

THE EPOCH TIMES

LIFE &

TRADITION

CULTURE

Faith, Family, and Freedom

Why Norman Rockwell's World War II masterpiece still matters today

JEFF MINICK

In the winter and spring of 1942, America and her allies were taking some hard punches.

The Germans had renewed their offenses in North Africa and the Soviet Union, and their submarine warfare in the North Atlantic inflicted catastrophic losses on convoys sailing from the United States to Europe and Russia. On the other side of the world, the military forces of the Japanese Empire swept across the Pacific, seizing Singapore—arguably the worst defeat in the history of the British military—besieging and then conquering the Philippines, and threatening to invade Australia.

Alarmed by these dire events, illustrator and artist Norman Rockwell was determined to do what he could to help turn the tide using the weapons at his disposal. He picked up his brushes and began to paint.

The Famous '4 Freedoms'

In his annual address to Congress in January 1941, nearly a year before Pearl Harbor, Franklin Roosevelt spoke of four universal freedoms—the freedoms of speech and worship, and the freedoms from want and fear. Inspired by the president's "Four Freedoms Speech," as it came to be called, Rockwell worked to bring those concepts to the canvas.

His "Freedom of Speech" depicts a Lincolnesque figure standing erect in what appears to be a town meeting. He's clearly a working man, ruggedly dressed, his fingernails black with grime. Seated around him, men in jackets and ties give this young speaker their respectful attention. "Freedom of Worship" differs from the other three paintings in the set. This painting has no storyline, but instead features a collection of profiles prayerfully facing a bright light.

And unlike the others, this painting bears an inscription: "Each According to the Dictates of His Own Conscience."

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Freedom to Worship, 1943



Norman Rockwell, painter and illustrator (1894-1978).

MPI/GETTY IMAGES

(Top) "Freedom to Worship," 1943, by Norman Rockwell.

(Left) "Freedom of Speech," 1943, by Norman Rockwell. U.S. National Archives and Records Administration.

(Right) "Freedom from Fear," 1941-1945, by Norman Rockwell.

COURTESY OF STEVE BRAKE



Steve Brake driving the tractor with his neighbor, Abi Reetz.

'Superhero' Teen Helps Ill Neighbor Farmer

When Steve Brake was suddenly struck with an autoimmune disorder, a high schooler saved the day

LOUISE CHAMBERS

When her neighbor, a farmer, fell ill suddenly, a Minnesota teen volunteered to help him tend the land. The farmer was beyond grateful for the support, and the teen picked up new skills and tricks of the trade—thus a beautiful friendship was formed.

Steve Brake, 63, lives with his wife, Mary, in Wellmont, Minnesota, where he grew up. Abi Reetz, 17, and her family are their neighbors.

"I'm a fourth-generation farmer and

livestock producer," Steve told The Epoch Times. "My great-grandfather came to Minnesota in 1898 and started the farm that we still farm today."

Steve and his wife bought the house that they're currently staying in about five years ago. The house was his parents' home, and his parents had lived there for 30 years. Steve always knew that there was a family next door who had some girls, but he never knew them personally.

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'Superhero' Teen Helps Ill Neighbor Farmer

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When Brake and his wife moved, Reetz, 12 at the time, and her sisters, Morgan and Kira, would knock on the family's door to ask "silly questions" or permission to make chalk drawings on their driveway. When Reetz got older, she asked Brake if she could join him in riding tractors on the farm, since she loved tractors.

"We kind of adopted them as our neighborhood granddaughters," Brake said. "It's been very fun to get to know them."

During Brake's farm's September 2021 harvest, he suddenly fell ill. It began with sharp pains in his neck, spine, and joints. Later that same day, Brake lost his balance, and his vision went blurry. He then called his wife and they went to the hospital.

At the hospital, doctors thought he was having a stroke but found no evidence. For 21 days at the hospital, Brake couldn't eat, see, or talk very well. After 21 days without a diagnosis, he was discharged. He was finally diagnosed at the Mayo Clinic in Rochester, Minnesota, with Miller-Fisher syndrome, a rare variant of Guillain-Barré that attacks the nerves and causes severe pain.

Brake returned home at the end of October

2021, and after four or five days, he wanted to desperately get back to his tractor and plow.

However, since he was still having balance problems, required a walker or a cane to get around, and had eyesight issues and difficulty climbing into his tractor, Mary accompanied him on the first day for about five hours.

"I convinced her that I was capable [and] in good enough shape to do it," Brake said. "But I was just desperate to get out of the house and get out to help my family harvest."

Soon, Reetz, a Worthington High School student, came knocking at his door, wanting to help tend the land.

"Once Abi called to volunteer to come out and ride with me, Mary was relieved ... I was relieved that I had somebody with me," Brake said.

With the support of her mom and Brake's wife, Reetz became Brake's right-hand girl. She jumped out of the tractor to remove obstacles, made sure the tractor was serviced and refueled, helped Brake enter and exit the vehicle, and even drove him home at the end of the day.

She was humbled by her mistakes and boosted by every new lesson learned. Over 12 months, the pair grew close, sharing

great conversations about their hopes, dreams, and Reetz's plans for the future as they worked.

It got to a point where the pair spent so much time together that Brake's brothers decided that the teenager was capable of working on her own, and she began driving her own tractor.

With the support of her mom and Mary, Abi became Steve's right hand girl.

"I would be in another one, and we would stay in communication with each other on the phone ... it became like a game ... we were able to work together, but not in the same tractor," Brake said.

Reetz told The Epoch Times that she and Brake had always planned for her to ride the brand-new tractor he bought right before he fell ill. It just happened earlier than expected.

"At first, he was pretty nervous about put-



ting me in a seat by myself, as anyone would; I mean, it's a million-dollar machine!" Reetz said. "But after probably a few days, he said, 'you know you're fully capable of it.'"

Reetz is "one of the guys" on the farm, said Brake, who has two sons as well as nephews who have young daughters.

"They're seeing Abi out there doing things that they've only ever seen their dads do," Brake said. "It might inspire them to someday think that they want to join our farm operation."

Brake describes his 17-year-old sickle as "shy," claiming that she "likes to stay under the radar." Nonetheless, a year after Reetz stepped up to help him on the farm, Brake felt the teen deserved recognition, and wrote a letter to her school.

Worthington Public Schools reposted the letter on Facebook.

Reetz, who played basketball until sophomore year and still plays clarinet in the high school marching band, wasn't expecting recognition but thought Brake's letter was "pretty cool."

"The kids that are recognized at school, are somebody that scores all the touchdowns, or scores all the points in a basketball game, or is a straight-A student ... Abi is not any of



1. A couple of tractors working one of Brake's fields.

2. Abi Reetz and Steve Brake attending her confirmation at church together.

3. Steve Brake in the hospital.

4. Abi Reetz helps out with Steve Brake's tractors.

those," Brake said. "I just wrote the letter to ask the school if there was some way that Abi could be recognized for her kindness."

Needless to say, the response they received was "amazing."

"I think it's the kind of story that people like to see," he said. "There's a lot of good kids out there ... I think, overall, that this country is in a good place with girls like Abi to lead us!"

Attending Reetz's confirmation at church one Sunday, Brake noticed the bishop talking to the kids in the congregation about "superheroes"—regular people made to do extraordinary things to help those who can't, or won't, help themselves. He then leaned over to Reetz and told her that she was his "superhero."

"But she likes the term 'tractor princess' better!" Brake said. "Abi took the time to be kind to me, and to help me, and it made a difference in my life. It made a difference in her life ... people just need to help each other and we'll all be fine."

Reetz—who plans to study agriculture after having the experience of helping Brake—said: "Whether you know the person or not ... even if it's as small as holding the door open for someone, take time out of your day to help that person if you see them in need."

Johann Wolfgang von Goethe: The Art of Achievement

ANDREW BENSON BROWN

Johann Wolfgang von Goethe is often called "the German Shakespeare," though in many ways he was more of a Leonardo. In addition to writing literary masterpieces in every genre, he made scientific contributions to the fields of geology, anatomy, optics, and botany. He was also a painter, diplomat, and government administrator who never wanted for love or friendship. How could one human being achieve so many blessings? The short answer: Charisma helps. But the longer answer involves, surprisingly, art.

