WEEK 8, 2023

# THE EPOCH TIMES IFFE & TRADE OF A STATE OF A

## Responsibilities Trump Rites

Marking the moments that turn adolescents into adults

#### **JEFF MINICK**

he online Britannica defines a rite of passage as a "ceremonial event, existing in all historically known societies, that marks the passage from one social or religious status to another."

In the same article, the authors offer more specifics: "Many of the most important and common rites of passage are connected with the biological crises, or milestones, of life—birth, maturity, reproduction, and death—that bring changes in social status and, therefore, in the social relations of the people concerned. Other rites of passage celebrate changes that are wholly cultural, such as initiation into societies composed of people with special interests—for example, fraternities."

In Western culture, a good many of these rites have traditionally involved a religious ceremony. For centuries, for example, a baby was baptized, adolescents received first communion and confirmation, a man and a woman married in a church, priests and religious brothers and sisters went through training and a ceremony confirming their new status, and the dying left this life with the last rites. In the Jewish faith, boys at about 13 years old underwent their bar mitzvah, a period of training in their faith followed by a ceremony



#### that recognized their maturity and their ability to take part in religious services.

But what about today? Is there a ceremony or some sort of test which, in our more secular world, marks the transition from adolescence to adulthood?

#### Some Modern-Day Initiations

A rite of passage typically involves a journey from the familiar to the new, an expedition marked by education or some sort of ordeal or major event, and a transformation of the individual involved.

Our society has a plentitude of such rites, although they rarely go by that name. A 16-year-old studies the rules of the road, passes a test, and earns her driver's license, thereby acquiring the legal right to drive two tons of metal, plastic, and rubber at 70 miles per hour on the highway.

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#### THE VIEW FROM ABOVE

### Recollections of a Smoke Jumper Pilot

Ken Herrick flew many firefighters who parachuted down into wild, remote areas impossible to reach by vehicle



#### DEENA C. BOUKNIGHT

This past summer, 71-year-old Ken Herrick relived the eight years he spent as a smoke jumper pilot. As a volunteer with Yellowstone Nature Connection (YNC), a 2012-founded nonprofit in the town of West Yellowstone, Montana, and housed in the original, early 1900s-built ranger cabins, Herrick's "job" was to share with children, individuals, and families about the importance of protecting our nation's wilderness.

He showed visitors films about smoke jumping training, allowed anyone interested to put on a smoke jumper suit, and offered youngsters an opportunity to receive junior smoke jumper wings. And when they found out that Herrick flew planes that actually carried smoke jumpers, eyes widened.

"It definitely was the most rewarding aspect of my career as a professional pilot," said Herrick, who retired six years ago.

Although a full-time pilot for 40plus years, Herrick flew his last "fire season" (typically May through September) as a smoke jumper pilot in West Yellowstone in 1984, opting for better financial security as a commercial pilot for the remainder of his career. He remembers the time fondly: "I just have so much respect and gratitude for smoke jumpers."

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ALL PHOTOS BY DEENA C. BOUKNIGHT



Ken Herrick helps a family visiting Yellowstone Nature Connection try on smoke jumper gear, in Yellowstone, Mont., in June 2022.

#### THE EPOCH TIMES INTERVIEWS SHEN YUN AUDIENCES

### **Shen Yun** Shows 'We Have a Divine **Purpose'**

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.



The idea that we're immortal beings, that we have a divine purposethat was beautiful. CASSANDRA EWER,

Grammy Award-winning singer, Mesa, Ariz.



[The orchestra] hit at the right times when it needed to resonate and would decrescendo into that quiet, calm, peaceful reflection. And then rise back up and bring you back up on your seat. Couldn't ask for anything better. **GREG JONES**,

percussionist, Nashville, Tenn.



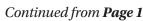
Even in the midst of all the newspaper clippings and headlines of turmoil, we can still relate to what's everlasting and what is truth over the millennia. TOM SHEW,

aerospace engineer, Mesa, Ariz.

