

THE EPOCH TIMES

LIFE &

TRADITION

INSPIRATION

Resolutions for 2023:

Tips for a Happier Life



Building a snowman is one way to relive the simple joys of childhood and put a smile on the face of everyone who sees it.

Instead of our New Year's resolutions, try implementing these tips to bring yourself—and others—sparks of joy

JEFF MINICK & ANNIE HOLMQUIST

For some of us, the new year rings in resolutions: Drop 30 pounds by year's end, hit the gym four evenings per week, or spend less money. All of these are noble and worthy causes, to be sure, but also a trifle grim, like the bread-and-water diet of a desert anchorite.

Many Americans are already down in the mouth; recent polls show that a majority are unhappy with the direction our country is headed. To counteract that dark mood, we should take deliberate aim at bringing a spark of joy to ourselves and to the world at large this year. To that end, we put our heads together and came up with some ideas for lighting a few wicks on the candelabra of 2023.



Bring a Smile to Others

Jeff: Make a deliberate effort to bring a smile or laughter to another person every day—a family member, a friend, or a stranger.

This can involve something simple, such as acting goofy in front of a grumpy grandchild, or something more complicated, such as paying for the groceries for that frazzled mom and three kids behind you in line at the grocery store. By doing so, you'll not only bring others a smile, but you'll likely find yourself smiling, too.

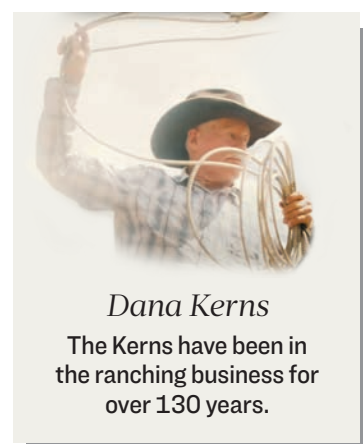


Keep a Gratitude Journal

Annie: There's nothing like gratitude to beat the post-holiday blues, so why not make this the year to start a gratitude journal?

Continued on Page 2

BIBA KAVENICH, ALL ICONS BY SHUTTERSTOCK



Dana Kerns

The Kerns have been in the ranching business for over 130 years.

Cowboy Family Brings 'City Slickers' on Cattle Drives

The Kerns have been running cattle drives in Wyoming since 1888, and now guide tours

MICHAEL WING

There is no doubt in Dana Kerns's mind that he is a rancher, through and through.

The Wyoming man owns land in Sheridan, handed down through four generations. It was first homesteaded in 1887 when his family set up a trading post to trade with the indigenous Crow tribe. But cattle soon became their livelihood.

Grazing the lowland valley ranch during winter, the animals needed nourishment come summer and the lush mountain pastures of north-central Wyoming satisfied their want.

"We put our first herd of cattle on the mountain in 1888," Kerns, 66, told *The Epoch Times*. "The family has been in ranching since then."

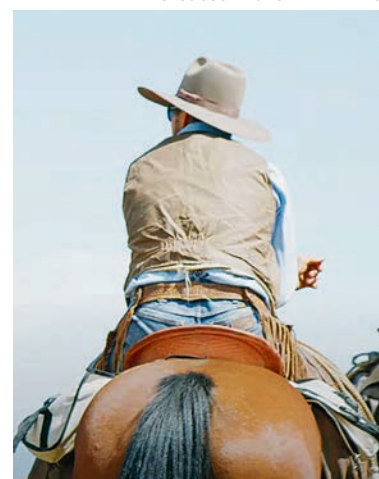
"Without that summer grass, we would go out of business. We rely on it very, very heavily, and it's all national forests, which is public lands."

After the government took control of that land a few years later, it began issuing grazing allotments so that the cattle would consume fuel and prevent the spread of forest fires. Thus began the Kerns's family tradition—trailing the 30- to 50-mile ascent, depending on the year's allotment, to graze—and it has continued to today.

It was during the double-digit inflation of the Carter years that ranchers started experiencing disaster, with many having to sell out of the business. The Kerns's ranch had to find new revenue to survive.

Continued on Page 3

ALL PHOTOS COURTESY OF DANA KERNS



Ranching is a family tradition.

INSPIRATION

Resolutions
for 2023:

Tips for a Happier Life

Continued from Page 1

A small notebook sits on my bedside table, waiting for me to write a line or two each night before bed about something from the day that I'm grateful for or was blessed by. Such a discipline redirects our attitudes at the end of a bad day and also serves as a fun reminder of the little joys that would easily be forgotten forever.



Pick It Up and Pitch It Out
Jeff: One sure-fire way to make myself feel better is to straighten my work area, a breakfast table that becomes a littered plateau of

Whether or not one can dance, getting silly with some disco or favorite tunes is one way to lighten the heart.

books, papers, coffee cups, pens, and other random paraphernalia in a single morning. Happiness is also a waste basket and a trash bag, the first for useless papers and print advertisements, the latter for heavy-duty decluttering destined for the thrift store. Junk the junk, and satisfaction follows.



Picture This
Annie: Many photos capture the best moments of our lives, so re-viewing them—particularly 10 or more years later—can be an excellent moment of happiness recall, not to mention the laughter these pictures inspire with their clothing, hairstyles, and expressions! Finding photos of those who are still a regular part of your life and sharing them spreads the photo joy to others as well.



Get Outside ... of Yourself
Jeff: Experts say that getting outside improves our mood. So does getting away from the self. Help a neighbor shovel snow from the driveway. Take a meal to a new mom. Volunteer at a school to tutor or read to kindergartners. Donate time to a worthy cause. When we focus on others, our own troubles take a backseat, at least for a while.



Build a Snowman
Annie: Don't let the busyness of adulthood stop you from reliving the simple joys of childhood. If you live in northern climes, try building a snowman, as I did the other day—for the first time in roughly 20 years, I might add. Soon, the faces of sick family members were peering out the windows with smiles that matched mine as I worked. My neighbor then sent a text asking for a picture of the snowman, which she promptly shared on social media, spreading my little act of personal cheer far and wide.



Unplug
Jeff: Going for a walk? Leave the phone at home. Running into the grocery store? Leave the phone in the car. Want to read for half an hour? Put the phone on silent. Turn off the electronic gadgets for a few hours weekly and detox from social media. Our devices are little stress boxes of dopamine dispatchers. Shut them down and enjoy some peace.



Lit Hits
Annie: There's nothing like a good book to help you forget your woes and lift you to a higher plane of hope and inspiration. Need some humor mixed with hard work? Try "Little Britches: Father and I Were Ranchers" by Ralph Moody. Want encouragement to get through difficult times? Check out "Suffering Is Never

for Nothing" by Elisabeth Elliot. Want profound perspective on our challenging times? Try "Witness" by Whittaker Chambers.



Crank Up the Music
Jeff: Need a fast fix for the blues? Get silly. I've danced with my 10-year-old granddaughter to disco—"I Love the Nightlife" full blast—and I can't dance, much less disco, but we both laughed the entire time. If you're alone, belt out some tunes. Hug someone you love. When it comes to happiness, the little things can be game-changers.



Send 'Just Because' Notes
Annie: As Jeff mentioned above, spreading cheer to others is one of the fastest ways to bring joy to yourself. What better way to do so than by dropping a friend a card or email on a random day other than their birthday or Christmas? Choose one friend each month and tell them why you appreciate their friendship or talents. Doing so will strengthen your friendships, further helping to ward off your personal gloom and loneliness.