Destined for Greatness

Goethe was born in 1749. His prominent family's coat of arms was the lyre, symbol of wisdom and the arts. His father appointed private tutors to teach him literature, languages, painting, music, and science, as well as riding and fencing. As a boy, Goethe composed poems and plays. His first novel, "The Sorrows of Young Werther," brought him international success in his 20s. Following this, the Duke of Weimar invited him to court. They got along so well that Goethe soon found himself managing the duke's practical affairs. Though he enjoyed applying his talents, Goethe's artistic output waned.

Feeling overwhelmed by his responsibilities, he absconded to Italy for two years in 1786. He clamored over Roman ruins and saw famous works of Renaissance art, keeping a diary that he would draw on to write his "Italian Journey," an early travelogue. He was so inspired by his travels, he wrote the duke, that he promised to return a changed man.

He would achieve, in other words, spirit—the moral corollary of light.

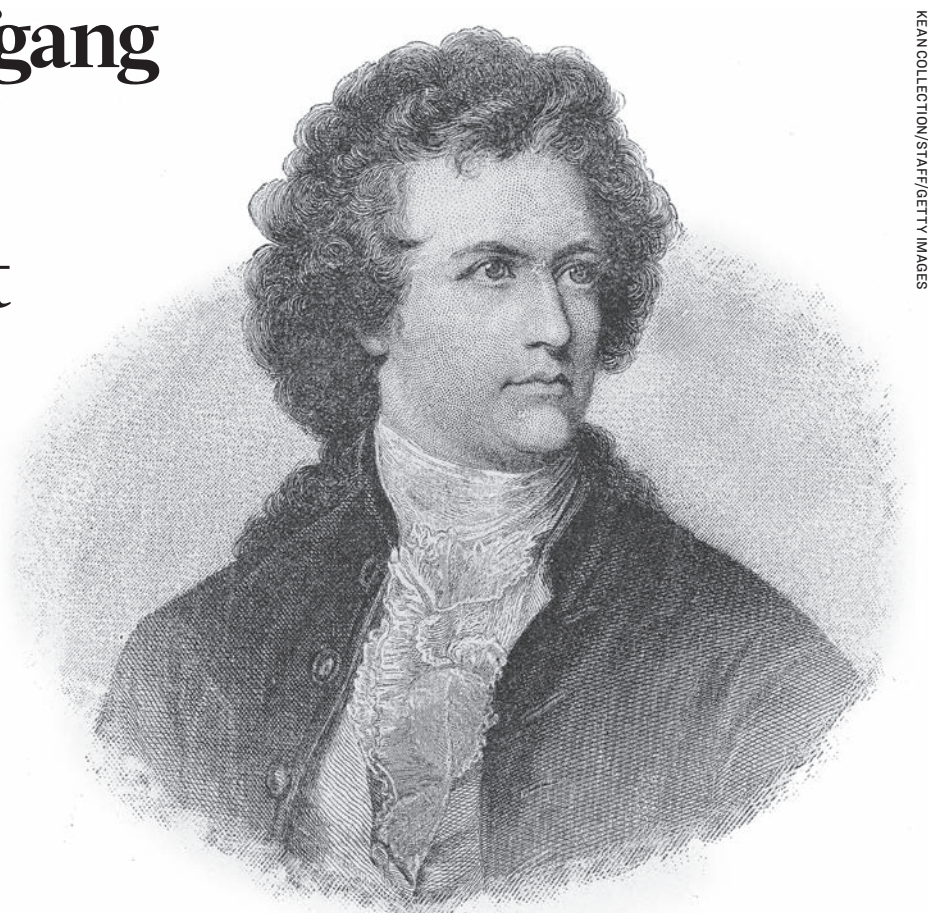
Life as Art

Throughout his life, Goethe scribbled down his passing thoughts on scraps of paper. He incorporated them into his various novels, poems, plays, and scientific writings, but also amassed them separately into a collection of "Maxims and Reflections," published the year after his death. Among these disparate thoughts, some illuminate his struggle to balance literary endeavors with administrative duties. Maxim 32 states: "There is no way of more surely avoiding the world than by art, and it is by art that you form the surest link with it."

Too many artists, he felt, made themselves unsuited for the active life. But as Rüdiger Safranski observes in "Goethe: Life as a Work of Art," the German poet would seek to give his individuality an original form by applying the aesthetic sphere to the practical one.

Toward the end of "Maxims and Reflections," we encounter this more esoteric statement: "Light and spirit, the one in the physical, the other in the moral realm, are the highest imaginable indivisible energies." Goethe is referring here to the scientific idea he thought he would be best remembered for. In his "Theory of Colors," he attacked Isaac Newton by arguing that white light contained a "natural purity" that struggled against darkness. The color spectrum arose, Goethe theorized, from light's interactions with refracting and shading elements as it fell upon objects. He analyzed the physiology of color perception in a way that was basically correct, even if he was wildly incorrect about light's essence.

Like a good moralist who struggled with the rigors of empiricism, Goethe applied this optical concept to the ethical realm. In a diary entry dated May 26, 1807, he wrote,



Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, often called "the German Shakespeare" for his impact on German literature.

"Love and hate, hope and fear are also only different conditions of our murky inner life through which our spirit looks towards the light or towards the shadows." In Goethe's own life, he sought natural purity by integrating his perceptions into his various endeavors. He would conscientiously fulfill his administrative duties while making time for literature. His practical insights would give a "refined naturalness" to his writings as the wisdom gleaned from literary reflection informed his life in turn.

In maxim 164, he wrote, "However ordinary life may look, however readily it appears to put up with what is common, everyday, it yet goes on secretly nursing higher demands and looks round for ways of satisfying them."

While focusing on each task at hand, he would attain the best possible results in each area. He would achieve, in other words, spirit—the moral corollary of light. These years became filled with a hectic activity that almost defies compression into a single life. As the duke's privy counselor, Goethe oversaw areas ranging from mining to finances, road-building, school administration, irrigation, and military organization. He married his secretary and longtime lover, Christiane Vulpius, and cultivated a great friendship with the poet Friedrich Schiller. Most importantly for posterity, his literary output was massive.

Goethe summarized it best: "Do not hurry; do not rest."

For Additional Information

- Rüdiger Safranski's book, "Goethe: Life as a Work of Art," published by Liveright in 2017.
- Johann Peter Eckermann's book, "Conversations with Goethe," originally published in 1836.
- Johannes Wolfgang von Goethe's book, "Maxims and Reflections," originally published in 1833.

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"Napoleon in Coronation Robes," 1805, by François Gérard. Napoleon Bonaparte read "The Sorrows of Young Werther" seven times before meeting Goethe.

CULTURE

Faith, Family, and Freedom

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"Freedom from Want" is perhaps the best-known of this quartet. It features a family, all smiles and grins, gathered around a Thanksgiving table while Grandmother serves up the turkey and Grandfather waits to slice it. At the bottom right corner of the canvas, Rockwell himself merrily peeks out at viewers. "Freedom from Fear" features a mother and father at the bedside of their sleeping children. The mother is pulling the covers up to the chins of the sleeping youngsters while the father solemnly watches them, a newspaper in his hand with headlines about a bombing.

First published in The Saturday Evening Post early in 1943, these four paintings became a tremendous hit with the American public. Readers requested thousands of copies, and when the Post and the Department of the Treasury together launched a war bonds drive by sending the paintings on tour, more than a million people in 16 cities viewed Rockwell's "Four Freedoms," raising \$133 million in bonds. Millions more reproductions were delivered around the United States and overseas.

As the Norman Rockwell Museum web-



Artist Norman Rockwell (1894-1978) sketching with a pencil while sitting at a drafting table, circa 1945.

site tells us, these paintings now "reside in their own specially designed gallery space, inviting visitors to reflect on their inspiring message."

The Dream Abides

Like those visitors, we too might reflect on these paintings. In many ways, their meanings are clear and timeless. "Freedom of Speech" and "Freedom of Worship" remind us of our First Amendment rights. "Freedom from Want" and "Freedom from Fear" remain aspirations applicable to all mankind.