#### Shen Yun's Upcoming Performances Nev. Feb. 24-26 Las Vegas Minneapolis Feb. 24–26 Minn.

Dallas	Texas	Feb. 24–26
Portland	Maine	Feb. 25–26
Sioux Falls	S.D.	Feb. 28
Costa Mesa	Calif.	Feb. 28–March 5
Rockford	III.	March 1

The Epoch Times is a proud sponsor of Shen Yun Performing Arts. We have covered audience reactions since Shen Yun's inception in 2006.



A Scout wins his organization's highest achievement, the rank of Eagle, with his feat usually celebrated by fanfare and a special ceremony. Society still regards high school graduation as a step into adulthood, with the graduate heading off to college or into the military or the workforce. Some Christian churches still bestow the sacraments on the young, again with a ceremony followed by festivities.

Yet something is missing from these and other steps into maturity. They're awards of achievement, which is all well and good, but rarely do they carry an accompanying burden of responsibility taken seriously, which is surely one of the keys to adulthood.

#### Then and Now

Getting married, buying a first house, and having a baby: These events have traditionally signaled to others a major step into the world of the grownup.

In the apt words of the Apostle Paul, "When I was a child, I spoke like a child, I understood like a child, I reasoned like a child; when I became an adult, I put an end to childish ways."

A wedding ring, a mortgage, and a tote bag holding disposable diapers are outward signs that childish ways—pizza for breakfast, dusk to dawn electronic games,

To regard the age of 29 as the end of adolescence must surely strike some people as disconcerting. Week 8, 2023 THE EPOCH TIMES



road trips to the Keys for spring break are now memories tucked away in an attic trunk.

These days, things have changed a bit. In "If you're in your 20s and you don't feel like an adult yet, here's why," Derrick Clifton wrote, as have many others online, of the reasons why those in their 20s and even their 30s don't think of themselves as adults. A lot of them have remained unmarried—the median age for marriage for American women is now 28, for men 30 few have bought a house, and many remain leery of parenthood. Forty-seven percent of young people ages 18 to 29 live with their parents or other relatives, are paying down student loans, and often work in jobs they consider unworthy of their talents.

It's true that home ownership and the like are signs of adulthood, but to regard the age of 29 as the end of adolescence must surely strike some people as disconcerting. George Washington was surveying the Virginia backwoods when he was 17 years old. The average age of an infantry soldier in Vietnam was 22, while the average age for new moms was 21 in 1970. Besides, if we extend adolescence by another decade out to 30, that would mean spending almost 40 percent of one's life as a child.

The formula just doesn't work. I have two good friends, for instance, ages 38 and 63, who have never owned a house, lived at some point as adults with their parents,

#### FAMILY

## A Grandmother's Guestbook Records a Life of Love on Every Page

#### **RACHAEL DYMSKI**



Grandma Audrey's guest book, which she started over 40 years ago.

#### I sit in the living room of my grandmother's bungalow in Kent, England, a stone's throw away from the Dover Cliffs, where we spent the afternoon drinking tea in the National Trust gift shop while watching the ferries come into the harbor in pouring rain.

My girls are asleep, tucked up in the coveted "fluffy beds" I slept in every time I visited as a child. I stretch my legs out next to the gas stove, lit to ward off the chilly November evening. My grandmother, now 86 but every bit as full of life as I've always

remembered her, sits on the couch. We're both half listening to the documentary on television about the new King Charles as we flip through the bulky, spiral-bound book sprawled open on my lap.

#### **Guestbook of Love**

I know this book, filled with different handwriting and labeled "Visitors." It was a regular fixture on the side table in the guest room, and growing up, we argued over who was going to fill it out almost as much as we did over who would get to sleep in one of the fluffy beds.

My grandmother started this guestbook 40 years ago, when she and my granddad were living in Haddenham, England, where she directed the church choir and he restored their barn, which was originally built in the 1500s. My grandparents have always had the enviable trait of making friends for life everywhere they go. Because of my granddad's job with the railroad, they moved often, meaning that they spent most of their weekends hosting their large collection of never married, and never produced children, yet both qualify as grownups by any parameter. I've also known a 40-something man who was a husband, father, and homeowner but who struck many who knew him as juvenile.