Tots and Teens
Jeff: A lot of little ones pass through my favorite coffee shop, and just watching the toddlers can bring a smile. Engage with the grandkids, nephews, or nieces, and that dark cloud in your heart retreats. If you pass a school playground, take a few minutes and watch the commotion. Grab a friend and head off to the soccer field or a high school basketball game. Watching the parents, the teens, and the kids at these contests is half the fun.



Watch an Old Movie
Annie: Many of today's movies fall into one of two categories—fluff or junk—and can be downright depressing. However, many old movies are uplifting and encouraging, relying on a good storyline rather than special effects to make a winner of a film. So when you're in need of a little happiness, pull out an old movie. Some of my favorites include "Meet John Doe" (1941), "Cheaper By the Dozen" (1950), and "Mr. Smith Goes to Washington" (1939).

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." 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.



A photo of the Kerns clan in north-central Wyoming.

Cowboy Family Brings 'City Slickers' on Cattle Drives

Continued from Page 1

"About 30 years ago, things were so darn tough in the cattle business, we had to generate revenue or sell out," Kerns said.

They began taking clients along on cattle drives—not unlike the movie "City Slickers"—and though the trips were "grueling," they came to appreciate the "reality check" cowboy life afforded them. It sounds exciting, and is indeed exhilarating, Kerns said. But it's no Hollywood flick. Short of whiteout blizzard conditions, they're out riding regardless of the weather.

The added revenue sustained the family, while other ranches folded.

They run six trips per year. Each week-long excursion starts with a day-long horsemanship clinic on Sunday, before waking at 4 a.m. Monday. By 5 a.m., they're saddled up as cattle don't fare well walking in the heat, and trips last typically five to six days with some days requiring 10 hours in the saddle.

just a few degrees warmer than ice, there's "nothing delightful about it." Cowboys and clientele alike sleep in tents, Kerns said.

There is no electricity in camp and hot coals provide heat.

Whoever said cowboying was comfy?

Cowboying is an art. Some clients embrace that more than others.

"We're gonna let them do as much cowboying as they want to," Kerns said. "Some people really want to get after it, and we allow that. Other people enjoy riding along and witnessing."

He alludes to the time-honored craft of riding, and rounding up and moving cattle where you want them to go. "It takes a real skillset, because believe it or not, an animal will tell you what they're gonna do before they ever do it," he said. "Read their body language. A good cowboy sees what they're going to do, anticipates that, and then either encourages that behavior or discourages that behavior."

The upshot, though, is the cattle know where they're going: into cooler mountain pastures to feast on summer grass. They're up for it and cooperate.

All that toil by day is rewarded with a "five-star" feast each night cooked in coal-powered Dutch ovens. They serve up casseroles, chicken dishes, and barbecued steaks. "People have to understand, we're in the backcountry," Kerns said. "You can't run down to the grocery store and get something." All things considered, they dine like kings.

As far as staff goes, the company

has four cooks, led by Kerns's wife, Alice; a Coast Guard-trained medic; a number of cowboys, including Kerns's two youngest sons; and packers to set up and break camp each day. All told, there are about a dozen helpers on the trail.

It takes roughly two days to reach the pastures; another two are spent grazing; and two more make a round trip. Back in the valley on the last night, they throw a big banquet. "Everybody is tired, they're dirty but exhilarated beyond belief," Kerns said. "They understand that what they just witnessed, very few people have had the opportunity to do it."

The excursion satisfies something instinctual, Kerns's clients tell him. "All of a sudden, they realize when they spent a week with us there's a piece of their life they're missing that really wish that they have," he told the newspaper. "And so that is one of the things that make some of these people come back year after year after year."

Many city folk have sought out Kerns's company, Double Rafter Cattle Drives, to help them find that missing piece. Some of those include nonprofits Semper Fi and Wounded Warriors who reached out to Kerns on behalf of their at-risk members, as well as psychologists and psychiatrists aiming to soothe distraught patients.

Journeying from as far away as China, Israel, and Eastern Europe, people from every continent have come for the cowboy experience. "The comment that is always made to us is, 'You changed my life,'" Kerns said. "I'm not exactly sure what we do; we are just being us."

People from every continent have come for the cowboy experience.

"They start moving cattle, and the day will go until we reach the day's destination," Kerns said. "There is no definitive 'we'll be done at such and such a time.'"

While the valley ranch sits at some 4,000 or 4,500 feet in elevation, they will take the cattle up to around 9,000 feet to graze, often traversing rocky and rough terrain that requires humans and animals to march single file.

"Some of the terrain is very, very challenging," Kerns said. "That adds to the excitement of it." With some 220 cattle, 440 including calves, it can get downright raucous. Calves that lose track of their moms instinctually retreat to where they last nursed and need to be rounded up.

"If it rains all day, you're riding in the rain all day," Kerns said. "Unlike the movie 'City Slickers,' where it appears riding rain is fun, there's nothing fun about riding in the rain." At elevations where drizzle is



A group relaxes on the trail.

BIBA KAYEWICH; ALL ICONS BY SHUTTERSTOCK

EPOCH TIMES INTERVIEWS SHEN YUN AUDIENCES

New York-based Shen Yun Performing Arts is the world's premier classical Chinese dance and music company, established in 2006. Aiming for an artistic revival and celebration of China's rich cultural heritage, the company performs classical Chinese dance, ethnic and folk dance, and story-based dance, accompanied by orchestral and solo performers.



"It's excellent, the way it brought out the divine creation and the traditions," said North Carolina state Rep. Frank Iler.



"Rather than feeling this sense that you are viewing this exotic far away culture, you felt very close to it as a result, ... like these were your brothers and sisters, and we are struggling for the same thing: We are struggling simply just to be free, to live as the Creator has made us to be.

—CHARLES GRAVENHORST, MUSICIAN



"[Shen Yun is] universal spiritual messaging. We're all connected by spirit, we're connected by love, we're connected by faith. Faith is what distinguishes us from animals, it's what establishes us; we're actually spiritual beings having a human experience, and this is a way of elevating your spirit—seeing this magnificent show.

—JOAN QUINN EASTMAN, MEDIA PRODUCER



"What really strikes me is that this is an absolute affirmation of the travesty and tragedy that a dictatorship will impose on people, on culture, [and] on history. ... And it's a complete affirmation of the tragedy and the abuse of human rights that's going on in China.

—FLORIDA STATE REP. JUAN FERNANDEZ-BARQUIN



"What we just saw is very Chinese but it's also universal. It's the sharing of family, of the motherland, of joy, and of the love that connects us all.