In his address, Roosevelt said of the four freedoms that this "is no vision of a distant millennium. It is a definite basis for a kind of world attainable in our own time and generation." Later, these freedoms became a part of the Charter of the United Nations.

Unfortunately, we live in a time and a place where this vision seems as distant as ever. The Chinese Communist Party and other totalitarian governments show no interest whatsoever in these freedoms, and even in our own country speech and religion have come under fire, with fear and humiliation employed as the weapons of suppression.

Yet Rockwell's freedom paintings continue to breathe life and hope into the dream of liberty. They have even, for example, inspired several of today's artists to bring his masterpiece into the 21st century by using the same settings and themes but with greater diversity of race. The faces have changed, but the spirit remains the same.

And then there are the more subtle messages in Rockwell's paintings, implications rather than explicitly expressed ideas.

The Pillars of Culture

In "Fancies Versus Fads," G.K. Chesterton wrote, "The family is the test of freedom; because the family is the only thing that the free man makes for himself and by himself." Two of Rockwell's "Freedoms" hint at this bond linking family and liberty. In "Freedom from Want," the grins and postures of that family around the Thanksgiving table shout out happiness and gratitude. Grandma is focused on settling that large turkey on the table, but the small smile on her lips bespeaks the pride and inner joy she takes in



"Freedom from Want," 1941-1945, by Norman Rockwell. National Archives at College Park.

serving these children and grandchildren gathered around her table.

The two parents in "Freedom from Fear," both looking a bit care-worn, regard their sleeping children with love and quiet concern. They stand between the light falling on the children and the darkness on the other side of the bed like a barricade between the forces of good and those of evil. This couple defines the meaning of parenthood: the love, care, and sense of responsibility.

Children, parents, family: These, Rockwell whispers to spectators, are the primary building blocks of culture and civilization.

Reason and Religion

The other two paintings also hold some subtle meanings, particularly for today's audience.

PUBLIC DOMAIN

KENNEDY COLLECTIONS/SHUTTERSTOCK IMAGES

PUBLIC DOMAIN

ARCHIVE PHOTOS/GETTY IMAGES



GETTY IMAGES

GETTY IMAGES



2



3



4

HULTON ARCHIVE/GETTY IMAGES

HULTON ARCHIVE/GETTY IMAGES



The USS Arizona sinks during the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor in Hawaii, on Dec. 7, 1941.

WITNESS TO HISTORY

A Child's Remembrances of Pearl Harbor: The Day of Infamy and the Years of War

As the attack on Pearl Harbor nears its 81st anniversary, Dorinda Makanaonalani Nicholson's story is as poignant as ever



We saw the sky light up like an extended lighting storm.

Dorinda Makanaonalani Nicholson

PAULA L. RATLIFF

On Dec. 7, 1941, in the early morning hours on the beautiful Hawaiian island of Oahu, Dorinda Makanaonalani was eating breakfast with her family when they heard the sounds of low-flying planes; then, almost immediately, loud explosions, followed by more planes passing directly over their house.

Her father remarked that it was "unusual" for the military to do maneuvers on a Sunday, and he bolted into the front yard, with his young daughter running close behind. "We looked up into the orange-red emblem of the Rising Sun and we could see the pilots' faces and even the goggles that covered their eyes" she recalled. "The sounds of the bullets were muffled by the roar of the engines; we could not hear them, but the incendiary bullets found their targets, and parts of our house caught on fire. The front door of our neighbor's house was so bullet-ridden from the strafing, it fell from the hinges."

She was just 6 years old when her eyes saw things she couldn't describe or begin to understand. Images were etched into her heart and mind which she kept silent about for almost 50 years, until she finally told her story in a book titled "Pearl Harbor Child: A Child's View of Pearl Harbor—From Attack to Peace," first printed in 1993 under her married name of Nicholson. She experienced the blackouts, rationing, air raid drills, gas masks, censorship, martial law, wartime currency, and finally peace.

"It has been a journey," she told The Epoch Times.

COURTESY OF DORINDA MAKANAONALANI



The Makanaonalani family.

Attack on Pearl Harbor

The Makanaonalanis lived on Jean Street in a small civilian community on the Pearl City Peninsula, across the channel from Ford Island, where the battleship USS Utah was docked just a few hundred yards from their home. As the attack continued, she could see that it was on its side in the murky water. There was smoke everywhere, and the smell of fire and burning oil filled the air.

Standing beside her father, she watched the Japanese torpedo planes scream past at treetop level, strafing her street on their way to attack the U.S. ships anchored peacefully in the harbor.

In the next instant, her mother heard the radio announcer give the dramatic news: "Air raid Pearl Harbor. This is no maneuver. This is the real McCoy." This message was followed by an urgent request for all medical and military personnel to report to the hospitals and bases.

Her father ran back inside the house and yelled for the family to "get in the car." They took nothing with them, not even their dog. He drove through the smoke-filled streets, uncertain of where to go.

"He knew he wanted to get away from the bay, fearing another attack. He drove to another vantage point on the harbor, where we could see that another battleship was upside down and others were ablaze and helpless," she said.

The feelings of shock were quickly replaced with anxiety and fear. Her father drove to Waimano Home Road, to the sugarcane fields in the hills above Pearl Harbor. Even from that point, they could still see the fires and, fearing for what could happen next, they parked their car and went deep into the sugarcane fields. She could feel the field shake beneath her little feet from the massive explosions; explosions that would continue for days from the stored ammunition.

Within hours, neighbors joined them in the sugarcane field, bringing only tidbits of news because Hawaii Gov. Joseph Poindexter had ordered all radio stations off the air in case the Japanese came back and tried to use the signals to guide them to the islands for another attack. Telephones could not be used.

As the sun set that evening, military police found them in the fields and evacuated them to a recreation hall called Sugar Mill. Shortly after arriving there, red streaks flashed over Pearl Harbor with sounds of gunfire in all directions.

"We saw the sky light up like an extended lightning storm. Then, there was silence. The remainder of the night was spent in fear, wondering what the latest exchange of gunfire meant. There was nothing to do but huddle together and wait for morning as we slept on the floor in total darkness," she said.

Nearly 50 years passed before she learned that the battle sounds and red streaks in the sky were the "Fighting Six," a group of U.S. fighter planes from the aircraft carrier USS Enterprise that was trying to land on the island. Sadly, they were mistaken for the enemy, and U.S. troops fired at them, destroying five fighter planes and killing three pilots by friendly fire.

Her family, along with approximately 100 civilian men, women, and children, remained at the shelter for four to five days before returning home. Their home was damaged from the fire, but they could still live there after removing the incendiary bullets that were supposed to burn when hitting a target.

"As kids, we played games to see who could collect the most shrapnel," Nicholson said, noting she still has one bullet from her home. Thankfully, she found her dog under the house and they enjoyed a tremendous reunion.

The schools were closed immediately

and some were converted into military hospitals. Her mother kept the bathtub filled with water in case the water supply was cut off. Her father returned to work at the post office, where he helped to sort the wet and burned mail that was salvaged from the battleships USS Arizona and Oklahoma.

Martial Law

The islands were put under military rule. A curfew was implemented and people couldn't leave the house at night unless they were given a pass. Lights had to be out at night. The media and mail were censored. Guards were placed in front of buildings. Bomb shelters and trenches were dug. They lived every day in fear of a land invasion.

Nicholson recalled that as the war progressed after the attack, food became scarce as most of the food was imported to the islands by boat through possible enemy waters. Long lines became a fact of life, and grocery stores began limiting the number of shoppers.

"It was a 'special' kind of rationing that began even before the official ration stamps were printed and in use," she said. Gas was rationed. There was no toilet paper. Eggs and meat were too expensive to buy. Butter was scarce, so the distributors provided an "orange-colored tablet" to mix with margarine to make it look like butter. The tablet was later replaced with a liquid in a plastic pouch, which made it easier to color the margarine to look like butter.

In the 1940s, silk stockings with seams were extremely popular but in short supply, because the military needed the material to make parachutes. Women improvised by applying makeup on their legs and drawing "seam lines."

Poindexter urged all nonessential civilians to leave the island because he wanted fewer mouths to feed and fewer people to defend if the enemy returned. The wives and children of the military were forced to leave. The Makanaonalanis chose to stay.