Should we not then just devise a rite of passage that says to the recipient, "Today, you are an adult"?

#### The Trouble With That Idea

Here, we encounter at least two more problems, one having to do with the culture at large and the other with the individual young person we intend to cast overnight as a responsible adult.

In the first instance, our culture has come to disdain rites and rituals of all kinds. Think of funerals, for example. For most of our country's history, the burial of a relative or acquaintance was a formal affair. You engaged a mortician, bought a casket, possibly hosted a wake, had services conducted in a house of worship and at the graveside, and so interred the deceased with a ceremony

Many still practice these rituals today, this final rite of passage but not everyone. Several people of my acquaintance have put their loved ones, usually cremated, into the earth with no ceremony whatsoever. "Here yesterday, gone today," runs this casual leave-taking. Another woman has stored her husband's ashes in a closet for years, with never an explanation as to why.

The past few years have brought our newest method of burial, in which participants literally follow the old church formula, "dust to dust," by composting a loved one's body and using the remains as fertilizer for the garden.

The second sticking point comes with young people wondering when and how they'll become real adults. On their 18th birthday, when they've reached the age of majority, we could make a grand ceremony of the occasion. A speaker might welcome them to their new stage of life as adults, we might issue a certificate confirming that status, and we could celebrate with a great bash afterward. But this proposal also has a major drawback: Unless our candidate feels like an adult, then this rite of passage and all the commendations in the world won't make him one.

#### The Only Thing That Really Counts

And so a note to readers, young as spring or old as the hills: You're only an adult when you think of yourself as one. It doesn't matter where you live, what sort of work you do, whether you've tied the knot with another, or whether you have four children or none at all. You're an adult when you think of yourself that way.

As for you in your 20s, if you're working and pulling your weight, if you're paying for a car and remember to have the oil ch every six months, if you put aside Minecraft to shovel your elderly neighbor's driveway, if you shoulder responsibility when you make mistakes, odds are that you're an adult.

The Roman emperor and philosopher Marcus Aurelius once wrote: "Waste no more time arguing what a good man should be. Be one.'

Paraphrasing that adage, we might say: "Waste no more time arguing what an adult should be. Be one."

Jeff Minick has four children and a growing platoon of grandchildren. For 20 years, he taught history, literature, and Latin to seminars of homeschooling students in Asheville, N.C. He is the author of two novels, "Amanda Bell" and "Dust On Their Wings," and two works of non-fiction, "Learning As I Go" and "Movies Make The Man." Today, he lives and writes in Front Royal, Va.



THE VIEW FROM ABOVE

Ken Herrick (R) stands with Jim Kitchen (L) and a mannequin dressed in full smoke jumper gear at Yellowstone Nature Connection in Yellowstone, Mont.

## Recollections of a Smoke Jumper Pilot

#### Continued from Page 1

In essence, smoke jumpers parachute into wilderness areas where a fire has been caused, most often because of a natural occurrence, such as a lightning strike. The areas are often highly remote and thus impossible to reach by vehicle, and hiking into the fire would take too long. Jumping into the fire area becomes the most efficient option. Once the firefighters are on the ground, equipment—such as a supply of chainsaws—is dropped by parachute.

### Much goes into getting into a precise area where the firefighters can jump safely.

Ken Herrick, smoke jumper pilot

Herrick, who currently resides in Phoenix with his wife, Anita Herrick, remembers determining his career choice at age 11.

"My father worked at Boeing in Seattle, a fuel pump line boy at Aero-Dyne flight school my senior year of high school."

While he was in college at Washington State University, earning a degree in range management and forest economics, he also worked part-time at Aero-Dyne and obtained all his flight ratings for private, instrument, and commercial. Each rating requires numerous hours of training and flight time.

