy support system. She was loyal to her children, and she would stand up for us if she needed to. She was kind and never raised her voice. In hindsight, I really valued all of that so much. There's an art to maintaining a calm, connected household. I think I tried for that as a parent."

Speaking with Anne, I could hear the echoes of her mother's kindness in her voice.

Sacrifice

Rebecca McMahon of Virginia, wife and mother of three with another on the way, praised her mother as selfless. "I have very few memories of her buying anything for herself," she said, adding with a laugh, "When she was 52 and my sister was getting married, a group of us went to get a manicure. I'm not sure how to behave, her mother told us as we entered the shop. I've never had anyone do my nails."

McMahon valued her mother's example as a homemaker. "Here's a woman who homeschooled six kids, cooked and baked so much that the house was always filled with wonderful smells, and who kept her home immaculate. I've tried to do the same."

Like some of the others I interviewed, McMahon credited her mom for passing on her religious faith. "She and Dad often took us to daily Mass, and she was dedicated to the rosary, saying it every night no matter how tired she was."

Lessons Learned

On this special day, we can bring our mothers flowers and fancy cards, treat them to lunch, and even buy them extravagant gifts. All of these gestures express our love for them and for what they did. But after speaking with these women, I believe the greatest gifts we can offer our mothers are words of gratitude from the heart and passing along their lessons to our children.

And for those whose mothers are gone, I encourage you to tell stories of them to the younger set, your children and grandchildren. Share their love and wisdom with the next generation.

Finally, for you moms with infants and toddlers, you have some big shoes to fill. As William Makepeace Thackeray wrote in "Vanity Fair," "Mother is the name for God in the lips and hearts of little children."

Those children need you. We all need you.

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 [Jeff Minick.com](#) to follow his blog.

Love is the treasure of a lifetime, worth



ART EXPLORATION FOR THE YOUNG AND YOUNG AT HEART

A Masterpiece of Love

ANDREA NUTT FALCE

I always wanted to be an artist. With the loving help of my parents, I worked to become one. After studying diligently in the United States, I moved to Europe for years in pursuit of realism at the highest levels. My mom supported me. We talked on the phone long distance almost every day.

When I felt downtrodden because my work didn't seem good enough, she would say, "Sometimes, perfect is the enemy of good, and even great."

When I was exhausted and wanted to give up, she would say: "It's the last lap of the race, everyone is tired. The winner holds on to the end." She even added an extra beatitude to teach patience toward a goofy classmate: "The nerds will inherit the earth." She was right.

No one knows better than my mom how passionately I'm dedicated to my career. She of all people knows I never imagined marrying or having children. I dreamed of being a painter. When I did marry, and my husband and I found ourselves expecting, I told my mom I was worried about giving up everything I had worked to achieve. The world doesn't praise moms. Being a mom is hard. It requires sacrifice. My mom caught me off guard: "Do not be afraid to put your career on hold. Children are only little for a little while, but how you love them lasts forever. You'll have your whole life to work."

suffering to give and receive.



(Clockwise from above left)

"Mother and Child" 1869, by Eastman Johnson.

"Bo Peep," 1872, by Eastman Johnson.

"Christmas Time," 1864, by Eastman Johnson.

Now that I am a mom, I appreciate my mother's wisdom all the more. I hear her voice: 'The minutes, hours, and days are long, but trust me, the years will be short.'

frustration, and most of all, love. It seems long ago that pride began to be replaced by prayer. I asked God to make me what he would have, instead of what I demanded to be. One thing I've learned is that his plan is always greater than mine. My kids are growing up, and, implausible as it seemed for a career in the arts, by the grace of God, work is still waiting for me. But no matter what I publish or paint, the most important job I will ever do is be a mom.

The world doesn't exalt moms. Moms don't get paychecks for being chauffeurs, counselors, cooks, nurses, diplomats, or maids.

Recently, a hardworking lady I know impressed these words upon my mind, "I'm afraid I am a bad influence on my children." "Why?" I asked, truly baffled. "Because I'm just a housewife. All they see me do is be a mom."

Moms form the cradles of life. What job could be more important than that? To my friend who questioned the influence of being "just a mom," a good mom is one of the greatest influencers on earth.

To my own mom, thank you. Thank you, Mom, for your patience and for giving up so much to love me. To love beautifully is a masterpiece indeed.

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

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"Yes let's celebrate communism in our libraries," quipped another.

Others raised concerns in light of Marxism's bloody track record. "The Marxist death toll is over 200 million and rising daily," responded one poster from Tennessee. "Marxism is a great evil, and it should be as repugnant to call yourself a Marxist as it is to call yourself a Nazi."

(For a full exposé on the legacy of Marx, readers will want to check out The Epoch Times' exclusive series, "How the Specter of Communism Is Ruling Our World.")

It's not apparent whether those voting for Drabinski would have been aware of her Marxist identity. Her campaign platform never mentioned Marx or socialism. At most, voters would have had to have read into—or been on high alert for—Marxist verbiage in Drabinski's campaign materials, such as calls for "collective power" and references to "class war" and "imperialism."

What remains to be seen, and will likely be on the minds of liberty-loving parents and families, is whether these political commitments will translate into policy or advocacy—trickling down, ultimately, to the local library.

It's also unclear whether the incoming president, or organization, endorses Marxism as historically practiced—what with its towering legacy of political violence, silencing of opposition, and hostility to free markets, if not free thought.

Marxist rhetoric and theory are increasingly in vogue in academic circles, and often something the consequences of which are not considered. For the aspiring scholar, it's often a ticket to publication and, in turn, career advancement. But as the bloody legacy of the 20th century reminds us, ideas matter—and have consequences.

Given that the ALA and libraries everywhere are striving to create abundantly "inclusive" spaces for all patrons, it's hard to square the overt politics of Marxism with the sensitivities of patrons of America's library systems.

Did voting ALA constituents (or higher-ups) not consider just how uncomfortable, for instance, Marxism might make large segments of the population feel? These include refugees from communist North Korea, Cuba, and China—many of whom are plagued by post-traumatic stress disorder after suffering brutality and inhuman deprivations by Marxist regimes. Are their needs any less real or valuable than, say, the transgender student whom the association is working so extensively to accommodate (what with staff trainings on gender-neutral language and the refashioning of bathrooms)?

For many thousands of Americans who previously fled Cambodia's Pol Pot or Stalin's gulags, Marxism evokes only memories of unmitigated misery—on a scale most of us could never imagine, and will hopefully, let us pray, never experience.

Or for the younger generation, we might ask: What about the millions of American-born Christians and persons of faith toward whom Marxist doctrine—which disavows all religion—is expressly hostile?

(Karl Marx—as detailed in Paul Kengor's exceptional book, "The Devil and Karl Marx"—envisioned a secular utopia with no place for religion in it. He once declared, "The idea of God is the keynote of a perverted civilization. It must be destroyed.")