She recalled that every person over 6 years of age had to be fingerprinted and carry an identification card at all times.

"My mom and dad never told me that this was to identify the bodies in case of bombing raids," she said.

People dug trenches and built bomb shelters. Residents over the age of 2 years were required to carry a gas mask at all times, and schools had regular drills to practice putting them on. Another protective measure was to install barbed wire along the island's coastline. Waikiki Beach had rolls and rolls of "ugly barbed wire"

stretched across the sand leading to the ocean.

As time progressed, people found creative ways to enjoy light at night. Her parents, as did many others, bought black paint and painted the windows black so they could turn the lights on after the designated blackout time.

"We had to be extremely careful about any light escaping from our houses because the block warden was very strict. If I saw any light, he would report it to the soldiers in a patrol car. They took care of the problem by shooting out the light," she said. There were no street lights, no lighted signs on buildings, or car lights.

The curfews stipulated that no one could be on the streets after dark without a special pass. If you had a pass to be out after dark, your car lights had to have a shield or hood over them, only allowing half of the light to pass through.

Censorship became a fact of life during the war years and included all types of communications, such as newspapers, magazines, radio broadcasts, and the U.S. mail. Hundreds of readers would censor the mail and ink or cut out any parts that were judged to be unacceptable or hurtful to the war effort. The objective for both civilian and military censors was to prevent any important military-related facts from falling into Japanese hands.

"One forbidden topic was the weather," Nicholson said. "If you mentioned the weather, it would be cut out of your letter. Even the newspapers couldn't mention forecasts or current conditions since this might help the enemy plan an attack." Nicholson was involved with the community gardens. She watched as women joined the service, some going to work to help the war efforts. There were remnants of war throughout the island as homes, buildings, and automobiles were damaged. She saw how the Japanese Americans were treated, detained by force, and taken to de-

tention camps. It took more than 50 years for the U.S. government to offer an official apology and reparations.

The restrictions were lifted when the war was declared over on Aug. 14, 1945, when the Japanese agreed to surrender. She recalls the celebrations in the streets with firecrackers, people banging pots and pans, strangers kissing strangers, alarms, horns, sirens, and whistles. The sky over the harbor flashed brightly with flares, and the ship whistles sounded.

"As we came closer to our house, our car lights picked up the white uniform of a sailor standing in a yard across the street. Unlike the others, he was alone. I watched him curiously, wondering why he wasn't with the jubilant crowds nearby. Then I saw that he had his own way to express his joy at America's victory. He leaned against a palm tree with his elbow bent, and rested his face in the crook of his arm. I didn't hear him cry, but I could see his shoulders and head quake with emotion," she said.

The war was finally over.

The Story Continues

Her book is now in the 12th edition and, through the years, she has spoken to hundreds of groups, sharing her insights as to how the war affected the native Hawaiians and changed their way of life.

She said: "I told my story for future generations. War is not romantic. It hurts more than the military and civilians. It hurts families and communities. It hurts our children. Over the years, I've had the privilege of meeting many of our military heroes and I share their stories, as well. We must learn from the past and never repeat the lessons learned. We must continue to pursue peace and healing."

At 87 years young, she continues to research and write. Her story continues.

Paula L. Ratliff is a published author and freelance writer in Kentucky.

DEAR NEXT GENERATION

Study History and Seek Excellence

→ Advice from our readers to our young people

Some advice in quick-time. I refer to an old military abbreviation for moving quickly and efficiently. Not an Apple app.

My advice is mostly about YOU, the next generation. You will lead us into the future... and you hold the key to how the future may look. Your character, your education, your value systems, your wisdom and endurance, your ability to "hang in when the going gets tough."

First, study history. From many sources. Don't scan it, watch it on TV, or listen to lectures about it. Probe its corners. Look for truth. It's all related, somehow. Learn to ask hard questions and expect truthful answers. Do not swallow narratives blindly. After all, those narratives may be shaped by one-sided people with skewed agendas. The agendas may vary, but many are "informed" by 20/20 hindsight. The most reliable sources for any history are the observations, documents, and writings of those who lived it "real-time." As a parent and teacher, I remind students that history is rightly judged through the eyes and standards in existence at the time it happened. Judging it 20 years or 200 years after the fact and based on current standards is misdirection—Monday morning quarterbacking. Ever seen a football score changed on the Monday after the weekend game?

And by the way, what's to be gained by tearing down a nation rather than working to make it better by rolling up your sleeves and pitching in for a team win?

For some good insights into the history of possibilities, I recommend "A History of the American People" by British historian Paul B. Johnson, CBE, who coincidentally began his journalistic career as a leftist.

History's "bottom line." A stalwart in the perennial fight for human freedom once observed the following principle:

"Dwell in the past and you'll lose an eye; forget the past and you'll lose both eyes." That was said by Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn, Russian author and dissident famous for many novels, including "The Gulag Archipelago," "August 1914," "Cancer Ward," and others.

Second. Tie everything you do to your effort to make your world a better place, not only for yourself, but for everyone around you. The maxim "A rising tide floats all boats" is still true.

Third. Get used to the fact—yes, it's a fact—that you will receive opposition from some corner or other; more if you are doing something that is good and significant. Don't run for a "safe space." Instead, muster your courage, knuckle down, and stay the course. I like to remember the trite quote, attributed to various people, that, nonetheless, offers a place to hang one's hat in tough times:

"Everything will be alright in the end. If it's not alright, it's not the end."

Fourth. Take care of your physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual health by disciplined consumption of healthy materials. Remember that the best defense is a good offense. It's about balance. Preserving your health in all those categories is easier, cheaper, and more effective than recovering from self-induced illness. Always.

Do the hard things it takes to make that happen. At age 77, I still do strenuous physical work or workouts for at least three hours, six days a week—usually with the added benefit of accomplishment that makes life better for my family. While many of my friends grow heavier and softer every day on their diets of TV, movies, ice cream, and cake, I stay healthier and happier with work that some tell me I "ought not to do." Say what?

Good health is that simple, barring some tragedy beyond your control. No guarantee, "no free lunch."

Read good fiction and nonfiction, lots of it. Talk to older, more experienced people who have found success at some level. Don't limit those talks to people who have attained visible, material success. Find folks who enjoy a decent lifestyle and peace of mind simultaneously with being productive. You'll be surprised at the insights you gain.

My personal history roughly parallels many of those already published in this column. Similar big picture with varying details. I was reared in a large family in the '40s-'60s. Fourth of five kids. Chores, hard work, and the exacting standards of many adults led me—and sometimes pushed me—toward a productive life as a child and an adult. Parents, grandparents, schoolteachers, church and scout leaders, and neighbors—all had a hand. We enjoyed the following benefits in our years at home:

- Rigorous education in public schools, including corporal punishment.
- Equally rigorous education in church.
- Respect for law and order. Respect for elders. Respect for authority. Respect for others.
- Punishment when the respect lapsed.
- After-school athletics with tough coaches.
- Summer jobs, childhood jobs, low wages, and high standards of performance, whether I was delivering groceries or newspapers by bicycle, mowing and raking lawns, working in our family's garden, and so on. In high school, I engaged in basketball and track, then after dinner, I went to work for a janitorial service until late each evening. Later, I got a job as a stock boy in a supermarket, and one summer, I painted the outside of our large, frame home. There were other jobs as well. One summer in a furniture factory, graveyard shift.

We had no car in my early years, no TV until I was 14. My dad was a farm boy with an eighth-grade education, my mom had a high school diploma. Gifted with determination and lots of talent, they worked hard, long hours to make ends meet.

Neighborly eyes on watch were everywhere in my youth. Moms and dads all kept us "in tow" by their mere presence. We knew they would reel us in quickly if we got too far out of line. Whether playing sandlot ball, cops 'n robbers, or hide-and-seek, we knew we were watched. In my opinion, that's a standard worth paying forward. It tends to promote community, and keeps everyone observing at least minimum standards.

As a walk-on basketball player at community college, I earned a scholarship. Became captain of the team. Never a standout, but a journeyman who enjoyed the game and the teamwork. In my third year of college, I joined the new two-year Army ROTC program. The rigorous training was right up my alley and I excelled. Because my college brigade's cadet commander in my senior year and graduated as a Distinguished Military Graduate.