—ROSA MARIA PAYA, FOUNDER, CUBA DECIDE INITIATIVE

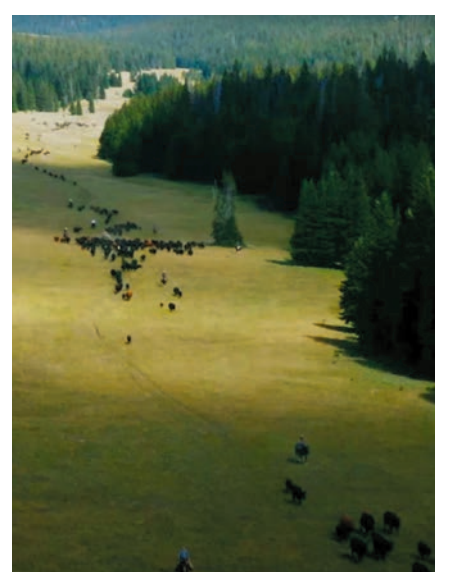
Shen Yun's Upcoming Performances

Dallas	Texas	Jan. 11-15
Augusta	Ga.	Jan. 11
Johnson City	Tenn.	Jan. 11
Berkeley	Calif.	Jan. 13-16
Worcester	Mass.	Jan. 14-15
Pittsburgh	Pa.	Jan. 14-15
Savannah	Ga.	Jan. 14-15
Columbus	Ga.	Jan. 17

For additional performance dates, please visit <https://www.shenyun.com/tickets>



(Left) A cowboy on a cattle drive. (Right) The trail the Kerns family has driven every year since 1888.



New Year, Old Ideas

The more time that younger generations spend on screens, the less exposure they have to decorous, good-old-fashioned interactions

ANDREA NUTT FALCE

Several weeks ago, my teenage daughter and her friends attended a middle school dance. Junior high social collaborations are a funny thing. Teens and pre-teens come together to test their moves, look cool, and maybe actually dance with the opposite sex. Though I had been rather sick on the night of the dance and could barely keep my eyes open for a 9 p.m. pickup, I assured my husband that I'd be happy to get the girls. Post-dance car rides are a short but precious period of time. Ah, what a mom might learn.

"How was it?" I inquired casually, as the girls settled into the car.

"Not good!" They answered in united exasperation. "They kept the lights on all night and played nothing but rap music."

"It looked like stadium lighting," I commented. "They kept that on all night?"

"It was so bright!" the girls cried. "But the biggest problem was the music. No one could actually dance. They didn't play a single slow song, or even a song we could sing to!"

We got home. The girls had snacks, visited with the family a little, and then dashed off to my daughter's room for a sleepover. Bedtime rolled around; I headed upstairs to encourage tooth brushing. After a quick knock, what I saw made me smile, then ponder. The girls were dancing together, an improvised English country dance, Jane Austen style. They were laughing and having a marvelous time. When I entered the room, they begged me to hum a waltz as the background to their moves.

"It's just like 'Pride and Prejudice,'" my daughter's best friend exclaimed. Earlier, we'd started to enjoy the first installments of the old A&E movie. The girls relished the humor and romance of an excellent human story.

"I bet those old dances would have been fun," I reflected.

"Yeah," the girls spouted, "it wouldn't be awkward to dance with a boy if everyone knew what to do, and you only had to hold hands a little."

Out of the mouths of babes.

The Good Stuff

There's a lot to be learned from the formal practices and social customs we read about in 19th-century literature, especially in the work of Jane Austen. She had a keen understanding of human desires and motivations. She also offered an intriguing view of society during the time that she lived.



Regency-costumed guests arrive for the Pride and Prejudice Ball at Chatsworth House in Derbyshire, England, on June 22, 2013.



An illustration for "Pride and Prejudice," 1894, by Hugh Thomson.

the dinner table, though the ritual of family mealtime itself seems to be slipping into obscurity.

Driving home the other day, my husband and I noticed a teenage boy pacing at the end of his driveway. He appeared so peevis that we grew worried for his mental health. His hair was greasy, he was wearing pajama pants and furry slippers, and he flipped his head back constantly only to return a downward gaze to his phone. Then, his Doordash arrived. Realizing that the source of his angst was related to the wait for fast-food delivery, my husband commented, "That kid was old enough to make himself some lunch, or at least drive himself to get some, and at the very least, get dressed by late afternoon! What kind of kids are we raising in this country?"

Could it be that regardless of great prosperity, we as a society are experiencing a dearth of all the best stuff? America has enjoyed abundance, but what do we choose to indulge in lately? Increasingly, it seems that children are overexposed to video games, junk food, and sexual content, but underexposed to fine literature, classical music, basic manners, and more genteel encounters. The messages presented in rap songs and the like about male-female relationships are startlingly inappropriate to my older ears. The clothing and manners of young people are so casual, it seems they often don't dress, and rarely interact outside of cyberspace. So much of a young person's social experience has turned into an electronic interface.

The girls raised my attention to the contrast between a Jane Austen storybook dance and the reality of social interactions today. I couldn't help but see that in some respects, society did a better job guiding courtship and social enterprises in generations past. Don't get me wrong, I'm not trying to over-glorify the good old days. I know that good and evil have existed for as long as man, and every generation has its strengths and weaknesses. I'm glad that women, minorities, and less affluent persons have more freedom to learn and succeed in society now. Upward mobility made possible by the American dream is a great addition to our lives and times. But, not all change is for the better, and many customs of the past were very good.

People Need People

Today, we have more freedom, but freedom can be a double-edged sword. Coupled with a well-formed conscience and disciplined will, freedom may flourish. Wielded in unrefined licentiousness, freedom may sim-

People need people. We need to interact and to do so in wholesome ways.

Though only the most limited views of Jane herself exist, the artwork of her sister, Cassandra, offers a simple glimpse of a brilliant thinker. I especially love the back pose that leaves the author's expression to the viewer's imagination. The world may not enjoy many original portraits of Jane Austen, but her novels paint strong and enduring pictures of human and worldly relationships. Men and women have always looked for opportunities to meet one another. Rituals of courtship can be sensitive. Young adventurers are skittish, clumsy, and unsure.

Helping to form the characters of the young, and readying them for adulthood, is a critical task. A great place to practice decorous behavior and conversation is at



If we want men to thrive, we should encourage activities that promote their friendships.

CULTURE

The Masculinity Message in 'The Lord of the Rings'

Tolkien's classic explores not only the conflict between good and evil, but also the best qualities of manhood

ANNIE HOLMQUIST

Having read numbers of classic books, my friends are often surprised to hear that I had never read J.R.R. Tolkien's famous "Lord of the Rings" trilogy.

"You have to read it," numerous individuals—many of them males—exhort.

This fall, several of my friends—also male—took the bull by the horns and gifted me a beautifully bound edition of the work as an encouragement to get going on reading it. And as I'm doing so, I'm beginning to realize why "The Lord of the Rings" is the book most often recommended by the men around me. The series is masculinity at its finest, describing the types of actions that cause men to thrive, increase in strength and valor, and rise to the occasion.

Male Depictions in 'Lord of the Rings'

For starters, "The Lord of the Rings" depicts

a quest; a mission or a goal—a responsibility, if you will—to keep the ring from the forces of evil and to eventually destroy it.

In this quest, the male characters in "The Lord of the Rings" are always working their way toward Mordor. They don't get to take the easy way there; instead, they must rely on their wits and be willing to take risks in order to make it—to be heroes—even if it means losing their lives to do so.

Solid male friendship is also a strong, if not subtle, aspect of "The Lord of the Rings." There are no women on the quest that the nine males set out upon, meaning that none of them have to compete with each other for female attention, nor do they have to expend energy fulfilling the natural instinct to protect the opposite sex.

Eating also plays a large role in "The Lord of the Rings." Sometimes there are great feasts, where the characters stuff themselves until they can't think of eating more.