It seems that, increasingly, the burden may fall upon family-oriented parents and people of faith to be proactive in ensuring that their voice, too, is heard, and that events and materials at their tax-funded local library serve and respect their needs and spiritual commitments.

While the natural knee-jerk reaction might be frustration, resentment, or to simply throw in the towel and "hide your kids" (as a popular meme of decades past had it)—parents can also view it constructively. It could be considered an invitation to get engaged and make a difference. Maybe more than ever, it's time to join the local library board and help ensure that wholesome, family-friendly choices are being made.

If nothing else, the ALA's announcement provides, perhaps more boldly than hoped for, validation of many Americans' concerns about the very real presence of Marxism in America and its creeping influence.

One can only hope it doesn't play out in the town library's children's section, next to the fuzzy beanbag chair.

Matthew John is a veteran teacher and writer who is passionate about history, culture, and good literature. He lives in New York.



"Young Mother Contemplating Her Sleeping Child in Candlelight," 1875, by Albrecht Anker.

COURTESY OKAMOTO STUDIO

Sculpting in Ice

Shintaro Okamoto's creations have a lifespan of less than a day



One of the creations by Okamoto Studio.

COURTESY OKAMOTO STUDIO

DAVE PAONE/THE EPOCH TIMES



The Statue of Liberty and New York City skyscrapers, carved in ice.



The production board at Okamoto Studio, in Queens, N.Y.

DAVE PAONE/THE EPOCH TIMES



Shintaro Okamoto (R) gives ice carver Christian Lopez instructions on the likeness of a client's dog he's sculpting at Okamoto Studio in Queens, New York.

DAVE PAONE

In his studio in New York's Long Island City in Queens, sculptor Shintaro Okamoto and his team of artisans create massive, detailed sculptures for the rich and famous, as well as for everyone else.

Okamoto was born in Fukuoka, Japan, but his family moved to Alaska when he was 9 years old. It was his father who discovered sculpting in ice first. (If you're going to sculpt in ice in the United States, Alaska is the place.)

"I have to say, not all Alaskans play with ice, but I did," Okamoto told The Epoch Times.

Right from the beginning, Okamoto had artistic tendencies that were encouraged by his father, who owned and ran a Japanese restaurant in Anchorage. As a child, Okamoto found himself drawing and painting all the wildlife around him, which he just loved.

"One boring winter, he took me and my brother to a frozen lake, took out a chainsaw, cut a block of ice, carved a swan, [and] gave it to a friend. Somebody else wanted it, [and] next thing you know, he had a side gig carving ice," Okamoto said.

As his father sculpted, Okamoto was given "all the grunt work," as he put it.

"My earliest memories of carving ice [are], if anything, terrible. I hated working with ice because my job was to shovel scrap ice and haul pieces of ice in minus-30-degree weather," he said. "I despised it."

However, once there was an "elegant and beautiful" finished piece, which was born from all that "brute" labor, he could see his father was on to something.

Eventually, Okamoto found himself in the contiguous 48 states and earned his undergraduate degree in fine arts from Brown University and his MFA in

painting from Hunter College.

Okamoto Studio

Okamoto spent 10 years hawking his artwork to galleries in New York. Eventually, he and his father opened up Okamoto Studio, where they planned to carve ice for profit.

The plan worked.

The studio provides ice sculptures for the usual weddings, sweet 16s, and mitzvahs, but also for corporate events (often holiday parties), fashion shoots, and public installations on the street.

The sizes range from small (hand-cut ice for cocktails) to medium (sculptures of animals, corporate logos, and such) to massive (entire bars assembled from several blocks of ice fused together). All the sculptures are carved with the minutest details, giving everything a professional, polished look.

The staff doesn't just deliver the finished products to a venue and drive off; they install the artwork with drainage trays and LED lights, which illuminate the pieces in a pleasing way, making viewing them an experience.

In the ice sculpting community, there are three methods of carving: hand tools (saws and chisels), hand tools plus power tools (band saws, chainsaws, and die grinders), and a computerized numerical controller, which involves a computer-driven blade. Okamoto Studio does all three.

The Crew

On a busy day, the studio may have a team of 10 employees making ice, carving the pieces, and preparing them for delivery. One such employee is Christian Lopez, a 38-year-old from Hempstead, New York.

While Lopez knows the by-hand method of carving, he has also embraced

I have to say, not all Alaskans play with ice, but I did.

Shintaro Okamoto



modern technology.

"I have a passion for advancing the craft with technology," Lopez said.

Another employee is Jean Kirby, a studio assistant. She graduated college a few years ago with a degree in film and television production, but the lockdown put an end to the jobs she had at the time.

While perusing Craigslist for a position as a sculptor's assistant, she came across a posting for Okamoto Studio. She's been there for six months, but doesn't carve.

"Hopefully one day soon I will learn to carve," the 25-year-old said.

Not for the Ages

Michelangelo sculpted his "David," "Pieta," and "Moses" more than 500 years ago. Since they were carved from marble, they might very well survive another 500 years or longer.

In most cases, Okamoto's sculptures have a lifespan of less than a day, and he's fine with that.

"If anything, it's kind of liberating in a sense," he said. "As an artist, what makes ice interesting is that it has all the qualities of being a static sculpture ... but in its essence, it's more of a performance piece. It's constantly shifting and moving. The art really begins when our work leaves our studio."

With the sculptures melting as soon as they're installed, Okamoto feels that aspect "physicalizes time ... and makes that moment just that much more precious."

Although Okamoto has been running his studio for 19 years, he's still learning about his chosen medium.

"No matter what we do, no matter how much we assume how ice may perform, it always surprises us," he said. "It's a big, big adventure, working with ice."

To Protect and Cuddle: NYPD's Therapy Dogs on the Job

DAVE PAONE

The New York Police Department has gone to the dogs.

Perhaps better put, the dogs have gone to the NYPD. For the past two and a half years, the department has employed three handlers, each with a highly trained dog, to attend to officers, their families, victims of crimes—anyone who needs the comfort of a dog in a time of distress.

Cops in urban areas see society at its worst, often daily. Repeatedly viewing crime scenes and interacting with the bottom rung of the populace can take a toll on anyone, and often cops find it difficult to process all that they witness. Some find it just as difficult to admit to anyone they need help in doing so.

That's what the Health and Wellness Section is for. It was created in August of 2019 and is an outreach for any NYPD employees in crisis.

Suicides

Several years ago, the suicide rate among NYPD officers was alarmingly high, with an average of four per year. That number spiked to 10 in 2019.

"More officers die by suicide than are killed in the line of duty annually around the United States," Deputy Mark Wachter, commanding officer of the Health and Wellness Section, told The Epoch Times.

"We had to look at the different policies that we had and really we had to start focusing on the wellness of the officer" through new policies and initiatives, as the ones at the time were "not working," he said.

A task force was assembled, and the Health and Wellness Section was created. The department already had an Employee Assistance Unit, which had been around since the 1970s. In 2019, it became one of the several units under the auspices of the Health and Wellness Section.