Immediately on active duty during the Vietnam years, I married my lovely sweetheart after two years. We reared three beautiful daughters during our career paths and have stuck together for 54 years, happy as ever. We are blessed by our Creator.

Now, in our seventh decade of life, we watch for ways to improve our knowledge and skills, our inner peace, ways to help others, to make things work better, to challenge conventional ideas that don't work. We enjoy time with our children and grandchildren as well as our neighborhood and longtime friends.

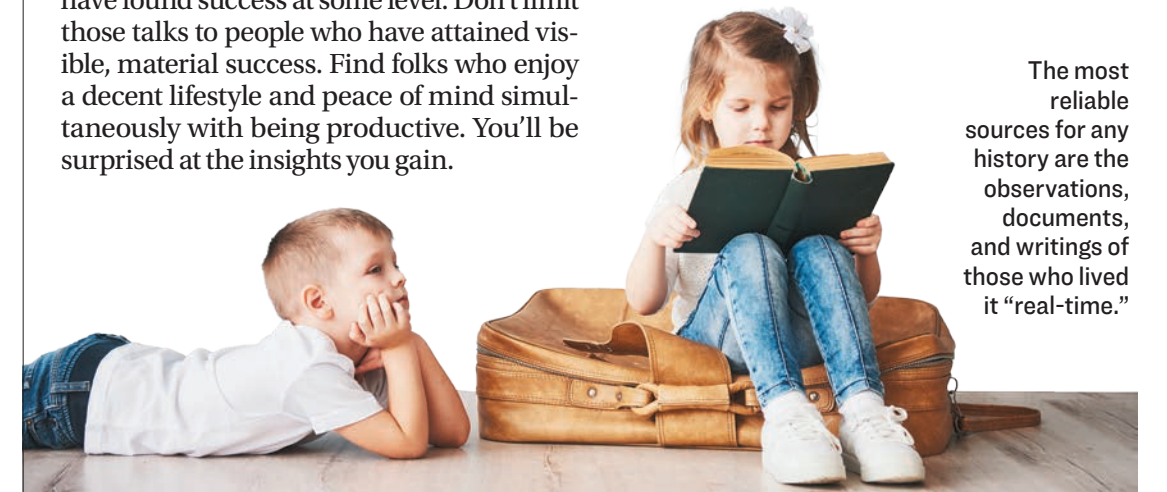
Grace and peace to all.

—Sternes Stubblefield, Arkansas

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

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

Send your advice, along with your full name, state, and contact information to NextGeneration@epochtimes.com or mail it to: *Next Generation, The Epoch Times, 229 W. 28th St., Floor 7, New York, NY 10001*



STANDEY/SHUTTERSTOCK

The most reliable sources for any history are the observations, documents, and writings of those who lived it "real-time."

"Harvesters Resting," 1850–1853, by Jean-François Millet. Oil on canvas, 26.5 inches x 47.1 inches. Bequest of Mrs. Martin Brimmer. Museum of Fine Arts Boston.



ART EXPLORATION FOR THE YOUNG AND YOUNG AT HEART

The Value of Labor in a Life Well Lived

Instead of the frenzy of productivity that is for its own sake, work done with intentionality and balance creates room for rest, peace, and fulfillment

ANDREA NUTT FALCE

This summer, my husband, four children, and I moved from our colorful little farm on a Florida bayou closer to the bustle of town. Leaving the hum of sleepy cicadas, the stretch of snowy egrets over watery sunsets, and early mornings working in a big, old barn was tough to accept.

But our oldest son started high school, and adding another destination to the sunrise trek to the other side of the shining bay—in addition to all the subsequent trips required in a school day—caused us to reconsider where we live and work at this juncture.

Life progresses.

We didn't dare list the four-acre oasis until we found an acceptable new option. Selling wasn't the problem. Finding a new house and winning the bid were more formidable feats. Most desirable places were gone in a day or priced to sticker shock, as so many items from the grocery store to the gas pumps have become over the past couple of years.

At the end of the day, we solved that problem by choosing a serious fixer-upper. Accepting the task of labor, again, seemed a better prospect than losing our investment to a falling market later. The move came down to a consideration of time, resources, work, and love. We gave up our picturesque fields for another day. The quintessential question is to what end do we choose to toil?

Work Is for Man

In his 1986 address to the workers of the Transfield factory in Seven Hills, Australia, Pope John Paul II addressed the ongoing question of man's relationship with work.

"First, it is always the human person who is the purpose of work," he wrote. "It must be said over and over again that work is for man, not man for work. Man is indeed 'the true purpose of the whole process of production.'"

In the "new" house, my husband and I have already torn out most of the 40-year-old cream carpeting that covered every room, including bathrooms. We have re-floored the downstairs, installed new doors, rebuilt walls, and gutted bathrooms. As parents of four, between volleyball, cheerleading, soccer, quiz club, painting, flying, unpacking, rebuilding, cleaning, and writing, we live amid the music of saws and sobbs, laughter, clatter, clouds of demolition, and reconstruction.

This year, the kitchen was totally out of commission for Thanksgiving; as the cook, I couldn't help but chuckle at the blessing and the curse. The regular seasons of life are busy enough, but now, heading into the bustle of the holidays, I am reminded that more activity isn't always the best course. Labor and rest are integral to the cycle of human life. Work is as essential to man as is time for rest and reflection.

Before his life was demanded of him, Socrates impressed a significant statement upon the minds of future men by saying, "The unexamined life is not worth living." Though the world is ever-changing, the human condition remains basically the same. We are born, we live, grow, love, rest, struggle, and finally die. It's a matter of relevance how best to accomplish these tasks. What will we live for? What will we work for? What's the final goal?

Long before Socrates posited ideas about a life well lived, and even before the fall of man, Genesis records God's original charge to humankind:

"Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it" (Genesis 1:28). According to this order, man has gone forward to make his way in the world. Since the Garden of Eden, man's relationship with earth and work has been tumultuous and evolving. Individual failures and the sins of wicked leaders pose an omnipresent impediment

to man's peace, productivity, and success. Still, with grace, hope, effort, and ingenuity, people have progressed to create new systems and technologies that aid in efficiency. May we use them well.

The Working Man in Art

Between 1857 and 1859, shortly after the industrial revolution, while humankind was reeling from the effects of the French Revolution, and the earliest ideas about democracy and communism simmered on the world's front burners, Jean-François Millet painted "The Angelus." It was a time when man was reconsidering the role of work, philosophy, individual rights, and freedom in an increasingly modern world. Millet, a French artist and champion of the Barbizon School of painters, wasn't a particularly religious man. Some, in fact, accuse him of being communistic in his leanings.

He painted "The Angelus" for an American patron, who never returned to claim the work. When the commission went unclaimed, Millet added the church steeple from Chailly-en-Bière to the background. Reflecting upon the painting, he once asked a friend, "Can't you hear the bells chime?" Millet explained that the inspiration for the piece came from his grandmother, who would always stop working and lead the children in prayer for the souls of the departed when she heard the ringing of the bells at the end of the day.

Millet is among a set of 19th-century painters who sought to express the beauty and dignity of the working man. Although, like so many of us, he struggled to gain a full understanding of the forces moving to affect his life and vision, what he was able to see, he expressed most powerfully in paint. Millet lived during a tumultuous time in history. He painted ordinary men and women, images of family, faith, and service lived in earnest. He was moved by the strength and beauty of a simple life, the traditions of hardworking people, and the structures of their faith.

How mankind ought to reconcile himself to work, and when and how he may achieve peace, are timeless considerations. During the current age, freedom and technology factor ever more significantly into the philosophical question.

The Value of Labor

Known as the patron saint of ordinary life, Josemaría Escrivá had significant insights to contribute. Living through most of the 20th century, St. Josemaría Escrivá founded an organization titled *Opus Dei*, which means "the work of God."

In Escrivá's words, "Since Christ took it into his hands, work has become for us a redeemed and redemptive reality. Not only is it the background of man's life, it is a means and path of holiness. It is something to be sanctified and something which sanctifies."