Other times, they are rationing their food, denying their appetites, and surviving on small bits of the miraculous Elven bread. Regardless of how big or small the portions, Tolkien always ensures that his characters are fed, suggesting the importance of sustenance and the caloric intake men need to pursue and fulfill their missions.

At first blush, some may think these observations offensive, a suggestion that "The Lord of the Rings" is full of male stereotypes, and that

all the men who seem to hold this classic work as one of their favorite reads are the knuckle-dragging thugs of toxic masculinity that are anathema in today's society. But I don't see it that way. Instead, I think "The Lord of the Rings" gives us a glimpse into the type of men

we need in society, while simultaneously giving us clues on how to encourage such masculinity.

Men on a Mission

Just as the team of males in the quest to destroy the ring had a mission, so men today need responsibility. They need space to be heroes, to take risks, make mistakes, and get up and try again. What they don't need is women taking away that responsibility, claiming that men are inept and not up to the task.

"For men, there's nothing but responsibility," Jordan Peterson notes in one of his lectures. Take away that responsibility, that meaning in life, and the male is unmotivated to do anything, resulting in listless, emasculated men and frustrated, overwhelmed women who wonder why men never step up to the plate.

Camaraderie

Today's men also need friendship. And their friendship needs aren't like the girly chats that women hold in coffee shops. No, their friendship is much more action-oriented, and often plays out in teams, author Anthony Esolen explains.

"Boys and men fight, in teams. Without such teams, forget about civilization; human survival itself would not have been possible.



"The Lord of the Rings" depicts a quest to keep the ring from the forces of evil and to eventually destroy it, giving the male protagonists a shared mission and purpose in life.

The hunting party is a male team. The defenders of the village are a male team."

Unfortunately, we have done a lot in recent years to destroy these male teams, discouraging male-only clubs or activities and insisting upon equality and the inclusion of females. In so doing, we destroy something that C.S. Lewis referred to in "The Four Loves" as something "biologically valuable." If we want today's men to thrive, then we must strongly encourage activities that promote brotherhood or comradeship, which effectively means that we must also stop insisting that everything be absolutely fair and equal between the sexes.

Mind and Body

Finally, it's important to recognize that men and women are different not only in their

HOMESCHOOLING

6 Winter Wonderland Activities for Your Homeschool

Put a spark into your homeschool by investigating the science, history, and more behind your kids' favorite winter phenomena

KAREN DOLL

Ah, 'tis the season to revel in the joys of winter. Winter is a time of exquisite beauty and the perfect time to explore nature's changing landscape and the many wonders of the season. Transform your homeschool into a winter wonderland with these fun, winter-themed activities that will delight your children and add a spark of light to your winter homeschool days.

Investigate the Science of Snow

Snow is a fascinating and magical phenomenon, and the beauty of a snowy landscape is one of the joys of the winter season; those frosty crystals that appear to simply float down from the sky and blanket the earth for a winter wonderland are awe-inspiring. So, what do your kids know about the complex science of snow? Let's investigate. Read "The Story of Snow: The Science of Winter's Wonder" by Mark Cassino, and marvel at the gorgeous photos of real snow crystals.

Now, let's dig in. Mix up a batch of snow ice cream from freshly fallen snow. It's easy and so delicious. All you need is about eight to 10 cups of clean snow, one teaspoon of vanilla, and a 10-ounce can of sweetened condensed milk. Put the snow in a large bowl, then add the vanilla and the milk and mix it well. Dish it out and let your kids add finishing touches of sprinkles, syrup, whipped cream, or fresh fruit. And, of course, your snow cream freezes remarkably well, so place any leftovers in an air-tight container for tomorrow.

Dig Into the History of Groundhog Day Did you know that the very first Groundhog Day celebration took place on Feb. 2, 1887?

Yes, this fun, quirky holiday has a long, rich history originating from the Candlemas Day celebration brought here by the early German immigrants. Pique your children's interest by reading the book, "Celebrating Groundhog Day: History, Traditions, and Activities" by Karen Bush Gibson.

Hmmm, I wonder how often that furry meteorologist, Punxsutawney Phil, has been correct in his predictions. Encourage your kids to dig deeper to find out if Phil's weather predictions have been correct more times than he's been incorrect or vice versa.

Learn About Hibernation

Here's a fascinating fact: a dormouse (FYI, not really a mouse) is a superhero hibernator and can hibernate for up to 11 months at a time. Wow, now that's a long nap. No surprise really, as the name dormouse comes from the French verb "dormir," meaning "to sleep." The dormouse is an excellent example of a true hibernator. Do a little investigative research with your

kids to determine the characteristics of true hibernators.

A wonderful resource to teach your kids all about hibernation is the book "What is Hibernation?" by John Crossingham.

Read Books and Poems About Winter

Cozy up on the couch together and discover the many wonders of winter with some of my family's all-time favorite books: "The Snowy Day" by Ezra Jack Keats, "Snowflake Bentley: A Christmas Holiday Book" by Jacqueline Briggs Martin, "Carl's Snowy Afternoon" by Alexandra Day, and "The Snowman" by Raymond Briggs.

End each day on a calming, lyrical note and read poems penned by Shakespeare, Wordsworth, Frost, and many more in the book "Winter Poems," selected by Barbara Rogasky.

Feed the Birds

Winter is the perfect time to begin feeding the birds. For bird species such as the



JEFF SWENSON/GETTY IMAGES

Diving into the fun, quirky holiday of Groundhog Day will delight kids' imaginations as well as demonstrate the challenges of weather forecasting. In this photo, Punxsutawney Phil gets a visit from Jason Gursky and his official handler, AJ Dureume, in Punxsutawney, Pa., on Feb. 1, 2021.



ARTUROS/SHUTTERSTOCK

Winter witnesses seasonal visitors who may not be seen any other time of the year, making bird watching a fun and educational activity for the winter homeschooler.



COULANGES/SHUTTERSTOCK

Winter is a great time to teach kids about hibernation. The dormouse, for example, can hibernate for 11 months at a time.

Resources:

- **"The Story of Snow: The Science of Winter's Wonder"** by Mark Cassino
- **"Celebrating Groundhog Day: History, Traditions, and Activities"** by Karen Bush Gibson
- **"What is Hibernation?"** by John Crossingham
- **"The Snowy Day"** by Ezra Jack Keats
- **"Snowflake Bentley: A Christmas Holiday Book"** by Jacqueline Briggs Martin
- **"Carl's Snowy Afternoon"** by Alexandra Day
- **"The Snowman"** by Raymond Briggs
- **"Winter Poems,"** selected by Barbara Rogasky

'The Lord of the Rings' gives us a glimpse into the type of men we need in society, while simultaneously giving us clues on how to encourage such masculinity.

friendships and motivations, but also in their eating habits and nutritional needs. For instance, men's bodies burn calories far easier than women's do, while women have greater need for vitamins and minerals.

Should men eat their vegetables and be careful about what they consume? Of course. But such care and caution don't mean they must live on Quinoa salads and meatless meals. Nor does it mean that "the manly consumption of meat is irreversibly damaging the world," as one Huffington Post article alleged a few years ago. What it does mean is that women should be cautious and considerate before they nag and force men into their own female nutritional mode.

