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# THE EPOCH TIMES IFFE & TRADE OF THE SAME AND THE SAME AND



FAMILY FIRST

## Finding Happiness in the Simple Life

A young family's faith carries them through life, work on a community pasture in rural Canada

#### LOUISE CHAMBERS

A family of four that manages a community pasture in rural Canada has found happiness in the simplicity of everyday life. Their belief is to live wholeheartedly in every aspect of life, through the good and the bad, and to see God's hand through it all.

Canadian natives Vanessa and Levi Ould, who are in their late 20s, currently live in west central Saskatchewan, Canada, with their children: Jeremiah, 4, and Hadley, 2. They work on the community pasture for six months of the year but live there for the whole year.

"The Lord opened this door and we are so grateful," Vanessa told The Epoch Times.

#### Early Life

A horse lover for as long as she can remember, Vanessa spent her childhood and teen years riding horses and taking lessons. She also competed in shows but had never ranched or even ridden the western style of horseback riding.

What inspired her to become a true

"cowgirl" was moving to Alberta in 2012 to manage a horse program for a year-round kids' camp.

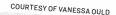
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**1.** Levi and Vanessa Ould with their children Jeremiah and Hadley.

**2.** Vanessa Ould noted how resilient children can be.

**3.** The young children inherited their parents' love of riding.

**4.** The pasturelands of central Saskatchewan, Canada.



COURTESY OF BOX T PHOTOGRAPHY BY TANYA CHAPPELL VIA VANESSA OULD

(FRAMES) SHUTTERSTOCK

CHENYING/SHUTTERSTOCK

### Neighbors Helping Neighbors Through Lasagna

Volunteers across the US cook up some warmth and love through 'quintessential comfort food'

#### DAVE PAONE

There's no problem that a pan of lasagna can't solve.

While that statement isn't really true, Rhiannon Menn believes it can at least help.

> "Lasagna is the quintessential comfort food," she told The Epoch Times. "It communicates warmth and love."

> > At the start of the lockdowns in March 2020, Menn was a

mom in San Diego who wanted to do something kind to support families in her neighborhood who were contending with pandemic-related woes.

Through a social media post, she offered to deliver a hot pan of lasagna to the doorstep of anyone who was interested in one.

"In those early days, I didn't just want to deliver a meal; I wanted to deliver that sense of warmth and love and kindness that said: 'We're here for each other. I'm here for you. We're going to get through this together.' And I think lasagna does that," she said.

#### **The First Delivery**

After Menn posted her offer online, there were seven families who responded.

One of them was a woman who was taking care of her mother, sister, and a 6-monthold baby. Her income had stopped due to the lockdown and their refrigerator had broken down.

"They had been eating ramen noodles for two weeks," Menn said. "That just broke my heart."

When Menn drove up to the residence, she saw the discarded refrigerator out front.

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**FAMILY FIRST** 

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#### Continued from Page 1

"I started helping neighbors with their to help at the camp, and started being Alberta, Canada. Following that, for the children beside them on this adventure drawn to that way of life," Vanessa said. "I ... loved the aspect of the lifestyle that came with cowboying. That it was more than just something to do on the side but a way to bring horses into every aspect of your life."

In 2015, when she was working at a horse camp, she met Levi's brother and sister-inlaw. The couple later invited her on a fall excursion, where she met her husband-to-be.

"Even Levi knew that they were trying to set us up," Vanessa said. "During that trip, for the both of us, something just clicked. Over the next few months, spending more time together and with their friends and being on some not-so-planned adventures, they both realized that they fit together.

"It seemed easy and natural. We both loved the Lord, would rather be riding than anything else, and had a heart for similar things," Vanessa said.

After dating for a year, the couple tied the knot—six years ago—at 6 a.m. on a hilltop, with the sun rising and close family and friends around.

#### Life on the Community Pasture

Although Levi's parents never ranched, he did horseback riding with his brother. He also grew up with grandparents who farmed and had cows, and he would help his neighbors with their cows, learning the ropes of it all.

Before moving to Saskatchewan, Vannext few years, Levi worked at a cow/calf operation.

With a keen interest in the idea of managing a community pasture, the couple then waited patiently for an opportunity to come by.

#### l am a firm believer that God has us where we are with purpose and intention, and the grass isn't greener on the other side but where it's being sown into and taken care of.

Vanessa Ould

Lasagna Love.

Today, they couldn't be happier, managing more than 2,000 cattle—divided into five herds—on 22,000 acres with open prairies, trees, and a couple of big lakes. Describing the work on the pasture, Vanessa said: "In April, we start checking

By September, Menn had 500 vol-

unteers. She named the charity

At the end of September, Menn

"We went from 500 to 5,000 volun-

That program was Kelly Andolina's in-

teers within a month," she said.

troduction to Lasagna Love.

was on the "Today" show.



Levi Ould (L) grew up with grandparents who farmed and had cows. He also has experience with managing cattle.

fences and getting the land, pens, and water systems ready for the cattle. In May, they start coming in, and then we start weekly checking each [herd], doctoring sickness, checking herd health, managing the grass, and making sure that the land is being stewarded and utilized well."

In the off-season, Levi does rawhide braiding, and the couple works together on fulfilling orders for handmade leather goods, such as keychains, refrigerator magnets, and cellphone holsters, which they sell on their Etsy store.

Besides cattle, the pasture is also home to seven horses, a mini horse for Jeremiah, three sheep, and four cattle dogs.

The animals are like family; two of the horses have been with the Oulds since they were colts, even being a part of their wedding day and both of Vanessa's pregnancy announcements.

Tagging along with their parents, the kids have inherited Vanessa and Levi's love for riding.

"Jeremiah rides by himself," Vanessa said, "and Hadley rides behind Levi or me in a 'buddy saddle' that attaches to our saddle."

The kids also help with various tasks. Jeremiah likes lending a hand with opening the gates, and when he's riding the pony, he's off quickly to help mark the roped cattle. He also helps with temping them and giving them medication when needed.

"Hadley is also eager to help and is a very determined back-seat driver, telling us where to go or what cow needs to be roped' because it's lame," Vanessa said.

The mother of two shared that daily challenges are few, and while it can be hard living far from extended family-with Vanessa's family living in Ontario, Canada, and Levi's family living in Alberta—she insists cattle, learning from friends who came essa and Levi managed cattle in northern that they "won't ever regret" having their

#### **Learnings and Memories**

Living in the community pasture has taught the family many things, such as how resilient children can be.

"They are eager to be a part of what you're doing if you'll invite them into it," Vanessa said

The family has also learned how to work better as a team and be more strategic in getting jobs done.

Her key lesson learned has been that "the best things don't come easy, but through a lot of hard work, perseverance, and cheerful hearts."

Among the many experiences they've had, Vanessa remembers a special day in spring this year when the family found a cow stuck in the mud near a natural spring and rallied together to free her.

"We tried dragging her out with our horses, but she was suctioned in there pretty good and wouldn't budge," she said. "Levi rode a few miles back to where we had a Jeep parked with a winch and brought it back. He crawled into the mud and wiggled straps under the tired, stuck cow.

"We got her mostly up the ridge with the winch when the Jeep's battery died."

Luckily, the family had brought both their jeep and truck that day. So with the cow

## Neighbors Helping Neighbors Through Lasagna

Volunteers across the US cook up some warmth and love through 'quintessential comfort food'

(L to R) Volunteers Kathy Kirschner of Omaha, Neb; Kayla McDe of Massachusetts; and Megan Gotimer of Maryland.