From the genesis of mankind to Socrates, Jean-François Millet, St. Josemaría Escrivá, our own lives, and into the generations beyond, it remains critical to contextualize the value of men and women and their call to

How mankind ought to reconcile himself to work, and when and how he may achieve peace, are timeless considerations.



Painter Jean-François Millet by Nadar, circa 1856–1858.

PUBLIC DOMAIN

Labor and rest are integral to the cycle of human life.



"The Infant (The Sick Child)," 1858, by Jean-François Millet. Pastel and pencil on paper, 15 inches by 12.2 inches.

work and to rest. Pope John Paul II continued the enduring discussion by explaining that "human work is a key, probably the essential key, to the whole social question."

And while celebrating Mass at the Jubilee of Artisans in 2000, he expanded this sentiment.

"You can restore strength and concrete form to those values that have always characterized your activities: the striving for quality, the spirit of initiative, the promotion of artistic qualities, liberty and cooperation, the equitable relationship between technology and the environment, the bond with the family and good neighborly relations."

The evidence of God's work is all around us. From forest to mountain, to fish and sea, to you and me, creation is beautiful. After creating a veritable masterpiece of life, the book of Genesis explains, "On the seventh day God ended His work which He had done, and He rested" (Genesis 2:2). When examining the assignment of life, it's interesting to account for the idea that we are made in the image and likeness of God.

Work itself is a tool and opportunity for man to do good. Millet's work creates a stunning pictorial lesson about the ageless necessity to build a sturdy space for labor and love in this human life. In his painting titled "Charity," as well as the poignant image of a mother holding her sick child in "The Infant (The Sick Child)," Millet's art explains that even love itself involves work and suffering.

"The Angelus" reminds us to take a moment to reflect on the time we've been given and its inevitable end. After a lifetime of love, sorrow, joy, gratitude, and toil, there will be a break. May we embrace the sunset of our earthly days with hands folded in faith and the hope of hard-won peace.

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

LARGER THAN LIFE: ART THAT INSPIRES US THROUGH THE AGES

A Symbol of Polish Patriotism: The Royal Castle in Warsaw

LORRAINE FERRIER

WARSAW, Poland—Take a walk through Warsaw's old town, and soon enough, you'll meet King Sigismund III Vasa (1566–1632), who stands tall atop a column between the colorful old buildings and the pink façade of the Royal Castle.

Having been plundered, raised to the ground, and rebuilt several times, the Royal Castle in Warsaw today stands as a symbol of Polish patriotism, incorporating medieval, baroque, and neoclassical architectural styles with Polish panache.

In the early 14th century, long before the castle became a royal residence, the Duchy of Masovia had built a wooden castle and tower on the site.

In 1568, King Sigismund II Augustus (1520–1572) was the first royal to establish his court at the castle, which then became the seat of parliament (Sejm) in 1569. In 1596, King Sigismund III Vasa moved the seat of the commonwealth and royal power to Warsaw and expanded the castle to the five-winged structure that it is today.

Between the end of the 17th century and the start of the 18th century, the Saxon-Wetlin dynasty added a baroque-style wing.

In the second half of the 18th century, the last king of the Polish-Lithuanian commonwealth, Stanisław II Augustus Poniatowski, commissioned architects Johann Christian Kammsetzer (Dresden) and Domenico Merlini (Italy) and painter Marcello Bacciarelli (Italy) to create neoclassical style interiors (known as the Stanisławian style).

The castle we see today was painstakingly reconstructed after World War II had left Warsaw and the Royal Castle in ruins. While a castle reconstruction committee quickly formed in June 1945, the communist regime forbade the rebuilding of a monument that supported the lost Polish monarchy.

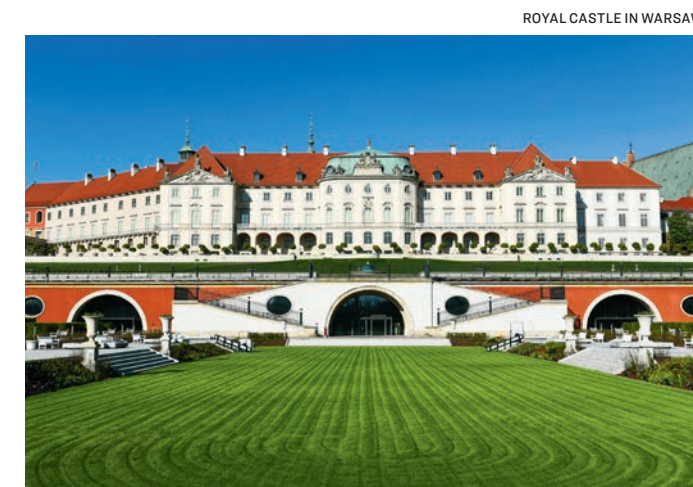
In 1971, the Polish people, not the state, paid for the reconstruction. Some of the original objects and architectural fragments were incorporated into the reconstruction. These included precious items that firemen, museum employees, conservator-restorers, and civilians risked their lives to save and hide during the Nazi occupation.

To find out more about the Royal Castle in Warsaw, visit Zamek-Krolewski.pl



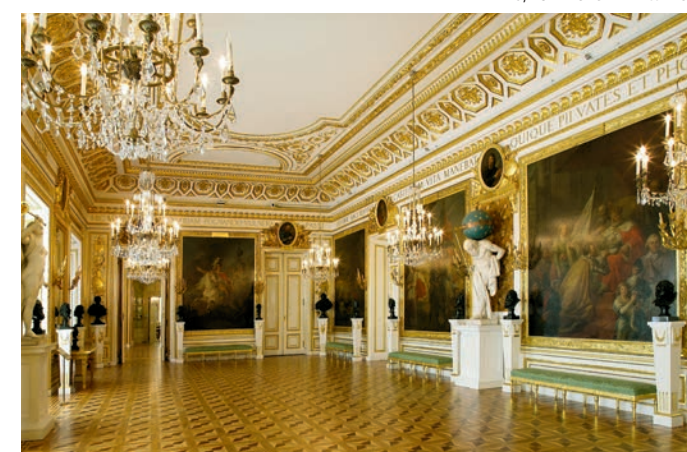
SERGIJ FIGURNY/SHUTTERSTOCK

Sigismund's Column and the Royal Castle in Warsaw (R), Poland. Over the centuries, the castle's architects have incorporated medieval, baroque, and neoclassical art and architectural styles to the building.



ROYAL CASTLE IN WARSAW

The baroque eastern façade, with its extensive gardens, faces the Vistula River.



A. RING/ROYAL CASTLE IN WARSAW

Everything in the Knights' Hall is set to glorify Poland, from the paintings of historical events to the busts of great men by French sculptor André-Jean Lebrun. A line from Virgil's "Aeneid" runs under the cornice, which translates as: "Here is the band of them who bore wounds in fighting for their country, and they who were pure in priesthood while life endured, and the good poets whose speech abased not Apollo; and they who made life beautiful by the arts of their invention, and who won by service a memory among men."



A. RING/ROYAL CASTLE IN WARSAW

The walls of the Royal Bedroom are lined in cream silk with floral patterns and yew paneling with gilded laurel branches, both complementing the Carrara marble fireplace. The Turkish-style bed in duck egg green is a reconstruction of the one that the king sat on during the day and slept upright in during the night. Paintings by Italian Marcello Bacciarelli show scenes from the Old Testament, and the couches and armchairs are upholstered in tapestries of Jean de la Fontaine's fables.



A. RING/ROYAL CASTLE IN WARSAW

French and Italian masters created the interior decor in the gold and crimson Throne Room. Five huge crystal mirrors reflect the stucco work, paneled walls, and marble fireplaces imported from Rome. Italian sculptor Angelo Puccinelli created sculptures of ancient Roman rulers to convey the virtues of wisdom, justice, restraint, and courage.



Cultivating selfless love for others in our children—and extending this love toward them, as well—is an excellent way to affect them and society by restoring some of the civility that so many of us pine for.