Herrick was in the right place at the right time when Aero-Dyne began a U.S. Forest Service (USFS) contract to fly pistonpropelled DC3 aircraft to wildfire sites. He had to meet the safety and skill require ments necessary for low-level altitude flying. Only with the adequate licenses and flight hours completed was Herrick able to become a smoke jumper pilot.

"The lowest a pilot is supposed to fly is 500 feet above the ground and 200 feet above the tree top," Herrick said. "Normally I was flying about 1,000 above the said. "And men and women have to be ground for the spotter to figure out where the smoke jumpers needed to go. Then I would climb higher for the safety of the jumpers to deploy their parachutes.

"I learned quickly that there's nothing mundane about flying low where there is a fire. But I loved it ... the thrill of getting that close. As a pilot, you have to be sharp. Sometimes you can feel the fire's heat when flying over. And smoke can really get your heart racing because of lower visibility. Smoke jumper pilots have to study the terrain, consider if other aircraft might be flying in the area (dropping fire retardant, for example), pay attention to wind speeds and visibility. Much goes into getting into a precise area where the firefighters can jump safely."

Herrick became interested in volunteering with YNC after he visited West Yellowstone and met Jim Kitchen, a retired 25-year veteran smoke jumper who's president of the nonprofit.

"Anyone who has done this job has an instant connection," Herrick said.

Smoke jumpers typically number lower than 400 throughout the United States, and all are employed with the U.S. government and operate out of one of eight bases managed by both the Bureau of Washington, and I just knew I wanted to Land Management (Department of the be a pilot. So I got my first job in the field as Interior) and the USFS (Department of Agriculture).

"Most people doing smoke jumping A 30-plus-year writer-journalist, Deena started with rural fire programs and hot shot crews (firefighters who tackle the hottest aspects of forest fires)," Kitchen



(Left) Jim Kitchen (C) teaches the kids at Yellowstone Nature Connection about smoke iumper gear and the process that the smoke jumpers experience before, during, and after a jump, in Yellowstone, Mont. (Right) A child visiting Yellowstone Nature Connection tries on a complete set of smoke jumper gear in Yellowstone, Mont., in July 2022.



The author's grandma, Audrey Genders, with the author's youngest child, Jack.

family and friends. My grandma's book was her way of remembering these visits. Entries in the opening pages date back to 1983, right when my dad started dating my mom. They're formal, providing only their names and address. "Wendy and Ray, Rose Cottage." "Alison Cristin, Jersey."

As I flip through the pages of the book, I watch my parents' story unfold and the notes become a little more casual. Alison Cristin becomes Alison Genders. Dave and Alison move to America. Alison and

"Bump" come for a visit. Sprinkled among visits of friends, my dad's brothers leave home and come to visit. They sign the guestbook, then their wives do, and then their children do. Neat, contained handwriting is replaced by the exuberant and wild scrawl of grandchildren learning to write.

My grandmother's friends become more elaborate in their signatures, adding in what they ate and what they did. Guests write that "they ate enough to last a week" and that "no pudding can beat Audrey's." Weekends at Derek and Audrey's appear to be nothing less than entertaining, complete with trips to Ely, long walks (sometimes in heavy rain), tea in the garden, and choir concerts. I read entries of my own, from when I was 8 years old, when the highlight of a trip to England was feeding the

with Granddad. Reading my entry written at 21, it doesn't look like much has changed.

#### Home Away From Home

Page after page, I'm struck by the impact that a single, intact home can have on so many others. My grandparents opened their home to hundreds of people over the course of their lifetime. They built lasting friendships and created a stable environment for an extended family to thrive. I see where my cousins and I have commented on one another's entries, joking with one another and looking forward to seeing each other again. Growing up an ocean away, my grandparents provided a consistent place for us to connect and build relationships. Everyone knew the marriage between my grandparents was strong, and that kind of stability gave them permission to relax in their home.

As the years went on, the book continued Rachael Dymski is a writer, author, to fill, until there were only a few blank entries left.