Menn delivered more lasagna and baby food to that family several more times.

#### **Exponential Growth**

could.

Continued from Page 1

"I burst into tears," she said.

In March and April 2020, Menn made the first seven deliveries on her

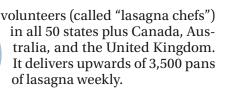
She knew then that she had to keep

donating pans of lasagna as long as she

"By May, I had 10 volunteers in San Diego and I wasn't even looking for volunteers. I wasn't looking to grow," she said.

"I immediately went to sign up to be a volunteer," she told The Epoch Times. Andolina is now its regional director of New York and Pennsylvania.

Lasagna Love became an official charity with 501(c)(3) status in November 2020. It has delivered more than 250,000 pans of lasagna, made by more than 35,000



**Not Just for Families** 

In addition to delivering to families in need, Lasagna Love also provides food for firefighters, police officers, and hospital nurses.

In one night, Andolina oversaw the delivery of a staggering number of pans of lasagna to three hospitals in upstate New York to feed a total of about 300 nurses. This included salad and dessert.

Volunteers have also provided meals to



Hadley, the youngest, rides in a "buddy saddle" behind Vanessa Ould.

still stuck, Levi rode all the way back to the truck, got the battery out, and brought it back to the jeep.

"We got the cow out after a couple of hours' work," Vanessa said. "It was a pretty good moment and a lot of thanking the Lord!"

But the rescue didn't end there; the cow's calf needed help, having been deprived of milk during her mother's rescue and recovery. The family got both the cow and the calf back to the barn. They fed the calf milk replacer for the next few days and helped raise her body temperature.

The cow and calf have since recovered and are doing great.

"We named them Clover and Daisy, and the kids love when we get to go check their bunch and spot them," Vanessa said.

'We Can See God's Hand Through It All' Faith plays a major role in the Oulds' life. Both Vanessa and Levi believe that they wouldn't have this job or enjoy the bliss on the community pasture if it weren't for God's grace.

"We pray often throughout our days, and we can see God's hand through it all. ... I am a firm believer that God has us where we are with purpose and intention, and the grass isn't greener on the other side but where it's being sown into and taken care of," she said.

Since finding joy in the simple life, Vanessa has begun sharing her insights with the world via Instagram in hopes of encouraging others.

In one post, she shared her greatest lesson: "Happiness wasn't something chased after, but came from a 'simple life' of enjoying the things already in your life and not the 'things' you think you need to have to be happy."

Vanessa told The Epoch Times, "To me, that is such an important truth our culture needs to hear. To enjoy what God has already given us, to really enjoy him, changes everything because contentment is of that much more gain than something

that makes us feel happy for a moment. "It's not simply doing what makes you happy that truly makes you joyful, but rather living wholeheartedly in every aspect of your life: the good, the hard, the challenges and seeing opportunity in it all."

Vanessa's best advice for others is to get started: Find people to learn from, stay humble, and seek God.

"Our life is blessed, not simply because of what we have or what we get to do but because of who we know-the Lord-and our hope is in him. When things are hard, we know he holds it; when moments work out, we give him the praise," she said.

"Look for ways to serve others. Start being a good employee, a good wife, and a better mom. By God's grace, do the best you can right where you are, and make each day worth living."

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# HISTORY Little Big Man: Some Lessons From 'The Father of the Constitution'

#### **JEFF MINICK**

At first glance, James Madison (1751-1836) appeared unimpressive. A second glance would likely produce the same result.

He was often plagued by ill health, including what were then known as bilious fevers and a mild form of possible epilepsy. His frailty prevented him from serving in the Continental Army, and years later, as president, he exchanged the muggy summer heat of Washington for the curative airs of Montpelier, his family home in central Virginia. Though he lived to 85, considered then and now a ripe old age, the principal framer of our Constitution himself suffered from a "poor constitution," as his contemporaries might say. Nor did his demeanor attract attention.

He was often timid in large gatherings and was a poor public speaker, hindered by a feeble voice in an age that treasured oratory. Patrick Henry might bring roars of approval from a crowd, but Madison spoke so softly at the Constitutional Convention of 1787 that delegates had to scoot their chairs closer to hear him.

Even his height worked against him. Compared to George Washington or Thomas Jefferson, both of whom stood well over 6 feet tall, Madison was about 5 feet, 5 inches tall. He was America's shortest president, and his height made him the butt of jokes, earning him nicknames such as "Little Jemmy" and "His Little Majesty." As one person observed, Madison was "no bigger than half a piece of soap."

Yet today, we know this shy, diminutive man by other, more worthy titles: the Father of the Constitution, the Father of the Bill of Rights, and the Sage of Montpelier.

#### Gifts to a Nation

Though some confused Americans credit Jefferson, author of the Declaration of Independence, as the Father of the Constitution, it is, of course, Madison who wears this badge of honor.

And rightly so. It was Madison who had spent years prior to the Constitutional Convention reading history and political science. It was Madison who assiduously took notes every day of the Convention's meetings and then closely studied them system of checks and balances distributed among the branches of that government. And when the new Constitution was sent to the states for ratification, it was Madison who wrote 29 of the 85 articles in "The Federalist Papers" defending and promoting this document.

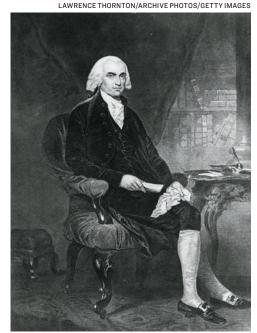
Madison was also the principal author of the Bill of Rights, those amendments to the Constitution listing such natural liberties as freedom of speech and religion. These remain the heart of the American experiment and are the watermark of American exceptionalism.

In Federalist No. 14, Madison wrote of Americans and their leaders that "they accomplished a revolution which has no parallel in the annals of human society." The same might be said of Madison' Constitution.

For these gifts, we must be grateful. Whether we realize it or not, our Constitution has shaped the lives of each one of us. But Madison's lessons for us don't end there. If we examine some other aspects of his life, we find tips on how we ourselves might live more fully.

#### Liberty and Learning

"All I have been in my life I owe largely to that man," Madison later wrote of Donald Robertson.



An engraved portrait of James Madison, seated at a writing desk, circa 1800.

Robertson was the principal teacher at the Innes school, to which Madison was sent at the age of 11, about 70 miles from Montpelier. There, this graduate of Scotland's Edinburgh University educated the boy in math, science, Latin, Greek, and French. Later, Madison was instructed at home by the young Thomas Martin, a graduate of what is now Princeton University. Madison attended this college as well, entering as a second-year student because of his excellent preparation.

As a result of this education, Madison remained a lifelong reader and student. But he also became an advocate for more educational opportunities, writing in August 1822 to Kentucky's Lt. Gov. W.T. Barry, "What spectacle can be more edifying or more seasonable, than that of Liberty and Learning, each leaning on the other for their mutual and surest support?" At the same time, he was working alongside Jefferson to establish the University of Virginia in Charlottesville and would continue his involvement as university rector after Jefferson's death in 1826.

Madison's recognition of the important link between learning and liberty should inspire parents and teachers to make this same connection.

#### **Choose Your Friends Wisely**

The 50-year friendship between Madiin the evenings. It was he who envisioned son and Jefferson had enormous repera republican form of government with a cussions on the formation and future of

> The deep bond between Madison and Jefferson is unlike that of any other two presidents in our history. They made an odd couple physically—Jefferson was 6 feet, 2 inches tall—but that difference mattered not a whit. Over the course of a half-century, these friends exchanged books and ideas, not all of them political in nature, and delighted in conversation whenever they were together.