The EAU has 400 employees in a peer support program who work in dual roles as cops and counselors and are trained in suicide prevention, resiliency, and depression.

The NYPD has 35,000 smartphones used

for crimefighting. The Health and Wellness Section utilizes an app every officer and civilian employee has access to on his phone. The section's recourses—including counselors, chaplains, and peer support members—are listed in the app, which was created by the NYPD.

"They are literally a fingertip away," said Wachter. "You can call them, text them, email them 24 hours a day. You're in crisis? They're there."

Wachter estimates his people get 5,500 requests per year, with 40 to 50 per month on "the midnights," which is the shift that usually sees the most activity.

So why the dogs? One reason is there's still a stigma to mental illness, and someone in need may find it difficult or even impossible to ask for help from another human. But if that other human has a calm, inviting dog at his feet, and that dog is trained to accept petting without any adverse reaction, the person in need may view the dog as a stepping stone to the other human.

There are three such humans, each with such a dog, in the EAU. Theresa Mahon, Ron Thomas, and Efrain Hernandez are all detectives, peer counselors, and handlers.

"These dogs kind of act as an icebreaker," Thomas told The Epoch Times.

Sometimes the handlers show up at "roll call," which is a briefing at the start of every shift, and have the dogs carry out a few "commands," or tricks, putting the officers at ease. This gives them an opportunity to speak to the handlers, who will switch hats and be peer counselors, should any of them have an issue they want to talk about.

"These dogs are the best icebreaker or segue into that conversation," said Thomas.

January Tragedy

The therapy dogs aren't solely for suicide prevention and outreach. They're on call for any crisis that occurs.

In January of this year, two NYPD officers were shot in the line of duty, one dying at the hospital a few hours later.



"Detective" Jenny, a therapy dog from the NYPD's Employee Assistance Unit, was available to anyone who needed her at St. Patrick's Cathedral for the funeral of fallen policeman Wilbert Mora in New York on Feb. 2, 2022.

"A sergeant actually put it over the radio, 'Have EAU respond.' That means what we're doing is working," Thomas said. He arrived at Harlem Hospital with his dog, Piper.

"Mostly what I saw is that people just wanted to take comfort in petting them and not have to say anything," Thomas said. "People wanted to approach them, pet them, just take a minute to remove themselves from that situation and just grieve with the dog, pet the dog, take comfort in the dog. Again, you don't have to say anything when you're petting a dog."

The night of the shootings and the following day, Thomas said "hundreds of cops" petted the two dogs, which in turn helped alleviate the anxiety and stress they were feeling.

The second officer died a few days later, and there were two separate wakes and funerals held for them at St. Patrick's Cathedral in the following weeks. Piper, Jenny, and the unit's third dog, Glory, were on hand all four days for the families and the members of the commands.

At PO Jason Rivera's wake, his widow and brother-in-law sat privately behind the altar petting Jenny for a while.

Puppies Behind Bars

The NYPD's therapy dogs were trained by prison inmates, through a nonprofit called Puppies Behind Bars. In the program, each dog begins its training at about eight weeks old and lives with its incarcerated trainer for about two years.

After that, the soon-to-be handlers receive a 14-day training at the prison. That means cops are literally in a prison, interacting with inmates.

"It's intimidating," Thomas said.

But the inmates "were extremely professional and knowledgeable," he said, and "it

was a remarkable experience."

The Real Deal

Each EAU dog has paperwork that confirms he or she is fully certified and compliant with the Americans with Disabilities Act. Each wears a harness with embroidered patches that identify him or her as an NYPD therapy dog in the department's Health and Wellness Section.

The three dogs, which are all yellow Labrador retrievers, can carry out 54 commands, including "high five" and "salute."

'Tell Me a Story'

Another command is "tell me a story," where a person may be seated on the floor and the dog crawls into his or her lap, placing its weight on the human. This command is effective when a child is a victim and may find it difficult to explain what happened to a detective. The child could tell the dog, without any adults in view, but with one listening from out of sight. The NYPD's dogs haven't yet been used in this situation, but the "tell me a story" command has been used to comfort victims.

Mahon recalled times when Piper "literally had been sobbed on" when comforting someone experiencing trauma.

The Future

The EAU started with two dogs under New York City Mayor Bill de Blasio. Immediately after taking office, Mayor Eric Adams gave the green light for a third. Wachter anticipates adding a fourth dog by the end of the year.

In the meantime, Piper, Glory, and Jenny continue to do the job themselves. As Thomas put it, "There's no better tool we can utilize than these K-9s to create a bridge between us and the people who might need help."

ALL PHOTOS BY DAVE PAONE/THE EPOCH TIMES



The New York Police Department's therapy dogs, "Detectives" Glory, Piper, and Jenny.

BOOK REVIEW

How to Become a Hero, in 10 Simple Steps

MATTHEW JOHN

This is the book that I wish someone had given me when I was 16. Or 20. Or 25.

Or, anytime.

William H. McRaven's "The Hero Code" is a fantastic distillation of what it takes to be a hero. Or better yet: a good person. It's a treatise on timeless virtues, but every bit applicable to our day.

It's the kind of life wisdom I'd hope as a grandfather I might be able to impart to a child one day, after a life well lived on this earth. I'd be proud if I could do it half as well.

The book brims with insights well worth savoring, and I found myself several times thinking, "This is really worth reading again," and, "That's something I should reflect on in my journal." It'd be great material to include in a homeschooling curriculum, perhaps starting around the eighth or ninth grade. I plan to use a chapter in my next Language Arts class.

The book draws upon McRaven's remarkable 37-year career in the Navy and is divided into ten short, memorable, chapters. Each is devoted to a different virtue.

The chapter on "Duty" particularly stood out for me, in part because it's a virtue so little taught or appreciated in this day and age.

McRaven illustrates the idea with several vivid stories, recounted from personal experience. One episode particularly stood out for me. He tells of a meeting he was summoned to—on extremely short notice—with the President of the United States, while stationed in Afghanistan at Bagram Air Base.

Rushing across the base by car with just

minutes to spare before his meeting, McRaven and his team were stopped short, at the gate, by a young female airman dressed in battle fatigues, with "an ill-fitting Kevlar helmet, oversized body armor, and carrying an M4 assault rifle." (The book's prose sparkles with sensory details like these.)

Two sergeants from McRaven's convoy, one after another, got out and tried with every ounce of strength to convince the woman, who was guarding the gate, to let them through. No amount of yelling, gesturing, or reasoning things out could change her stance. They didn't have the proper authorization. No go.

With minutes ticking by and the POTUS waiting for his briefing, McRaven—by then a three-star admiral—himself got out of the vehicle and gave it a try. He got no further than the others. "Sir, I know you have your job to do, but I have my job to do as well," she responded. "I have the responsibility to guard this gate. And my orders are clear. No one is to enter without permission."

There was no budging her. She knew her duty and would uphold it no matter who or what.

McRaven eventually got the clearance he needed and made it to the meeting. Tellingly, on the way out afterward, he stopped again at the gate, but this time for a different reason. He wanted to commend the airman for her exceptional service. He gave her a Command Challenge Coin.