A few months after my wedding in 2012,

ducks with Grandma and fish and chips my granddad began to get sick. He eventually was diagnosed with pancreatic cancer. The last week of his life, he was surrounded by the family he built: sons, daughters-inlaw, and grandchildren who made him tea in his meticulously cared-for garden and played piano and cello for him in the evenings. He passed just a few days after everyone left. It was as though he knew how much the way they hosted meant to us, and he had to do it one last time.

YNC enabled him to verbally take others

with him into the cockpit and imagine

"God created so much for us, and most

people don't get to see what I've seen from

the air," he said. "But to help smoke jump-

ers provide an invaluable service, to save

lives, homes, forests ... that's the main rea-

son I was a smoke jumper pilot."

C. Bouknight works from her Western

North Carolina mountain cottage. Her

website is DeenaBouknightWriting.com

the experience.

In August 2013, my dad flew back for his funeral, a packed service that included all the people who had graced the guestbook over the past decades. Before my dad left, he filled out the very last entry on the very last page, which summed up the book (and its owners) so well:

"With much love and thankfulness for the place that will always be home."

and mom to three wonderful kids. She lives on a flower farm with her family in Pennsylvania.

physically fit enough to carry out at least 110 pounds for at least three miles because the equipment is heavy. "Most people don't know this is a career that exists. And it's not a career that one does for the money. It's for the comradery, the travel, the outdoors, the physical chal-

lenge, and the difference you're making." He said he never once regretted jumping out of a plane to fight a forest fire, and he's thrilled when he meets jumpers and pilots, such as Herrick, to reminisce about various experiences. Herrick hasn't personally jumped out of a plane, but he never stopped being in awe of the men and women who did. "People might think my job required

bravery, but smoke jumping requires so much more bravery," he said. While Herrick hasn't flown since retiring due to flying being an "expensive hobby," he admits that he often misses piloting planes. However, volunteering at



According to Roman historian Livv the Roman Republic fell because of a degradation of moral character "Capriccio with ruins of the Roman Forum." circa 1634 by Claude Lorrain. Art Gallery of South Australia.

#### **HISTORY**

## Livy and the Heroes of Early Rome

A Roman historian traces the role of moral character in the rise and fall of republics

#### ANDREW BENSON BROWN

here's a good deal of talk today, by people who imagine themselves to be serious thinkers, about doing away with the U.S. Constitu-"just" government. What would such a uto- Coriolanus, the exiled general who led a n polity look like? In the imaginations of neighboring tribe to march on his own city radicals, it all sounds great, though history's but was turned back by a weeping wife and track record of human flourishing in cases mother; the old patricians who, when Rome where such sweeping overhauls have occurred is, to put it mildly, not great.

In an age when our commonwealth is crumbling, it's instructive to take the example of another political institution that has long served as a model for American aspirations: Rome. The Roman Republic lasted for nearly 500 years because its institutions were profoundly conservative, even as its leaders took a pragmatic attitude that adapted ancient customs to the needs of the present. But how, more specifically, did Rome achieve such glorious heights, and why did it fall? For the great historian and super-patriot Livy, the answer was simple: moral character.

#### A (Very) Long History

Born in around 60 B.C. in modern-day Padua, Italy, Titus Livius, or Livy, lived through one of the most tumultuous periods in world history: Julius Caesar's assassination, the civil wars of the late republic, and Rome's transition to empire. Livy moved to the eternal city around the time that Octavius (Augustus) defeated Mark Antony. Unlike the poets Virgil and Horace, who championed the new autocracy, Livy was more pessimistic. He enjoyed the emperor's patronage and **A Mirror of Decline** the newfound political stability but felt that the current age was a degenerate one and began extolling, instead, the virtuous heroes of Rome's republican past.

The masterwork that resulted from this ambition, "From the Founding of the City" (Ab Urbe Condita), is the longest history ever written by a single man prior to modern times. In its original state, it chronicled the entire 700-year life of Rome up to his own day, from its beginning in shepherd huts in 753 B.C. to its domination over the Mediterranean region. It was so vast that poet Martial jested he needed an abridged version, since his library couldn't fit all the volumes.