Lessons From a Lost Library Book

In Sydney Taylor's 'All-of-a-Kind-Family,' the value of a book goes beyond the book itself to include the beauty of sacrifice, simplicity, and virtuous character

ANNIE HOLMQUIST

The other night, my family gathered around and pulled out one of my childhood favorites for a read-aloud night: Sydney Taylor's "All-of-a-Kind Family." Set in the early 20th century, each chapter of "All-of-a-Kind Family" tells of the simple yet entertaining life of five little Jewish girls living with their parents in New York. "I am almost inclined to set it up as a canon that a children's story which is enjoyed only by children is a bad children's story," author C. S. Lewis once noted. I would agree—and extend that statement further to say that a good children's story is one that teaches life lessons and provides applications to both children and adults. Such a definition would place "All-of-a-Kind Family" squarely in the "good" category, for I walked away with several intriguing life lessons on responsibility,



Readers of all ages can glean intriguing life lessons about sacrifice, responsibility, and worthy role models from Sydney Taylor's "All-of-a-Kind Family."

sacrifice, and worthy role models from the first chapter alone.

Treasuring Simple Pleasures

The chapter opens with the sisters eagerly anticipating their Friday afternoon trip to the library, where they can each select one book. Only one sister—Sarah, the 8-year-old middle child—isn't there. When she finally makes her appearance, her face is tear-stained because she can't find the book she was supposed to return that day, a fact that fills the other sisters with dismay.

In a day when we have streaming services, digital apps, and online books galore, it seems almost ridiculous to see these five children so thrilled with the opportunity to go to the library and pick out one book per week. Yet, their joy in such simple pleasures speaks volumes to those of us who complain about the many problems in our country today.

Yes, the inflation, high prices in the stores, supply chain issues, and other problems are troublesome. But each one of us can get so consumed with what we don't have, that we forget all the wealth and bounty that we do enjoy. Just as these five little girls rejoiced over their weekly library trip, so we, too, should train ourselves and our children to delight in the simple joys we encounter every day, giving thanks for the ability to get outside, walk into a store without wearing a mask, and rejoice over those leftovers in the fridge rather than wishing for a restaurant-served meal.

Instilling Responsibility

When the search for the lost book proves fruitless, Sarah's mother insists that she must go to the library, explain what happened, and then pay for the lost item. "It's only right," Mama said. "You borrowed the book and that makes you responsible. ... I wish I could help you pay for this, but you know, Sarah, there's no money for such things."

We live in a time where nothing is ever our fault. There's always someone or something else to blame for a less-than-desirable situation—the boomers, the boss, politicians we don't like, an alleged disorder. We're even quick to enable our children to follow in this pattern by making excuses for their actions, which only continues the cycle of irresponsibility in our culture.

Sarah's mother, however, gives a simple pattern to stop such a cycle. She doesn't coddle. She doesn't make excuses. She doesn't hold her daughter's hand and cover for her. Instead, she makes Sarah practice responsibility at a young age, preparing her for a world that isn't always fair, but one in which character traits such as responsibility make it a whole lot more bearable.

Role Model Opportunities

When the children reach the library, they are greeted by a new librarian, Miss Allen.

Instead of scolding or harshly telling them they can't return to the library until the book is paid for, she receives them kindly and sympathetically. She backs up their mother's lesson in responsibility, affirming that Sarah must pay for the book, and works out a manageable weekly payment plan for the little girl. Such kind reception turns Miss Allen into an instant role model for the sisters, and the friendship that ensues eventually ends up repaying Miss Allen in a surprising way.

Today, young adults like Miss Allen don't know how to respond to children. They often look at them as a nuisance, an interruption to their career, or as foreign beings whose whims must be pacified at all costs.

Yet, adults who will be a kind and loving refuge for children, rejoicing with them in their little sorrows, will find that children are an excellent avenue for expanded influence. The more influence for good an adult can be in the lives of children—whether through parenting or just through being an involved and loving adult figure—the more effect that adult will have on society. For those of us who want to turn the country around for the better, investing love and kindness by being positive role models for little children is one of the best ways to do so.

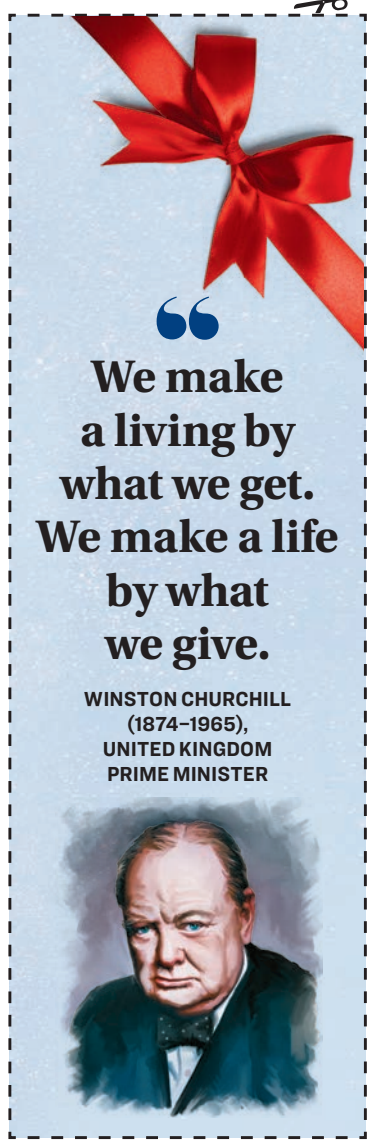
Civility Through Sacrifice

When Miss Allen tells Sarah she can give a small percentage of her allowance every week toward the book payment, the other four sisters gather around in whispered conference, finally agreeing that they, too, will bring the same amount each week to help Sarah pay her fine.

Here we have an example of Edmund Burke's "little platoons" in action, the "first link in the series by which we proceed towards a love to our country, and to mankind." These little platoons are what spur "public affections"—a quality lacking in today's contentious society. Cultivating such selfless love for others in both ourselves and our children will go a long way toward restoring some of the civility that so many of us pine for.

Life in the pages of "All-of-a-Kind Family" seems very peaceful and simple, a dream world that no longer seems possible in the fast-paced techno-world we live in today. But perhaps that's due in part to the fact that we've forgotten the beauty of sacrifice, simplicity, and virtuous character. Who knows? Working to build these in our own lives may just be the first step toward the restoration of a society in which the peace and order that reigned in "All-of-a-Kind Family" returns.

Annie Holmquist is a cultural commentator hailing from America's heartland who loves classic books, architecture, music, and values. Her writings can be found at Annie's Attic on Substack.



ALL IMAGES BY SHUTTERSTOCK



Gifts

By Juliana Horatia Ewing

You ask me what since we must part You shall bring back to me. Bring back a pure and faithful heart As true as mine to thee.

You talk of gems from foreign lands, Of treasure, spoil, and prize. Ah! love! I shall not search your hands But look into your eyes.



LEDEX/SHUTTERSTOCK



AMERICA ATTACKED

On the morning of Dec. 7, 1941, Japan launched a surprise attack on the U.S. naval base at Pearl Harbor on the island of Oahu, Hawaii. Hundreds of Japanese fighter planes arrived suddenly, destroying or damaging nearly 20 U.S. vessels and more than 300 airplanes. More than 2,400 Americans were killed and 1,000 wounded. The United States declared war on Japan the next day, marking the country's entry into World War II.



HULTON ARCHIVE/GETTY IMAGES

The mast of the destroyed battleship USS Arizona after the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor, Honolulu, Hawaii.

By Aidan Danza

THE KILLER WHALE

The killer whale, or orca, is one of the world's most predatory sea mammals. It's the apex predator wherever it goes, and there really is nothing that can eat a killer whale. However, it's considered by scientists to be a dolphin, and like most dolphins, it's a very intelligent and social creature.

Like most dolphins, the killer whale lives in a social group called a pod. The pod consists of many individuals that are related on their mother's side of their family, and is headed by an old female called the matriarch. All the whales in the pod can trace their lineage back to her. There can be up to 50 whales in a pod, and this is divided into around 20 percent adult males, 20 percent calves, and 60 percent immature and adult females.

Killer whales communicate via a complex language of whistles, calls, and clicks. When

calling or whistling, each pod has a sort of accent or dialect that differentiates it from other pods. This accent has been found to stay the same for up to six generations. The whales use their whistles and calls to communicate both within the pod and between pods if they happen to meet one. Meanwhile, it seems that the clicks are used only for echolocation.