The story itself was instructive, I found, for it reflected a quality that I noticed running throughout the book: seeing the good in others, even if it's not convenient for you or

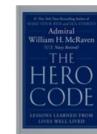


William H. McRaven.

FREDERIC J. BROWN / GETTY IMAGES

THE 10 VIRTUES OF A HERO

1. Courage
2. Humility
3. Sacrifice
4. Integrity
5. Compassion
6. Perseverance
7. Duty
8. Hope
9. Humor
10. Forgiveness



'The Hero Code'

Author
William H. McRaven
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176

things aren't going your way. It's a wonderful character trait, and something most of us can aspire to get better at.

Readers need not be interested in military literature to find the book compelling. The illustrative stories and cases it features are drawn from all walks of life, not just battlefields of brawn, as I'd expected. You'll meet a remarkable cast of figures along the way, ranging from courageous medical researchers to historical personages, such as John Adams.

Ultimately the collection of episodes, taken as a whole, does a lot to restore one's faith in humanity. It's amazing what goodness people are capable of—and have showcased. We might just not have spotted it.

There's an underlying positivity that reminds one of the best of coaches, the type who elevate everyone's game.

It's an achievement that for all its life lessons, the book never feels preachy or didactic. It's not telling you to be your best; it's showing you how.

When I finished the last page, something struck me in particular: this is a book I could give to anyone, whatever their faith, line of work, or political persuasion—a rarity in today's ever-polarized world.

The code to the hero in all of us, it turns out, is something so deeply human, it's universal.

"I came to realize that there is a hero in all of us," McRaven writes. "For some, living the Hero Code comes more naturally. But for most of us, we must learn how to bring forth these virtues. We need to see them in the lives of others and try to mirror them in ourselves. We need to build those qualities through small steps that eventually become the foundation of our character."

"The Hero Code" provides a terrific first step. Here's hoping a new generation of Americans take it.

Matthew John is a veteran teacher and writer who is passionate about history, culture, and good literature. He lives in New York.

Memories of My Mother

ALL PHOTOS COURTESY OF ANITA L. SHERMAN UNLESS OTHERWISE NOTED

She carried herself like the Spanish aristocrat I fashioned her to be, with a grace all her own

ANITA L. SHERMAN

That summer day in Portland, the parish priest was in the old neighborhood and visited the house as a matter of courtesy since he knew that my mother was old and ill. According to my sister, his appearance standing at the bedroom door signaled to her that she must be dying and he was there to administer extreme unction and perhaps anoint her with oil. He stayed a brief time and gave her holy communion. Comforted, the next day she died.

My mother's name was Aurora. Her funeral was held on what would have been her 94th birthday in the month of July some two decades ago. The service was small. I was fine until the notes of "Malaguena" wafted through the air.

When my sister phoned to say that she had died, my sadness was overshadowed by my relief. Her last years had been difficult and without dignity for her.

A series of strokes had left her unable to walk and her entire left side was paralyzed. Her vision, which was already bad, worsened and she wasn't able to hear.

Yet, her mind was intact, and even though she tended to wander down paths of the past, she was aware of her deteriorating condition and frustrated by her inability to do the things she loved.

She could only read for small periods; the letters appeared jumbled when she was able to make them out, and her fingers had long ceased to be able to crochet or hold a pencil long enough to fill in the blanks of the daily crossword puzzle.

But there was a time when mother was strong and her fingers were nimble.

Early Euphoria

When I was very small, some of my earliest memories were of my mother carefully fingering brilliant white gloves on my hands. They were the final touch to my new navy-blue coat. I also had a white beret that she stylishly pushed to one side.

My greatest pleasures were found in the shopping trips that we took together.

We'd get on a faded red bus that wound its way through our northeast neighborhood nearly on the hour and head to downtown Portland, Oregon, some 30 minutes away.

Once there, she rarely released my hand. We would go to our favorite department store haunts.

On one trip, she bought me a pale green sweater that didn't ride up my arms. I remember the polished buttons.

She also bought me a new lunch box for school. She liked the one with a Scottish plaid design but let me buy the one plastered with Superman comics. I was a hit with the boys during lunchtime. They would gather around, not noticing me in particular, but the lure of a flying superhero. I was so happy.

Then she let me choose a new doll. She loved dolls, especially the ones with porcelain heads and fancy dresses. She had a penchant for Madame Alexander dolls and I believe she considered acquiring them a must-have for a young girl. Their features were kind, gentle, and caring—all attributes that I'm sure my mother hoped would be instilled in me.

When our shopping was done, we'd usually go to the basement cafeteria of Meier and Frank and have clam chowder and egg salad sandwiches. When I was older, we'd frequent the Georgian Tea room and have a glass of wine with our meal.

I had my first cup of coffee when I was about 12. It was heavily sedated with cream and sugar. Later I drank it black, like my mother did.

One of my mother's particularities was that she absolutely would not drink coffee from anything other than a cup and saucer. She rarely would use a mug, and under no circumstances would she touch Styrofoam.

Mother had a collection of china teacups and saucers that graced the dining room cabinet. I have many fond memories of choosing a favorite set and savoring the aroma of a freshly poured cup usually accompanied by a sweet thing. To this day, it is hard for me to drink a cup of coffee without a cracker and piece of cheese, a croissant, or better yet, a slice of pie or cake.

She loathed the sight of a ketchup bottle



Aurora Vigil Marquez, as a young woman. She was born in Magdalena, N.M., in 1906.

on the table. And it was only on picnics that paper napkins were ever used.

Comfort Food Coziness

One wintry day as I was walking home from St. Rose Catholic School, I caught a glimpse out of my left eye of a chubby classmate abreast a hill crafting a snowball. I should have followed my instincts and crossed the street but I did not. Once his snowball was done, he let it loose, and it hit me hard on the forehead.

It still wasn't too big to sit on my mother's lap. As she wiped away the tears, she told me not to be offended by the uncivilized acts of uncouth and naughty boys, and then she offered me a Cadbury bar.

That was another of her favorites—chocolate, and the richer the better.

Mother loved the taste of butter and explained to me one day that she was saving my father money. She told me that since she didn't frequent beauty parlors, in her mind, butter was a much better bargain.

I remember her combing her long black hair and then deftly creating two braids that she would wrap about her head and secure with tortoiseshell chignon hairpins. As she aged, she kept her hair long. While it thinned and became streaked with soft silver strands, I admired that she didn't chop it off or have a perm but then, in her mind, that probably would have meant sacrificing butter, which she wasn't about to do.

I spent my elementary and high school years in Catholic schools taught by different orders of nuns. Mother was raised Roman Catholic and there was never any question about how I was to be educated.

My mother was faithful throughout all those years, following my studies, reading my school papers, and encouraging me to be all that I chose to be. When it came time for college, even though I know she was skeptical and sad, she bid me farewell with a warm hug as I left for a large university in Seattle.