Much of Livy's history was lost during the Middle Ages, and only about a quarter of his massive tome is extant—35 books out of an initial 142. Of the surviving work, the most influential portions have been the first Vulso was awarded a tri-10 books recounting the semi-mythical fig-

ures of Rome's first 400 years. The stories are famous: the brothers Romulus and Remus, who were raised by a she-wolf and guarreled over where to establish their new city; Horatius Cocles, who singlehandedly defended the Pons Sublicius bridge against tion in favor of establishing a more an Etruscan army led by Lars Porsenna; was about to be sacked by the Gauls, refused to abandon their city, dressed in their finest robes, and waited in their villas "like statues" to meet their deaths in stoic fashion.

These legends all comprise variations on a theme: Hard times make tough men, and glory can only be achieved through hardihood, sacrifice, and a devotion to public duty. Livy's history was an instant success and quickly became the standard canonical version, overshadowing prior sources he drew upon that ceased to be copied.

From America's beginnings, the founders self-consciously drew inspiration from early Rome in establishing their own fledgling republic. George Washington was known as the "American Cincinnatus," referring to the former consul who left his small farm to defend his country, defeated Rome's enemies, and then relinquished his power and returned to his plow. Alexander Hamilton and other political writers penned pamphlets under pseudonyms such as "Publius" and "Cato." It's almost entirely thanks to Livy that the model of Roman republican virtue has captured the imagination of readers for two millennia.

In our own times, comparisons with the late Roman republic abound: the erosion of discipline and principle, the abandonment of customs, the lax morals—all these themes can be found in Livy. At the heart of everything, he says, is the relationship between luxury and vice. It's an old idea, but Livy chronicles the historical process by which "manifold amusements have led to people's obsession with ruining themselves and with consuming all else through excess and self-indulgence."

In Book 39, he even dates the beginning of the end to a specific year: 187 B.C., when the consul Gnaeus Manlius umph after defeating the

In an age when our common wealth is crumbling, it's instructive to take the example of another political institution that has long served as a model for American aspirations: Rome.

Titus Livius, known in Eng-

lish as Livy, wrote a mon-

umental history of Rome

this day.

that remains influential to

Galatians of Asia Minor. At this time, "the beginnings of foreign luxury were imported into Rome by the army of Asia." These soldiers brought with them "bronze couches, expensive bedspreads, tapestries," and other "sumptuous furniture." Vulso's dinner parties were accompanied by "lutenists" and "harpists," and banquets "began to be laid on with greater elaboration and at greater expense."

Livy then mentions a detail that bears a striking resemblance to our generation: "it was then that the cook, who had been to the ancient Romans the least valuable of slaves ... began to be highly valued, and what had been a mere service came to be regarded as an art." One is reminded today of the rise of celebrity chefs and the disproportionate number of shows devoted to preparing extravagant dishes.

Lest one think, though, that we're the only ones addicted to vicarious entertainments, Livy also highlights the imperial Roman taste for gladiatorial combats and chariot races. In the past, great Romans took up the sword in moments of crisis and rode the chariots themselves. But by the imperial age, the descendants of heroes watched lesser men do these things for sport and empty honors. The parallels with Hollywood and the NFL, our versions of the Circus Maximus and Colosseum, couldn't be more obvious.

#### Moral Regeneration

Livy's preface to his history is pessimistic about whether the vices of his own age could be remedied. He does suggest, though, that reading history can help to better people's private character and help mend public corruption.

"The special and salutary benefit from the study of history," he writes, "is to behold evidence of every sort of behavior set forth as on a splendid memorial; from it you may select for yourself and for your country what to emulate, from it what to avoid, whether basely begun or basely concluded."

The heroes exemplified in the early republic didn't become virtuous automatically; their character was shaped by constant vigilance. He acknowledged that these early legends may be "pleasing po-

etic fictions," but whether real or not, they still had something to teach. Livy admonishes his readers to pay close attention to how they lived, their moral principles, and the leadership that led to the flourishing of "the world's mightiest empire, second only to the power of the gods."