I haven't yet completed "The Lord of the Rings" trilogy, so I can't say for sure where this masculine-minded story leads, but I would wager that the quest is successful. Which leads me to wonder: Would we see more of today's men stepping up to the plate, being more responsible, heroic, successful, and satisfied if we enabled them to practice some of the masculine characteristics that are displayed in Tolkien's classic tale?

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.

DEAR NEXT GENERATION Advice from our readers to our young people

You Can Do More Than You Think

I loved the article “Surprised by Hope” written by Jeff Minick. I lived that “life” for a short time in the ‘60s and ‘70s and ‘80s. I’m only 76 years old, but I still think I have some wisdom to share.

I was born in the ‘40s just after World War II to a couple who had little, and then after I was only a few months old, the little they had was stolen! They were living in a very modest rental home in a small town in mid-Michigan. That theft may have led them to move back to Florida where my father grew up in a tiny little settlement called Istachatsituated on the side of the Withlacoochee River near the belly button of Florida. Our family lived for two years with my paternal grandparents. Later, we lived in a different place every year: a mine shack, an abandoned school, a house with electricity and running water, etc.

While my father was out on the road selling seeds or long-distance trucking, my mother got fed up with our moving every year. When the school (abandoned) that we lived in was sold

“**Step up to the plate and do the best you can, NOT the least you can!**”

Vernice Chatfield,
Michigan

and moved out from under us, my mom decided to build us a house on that land. She contacted a nearby contractor, who was also a cousin of my father. He told her what lumber she would need and how much. She purchased raw lumber, nails, and borrowed a handsaw and hammer. With a foundation of cement blocks and no footings, she built a small three-room house, with six windows.

We had two outhouses at the very back border of that land and a well with a hand pump in the front yard. The roof had rolled roofing and often leaked when it rained hard.

All this history is to teach our young people that you can live with less than you think and you can do more than you thought you could!

As an adult, no one owes you a living. Step up to the plate and do the best you can, NOT the least you can!

Respectfully,

—Vernice Chatfield, Michigan

P.S. I wrote a book “Miracles in the the Tamaracks: A Memoir,” which is available on Amazon if you want to know more.



BIBA KAYEWICH

The Power of Example

Start with yourself, and watch the transformation of your inner world affect the people and environment around you

BARBARA DANZA

“Be the change you wish to see in the world.” This oft-shared quote is commonly attributed to Mahatma Gandhi.

Those words, according to Joseph Ranseth, are a paraphrase of what he said. He actually said:

“We but mirror the world. All the tendencies present in the outer world are to be found in the world of our body. If we could change ourselves, the tendencies in the world would also change. As a man changes his own nature, so does the attitude of

the world change towards him. This is the divine mystery supreme. A wonderful thing it is and the source of our happiness. We need not wait to see what others do.”

That unpacks the idea quite a bit more. Who among us can't recall a time when we adjusted our attitude, our understanding, or our thoughts internally to then find external conditions improved? On the other hand, there's the painful recollection of making things worse simply because of an incorrect mindset or poor emotional state. Our thoughts and our emotions—in other words, our internal world—impact the people and the environment around us.

It's tempting today, with the state of the world, to look at external circumstances with a sense of hopelessness. Gandhi's words offer a helpful reminder to begin by addressing the internal. Rather than throwing our arms in the air in defeat, we can be the example—the change we wish to see in the world.



Mahatma Gandhi, leader of India's nonviolent protest movement against British colonial rule, is well-known for his ascetic lifestyle and philosophy of passive resistance.

I would like to tell you if you have ever thought of suicide, don't do it! The very next day could be the best day of your life.

It was in 1963 and I was the new young mother of a beautiful baby girl, named Tammy. When my daughter was about 6 months old, I would go bowling with my husband and he would take my cousins home after babysitting for her. One day, the police called and told my husband to be down to the station or they would come and get him. I had no idea what was going on but found out that he had molested two of my cousins who babysat for me. I was devastated and thought that marriage was for life, and I also was a Christian. I feared for my own daughter at this point and immediately filed for divorce with the help of my grandmother, who provided the funds.

One night coming home from my mother's, I was overwhelmed with grief, stress, and wondering how I would take care of my baby girl (feeding, clothing, providing shelter), and with no job and seeing no way out, I thought to myself I would just find the biggest tree I could and drive into it. This way, it would look like an accident. My headlights shone on a huge oak tree and I was going about 80 miles an hour down a dark country road. As I began to turn the steering wheel toward the tree, a very loud called out to me and said, “You have no right to take Tammy.” I was startled and immediately pulled over, and my daughter, Tammy, began to cry. I was so mentally worn out that I hadn't even realized she was in the car. As I sat there in the car holding my daughter, I cried uncontrollably and asked for God's forgiveness.

The very next morning, my phone rang and an unidentified voice said to me, “You don't know me, but I heard what happened to you and that you may need a job, if you come down to the bank building tomorrow, I may have a job opening for you.” I said, “Yes, I will be there.” It turned out to be a one-girl office and an excellent job. I took the job and was able to take care of my daughter and myself. The unidentified voice on the phone that faithful day happened to be a good friend of my husband's boss who owned his own company. He was an answer to prayer for me.

A few years later, I met and married a wonderful bachelor who adopted my daughter. He adored her and she him. God is faithful, and he has a wonderful plan for your life.

Sincerely yours,

—Carol J. Mercer, Michigan

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.

As we consider the best way forward and define our aims for the new year, we might give thought to the example we are setting and whether our internal self aligns with the expectations and wishes we have for our external circumstances.

For example, if we want to see more freedom, we can live freely and make the most of the freedom we enjoy. If we wish there was more kindness in the world, we could foster compassion for others and truly be kind. If we're concerned about the sense of fear permeating society, we can try to set down our own fears. If we wish there was more openness and truth in the world, we could focus on telling the truth and being true to ourselves.

Sometimes, the problems we so easily define are quickly recognized because we, at least to some degree, also harbor them within ourselves. Observing them can be utilized as both a learning and growth experience.

If you're looking for hope and a positive direction in 2023, don't wait for external circumstances to deliver that to you. Go ahead and live out your values. Be the change you wish to see in the world.

PICTUREPIX/SHUTTERSTOCK



From the Piazza della Rotonda, the temple presents a standard temple front with a triangular pediment (structure above the intel, or roof) sitting above a row of eight columns forming the front of the portico.

LARGER THAN LIFE: ART THAT INSPIRES US THROUGH THE AGES

The Pantheon

A STAGE BETWEEN HEAVEN AND EARTH

JAMES HOWARD SMITH

The Pantheon has held an empowering effect on the individual and humanity for nearly 2,000 years and stands as one of the most significant classical buildings in history. It was built by Emperor Hadrian in the second century and is located in the Piazza della Rotonda, a city square in the center of Rome.

The size of the interior space is awe-inspiring. Columns line the room with blind doorways and niches. A second story of

blind windows seemingly connects to spaces beyond, giving a sense of being surrounded by buildings in a town piazza, rather than an interior space.

The enormous dome rises upward, creating an expansive space. A 27-foot wide opening, or oculus, in the ceiling allows rain and sunlight to fall through and land on the marble floor, reinforcing a connection to the outside and the atmosphere above.