Composing My Life

My first piano lessons were with a bitter little nun who had bad breath and scared me to death. She'd place her bony hands atop mine and scream at me when I didn't get a note right.

My mother wanted me to learn to play and found a different teacher who lived near us. I loved Mrs. Booth and her two furry dogs and flourished under her direction.

I would sit and play the piano while my mother would read or knit. Her favorite composer was Chopin, and even though she couldn't read music, she knew when I'd made a mistake.

She was a consummate reader and loved poetry, particularly Wordsworth. She discovered the American writer Carlos Castaneda before I did when I was in college and introduced me to another novelist, Wallace Stegner.

My mother kept copious journals. Perhaps it was watching her write, seeing the sense of peace to pen your thoughts, observing the careful cursive strokes of her pen or pencil, or smiling over the assortment of colorfully bound blank journals



The author's daughter, Sophia at age 3, and mother, Aurora Vigil Marquez, at age 81.



The author, Anita Louise Marquez (Sherman), as a toddler.

that she so easily filled that prompted my own penchant for journal keeping.

My mother relished trips to the Oregon coast. Those endless stretches of beach would have my mother walking, sometimes singing, and always smiling whether the sun was beating down or a soft drizzle of rain was falling. She'd search for small rocks and shells, feed bread to the seagulls, and stay up late to sit by evening fires where the smell of sand and sea was heady and heavenly.

Years later when I would visit from Virginia with my small children, she'd spend time helping them build sandcastles or test the chilly Pacific Ocean with their tiny toes. My mother so loved the sea as I do now.

Everything about my mother was a class act. She wasn't flashy or dramatic. She carried herself like the Spanish aristocrat I fashioned her to be—simple, elegant, and with a grace all her own.

Our bathroom always had a different scent because my mother loved soaps. But she refused to use grocery-store brands. She told me that they were harsh and would burn my skin. Instead, whenever we went on our shopping trips, she would buy a box of special soaps. I liked them because the bars were always larger and sculpted, and I never got burned or had red skin with them.

There were a lot of things about my mother that bothered me, and as I was growing up, I knew that I would be different from her.

She never drove a car and never worked outside the home, even though she had been a teacher before she married my father. Her gradual loss of hearing was annoying, and she was always nagging me about standing up straight and wondering if I was happy.

She had no financial sense and no understanding of the business world. She had no interest in politics and couldn't understand why I wouldn't wear my skirts longer.

But my appreciation for her catapulted upon the birth of my own daughter. Now, as a mother myself, I could comprehend the awesome responsibility of raising a child and wanting to do it with heart.

I'm a big girl now and have three grown children of my own and four grandbabies. I certainly learned to drive a car and have jobs and, on occasion, balance a checkbook. I understand dying and death and loss.

But whenever I am cuddled up with a freshly sharpened pencil and a crossword puzzle, or hear a prelude by Chopin, or reach to take the ketchup bottle off the table, or add butter to a recipe, or bathe with lavender soap, I remember Mama and wish that she and I could share a cup of coffee together again.

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

BOOK REVIEW

A History of a Mythic Figure: King Harald Hardrada of Norway

DUSTIN BASS

Brave, powerful, menacing, seductive, cunning, deceptive, and cruel. There are many ways one could describe Harald Hardrada (also known as Harald Sigurdsson). Viking and king are two other ways. Don Hollway, in his new book "The Last Viking: The True Story of Harald Hardrada," has provided a vivid look into a complex man who lived at the top during complex times.

Hardrada's life is that of fiction—mythological fiction, like a man who was a demi-god.

The Timeline of Hardrada

Hollway begins in A.D. 1030 when war and tragedy meet. During the Battle of Stiklestad, Harald's brother, King Olaf II of Norway, is killed, and Harald is wounded and carried to safety. From there, he becomes a mercenary of sorts within the Varangian Guard in the Byzantine Empire where he serves to fight for the emperors, put down revolts, and protect the throne. He also finds time to become lovers with Empress Zoe and Emperor Constantine IX Monomachos's lover, Maria Skleraina.

A majority of the book is centered around his time serving in the Byzantine realm. Hollway discusses how the Viking utilized his prowess, his fighting ability, his personality, and looks to maneuver safely among the highest ranks of the empire. His powerful group of Scandinavian warriors, the Varangian Guard, also ensured his political and physical security.

Eventually, his time serving in the empire comes to an end after being betrayed by Zoe, presumably because of his affair with Maria. He and several of his warriors are sentenced to prison where a massive snake feeds on the flesh of the living and the dead. Determined not to become part of the dead



'The Last Viking: The True Story of King Harald Hardrada'

Author

Don Hollway

Publisher

Osprey Publishing

Pages

368 pages



A portrait of King Harald on a stained glass window in Lerwick Town Hall, Shetland, in the UK.

that lie on the floor of the dungeon, Harald and his warriors kill and live off the meat of the snake. By some miracle (often attributed to Saint Olaf), the Viking warriors escape from the prison, assemble several longships, and escape while the Imperial army is busy fighting an invading enemy.

Hollway follows his return home and his eventual rise to kingship. As a mercenary, Harald's actions, regardless of how violent and cruel, are more forgivable as he is merely a warrior following orders. When he becomes king of Norway, however, those cruel actions cut differently for the reader. The author doesn't try to soften the cruelty of Harald's dictatorship. History is what it is, and rulers from ancient times to modern times rarely rule with a velvet glove.

As is made clear throughout the book, the throne was often a seat of anxiety and suspicion. Had he submitted to this anxiety before his pursuit of England, he might have lived a little longer as king. But as with every great tale, only a good ending will do. And the ending of Harald and this book is one to be remembered.

An Incredible History Story

Hollway has done his due diligence in

researching this great story, one utterly worthy of being retold. He has pulled from the great Norse sagas and historical documents to assemble this story of an epic life. Not only will readers learn about the life of Harald, but also the many historic events that took place in the Byzantine Empire, Scandinavia, and England. They will also be introduced to numerous Norse kings, princes, princesses, writers, and men of military might.

All this notwithstanding, "The Last Viking" is a violent book because it's a presentation of those most violent times when soldiers were killed not with bullets, but with sword thrusts and swinging battle axes.

For anyone who is a fan of Viking lore and history, "The Last Viking" is a thrilling read. For anyone else, it is still a thrilling read with an iconic ending at Stamford Bridge. An ending fit for a king. An ending fit for a Viking.

Dustin Bass. Dustin Bass is the host of Epoch TV's *About the Book: A Show about New Books With the Authors Who Wrote Them*. He is an author and co-host of *The Sons of History* podcast.

AMERICAN TREASURES

Richard Rodgers: Finding the Music Inside

KENNETH LAFAVE

Consider the following bits of text: "Doe, a deer, a female deer," "We'll have Manhattan," "Some enchanted evening," "Oh, what a beautiful morning!"

Unless you are wholly ignorant of popular music before the Beatles, you won't be able to read those words without hearing in your head the music that drapes them as perfectly as designer clothes. The words are by Oscar Hammerstein II and Lorenz Hart. The music that makes the words live is by Richard Rodgers.