> The camaraderie of these two Founding Fathers should remind our young people, and us for that matter, to choose our friends wisely and keep them close.

#### **Strong Marriages Matter**

When he lost the presidential race of 1808 to Madison, South Carolina's Charles Pinckney noted that he had lost to both Mr. and Mrs. Madison, and might have had a better chance if he had faced Mr. Madison alone.

Madison was 43 when he met 26-yearold widow Dolley Payne. He was instantly smitten, but after a proposal of marriage, Dolley took three months before answering yes. For the next 42 years, until Madison's death, they were the picture of a happy, compatible couple.

In many ways, they were proof that opposites attract. Dolley was outgo-

ing, loved entertaining and arranging large parties, and in spite of her earlier Quakerism, enjoyed wearing jewelry, her signature turbans, and fine gowns, some of which she ordered from Europe. Madison was retiring, intimate only with those whom he knew well, and most often dressed in black.

Each recognized the strengths that these differences brought to their marriage and to their public life. Nor was Pinckney far off the mark in his backhanded compliment about the influence of Dolley, whose social ease and finesse set a tone of graciousness in White House entertainment that has lasted to our present day.

#### Iumility

As we might expect from such an unassuming personality, Madison rightly struck those around him as a gentleman who kept his ego in check. Despite being the major force behind the Constitution, for example, he once stated: "You give me a credit to which I have no claim in calling me 'the writer of the Constitution of the United States.' This was not, like the fabled Goddess of Wisdom, the offspring of a single brain. It ought to be regarded as the work of many heads and many hands."

#### **A Final Note**

Like some of the other Founding Fathers, including Washington and Jefferson, Madison owned slaves, a practice which we moderns rightly condemn.

Yet some people would use this evil, which shamed Madison himself, to blot out all of his other achievements. This July, for example, the New York Post reported that the directors and staff of Madison's Montpelier had excluded most of his contributions to our nation from its exhibits, focusing instead on the slavery of his day and the perceived racism of our own. Their tours of the house and grounds left many visitors confused or angered by their politically correct guides and by the banishment of Madison himself from his own home.

After these protests, Montpelier announced that it would offer a month-long "Constitution Day" celebration centered on the Sept. 17 anniversary of that document's adoption.

Whether this celebration was already in the works, as claimed by a representative of Montpelier, or was instead a reaction to the public outcry is unclear. Whatever the case, what these iconoclasts forget as they seek to denigrate or even erase our past is that Madison doesn't just live on in Montpelier, or in the towns named after him, or in the statues erected in his memory. His greatest memorial is found in the world's oldest written constitution. If the cancel culture movement ever destroys that shrine of our freedoms, then the republic it established will vanish as well

As Madison wrote near the end of his life: "The advice nearest to my heart and deepest in my convictions is that the Union of the States be cherished and perpetuated. Let the open enemy to it be regarded as a Pandora with her box opened; and the disguised one, as the Serpent creeping with his deadly wiles into Paradise."

Preserve Madison's greatest monument, the Constitution, and we preserve what Jefferson's Declaration of Independence called our unalienable rights of "Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness."

Jeff Minick lives and writes in Front Royal, Virginia. He is the author of two novels, "Amanda Bell" and "Dust on Their Wings," and two works of nonfiction, "Learning as I Go" and "Movies Make the Man.

first responders and victims of natural disasters, such as the California wildfires.

#### A Lifetime of Cooking

When the United States experienced a large influx of European immigrants in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, the matriarchs of those families cooked traditional meals from the country from which they came. The children of these immigrants learned to cook the same meals. Essentially, Italian families cooked Italian

meals, Hungarian families cooked Hungarian meals, and so on. Times have changed. Young peo-

ple learning how to cook in modern America learn how to cook meals

Lasagna is an Italian dish. Menn is of Ukrainian descent. "We make borscht and perogies," she said. "I've been cooking since I was small enough to make brownies in the micro-

from ethnicities in addition to their own.

wave. Menn learned to cook all through grade school into high school, and owned a catering company at age 16.

So she doesn't limit herself to borscht and perogies. She makes dishes from

a wide variety of regions, and that includes lasagna.

Paying It Forward

Menn discovered that a large per-

centage of the recipients are so touched by the gesture that they "pay it forward," often immediately.

One January, a recipient said he was so moved and impacted by the donation that he turned around and paid his upstairs neighbor's heating bill.

In another instance, a woman received a pan of lasagna and the next day learned about a local family who had lost everything in a fire. She happened to have three storage units full of furniture. She donated it all to the family.

"The world needs more kindness," Andolina said. "And I think that this organization shines through with the kindness. It's amazing."



Lasagna Love voluntee chefs and co-regional leaders Kirsten Glaser and Kelly Kolling of Georgia.

#### Avoid Mockery

It's sometimes those

closest to us that we

find hardest to get along

with, but kind gestures

go a long way.

Living with others for an extended period of time naturally allows us to learn their interests, tastes, and likes. These tastes then become easy prey for mockery. However, Helps exhorts us to avoid ridiculing them. Instead, encourage or praise those tastes, or if you simply can't stand them, avoid saying anything about them at all.

#### Have Confidence, Not Doubt

When living with others, we often get a chance to help them make decisions, both big and small. In instances such as these, Helps writes, don't "question and requestion their resolves." Individuals are bound to do that to themselves enough. Constantly asking "Are you sure?" or arguing why something they want to do won't work may, indeed, manipulate them to go in the direction you want, but it will also discourage them and give them greater reason for resentment toward you.

#### **Don't Pick Fights**

Helps encourages us to "avoid having stock subjects of disputation" that we engage in over and over with our housemates. If these are left unchecked, there "is a tendency in all minor disputes to drift" back to these subjects.

Helps further cautions those who are sticklers for logic and reason. It may work well in law offices and ivory towers to continually be reasoning and debating a matter, but it only escalates contention when practiced regularly in a household.

#### **Remember Your Manners**

While we all know that familiarity breeds contempt, few of us work to ward off that contemptuousness for those we live with. Helps cautions us "not to let familiarity swallow up all courtesy." In other words, be kind. Pour their coffee. Do more than grunt at them in the morning. Offer to do a household task that you know they don't like. Smile at them!

#### **Think of Others First**

"Lastly, in conciliating those we live with," Helps tells us, "it is most surely done, not by consulting their interests, nor by giving way to their opinions, so much as by not offending their tastes." In other words, be sensitive and know what they like or dislike so that you can happily seek their best interests.

As I looked at these recommendations, I couldn't help but think that they seemed familiar. Then, it hit me. They mirror the biblical text of 1 Corinthians 13: 4-6, one of the greatest passages of literature ever written on love: "Charity [Love] suffereth long, and is kind; charity envieth not; charity vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up, doth not behave itself

unseemly, seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil; rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth; beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things."

In essence, what Helps recommends is to just show love to those we live with and interact with on a daily basis. It isn't a mushy type of love; it's simply showing kind favor to others, thinking of them first before we think of ourselves.

We often wonder what we can do to make this world a better place. I've got news for all of us, myself included: Start with those at home or right around you. Make their lives happy by showing them love and they'll be better able to go out into the world and show the same love to others, multiplying your little investment for good far faster than you could ever imagine.

Annie Holmquist is the editor of Intellectual Takeout and the online editor of Chronicles Magazine, both projects of the Charlemagne Institute.