As the earth revolves around the sun, the sun projects a shaft of light through the oculus, casting a circular shape that

moves through the interior, acting as a kind of theatrical spotlight, which heightens our self-awareness that we are here on stage in the human world.

The immense space arouses a sense of connection and completeness. It was created as a temple of the gods and is open and welcoming to people of all faiths to be in the presence of the divine.

James Howard Smith, an architectural photographer, designer, and founder of *Cartio*, aims to inspire an appreciation of classic architecture.

Correction

In the Dec. 28, 2022, edition, the article “Palazzo Medici Riccardi” mislabeled the name of the statue in the Medici Palace courtyard. The statue is of Orpheus by Baccio Bandinelli. The Epoch Times regrets the error.

1. A perfect 142-foot sphere informs the geometry of the interior space, measuring both the diameter and the height. The circle is associated with spiritual perfection, or the divine, and is repeated throughout the interior.

2. After passing through the columns, two massive bronze doors (left) lead through to the interior.

3. The massive, granite, trunk-like columns support a canopy offering shelter from rain or summer heat and create a place for the public to meet, gather, or rest.

4. The ceiling's oculus acts as spotlight that can heighten one's self-awareness.

5. The interior walls display a range of colored marbles drawn from all over the ancient Roman empire that shows the reach of Emperor Hadrian.



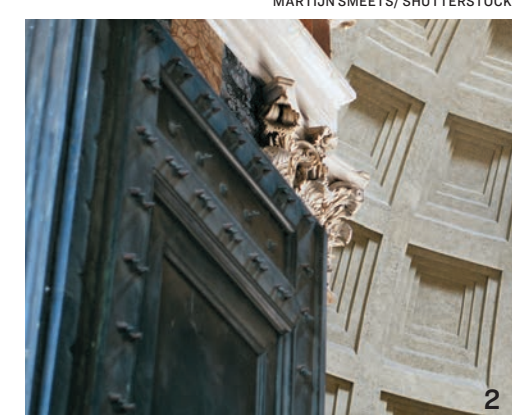
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The Carswells on the go.

ALL PHOTOS COURTESY OF COLLEEN CARSWELL

HOMESCHOOLING

Hotel-Hopping Homeschoolers

A conversation with travel entrepreneur Colleen Carswell

BARBARA DANZA

One of the most commonly touted benefits of homeschooling is the freedom it affords families. Charlie and Colleen Carswell of North Carolina are new homeschool parents who have chosen to make the very most of this freedom.

In 2021, after their fourth child was born, they decided to quit their jobs, start a travel-centered family business, and begin homeschooling. I asked Colleen about their experience so far and for any advice to give to other families who sense freedom calling.

The Epoch Times: Last year was an eventful year for your family! What led you and your husband to make the bold choice to quit your jobs and become homeschoolers?

Colleen Carswell: In February 2021, I had just given birth to our fourth child. I had been sick leading up to and after the delivery, to the point where I had to be put back in the hospital the day after coming home. Juxtaposed to this, my husband was working in a job he absolutely hated, to the point where he was physically sick every single morning.

One day, we just stopped and said, "What if?" What if we invested all our time, energy, and money into our family? What if we let our family and our "why" be bigger than any worry or fear? What if we decided to leap before we're ready? What if?

And then we just did it. My husband quit his job and we went all in on creating a business and lifestyle that was the best fit for us, for our family. In regard to our decision to homeschool our kids, I will say this: It didn't so much feel like a choice at first, but rather a rushed last resort. Just days before school was to begin, it became evident that the school board in our county wasn't going to act in the best interests of our kids. Not only were they making unsafe decisions, we found their rationalizations to be illogical.

My husband and I knew then and there that we didn't want to ever feel that helpless again when it came to our kids' education, health, or safety. We could either keep going with what we knew, what felt comfortable and "normal" but wasn't serving or acting in the best interest of our kids, or we could figure it out and find another way. And that's exactly what we did: We found another way.

The Epoch Times: Your new business centers on travel. How important do you think travel is to a child's education?



Colleen Carswell and her children.

It has been such a joy to spend this time with my family—to watch my kids grow and learn, to see them uncover their passions and watch their wheels turn.

Colleen Carswell

Ms. Carswell: I love this question! I think traveling and experiencing new ways of life, meeting new people, learning new cultures and traditions, and seeing new sights, all help to mold us into the full human beings we are meant to be. I don't think we're meant to stay isolated and confined to one area. As the quote by Mark Twain goes, "Travel is fatal to prejudice, bigotry, and narrow-mindedness." I couldn't agree more.

I find that our geography can be both the greatest unifier and divider. We tend to find comfort in our community, communities full of wonderful, like-minded people. But that community is only one small corner of a vast, vibrant world. There is so much more to experience and learn outside the boundaries of our own neighborhood, town, state, and country.

This for me is one of the most exciting parts of our homeschooling journey. Our kids get to learn through real-life experiences and interactions with the cultures, people, and places others only read about in books.

The Epoch Times: What have been the most challenging aspects of your new lifestyle so far?

Ms. Carswell: For me, one of the biggest overall challenges this year was choosing "right for us" over "right now." Both as new entrepreneurs and homeschoolers, the easy path right now would be the conventional one: to get a job that offers benefits and a steady, consistent source of income; to send kids to school for eight hours a day so we can get our work done while letting someone else plan the lessons and make the lunches and clean up the messes made during the day.

It's a mindset challenge more than anything else. I have found I must be so unshakable in knowing that "this is what is right and meant for me and my family" that I can withstand the hardest days—those days where temptation creeps in and says, "Oh, look how green that grass is over there. Wouldn't it be so easy if—" Because it may look easy—and it may very well even be easy in comparison—but it's not the path that is meant for us.

We don't want a life that is logical or conventional; we want one that's vibrant and full of adventure. And I am committed to doing whatever it takes to create that life for me and my family.

The Epoch Times: What were the greatest benefits you enjoyed last year?

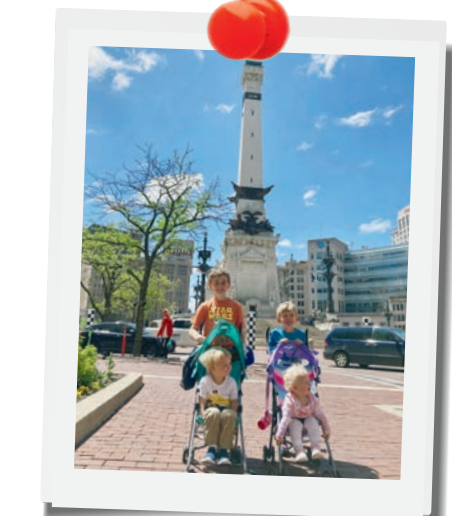
Ms. Carswell: Togetherness. As a career-driven mom who worked outside the home for many years, I truly had no idea what I was missing.

It has been such a joy to spend this time with my family—to watch my kids grow and learn, to see them uncover their passions and watch their wheels turn. They are so very different from each other, and it has allowed me to see what teachers are up against, trying to make one curriculum fit 20 to 30 very different and unique personalities. Simply knowing this one thing makes me all the more certain homeschooling is the right choice for us.