Richard Rodgers (1902-1979) was one of the most important composers of the 20th century. He never wrote a symphony or a concerto, let alone a string quartet or piano sonata, yet his music resides in the subconscious of millions worldwide.

Curiously, while his songs and the musicals they come from are widely recognized, the name "Richard Rodgers" lacks the resonance of "George Gershwin" and "Cole Porter," two of his most illustrious songwriting contemporaries. The reason may be simply that Rodgers's life lacked the stuff of scintillating biography.

Gershwin died tragically young, and Porter battled sexual demons, but while Rodgers certainly had his dark side (he was an alcoholic prone to bouts of depression), his outer life conformed to the traditional expectations: 70-plus years of life, a decades-long marriage, children and grandchildren.

Extra-Ordinary

From this background of an ordinary, 20th-century American life, plagued by ordinary problems, Rodgers produced a catalog of songs so rich that space prohibits listing all the most popular of the 900-plus tunes.

The short list includes "Manhattan," "My Funny Valentine," "Where or When," "My Romance," "Isn't It Romantic?" "Lover," "Blue Moon," "Blue Room," "There's a Small Hotel," "Bewitched, Bothered, and Bewildered," "You Are Too Beautiful," "Falling in Love With Love," "Johnny One-Note," "The Lady Is a Tramp," "Spring Is Here," and "This Can't Be Love."

There's more: "The Surrey with the Fringe on Top," "People Will Say We're in Love," "If I Loved You," "You'll Never Walk Alone,"

"It Might As Well Be Spring," "Bali Ha'i," "Some Enchanted Evening," "Younger Than Springtime," "Getting to Know You," "I Have Dreamed," "The Sound of Music," "My Favorite Things," "Do-Re-Mi," "Climb Ev'ry Mountain," and "Edelweiss."

It is said that, in a certain mood, Rodgers would stand up and bow in a restaurant or bar when a song of his was played. If that's true, he must have spent precious little time seated.

The songs listed above from the beginning through "This Can't Be Love" have lyrics by Lorenz "Larry" Hart. From "Oh, What a Beautiful Morning" on, the words come from Oscar Hammerstein II. Rodgers composed music for several lyricists, including himself, but these two were his most famous and long-lasting collaborations.

Hart and Hammerstein were of opposite sensibilities. Hart wrote sophisticated lyrics in which arch observations and double entendres often played significant roles. "We'll have Manhattan" comes from the pair's first hit together, the song "Manhattan," written in 1925. The night it premiered in a Broadway revue called "The Garrick Gaieties," it was encored more than a dozen times and went on to be performed or recorded over the ensuing decades by 189 different artists, from Sterling Holloway to Rod Stewart.

Hart's lyric pokes gentle fun at aspects of the city. "We'll go to Greenwich/ Where modern men itch/ To be free." "We'll go to Coney/ And eat baloney on a roll." But Rodgers's exuberant tune soars, turning it into a love song to New York.

Hammerstein, by contrast, was deeply sentimental. When he wrote of a beautiful morning, or June "busting out all over," or a "lark who is learning to pray," there was no hidden sarcasm, no secret wink.

Accidentally, Rodgers's style shifted from 1942, the year he and Hammerstein joined forces to write their first show, "Oklahoma!" It could be said that the music he wrote with Hart was prose, while the music he wrote with Hammerstein was poetry.

Aptly, Rodgers's methods of working with these two were also opposed. For Hart, Rodgers composed the music first. With Hammerstein, the words came first. But in both cases, Rodgers wrote extremely fast. He was famous for it.



Richard Rodgers (L) and Oscar Hammerstein in 1945.

The Gestation of Song

One of the best-known stories about Rodgers's incredible facility concerns the composing of "Bali Ha'i," a pivotal song in "South Pacific." In an interview on CNYU-TV in 1975, Rodgers called the incident "semi-apocryphal," and admitted to his speed but gave it a fascinating background: "We were at lunch at Josh Logan's (the director of 'South Pacific'). Oscar came in and handed me the lyric of 'Bali Ha'i.' I left the room and thought about it for a few minutes, then went to the piano and had the tune."

Estimated time of composing: 10 minutes. Rodgers said, "I say it's semi-apocryphal because no one realizes what goes on inside your head."

At this point, the interviewer interrupts: "A period of gestation?"

Rodgers: "Exactly what it is. And it can last months. (When Oscar handed me the lyrics.) I didn't have the tune. Not a note of it. But I had the subject. I knew about the island, about the woman who sang it. And I knew all the time the type of music I wanted, so when it came down to the actual writing, it went quickly, which seemed rather miraculous. It wasn't. I'd been doing my subconscious homework."

We are more than our exterior lives.

Finding the Music Inside

Rodgers had the ability to glean a character or situation and find the music inside that matched it. Words were usually a part of

the set-up, but two great examples of the composer's gift are extended instrumental pieces in which, without words, he managed to convey worlds unto themselves.

In 1945, Rodgers opened the musical "Carousel," book and lyrics by Hammerstein, with a magical waltz that accompanied the carousel where the two main characters meet. After a slow winding-up of energy that portrays the carousel beginning to turn, jewel-like melodies in easy succession pour forth from the orchestra, a wordless evocation of innocent Julie Jordan's wide-eyed enchantment before the carousel and its barker, Billy Bigelow. "Carousel Waltz" projects a sense of wonder and delight.

Six years later, Rodgers was faced with the task of evoking an Asian culture with which he and his audiences had little to no familiarity. The Siam of "The King and I" is musically unrelated to the 19th-century Siam where it is set, and with good reason. "If I had used real Siamese music, people would've run out of the theater," Rodgers later explained, fully aware of the stark differences between Western and Asian musical cultures. So for a scene in which Anna, the English school teacher, meets her students, the King's children, Rodgers kept to a rule film composers often cite: "Don't make the music about the scenery; make it about the people in it." Anna is set to leave Siam after a series of disappointments, but the beauty and charm of the children reach inside of her, as Rodgers's music reaches inside of us, and we are both convinced she should stay.

The "March of the Siamese Children" exhibits Western "orientalism" of the sort that might not make it past cultural censors these days, but Rodgers's subconscious gives us something bigger than a cultural meme: It portrays for us the fragility of children. In the hands of a Richard Rodgers, music is indeed a universal language.

Former music critic for the *Arizona Republic* and *The Kansas City Star*, Kenneth LaFave recently earned a doctorate in philosophy, art, and critical thought from the *European Graduate School*. He's the author of three books, including "Experiencing Film Music" (2017, Rowman & Littlefield).



The cast of "All Creatures Great and Small."

FAMILY-FRIENDLY TELEVISION

At Last: Some Sophisticated, Feel-Good Television for the Whole Family

MATTHEW JOHN

In a sea of unseemly sitcoms and rom-coms that sometimes seem locked in a race to the bottom, Masterpiece Theater's "All Creatures Great and Small" is everything television could be, and should be.