#### Advice for anyone living with housemates are to be for the future of the same mind." Embrace the differences between yourself and those close to you. Learn to smile at differences and look for ways that they benefit you, rather than simply looking at why they annoy you. Don't Meddle

Helps encourages his readers not to "interfere unreasonably with others," nor to continually criticize, "even if it were kindly and just criticism."

**BIBA KAYEWICH** 

Undoubtedly, each of us would say that our reasons for sticking our noses into the business of our housemates are always reasonable. But would they say the same? Probably not. Are they cooking dinner, sorting the laundry, or washing the bathroom in a way that you wouldn't do those chores? Let them do those things their way—free from negative commentary from you.

### Boy Dedicates Home Run Baseball to Grandfather

ome friends of mine recently sent

In the bustle of moving into the

dorm, meeting new friends, and

conversing with old ones, the father

their oldest son to college.

took a moment to impart some wisdom to his

son. He exhorted him to remember that he

was now swimming in multiple spheres of

influence and needed to watch how he con-

ducted himself and interacted with room-

In other words, "Do your best to get along

His advice is basic and something that every

one of us should know; yet, it's also something

that we're all excellent at forgetting. We live

and work and play with all kinds of individu-

als throughout our life on earth, yet it's often

those closest to us whom we have the hardest

mates, friends, and professors.

with people, Son."

A 4th-grade player's gratitude toward his 'Papa'

#### **LOUISE CHAMBERS**

A fourth grader who learned everything he knows about baseball from his grandpa presented him with an autographed ball after hitting his very first home run. The emotional moment was caught on camera and has since gone viral.

Felix, 9, plays for Boss Youth Baseball in his hometown of Sioux Falls, South Dakota. His grandfather, 73-year-old Bruce Carrier, retired as a superintendent of schools five years ago and now devotes most of his time to his nine grandchildren.

"I was really surprised, because I've never hit a home run, and then my second was amazing because it was a grand slam," Felix time getting along with.

In his 1857 book "Friends in Council," Sir Arthur Helps writes that "the hatreds and disgusts that there are behind friendship, relationship, service, and, indeed, proximity of all kinds, is one of the darkest spots upon earth."

7 Rules for a Harmonious Home

So how do we navigate such murky waters, particularly in a time when brother is turning against brother with increasing intensity? Helps offers us a handful of clues.

#### Vive la Différence

Variety is the spice of life, but sometimes it's a very biting spice given various personal backgrounds

"If people are to live happily together," Helps writes, "they must not fancy, because they are thrown together now, that all their lives have been exactly similar up to the present time, that they started exactly alike, and that they

> Times: "Of course, it was unexpected. I'm proud that this young man had a great day ... and wants to share that with me. That made me extremely happy!"

> Felix said that when he saw his grandpa's reaction, he tried not to cry, but eventually did. Since his mom, Melissa Carrier-Damon, posted the footage of the spe-

cial moment on social media, it's gone viral, amass-

ing a million views. Bruce said: "It still astounds me that this simple reaction of something wonderful has got the views and notoriety. But all the credit goes to [Fe-

> Originally from Minnesota, Bruce grew up playing baseball with his six brothers and his father, who was a baseball player and later managed

a local team. Bruce became a high school basketball coach for four years, then a college basketball and baseball coach for nine years. Felix has inherited Bruce's love of the game. While the preteen supports the Toronto Blue Jays, Bruce is a die-hard supporter of the Los Angeles Dodgers.

According to Bruce, each year since Felix began to play the game, he's shown improvement.

"I'm pretty fortunate; my wife and I are able to spend a lot of time with all our grandkids," Bruce said "It's pretty special, though, that this young man can play ball, and we go to just about every game, of course."

Besides baseball, Bruce and Felix together enjoy fishing, watching movies, riding bikes, and spending time at home. "He's able to come over to the house a lot and just hang out, so that's pretty special," said Bruce, imploring others to "appreciate those special moments that you have with your kids, with your grandkids, and live each day to the fullest."

Felix, who hopes to have a career in baseball in the future, has a philosophy when it comes to his favorite game: "When you're playing baseball, it doesn't matter if you win or lose, it just matters to have fun."

told The Epoch Times. "I feel really proud because that was just an amazing day for me." Wanting to share his victory with his grandpa, who's coached him in the game since he was 4, Felix wrote, "Papa, I love you" on his home run ball and headed home to present it. Describing the precious moment, Bruce said that he was watching a baseball game when he got a call asking him to go to the garage, as Felix wanted to talk to him. "I go up there and he presents this ball to

me," Bruce said. In a video that captured the heartwarming moment, Felix tells Bruce: "I signed the ball for you and it says 'Papa

Reflecting on being presented with the ball, Bruce told The Epoch

As Bruce starts to get teary-eyed, he asks Felix, "Why did you do that?" Felix replied, "Because you taught me everything about baseball." The two then shared a heartfelt embrace.

I love you."



# One-Handed Pilot Encourages Children to Excel

Eric Gaffney's story is an uplifting tale of strength, persistence, and hard work

#### ANNA MASON

He is confident, relaxed, and all smiles. Pilot Eric Gaffney, who was born with a limb difference, not only cuts a handsome figure but is truly made for the job.

The 34-year-old first officer at United Airlines, who flies the Boeing 737, is missing a hand—but he is not short on determination and resilience. He firmly believes people are born to win, provided they are ready to face their life challenges head-on.

Originally from Tulsa, Oklahoma, he now lives in The Woodlands, Texas, with his wife, Natalie, and two children: a 6-yearold daughter and a 4-year-old son. When Gaffney found himself grounded during the pandemic, he wrote a book for children, titled "Airick Flies High," aimed at showing how difference need not be a barrier.

"I tell kids all the time that even in a class rooms full of kids with two hands, we all have something that makes us different,' he said. "We are all different, and it's the different ferences we have that make us unique, limb difference or not. And with hard work and dedication, we can accomplish anything."

#### A Will to Thrive

Growing up with a limb difference was not easy for Gaffney. When he was born, his parents were justifiably concerned about how he would cope in life, missing a hand.

"In the hospital, though," he said, "a nurse told my mom that nothing would ever stand in my way. This bit of encouragement eased a lot of their worries early on. They knew from an early age that, no matter what, I would find a way to do anything I wanted to do."

The nurse was right.

Ever since his childhood, Gaffney has been resourceful and determined, finding a way to do everything. One of his favorite examples is tying his shoes. When he was young, Gaffney's parents got him spiraled laces that would tighten when pulled. But, quickly noticing he was the only kid who didn't know how to tie his shoes, he was determined to learn.

"To do so I would work on it with my mom at home and then she would send me to school with them tied," he recalled. "At recess, I would untie my shoes and practice tying them over and over until I figured it out."



Eric Gaffney during one of his motivational sessions with children.

Things are the same today; if there's a task to be done, Gaffney works hard until he finds a way to accomplish it.

#### 'I Know What I Am Capable Of'

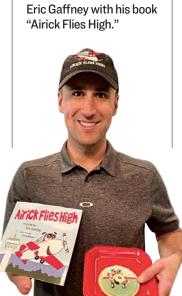
Gaffney's father is a mechanic for American Airlines, and Gaffney's love for airplanes started early. Thinking ahead to college, it was all he could imagine himself doing, but the idea of physically flying an airplane with only one hand seemed impossible.

He ultimately went with his other love, medicine, pursuing his passion to become a doctor. But during freshman year, he knew the path he'd taken wasn't right. He began doing research, and made contact with the chief flight instructor at The University of Oklahoma, a man named Dave.