The purpose of echolocation is to be able to find obstructions in murky water where visibility is low. Killer whales and all dolphins echolocate by emitting a beam of ultrasound

(sounds so high in pitch that humans can't hear them) clicks into the water. The sound echoes off of the object in the water, and the dolphin will receive the echo and interpret its intensity, pitch, and the time it takes the echo to return to form a mental picture about the obstacle in the water. There's still a lot we don't know about echolocation, and it has actually only been studied in the bottlenose dolphin. We know other species, including the killer whale, perform echolocation, but the specifics between each species are probably a little different.



TORY KALLMAN/SHUTTERSTOCK

Picture Books to Enjoy at Christmastime

Both children and adults will enjoy these timeless picture books, perfect for the holidays

BARBARA DANZA

One of the simplest and most enjoyable ways to infuse the spirit of Christmas into daily family life during the holiday season is to read timeless picture books aloud. Even the children who may feel like they've grown out of the read-aloud stage will make their way back at the sound of a lovely Christmas tale being told. Here are a few suggestions:



'Christmas in the Barn' by Margaret Wise Brown and Diane Goode

A simple and gentle tale of a "big warm barn in an ancient field" reveals the story of Christmas accompanied by soft, lovely illustrations. An excellent primer and practice book for beginning readers and a soothing read for bedtime.

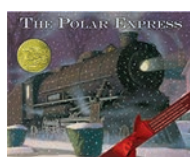


'The Twelve Days of Christmas' by Laurel Long

The classic English Christmas carol that counts the gifts "my true love gave to me" over the course of 12 special days, comes to life through the stunning oil

paintings of Laurel Long in this beautiful book. As the familiar song cumulatively progresses and new gifts are added each day, the illustrations become more elaborate and readers can revel in searching for the hidden gifts in each.

Complete with a brief history of the well-known carol, and including its sheet music, this version of "The Twelve Days of Christmas" would make a wonderful gift.



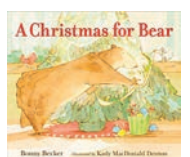
'The Polar Express' by Chris Van Allsburg

In this modern classic, alluring pastel illustrations evoke the magic inherent throughout the enchanting tale of a boy who, on Christmas Eve, steps on a train journeying to the North Pole and is taken on an adventure that solidifies the spirit of Christmas in his heart forever. It's the perfect prequel to a family movie night featuring the film adaptation.



'Where, Oh Where, Is Santa Claus?' by Lisa Wheeler and Ivan Bates

"Where, Oh Where, Is Santa Claus?" brings us to the North Pole, where Santa is missing on Christmas Eve! Will his furry friends find him in time? While reading this light-hearted romp, little ones will giggle with glee over the search for Santa. At bedtime, follow this one up with a softer choice to ensure a silent night.



'A Christmas for Bear' by Bonnie Becker and Kady MacDonald Denton

The last installment in the enjoyable Bear and Mouse series, "A Christmas for Bear" reunites the familiar characters at Christmastime. This warm tale of friendship is sure to evoke a smile.



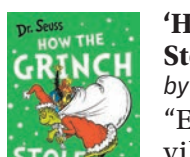
'Drummer Boy' by Loren Long

A toy drummer boy inadvertently embarks on an adventure that takes him in different directions—until he finds himself before a familiar scene in a manger. It's heartwarming and beautifully illustrated.



'The Christmas Miracle of Jonathan Toomey' by Susan Wojciechowski and P.J. Lynch

This absolute treasure depicts a journey of hope brought forth by the simple request of a young widow and her son to a "gloomy" woodcutter at Christmas time. The illustrations are stunning and the Christmas spirit is alive and well throughout.



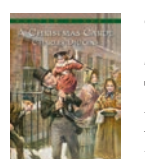
'How The Grinch Stole Christmas' by Dr. Seuss

"Every who down in Who-ville liked Christmas a lot ... But the Grinch ..." Well, you know the rest. Still, don't miss out on taking that worn copy off of your shelf and actually reading with your family the familiar rhymes of this enduring classic. Sure, you'll watch the animated version and you may even catch Jim Carrey's rendition, but nothing beats the original read by Mom or Dad.



'We Three Kings' by Gennady Spirin

Paging through the scenes of the beloved Christmas carol that tells the tale of the wise men following a star brings the story to life. This is a beautiful book that ensures the true meaning of Christmas is remembered.



'A Christmas Carol' by Charles Dickens

This unabridged version of a literary classic is worth diving into this time of year. This edition features just enough illustrations to keep younger readers interested while providing the complete, masterfully written tale.



'The First Christmas: A Changing-Picture Book' by Sophy Williams

A soft retelling of the Nativity scene, "The First Christmas: A Changing-Picture Book" is a beautifully illustrated summary of the fundamental meaning of Christmas, which will provide the perfect basis for bedtime on this special night.

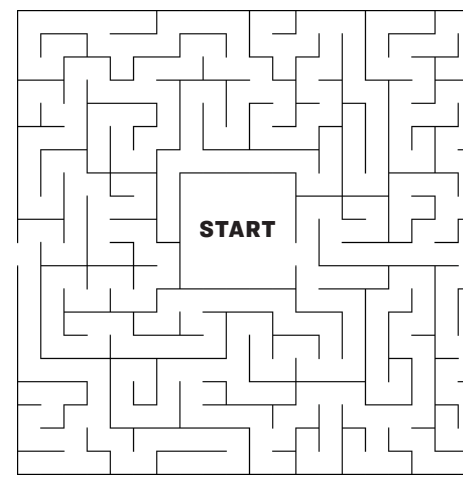


'The Night Before Christmas' by Clement C. Moore and Ted Rand

If there's one book you simply must read each year, it's this one—on Christmas Eve, of course. This sturdy board book will stand the test of time, and the illustrations are just right. Other noteworthy editions to look out for are Jan Brett's and the nostalgic "Little Golden Book" publication illustrated by Corinne Malvern.

'We Three Kings' by Gennady Spirin is a beautiful book that ensures the true meaning of Christmas is remembered.

AMAZING ESCAPES!



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

Easy puzzle 1

4	9
24	
2	7

Solution For Easy 1
2 × (9 - 2) + 6
2 × 6 + 2 × 6

Medium puzzle 1

10	13
23	
2	10

Solution for Medium 1
01 - 01 + 2 × 01

Hard puzzle 1

24	34
53	
15	26

Solution For Hard 1
01 - 06 × (02 - 02)



HIDDEN TREASURES by Liz Ball
www.HiddenPicturePuzzles.com

WORD SEARCH: Giving Gifts

V	O	L	U	N	T	E	E	R	S	U	P	L	Y	
B	L	A	N	K	E	T	S	H	A	R	I	N	G	
I	E	L	B	E	N	E	V	O	L	E	N	C	E	
J	L	C	H	A	R	I	T	Y	B	U	T	F	O	
A	L	T	R	U	I	S	M	D	D	O	N	O	R	
Y	I	G	R	E	N	D	O	W	B	F	C	Y	P	
T	H	O	U	G	H	T	F	U	L	P	A	H	S	
C	O	N	T	R	I	B	U	T	E	W	W	A	X	N
B	E	Q	E	A	T	H	I	D	A	R	M	P		
F	N	J	D	O	N	A	T	I	O	R	I	O	R	
M	E	H	D	O	N	A	T	E	V	T	D	T	E	
T	P	S	L	S	H	E	L	T	E	R	A	E	S	
I	S	E	L	F	L	E	S	S	V	M	K	B	Y	E
M	F	U	R	N	I	S	H	I	N	G	M	L	G	N
E	M	P	A	T	H	Y	C	L	O	G	H	E	S	T

Airman	Life
Anthem	Love
Armistice	Medals
Boots	Memorial
Bravery	Nation
Commemorate	Orders
Course	Parade
Defense	Patriot
Devotion	Peace
Endure	Pride
Fighting	Respect
Freedom	Sailor
Glory	Salute
Honor	Soldier
	Uniform
	Union
	Valor
	Values
	War
	Women
	Wounds

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