Unfailingly wholesome, lusciously filmed, full of wit and humor, immediately captivating, and impeccably cast—this is one made-for-television series you'll want to imbibe. Think of it as a cup of cozy British tea, perfectly served, while wrapped in the gentle embrace of your favorite duvet.

I can't think of a better on-the-air antidote to the melancholy of pandemic life we've all grown so weary of.

Set in the 1940s, in the aftermath of World War I, "All Creatures" transports you to the rolling, emerald green hills of rural Yorkshire, England. It's a timeless, bucolic landscape dotted with sheep and bracketed by stone fences so idyllic, it's hard not to fawn over.

It was here that England's—if not the world's—most celebrated veterinarian, "James Herriot" (or Alf Wight, as he was actually named), practiced his craft. And, importantly, wrote about it.

Herriot penned fully eight memoirs in all, spanning over three decades of practice. The books quickly endeared Herriot and his colorful cast to the hearts of readers on both sides of the Atlantic.

I discovered their appeal rather surreptitiously—and reluctantly—while a still rascally 10-year-old hemmed in the backseat of my parent's car, en route to New England to visit relatives many years ago.

My mother had negotiated with my brother and me for "just one story" from an audiobook of Herriot's that she had gotten out of



Helen Alderson (Rachel Shenton) and James Herriot (Nicholas Ralph).

Each episode just abounds in goodness, and offers some kind of life lesson any family can feel good about.

the library (then on cassette tape). It was her turn to govern the stereo, having just dutifully endured multiple rounds of "Ewoks: The Battle for Endor" audiobook, which my younger brother and I found endlessly enthralling.

We had dreaded the prospect of having to sit prisoner to Mom's "grown-up" tape about some vet and sick animals.

Five minutes in, we were spellbound. After 15, we clamored for more. There was a tremendous grace—and hu-

manity—to Herriot's storytelling that somehow managed to not only sedate, but enrapture, two rambunctious kids who only moments earlier were ready to burst out of their seatbelts.

That same magic that I remember on that ride—and the many that followed, over the years—comes through every bit in this latest television adaption of Herriot's memoirs. (They were previously adapted for television in the late 1970s, and such a hit as to continue on for eight seasons.)

There's of course the inherent drama of Herriot's veterinary adventures. Whisking off in the middle of the night to help with a cow's breech birth out in the barn. Resuscitating a flock of fleecy sheep that were chased to exhaustion by a runaway dog.

The drama of those distant audiobooks translates fantastically to the screen, and you'll find yourself and the whole family sitting on the edge of the sofa as young Herriot

races against the clock to save these creatures, great and small.

But every bit as compelling, and what really adds layers to the storytelling, are the relationships among the characters in Masterpiece Theater's rendering. (They gain greater prominence, and perhaps richness, I dare say, than in their original telling.)

Herriot (played by Nicholas Ralph) is the newbie in town, having just graduated from veterinary school in Scotland, and being marked as such by his highlander accent. He's not only faced with the challenge of earning the locals' respect, but also holding down his job under a most capricious taskmaster, Siegfried Farnon (played masterfully by Samuel West).

Farnon is a hardened man from the start, seizing upon Herriot's every fault while being short on praise. He is closed and ornery owing to, as we later learn, the loss of his wife not long before, and faces the added challenge of playing in loco parentis to his lazy, wild-child younger brother, Tristan—who joins the practice after, more or less, completing his stint at vet school.

(Tristan, it should be noted, provides a sharp contrast to the ever upright and diligent Herriot—as if reminding viewers of what different paths of life we can each choose, and to what drastically different effect. Lots of "teachable moments" here for parents!)

Rounding out the picture is the remarkable figure of Mrs. Hall, Farnon's housekeeper, and a young woman named Helen, whom Herriot quickly falls in love with.

What makes the relationships so enjoyable is the depth that each character possesses, and above all, their capacity for kindness. They genuinely seek to do good in life, to care for one another, and ease the suffering of others—including our four-legged and feathered friends—in the world.

As a result, each episode just abounds in goodness, and offers some kind of life lesson any family can feel good about. Forgiveness. Giving second chances. Seeing the good in others. Doing the right thing. Courage. Perseverance. Patience. Caring. It's a cornucopia of good values that can rejuvenate even the most tired of souls.

And while there's an underlying sweetness about the whole thing, it's never forced or overly sentimental. It feels genuine, fitting, and just can't help but put a smile on your face.

When asked to comment on the show, producer Colin Callender remarked, "I felt that what I wanted as a viewer myself, and what I felt that the audience wanted, was a show that we could all watch together, that could somehow reaffirm the basic values that inform Britain at its best—community, care of others, family, all those great things which I think we've sort of lost along the way."

To Mr. Callender I say: mission success. You can watch "All Creatures," both seasons 1 and 2, on PBS television as well as on Masterpiece Theater's website with a subscription. The shows are also available on DVD from retailers.

And if you quickly find, like my family has, that two seasons aren't enough, despair not: It was just announced that seasons 3 and 4 have been confirmed and are in the works.

Matthew John is a veteran teacher and writer who is passionate about history, culture, and good literature. He lives in New York.

activity or the convenience of the kitchen, but kids in summer tend to want a lot of snacks. Sugar-heavy options and unhealthy processed foods can impact everyone's mood and overall health. Stock your kitchen with clean, wholesome food options that are easily accessible. When it comes to drinks, water is the way to go.

Family Project

A long break in the summer can feel somewhat aimless. Give the season a focus by embarking on a family project. Challenge each other to read a certain number of books, set a goal for visiting every park in your county, redecorate your living room together, or take on a huge jigsaw puzzle. Set a goal and aim at it together as a family. This will make this particular summer memorable and meaningful.

Reading Time

As you establish the rhythm and flow of your days, consider instituting a reading hour, perhaps in the afternoon. The time just before dinner, when energy levels tend to dip and quiet time can seem especially precious, is a great time to declare the reading hour. Regular trips to the library over the summer along with new books here and there can make this time of day something everyone looks forward to and will also allow reading skills to continue to flourish. You might choose to spend some of this time reading aloud, listening to an audiobook as a family, or simply allowing everyone to enjoy reading independently.

FOR KIDS ONLY

THE EPOCH TIMES

When God Thought of Mother
By Henry Ward Beecher

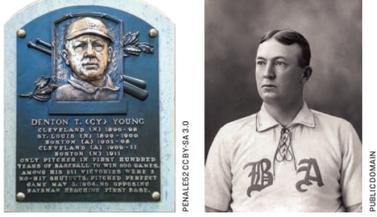
When God thought of mother, He must have laughed with satisfaction, and framed it quickly—so rich, so deep, so divine, so full of soul, power, and beauty, was the conception.

A mother understands what a child does not say.
JEWISH PROVERB

WHAT DO YOU CALL A

SMALL MOM?

This Week in History



Cy Young's plaque at the National Baseball Hall of Fame and Museum in Cooperstown, N.Y. Cy Young in 1902.