"Dave sat me in an airplane and showed me around. He told me—and I agreed—that it would not be easy, but he thought it would be possible," he recalled. Fast forward through many demon-

stration flight tests, Gaffney proved and demonstrated his ability to become the restriction-free airline pilot he is today. "I thrive on the doubt that others may have because I know what I am capable of," he said.

**Eric Gaffney** says he is **'forever** grateful' to his parents for their unconditional support and the ways they pushed him, enabling him to realize his dreams.



#### The Book: 'Airick Flies High'

With his children's book, Gaffney puts out a vital message to all kids. Having lived through how hard it can be for children to face their peers when they are not "like everyone else," he spares no effort to motivate and guide his little readers to be more empathetic, understanding, and confident.

The response to the book has been wonderful, Gaffney says, and giving kids with limb differences a cartoon character to identify with has been amazing.

"The smiles on their faces when they see they have a character and a pilot 'like them' is incredibly heartwarming," he said.

One of Gaffney's favorite quotes comes from a Jim Abbott documentary by author Cormac McCarthy: "Those who have endured some misfortune will always be set apart, but it is that misfortune which is their gift and their strength."

#### 'Forever Grateful'

Most of all, he credits his friends and family for their unfailing support, doing anything they could to help him-often in ingenious ways. Gaffney says he is "forever grateful" to his parents for their unconditional support and the ways they pushed him, enabling him to realize his dreams. "One thing I loved so much was the way my parents treated me-they would not

treat me any different," he said. "I played baseball growing up and my dad would play catch with me. It was a challenge initially to get the ball from the glove to my hand to make the throw and then get the glove back on in time.

"My dad would throw the ball back to me as soon as he made the catch in an effort to teach me to get the glove back on as soon as possible. It worked."

Advising others to never give up, he says hard work and dedication can take one far in this world.

"Declare that you can do something and you will find a way," he said. "Adapt and overcome, and never let anyone tell you no."

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## The Friendship That Changed the Life of a Homeless Addict

#### **LOUISE CHAMBERS**

An unlikely friendship between a California paramedic and a heartbroken homeless man led to a \$7 gift that turned the man's life around. However, it was only after 12 years when they reunited that the paramedic learned of this radical transformation.

Jeanah Nomelli, now 43, first met William Levens, now 66, in 2007. Levens had fallen on hard times, and Nomelli's was the friendly face he didn't know he needed. "My wife of 13 1/2 years had passed away," Levens told The Epoch Times. "I climbed inside myself. I wanted to go to work, do anything but stay home and just be a veg-

etable ... [but] I began to hang out with the wrong people, using drugs. "It resulted in the loss of my home and everything that I had worked for."

#### 'An Open Ear and an Open Heart'

Back in 2007, Nomelli, while at work one day, was stretching her legs outside the ambulance at a Chevron gas station in Ceres when she heard rustling in a dumpster behind her. It was Levens.

"We just struck up a conversation," she said. "He had beautiful, kind eyes ... and I just started asking questions and he was kind enough to answer."

Not long after, they both found themselves engaged in a very natural conversation. For the next several months, they found each other at the same place, at the same time, and at the same Chevron, looking for each other.

Over the course of time, they developed a friendship.

Levens recalled that, during that time, he "didn't want nothing to do with nobody, least of all somebody in a uniform," but after meeting Nomelli several times, he accepted her company and the pair grew close.

"She was somebody that I would look forward to seeing ... she had an open ear and

#### an open heart," Levens said.

When winter came and freezing temperatures hit the valley, Nomelli's husband dug into his closet and donated a jacket and boots for Levens. Nomelli gave the clothes to Levens, but after that didn't see him again for another six months.

She only learned of what happened to him when they reconnected after that brief period of time.

"He told me he had been advocating and helping a family who found themselves homeless due to the housing crash," Nomelli said. "Will was the kind of soul who helped this family navigate life on the streets, told them where to go for resources, where to go for safety.

"One night, one of the other transients happened to be giving this family a hard time and Will stepped in to defend them. It turned into a physical altercation."

Levens, who was on probation at the time, was briefly incarcerated. Everything he owned had been stolen, including his ID card. Nomelli said that because Levens was in jail, he had a taste of sobriety. She

could "see it in his eyes" that he was desperate to stay sober.

#### The \$7 That Changed His Life

After he got out of jail, Levens told Nomelli about a \$7 scheme that would get him a new ID, access to temporary housing, and temporary work assignments. This could be his ticket out of addiction and would ideally lead to a permanent job and permanent housing.

Nomelli said: "I ended up having \$7 in my pocket, and I never carry cash. It seemed absolutely a divine blessing to say, 'Hey, here's \$7, and please, please, please promise me that you won't use it on drugs."

This was the last time that Nomelli and Levens saw each other for 12 years, until, one night after a shift, when Nomelli and her

partner were driving home, they pulled into a Chevron gas station to use the restroom.

healthy-looking man," she recalled. "I didn't recognize him right away, standing there with tears in his eyes just asking, 'Do you remember me?' with such intensity and such emotion. It took me about five seconds before I recognized those beautiful kind eyes."

Levens reminded Nomelli of the jacket, the boots, and the \$7 that ultimately changed his life. The pair got into an emotional embrace, and a Chevron attendant took a photo of the reunion, which later went viral when Nomelli shared the story on Facebook in 2019.

Nomelli recalled standing in the Chevron gas station with Levens for half an hour, "giving each other the Cliffs Notes version" of their lives since their last meeting.

"It was a rough and rocky road there for a while," Levens said. "I did get the ID, I did get temporary work here and there, and I did slip a few times with drugs and stuff, but for the most part I kept my head above water."

He found a recovery home that supported

#### Will is an example of what unconditional love can do for a human being.

Jeanah Nomelli



William Levens and Jeanah Nomelli reunite after 12 years.

"When I came out, there was a very his sobriety and learned more about God. "I learned about the good Lord and the great things he can do for us," he said. "As far as struggling with addiction, it's a difficult path. I know that there's a higher power

... you've got to call out to him and be honest with yourself. He'll make a way for you where it seems like there is no way."

Meeting Levens unexpectedly and hearing about his transformation, Nomelli cried the whole way home, filled with excitement and gratitude

She reflected: "It wasn't the \$7, it was the love; it was the radical love that we shared in those moments, and the full acceptance of each other and who we were in those life stages, that really worked the magic ... Will is an example of what unconditional love can do for a human being."

#### The Beauty in Both Worlds

Today, Levens lives in Modesto. He remarried on January 2020 and works alongside his wife for a church.

After turning his life around, the former homeless addict now invites other men to join his personal outreach program. He books doctors' appointments, offers to counsel, takes people to job interviews, and guides them toward spiritual wholeness. He also runs a food ministry for the local community, feeding hundreds every day.

"He is continuing to pay it forward and is a light in so many people's lives," Nomelli said. These days, Nomelli and Levens never

go long without checking in with one another, sharing both the ups and downs of their lives.

"Oftentimes, people in Will's position don't want to talk to us," Nomelli said. "There's a disconnect between their world and ours ... he and I were able to break through that barrier, and what we were able to discover is the beauty in both worlds.

"In the world of homelessness, people are helping each other and protecting each other and advocating for each other often, I would say sometimes more than we would find in our world. If we can do a better job of loving ourselves so that we can then go out into the world and love others, that's what's gonna heal the planet."

# Sibling Wonders How to Deal With Addicted Brother

#### Dear June,

What can I do about my brother, a drunk who gets angry and is very difficult to deal with? He does not live in the same state as myself, so is easily ignored.