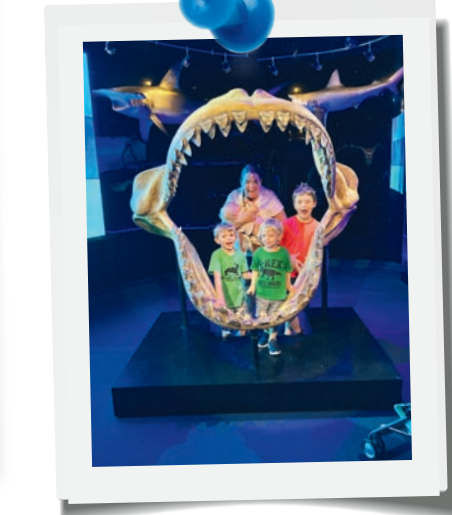
We had only been through a few years of public school before we made the switch to homeschooling. But even in that short time, I knew it felt wrong for us energetically. I didn't like having to ask permission to take a trip to see my family. I didn't like having to write a dissertation about how Disney World would be educational for my kindergarten. I didn't like that our travels were limited to only a few weeks a year. Now, even if we don't travel every day of the year, we at least have the choice and freedom to do so should we want to. And that feels really, really good.

The Epoch Times: Many parents are about to embark on their own first homeschooling year. What advice would you give those feeling a bit nervous about their choice?

Ms. Carswell: Don't overthink it. I know you want to have all the answers before you start. I know you think that if you don't, then you're somehow going to fail your kid(s). On both accounts, you won't. And I think getting comfortable with that fact is a very good place to begin this new journey. Your kids are only going to be better for this experience because they saw you try. They saw you learn by doing. They saw you do all the things you ask them to do in their



The Carswells at the Soldiers & Sailors Monument in Indianapolis.



Visiting the Wonders of Wildlife National Museum & Aquarium in Springfield, Mo.

own educational journey. You become that shining example for them, no matter the outcome.

Something that helped me greatly those first few months was understanding that this decision wasn't permanent. If I wanted to, I could send my kids back to school at any time. If it didn't work out, it was OK. The very worst-case scenario would be that we tried a thing and learned it wasn't for us.

But I think you'll be very pleased with how your journey unfolds. Take note of the small things that are now possible because of this new change in lifestyle. Maybe you're not rushing to get out the door at 7 a.m. and can start the day with a calmer energy. Maybe you learn that you love movie nights in the middle of the week. Maybe you learn that you love this—you really, really love this!

The Epoch Times: What have you found to be the most surprising aspect of homeschooling?

Ms. Carswell: I think I am most surprised by the fact that I actually, really love homeschooling! I was skeptical at first. Especially since I originally felt this decision had come from a place of desperation rather than a place of desire. But almost immediately, I was finding things left and right that felt so much more aligned. I thought homeschooling would feel heavy and daunting because it was just one more thing to add to my already overloaded plate. But in reality, it was expansive and freeing.

We can now live life based on our wants, our desires, our passions, and personalities. We get the final say. If something isn't working, we have the ability to problem-solve on our terms. And if we really enjoy doing something, we get to do as much of it as we like. As someone who has always been very type A, the freedom and joyful energy that has come from this unexpected flexibility was surprising in the best way imaginable.

The Epoch Times: If someone reading this is inspired to follow in your footsteps, what advice would you give them?

Ms. Carswell: My advice would be to start with one thing. While we didn't plan it this way, if we had taken on entrepreneurship and homeschooling and traveling all at the same time, it would have been too much all at once. This dream life we are now creating together would have felt unattainable, and we may have even given up.

Instead, we started with getting familiar with entrepreneurship, then homeschooling, then little travel adventures here and there, working our way up to bigger, bolder trips that only grow grander over time.

Focus on getting familiar, not comfortable. Stretch yourself and just keep moving forward. And when things get hard, remind yourself: I am so much closer than when I began.

Take things one leap at a time. Don't overthink it. Dare to do things differently. Dare to take risks. There is no right way to live your unique journey. No one mold you have to fit. That is the beauty of this entire human experience. You have a chance to create something magical with your family and you owe it to yourself, and them, to at least try.

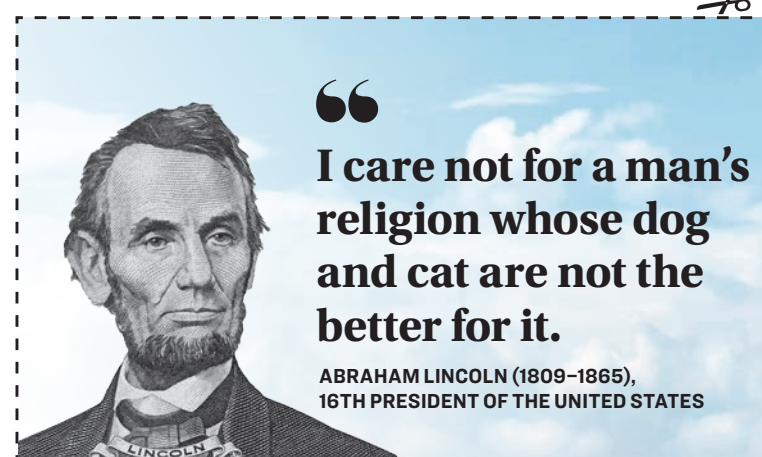
This interview has been edited for clarity and brevity.

FOR KIDS ONLY

THE EPOCH TIMES

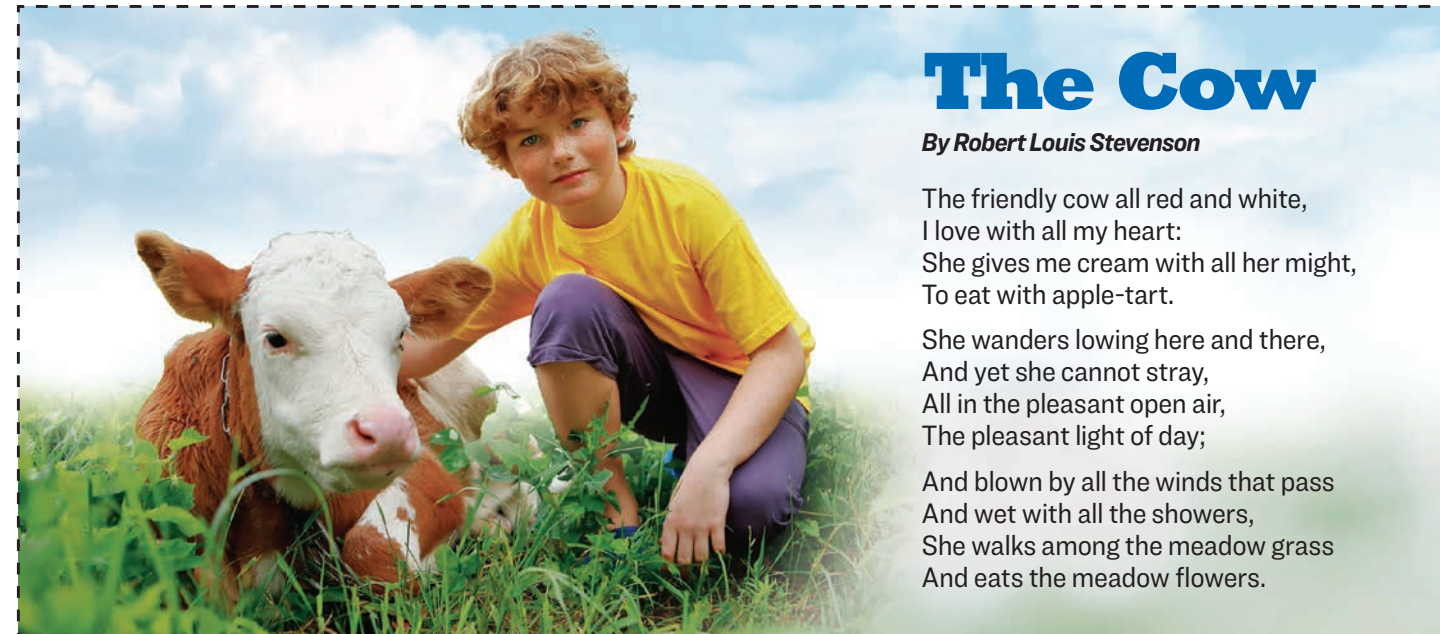


WHAT'S THE **LOUDEST PET** YOU CAN GET?