A PERFECT GAME

On May 5, 1904, baseball player Cy Young pitched the first perfect game in professional baseball history. A perfect game is when a pitcher completes the entire game without any hits or errors, allowing no player to reach first base. Young was playing for the Boston Americans (today's Red Sox) against the Philadelphia Athletics (today's Oakland Athletics).

By Aidan Danza, age 15

GROUSE

Grouse are birds that, at least in the suburbs of New York City, are quite uncommon—really, they aren't present at all. Once you get past the suburbs and into the woods of northern New Jersey—and to the west beyond—you begin to find the game bird.

RUFFED GROUSE
Ruffed grouse travel south from the northern forests of Canada and venture into America through mountainous areas, where conditions are similar to the Canadian woods. They inhabit groves of spruce, aspen, birch, pine, oak, and hickory, and they prefer to live in young, dense forests instead of open old-growth woods. They eat mostly leaves, buds, fruits, and acorns.

The reason they are called the "ruffed" grouse is because of the male's display, which is used for courtship or defense of territory. The male will fan his tail, puff his feathers out to twice their normal size, including a blue-black ruff around the neck, and will drum with his wings on a log or rock. This will often be answered by a nearby male, drumming to defend his territory.

GREATER SAGE-GROUSE

Moving west, you'll find the greater sage-grouse. These grouse live only in the "sagebrush sea," or the Rocky Mountain valleys and steppes, where sagebrush is the dominant plant. Sagebrush makes up the majority of the sage-grouse's diet and is the plant under which the grouse nests, so most of the sage-grouse's life is based around this plant.

The sage-grouse is also most famous for the male's display. Every morning, in the spring, the grouse congregate at a place called a lek, which has been used for generations for displaying males to attract females. The males will inflate their air sacs, fan their tails, and strut. Next, they will coo twice, then immediately blow some of the air out of their air sacs twice with a pounding sound, making their trademark display: a who-OOT-pound-pound. It is quite difficult to describe this amazing sound with words, and I heartily encourage you to listen to examples of the lekking call online.



PLANNING AHEAD

Summer Structure: Tips for Parents

BARBARA DANZA

Summer is almost here. Those lazy, hazy, crazy days of summer are oh-so-welcome after a laborious school year. The first few days of sleeping in with no alarm, spending all day doing whatever you feel like, and eating ice cream for dinner provide a much-needed release for parents and kids alike from the daily grind.

However, as every experienced parent knows, a summer-long free-for-all, enticing as it may sound, can quickly lead to days on end of cranky, directionless, and generally unhappy kiddos (not to mention parents). Adding just the right amount of structure and rhythm to your summer days can make the difference between a season that's frustrating to one that's genuinely fun.

Here are six structural elements to consider for your family this summer.

Circadian Rhythms

While waking up and going to bed whenever one wants may be every child's dream, the consequences of throwing off the body's natural circadian rhythm over a period of time will wreak havoc on your summertime peace. Find the best bedtimes and wake times for your family and aim to stick to them as much as possible all summer. Of course, summer fun may lead to unex-

If left unchecked, screen time habits can easily fall off the rails this time of year.

pected late nights and the need to sleep in here and there, but overall continually guide your family back to the regular sleep schedule as much as you can.

Screen Limits

If left unchecked, screen time habits can easily fall off the rails this time of year. The summer season should be one of less time staring at screens, not more. Don't allow your children to waste

their summer beholden to digital masters. Set strict limits on screens, encourage a ton of time outside in the fresh air, and embrace the beauty of "boredom." It's in boredom that creativity and ingenuity are born. Don't cave on screens.

Responsibility

Your children are getting older. Summertime is a great time to increase the responsibility that rides on their shoulders. Allow your children the opportunity to contribute to the household this summer in new ways by taking responsibility for the work of the home. Perhaps they can take charge of garbage maintenance, set the table each night for dinner, sweep the porch each morning, or even cook a meal once a week for the family. Depending on their age and interests, household chores can be a great way to instill discipline and enhance basic life skills.

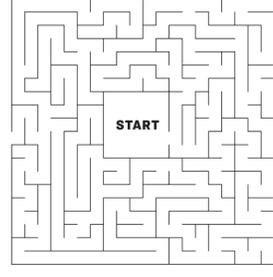
Healthy Snacks

Maybe it's the increased sunshine and physical

Summertime is a great time to increase responsibility and chores, according to the children's abilities.

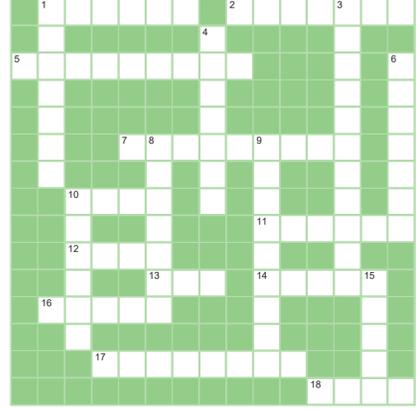


AMAZING ESCAPES!



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

<p>Easy puzzle 1</p> <table border="1"> <tr><td>5</td><td>9</td></tr> <tr><td>1</td><td>9</td></tr> <tr><td>+</td><td>-</td><td>x</td><td>÷</td></tr> </table> <p>Solution For Easy 1 1 - 6 x (9 - 6) 1 - 6 - 9 x 6</p>	5	9	1	9	+	-	x	÷	<p>Medium puzzle 1</p> <table border="1"> <tr><td>12</td><td>15</td></tr> <tr><td>7</td><td>12</td></tr> <tr><td>+</td><td>-</td><td>x</td><td>÷</td></tr> </table> <p>Solution for Medium 1 7 - 12 = (21 - 9)</p>	12	15	7	12	+	-	x	÷	<p>Hard puzzle 1</p> <table border="1"> <tr><td>13</td><td>25</td></tr> <tr><td>10</td><td>18</td></tr> <tr><td>+</td><td>-</td><td>x</td><td>÷</td></tr> </table> <p>Solution for Hard 1 01 x (92 - 61 + 81)</p>	13	25	10	18	+	-	x	÷
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12	15																									
7	12																									
+	-	x	÷																							
13	25																									
10	18																									
+	-	x	÷																							



Across

1 ____ cookies with Mom! (6)
2 Mother's day gift idea" (7)
5 Mom has always been out biggest ____ (9)
7 Mother is our ____ (9)
10 Holds close (4)
11 Mother's activity (6)

Down

1 A ____ of roses (7)
3 Mother's words (11)
4 Dedicated (7)
6 Often mom's job? (7)
8 Something we should give our Mothers (7)
9 Mother's favorite treat? (9)
10 We should be be mother's ____ (6)
15 ____ they Father and Mother (5)

Across

12 Mother's greatest gift (4)
13 Mother's comfort us when we ____ (3)
14 Nothing like hearing mother's ____ (5)
16 Mom has a big ____ (5)
17 Recollections (8)
18 Mother's hugs (4)

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