Would-be Helpful Brother

→ Dear Would-be Helpful Brother, As to whether to ignore your brother or not, it might be helpful to consider first whether you think you have a responsibility or duty to help him. Secondly, if there is no responsibil-

ity or duty, does your conscience tell you to help him anyway?

It's important to answer these questions first, because it would certainly be easier to ignore him and you will face significant difficulty in helping him. Helping a loved one recover from addiction can be very painful and will take grit and determination to see it through; reminding yourself why you've taken on this burden will help you carry it.

If you do choose to help him, I would start by psychologically preparing yourself. There are, of course, many resources for this. Alcoholics Anonymous is a well-known one, and on my shelf, I also have a book called, "The Addiction Spectrum," co-authored by Dr. Paul Thomas, who is himself a recovering alcoholic and offers a 13-point plan and holistic approach to recovery.

#### My advice when dealing with a loved one with a drinking problem is to see them as separate from the addiction.

I would like to offer a few thoughts on the nature of addiction and recovery. I am not an expert on this topic, so consider these as thoughts for reflection.

The first thing to understand about recovery is that the desire and strength to carry through with it comes from within the person who is addicted. Friends and family can help create a supportive environment, but the person themselves must be willing to do the hard healing work. So be realistic about what you can achieve.

I personally know three men who have struggled or still struggle with alcohol. One had to hit rock bottom, where he realized that if he didn't turn his life around, he would die. He first sought out AA, where he took the

spiritual messages from the group to heart and made spirituality the center of his life. In his later years, he dedicated himself to creating a healing center and tried to help others as much as he could. One of the great lessons I take from his story is how powerful helping others is. It truly is a great healer.

The second man doesn't seem to be winning the battle with alcohol. He has been in and out of rehab and his pattern of regressing and lying about it has left his life in shambles, divorced and distant from his children. For the third man, one of his sons is a frequent drinker and does not yet seem to recognize this as the beginning of a possible problem. I hope he can keep it in check, but, given his family history, I see a great risk.

So as regards your brother, he may not be ready to turn his life around, and the best thing you can do is wait, watch, and let him know you are there for him. You don't have to say this outright, but staying connected via email, social media, or phone calls, or going to visit him periodically just to hang out, will let him know you care.

Depending on your situation, it might be advantageous for you to move closer to him.

The way I see addiction is like a car toon devil that sits on a character's shoulder, whispering bad ideas into their ear. The character goes along with the bad ideas, putting the little devil in control. But fundamentally, the character and the devil are two different entities.

So my advice when dealing with a loved one with a drinking problem is to see them as separate from the addiction. The goal is for them to find the strength to cast off the devil. Hold fiercely to your belief in their self-worth. They may not be able to distinguish between the ideas coming from the little devil (addiction) and their own thoughts, but you can In order to really help them, I think you need not only to distinguish between them and the addiction, but also learn not to become angry or upset by the addiction. This doesn't mean that you ignore or condone bad behaviors; it simply means that your emotions are not involved, which is much less stressful for you. I realize this is easier said than done, but if you can stay calm when your brother becomes angry, you will have much

more bandwidth to help him. Try this, even if you can only do so in your heart. You may choose to have no contact with him, but do so without anger, contempt, or disgust for who he is. Only sadness and pity, perhaps, for the life he is wasting. Another reason behind the impor-

tance of believing in the worth of a person who is addicted to alcohol: Often, these people don't see their own inherent value. It may be that this is the reason they have a habit of drinking in the first place. Alcohol gives people a glimpse of who they could be, allowing them to feel strong and powerful, right, relaxed, and at peace. These are states of mind that we can all attain through inner work, but which come easily through alcohol-at least, at their most basic level. But unlike inner work, which over time increases our capacities and solidifies our selfworth, these states become harder to attain through alcohol as the addiction only creates a desire for itself.

Eventually, alcohol causes some people to lose all bearing on the rest of their life, taking over their emotions and thoughts and making them angry and intolerable, like your brother.

All this is again to say that it is important not to see addiction as the sum total of a loved one, even if that is who they are on the surface. Why? Because then you can still hold them dear, even respect certain things about them, and your believing in them may help them eventually believe in themselves.

Of course, someone who is addicted may do things that are disgusting, contemptible, and pretty intolerable, and I don't suggest you make light of these. Certainly, don't try to mitigate social consequences they might face; for example, by giving them money. Consequences may be what wakes

your brother up and gives him strength to fight his addiction, like the man I knew who had to hit rock bottom before addressing his addiction. If and when your brother is ready to turn his life around, then I would make an effort to be there for him, expecting to weather ups and downs.

You have not mentioned a wife or children, but I feel compelled to say that if there are children in the picture, I think they should be protected as much as possible from their father in his drunk, angry state, which can be very unsafe both physically and emotionally. So if your brother has children, I would first see what you can do make sure that they are not unduly affected by their father. If there are boys, you might consider doing activities with them and showing them a better model of manhood than their father. Sincerely,

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Do you have a family or relationship question for our advice columnist, Dear June? Send it to DearJune@

EpochTimes.com or Attn: Dear June, The Epoch Times, 229 W. 28th St., Floor 7, New York, NY, 10001

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

the humming of a fan or recorded nature sounds as they head to dreamland.

#### **Plan Tomorrow**

Set your intention for tomorrow the night before. Before you fall asleep, take pen to paper and jot down the three most important things to do the next day. This will help you mentally prepare for the day ahead and remind you in the morning which priorities to focus on.

#### Better habits at night can improve sleep, energy, focus, and stress levels.

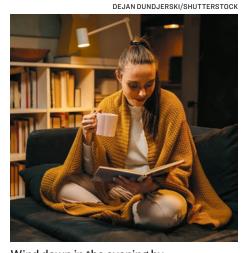
#### Fall Asleep on Time

A consistent nighttime routine will signal to your body when it's time to fall asleep. Enjoy a regular, sound sleep schedule and the benefits it brings you throughout the day.

A good nighttime routine can be enjoyable and empowering, helping you to feel prepared for whatever tomorrow may bring.

# A Great Day Begins the Night Before

Ways to improve your nighttime routine



Wind down in the evening by reading, journaling, or meditating.

**BARBARA DANZA** 

Most people tend to put at least some thought into their morning routine. Indeed, the way you begin your day surely affects the several hours to follow. As the day winds down, though, one's nighttime routine can easily devolve into binge-watching and unhealthy snacks on the couch.

Improving your nighttime routine can reap huge benefits during the day. Better habits can improve sleep, energy, focus, health, and stress levels. Here are some ideas to consider for your nighttime routine.

Feeling prepared for tomorrow starts the

#### **Tidy First**

will thank you for.

**Nourish Your Body** 

When the work of the day is done and you're transitioning into your free time at night, resist the urge to head straight for an entertaining screen; instead, set up your space for tomorrow. Perhaps you put on some upbeat music to bop around to as you tidy up, set out your clothes, prepare the coffee, and ready anything that your morning self

night off right. Continue your winning streak with a healthy dinner. Ensure that you cut off caffeine early enough in the day to not disrupt your sleep, and enjoy nourishing your body with the good nutrition it needs.

#### **Connect and Enjoy**

Spend time each night connecting with loved ones and doing things you enjoy. If you're in the habit of watching television night after night, mix it up a bit. Play a game, go for a walk, or work on a project.

#### **Turn Screens Off**

At least an hour before bedtime, turn off all screens and begin to wind down. This is a great time to wash up, change into pajamas, read a book, write in your journal, or meditate.