“I care not for a man's religion whose dog and cat are not the better for it.”

ABRAHAM LINCOLN (1809-1865), 16TH PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES



The Cow

By Robert Louis Stevenson

The friendly cow all red and white, I love with all my heart: She gives me cream with all her might, To eat with apple-tart.

She wanders lowing here and there, And yet she cannot stray, All in the pleasant open air, The pleasant light of day;

And blown by all the winds that pass And wet with all the showers, She walks among the meadow grass And eats the meadow flowers.

By Aidan Danza

BREEDS OF DOG



SPORTING

Sporting dogs are bred for hunting purposes, specifically, the hunting of game birds.

Retrievers will get waterfowl already shot down, spaniels will scare game birds out from hiding, and pointers and setters will identify and indicate the direction of game birds. Well-known breeds include Labrador retrievers, cocker spaniels, and Irish setters.



TERRIER

Terriers are mostly used as pets today, but their original purpose was to dig out rats and mice. They include breeds such as Scottish terriers and West Highland white terriers.



TOY

Dogs of the toy category are lap dogs. Their sole purpose is to be pets in the lap of human beings. They are all very small in size and fit nicely in small yards and houses. Some breeds include chihuahuas, pugs, shih tzus, and toy poodles.



WORKING

Working dogs are some of the toughest dogs around. They are used for many purposes, including pulling carts and sleds, and guarding herds and homes. They include rottweilers, mastiffs, Alaskan huskies, and Saint Bernards.



NON-SPORTING

The non-sporting dogs are a catch-all category. Any breed that doesn't fit into the other categories is put into here. Bulldogs, standard and miniature poodles, dalmatians, and chows are all non-sporting dogs. The winner of last year's National Dog Show was a non-sporting dog, a French bulldog named Winston.



HOUND

Hounds were also born to hunt, but their prey aren't birds, but mammals or humans.

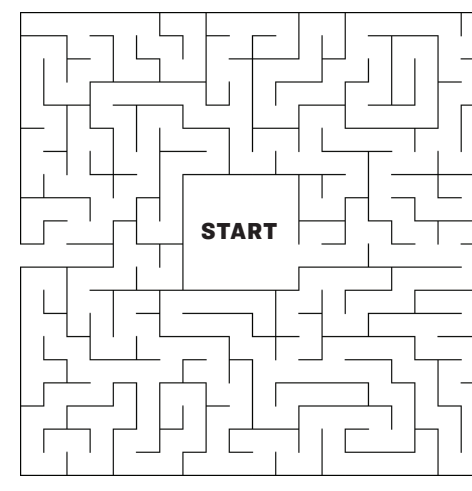
Sighthounds will see prey and then use their explosive speed to chase it and take it down, while scent hounds follow the scent of their prey and then chase it. Scenthounds are sometimes used to track escaped convicts. They include breeds such as beagles, greyhounds, and bloodhounds.



HERDING

Herding dogs are made for exactly that: herding livestock. They are extremely intelligent and are very good at their job. Some of their ranks, such as the German shepherd and Belgian malinois are used for police work. Other herding dogs include border collies, corgis, and English sheepdogs.

AMAZING ESCAPES!



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

Easy puzzle 1

6	8		
10			
6	6		
+	-	x	÷

Solution For Easy 1
8 - 9 + 9 = 8

Medium puzzle 1

10	11		
34			
3	11		
+	-	x	÷

Solution for Medium 1
01 - 11 + 8 x 11

Hard puzzle 1

15	31		
21			
2	27		
+	-	x	÷

Solution for Hard 1
22 - 2 + 51 + 18



HIDDEN TREASURES by Liz Ball
www.HiddenPicturePuzzles.com

WORD SEARCH: Do you Have A Pet?

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

- | | |
|-------------|---------------|
| Alpaca | Horse |
| Camel | Llama |
| Cat | Minipig |
| Dog | Monkey |
| Donkey | Mouse |
| Ferret | Oscar |
| Fox | Parakeet |
| Gerbil | Parrot |
| Goat | Rabbit |
| Goldfish | Rat |
| Guinea pig | Sugar gliders |
| Hamster | |
| Hedgehogs | |
| Hermit Crab | |

THE PEOPLE WHO MAKE THIS PAPER POSSIBLE



Jan Jekielek
Senior Editor



Joshua Philipp
Senior Investigative Reporter



Roman Balmakov
Host of "Facts Matter"



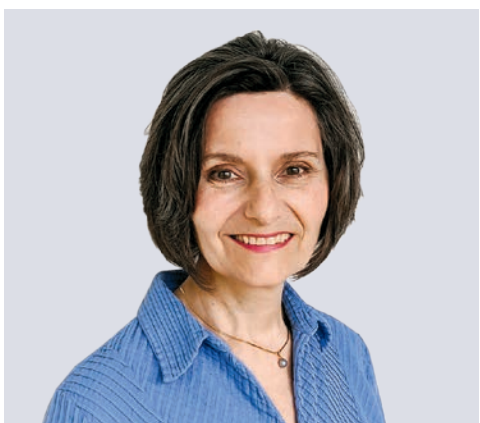
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Host of "The Larry Elder Show"



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Host of "Kash's Corner"



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Nicholas Zifcak
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Meet the Team Devoted to Getting You the Truth

When you become a subscriber of The Epoch Times, you're not just a subscriber: To us, you're a part of the family.

We see our reporting as a way of navigating the world together, just like how we'd share the news with our own family around the dinner table.

Because of this, we communicate a great deal with our readers—because your voice matters—and that starts with listening.

"As a newspaper, we aim to be a starter of conversations, not the be-all and end-all," explains Jan Jekielek, senior editor and host of "American Thought Leaders." "We want to be media that doesn't just talk, but that listens deeply and tries to understand the bigger picture."

Our team of editors, reporters, and producers uses your feedback to bring you the news that's important to your life. As senior reporter, Charlotte Cuthbertson says, "I want people to open our paper and see the strength and resilience that many other people just like them have exhibited in today's changing times. I want ... to ensure that the voice of the ordinary citizen shall not perish from American public discourse."

Your voice matters and, from the entire Epoch Times team, we're so glad to have you with us. Please don't hesitate to reach out to us at any time with questions or comments.

Thank you.
Jasper Fakkert, Editor-in-Chief

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THE EPOCH TIMES
TRUTH AND TRADITION