#### **Tone Things Down**

Let the atmosphere of your home gently guide you toward sleep time. Turn down the lights and make sure the temperature is nice and cool for sleeping. Candles at night can be very soothing. Night air coming through a window can be lovely. Some people prefer

THE EPOCH TIMES Week 37, 2022



A long and wide walkway invites visitors to admire the front façade of Nymphenburg Palace. The property was originally a country estate intended to be used as a hunting lodge and consisted of a two-story cube with a garden and large wood behind the building. Over the years, the building was extended, but very few alterations were made to the original structure, with two wings added on each side of the palace and the façade modernized in a French style. The central building has details from the French Regency style, an architectural and design transitional style between the architectural styles promulgated by Louis XIV and Louis XV.

LARGER THAN LIFE: ART THAT INSPIRES US THROUGH THE AGES

# NYMPHENBURG PALACE A European Gem of Bavarian History

#### **ARIANE TRIEBSWETTER**

istoric, mythical, beautiful. These three words describe the architectural gem located west of Munich, Germany, L that is the Nymphenburg Palace, a once-popular summer residence of Bavarian rulers.

In 1662, Elector Ferdinand Maria of Bavaria offered land outside Munich to his Italian-born wife, Henriette Adelaide of Savoy, to commemorate the birth of the heir to the throne, Max Emanuel. Two years

PEDRO J PACHECO/CC BY-SA 3.0 D



1. The elegant Pagodenburg pavilion, built between 1716 and 1719, was built for relaxation and is composed of a resting room, a magnificent tiled hall, and a lacquer cabinet. In the style of a Chinese pagoda, the pavilion was named "Pagodenburg" for small figures of Chinese minor deities called "pagods." Here, the ground floor is decorated with Dutch tiles. The upper floor has Chinese-style decorations, a popular style in early 18th-century Europe, and a feature of the French Regency style.

2. The Magdalenenklause pavilion, built between 1725 and 1728, is one of the earliest examples in Europe of a park building designed as a ruin. The pavilion was built in the Italian style as a hermitage with an artificial grotto. Made as a wood-paneled apartment of monastic simplicity, the pavilion was designed as a place of retreat and contemplation for Max Emanuel. The grotto and chapel have stucco work with carved coral, metal flowers, shells, and colored bird figures.

**3.** The famous Gallery of Beauty consists of 36 portraits by court painter Joseph Karl Stieler. This collection of portraits was initially displayed in the Munich Residence (the former residence of Bavarian electors, dukes, and kings) and later transferred to Nymphenburg. At the time, exterior beauty was a sign of moral perfection, as reflected by the beauties portrayed in the gallery, and beauty and art are omnipresent throughout the palace.

**4.** The great hall of the Badenburg pavilion in the Nymphenburg park was built between 1719 and 1721. Built for small festivities, it was designed in the baroque style with tall glass doors, wall fountains, mirrors, and

later, Italian architect Agostino Barelli began work on a summer residence for the electress in the style of an Italian villa, and architect Henrico Zuccalli continued the project in 1673.

Henriette Adelaide loved the building and called it her "borgo delle ninfe" ("castle of the nymphs"). Her son, Max Emanuel, extended the country estate in 1701, adding magnificent residential pavilions and side galleries. His successor, Elector Karl Albrecht, extended Nymphenburg's estate to what we see today.

The palace's style ranges from baroque,

rococo, and neoclassicism, and combines Greco-Roman mythology with Bavarian history. From 1805 to 1918, the German Wittelsbach dynasty of elected rulers resided in the palace as rulers of the Kingdom of Bavaria.

The frescos, furniture, and paintings in Max Emanuel's apartments are decorated in a baroque style. The ceiling fresco in the great hall showcases a rococo-style stucco ornamentation. The apartments of Queen Caroline, mother of renowned King Ludwig II, represent the period of Bavarian kings in the neoclassical and

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FLORIAN ADLER/CC BY-SA 3.

Napoleonic Empire style.

Nymphenburg offers a fascinating glimpse of Bavarian history. It remains one of the best examples of various European architectural styles combined in a single palace. As the grounds were expanded and upgraded to the court styles of each era, they came to reflect the varied cultural influences that marked Bavarian history

Ariane Triebswetter is an international freelance journalist with a background in modern literature and classical music.

KAHO MITSUKI/CC BY-SA 3.0









detailed stucco work. On the ceiling, a fresco represents the god Apollo with the goddess Flora, surrounded by the nine muses. The stucco work by Charles Claude Dubut reflects love, water, and festiveness, while the putti, or small cherubs, in the corners of the ceiling symbolize the four seasons. The pavilion also has one of Europe's oldest indoor swimming pools, as bathing was popular among Bavarian rulers, and an apartment with Chineseinspired wallpaper.

5. The Nymphenburg baroque garden, next to the castle, is filled with Greco-Roman statues. It was designed by Dominique Girard, a master fountaineer at Versailles and pupil of André Le Nôtre, the designer of the Versailles gardens. This garden is part of the 445-acre palace park, laid out by Elector Max Emanuel. It was redesigned in the early 19th century by garden architect Friedrich Ludwig von Sckell, in an English landscape style. The fountain, avenues, and central canal in front of the palace remain from the original baroque garden. Today, the Nymphenburg park is one of the finest examples of garden design and of the English landscape style in Germany.

6. The Amalienburg pavilion, built between 1734 and 1739, was the only pavilion not built by Effner for Max Emanuel. Elector Karl Albrecht commissioned this pavilion for his wife, Maria Amalia, to host small parties and pheasant shooting. Designed by François de Cuvilliés, it's considered one of the most beautiful examples of rococo architecture in Bavaria. Here, the hall of silvered mirrors is a masterpiece of European rococo design, with carvings and stucco work by Johann Joachim Dietrich and Johann Baptist Zim-

# The Heart of Homeschooling: Advice From a Mother of 5

#### **BARBARA DANZA**

ne of the unintended consequences of the pandemic and its policies has been the explosion of families choosing to homeschool their children.

While pandemic measures have eased, homeschooling still remains a popular option. Many parents discovered benefits to their children and families that they now don't want to give up. Still, others have become more aware of unsavory issues in public schools. As its popularity continues to grow, other parents are taking note and thinking that this could be the best choice for their families as well.

For those just about to step out on the journey of homeschooling their kids, it can seem a daunting or scary proposition. For them, lessons learned from more experienced homeschooling parents are invaluable. I asked Jodi Mockabee, a blogger, curriculum creator, and homeschooling mother of five, for her advice for new homeschoolers. Here's what she said:

The Epoch Times: What have you found to be the greatest benefits of homeschooling? Jodi Mockabee: We were not prepared for how efficient homeschooling would be. I started noticing how unnecessary repetition was in certain subjects and how other subjects overlapped with each other. We were able to come up with a system that exposed the children to truth, goodness, and beauty through good literature, while simultaneously allowing ample time to explore the outdoors, play sports, and visit interesting places. The greatest benefit has been that it has given us more time: More time together, more time for rest, more time for play, and more time to create.

The Epoch Times: For the parent just about to embark on their first year of homeschooling, what are the key steps you'd recommend they take to kick off the new year?

**Ms. Mockabee:** I would encourage a new parent to read about different homeschooling philosophies prior to starting the year. Two books I would recommend for a new homeschooler are "The Call of the Wild and Free" by Ainsley Arment and "For the Children's Sake" by Susan Macaulay.

Both books will introduce you to an entirely new view of education that is hope-filled and exciting. After reading those books, I came up with a few goals for the year. Keep the expectations realistic. If you make too long of a list, it will feel like it's not possible. I rarely write down more than five goals. Sometimes, a goal can be as simple as laughing together more; other times, there can be an educational goal such as mastering long division for a specific child.

Setting a few goals can help you from going wayward and will keep you placing one foot in front of the other on the academic journey—while also giving space to experience life together.

After setting the goals, I would recommend becoming a student of each child Meet with each child and find out what they're looking forward to or what his or her concerns are. Oftentimes, I will choose literature based on different children's interests so that each child is actively engaged during our reading time.

I will also purchase a few items to strew around throughout the year that may inspire a child without telling him or her. For example, one year I bought a compass and map of a nearby national forest. I just left it by the wood stove for someone to find. The child who discovered it has become quite the outdoorsman! Another time, I left out a rock collection with a book on rocks. Rather than introducing it to the children, I let them discover it on their own. After they found it, they spent hours identifying rocks and learning together about geology. They're constantly teaching me about rocks on our hikes. These are small actions that can ultimately open up large passions and interests.

The Epoch Times: How does homeschooling differ for the elementary years versus the middle and high school years? Ms. Mockabee: We have children in all three levels of academia, and I can honestly say that not too much changes-aside from the amount of writing and the added activities, such as having a part-time job or participating in high school sports. Of course, each child progresses with math and independent reading, but we are usually together for read-aloud time; the



younger children end up participating and

listening to higher-level books, such as

I do start to outsource some classes in

high school as we take advantage of dual

Calculus in high school, he is taking it in

college. This earns him credits toward his

high school diploma and college degree si-

In our state, homeschoolers can partici-

advantage of all available options.

make?

interaction.

science workbook.

and spiritually healthy.

pate in public school sports and activities

The Epoch Times: What are some com-

mon mistakes new homeschooling parents

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the classroom in their own home. Not just

by decor, but also by creating the same sys-

tematic model. They move through mul-

the child to finish quickly so that they

tiple subjects throughout the day, pushing

can check a box. Learning is hard work. It

takes time and concentration, interest, and

One of the benefits of homeschooling is

that you can provide those things to a child

if you break out of the traditional, system-

atic model. Learn alongside your child,

knowing that any time spent researching,

discovering, reading, and experiencing is

time well spent. It doesn't have to look like

sitting at a desk filling in the blanks of a

The Epoch Times: What's the best home-

schooling advice you've ever received?

without attending classes, so we really take

multaneously. It's quite an efficient system!

enrollment programs at local colleges.

Rather than my high schooler taking

"Plutarch's Lives" and "Beowulf."

Leaving interesting items around for children to find piques their curiosity and interest.



We have specific habits in our household that we call 'daily disciplines.' These are daily tasks that include physical exer cise, household duties, and independent aca demic work.

Jodi Mockabee, homeschooling mother

Ms. Mockabee: I cling to the words of Charlotte Mason, a British educator, who taught at the turn of the 20th century. One of her quotes is, "Education is an atmosphere, a discipline, a life." Her teachings have really helped me understand the nature of education. It is not just about academics; it's also about character development and equip-

The Epoch Times: What do you wish you had known when you were just beginning to homeschool?

ping our children to be mentally, physically,

Ms. Mockabee: I wish I would have had more confidence in the early years. I spent a lot of time worrying that I would fail my children and feeling like homeschooling was one big experiment. Sometimes, I still

feel that way.

But now that I have several years under my belt, I have come to discover that all children will have educational holes in at least one area—regardless of where they were schooled. So instead of focusing on what I am "not" doing, I try to make sure that what we "are" doing is quality-filled and tends to the needs of the whole child.

The Epoch Times: What strategies or tools have worked best for you in your homeschool?

Ms. Mockabee: We have specific habits in our household that we call "daily disciplines." These are daily tasks that include physical exercise, household duties, and independent academic work. Most of these disciplines are done before we even join together for breakfast. This starts the day off productively.

We then gather together for what we refer to as "Morning Collective." This is the time when I read aloud from several classical books and we discuss big ideas and concepts. It always proves to me how capable children are of understanding sophisticated language and humanity. These conversations are the heart of our homeschool.

While the disciplines create production, our Morning Collective time expands their worldview. Both are tools that have contributed significantly to our homeschooling.

The Epoch Times: If you could only offer one piece of advice to the parents about to begin their first year as homeschoolers, what would it be?

Ms. Mockabee: Know that falling into a rhythm that fits your family will take time. Don't put pressure on yourself or your children to instantly love homeschooling. It took us almost a year to find the right kind of method. We ended up getting rid of all of the curricula that I had originally purchased, aside from math, and replacing it with classical literature. We started writing about what we had read and even added illustrations to our work every day. I never even knew that was an option!

We have thrived ever since then and have years of books filled with illustrated documentation of the books we have read. The children still review them.

But discovering that rhythm took time, so give yourself a little grace as you navigate a whole new path for your family.

*This interview has been edited for clarity* and brevity.





sized Eurasian eagle owl beat the record-sized Blakiston's fish owl by 31/2 ounces. Yet the Blakiston's is extremely rare in its Far Eastern home and is thus one of the enigmas of the bird world. Up until recently, very little was known about the bird, but a few teams of researchers working out of Vladivostok, Russia, and Hokkaido, Japan, have begun to unravel the mystery of its life.

at up to 8.8 pounds. On average, it's the world's largest owl, although one enormously also must remain unfrozen in the freezing climate of the Far East. The trees in which they reside must be very old and large, so as to form suitable cavities for a nest.

By Aidan Danza

Raising young Blakiston's fish owls is a long process. Pairs might form when the owls are 2 years old, but they can't lay eggs until the age of 3. Even then, the owls may not have any young because of

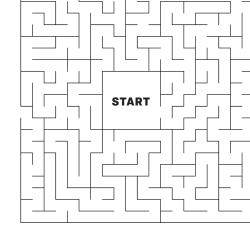
during the day, while the female joins him at night. They leave the nest 50 days after hatching but stay on the "family property" into their second year. A fish owl hunt is quite

interesting. They seem to be very capable hunters, hunting not only fish, but frogs, ducks, and small mammals. In the spring, they eat frogs more than anything else. Their strategy is similar to that

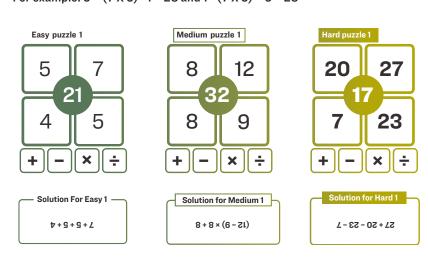
of other raptors: The owl stays at a low perch, sometimes directly on the ground, scanning the water When it sees a potential meal, it s down on the animal, taking it directly back to the perch to be eaten. When the prey is too large to fly a relatively long distance, the owl eats it partially until it's small enough to manage. Then it flies to its lookout post and feasts.

ALL PHOTOS BY SHUTTERSTOC





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





#### WODD CEADOUL

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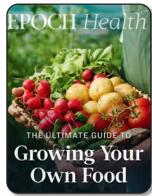
Overnight

Trail

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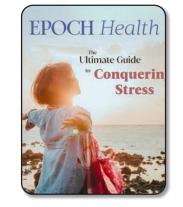
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#### WHAT REALLY HAPPENED ON JAN. 6, 2021?

It's been over a year since Jan. 6, 2021, and the events that happened at the Capitol that day have once again been brought before the court of public opinion. However, in many discussions of the events, key information is omitted.

The Epoch Times takes a look at the whole story, from the origins of the chaos to the police's use of force against protesters, in an effort to present an objective view of what truly transpired.