Livy's work is a literary monument to the actual, ruined monuments of an extinct civilization. It remains both a cautionary tale and a source of inspiration for our own troubled times.

Andrew Benson Brown is a Missouri-based poet, journalist, and writing coach. He is an editor at Bard Owl Publishing and Communications and the author of "Legends of Liberty," an epic poem about the American Revolution. For more information, visit Apollogist.wordpress.com

KIZEL COTIW-AN/SHUTTERSTOC

## Master Tinkerer Opens Dwarf Junk Car Museum

#### **MICHAEL WING**

Master tinkerer Ernie Adams had always wanted a race car. But who has money for a race car?

Moreover, living in a little trailer park in Harvard, Nebraska, at the time, he had no room to park one.

So Adams, who has worked in a garage since age 16, satisfied his longing by building his very own antique dwarf car.

### The mechanic's dwarf cars can easily handle the highway, zooming at speeds up to 100 miles per hour, while traveling as far as 200 or 300 miles on a tank of gas.

Over the years, his hobby would snowball massively. Now 82 and retired, Adams has an entire fleet comprised of some 15 antique dwarf cars—including several race cars—all made by his hand.

No stranger to tinkering in the shop, growing up, Adams lived just a quarter mile from the city dump, which fed his hobby.

"That city dump was like a free department store for me," he told The Epoch Times. "At that time, they were taking gas washing machine motors off and putting electric on, and they'd throw the old motors in the dump."

There were old bicycle and wagon parts, too, and he started deconstructing and reconstructing them and then selling his fully functioning contraptions. "I didn't realize I was learning my trade back then," he said, adding that his learning to build his own vehicles in those days came easy, because "time meant nothing, and there was no money involved."

His motivation for building dwarf cars was fueled by watching old side-hack races, which dissatisfied him because the drivers had to slow down around corners. He would think to himself, "Put four wheels on it and a small car body and

slide them corners!" Thus, the young Adams started formulating an idea.

He recalled an old refrigerator laying in the weeds by the train tracks near his childhood house, and a miniature car popped into his mind.

"I wanted an antique car and couldn't afford one, didn't have room for one. I picked up some refrigerators and built one," he said.

"I saw it in my mind, you know?" It was to be Adams's very first dwarf carthough it wouldn't be the last.

He didn't follow any design specifications or particular model for the first one, but said it looked "more like a '28 Chevy than anything else," and also that it "looked pretty decent." He's still got that old '28 Chevy dwarf car today.

But Adams wasn't satisfied with just one car; from the get-go, he had had a race car in mind.

So it was that throughout the 1980s, he pretty much sparked the whole "dwarf race car craze," which spread nationwide, and he started making others' miniature race car dreams come true, too.

"People started wanting them," he said. "People started seeing them, and they were cheap. And I was helping people build them for nothing for my labor." "It was just a fun hobby for me."

Adams became handy at making scaleddown versions of larger cars, imitating them to a tee. He learned to bend metal and weld; he crafted interior items, such as steering wheels and knobs on the dashboard; he even built his own tools, includ-

ing his own bead roller and English wheel. "I couldn't afford to buy [those tools], and I just sat down and made them," he said. "I made a better bead roller than I could have bought.

Besides cars for the racetrack, the me-

Ernie Adams

and his '34

Ford sedan, his

personal favorite

Adams working on a dwarf car.

chanical maverick created dwarf models that are street-legal. Those include a '39 Chevy 2-door, a '29 Ford Hillbilly 2-door sedan, a '40 Mercury coupe chopped top, a '54 Chevy 2-door Bel Air, and a '32 Ford 3-window coupe.

But perhaps the most impressive of Adams's fleet is his prized '49 Mercury. "It was a well-sought-after car," he said. "Even now people pay big money for a '49 Mercury." He added that he wouldn't sell it for any

amount of money. "No, it's not for sale," he said.

"That car is just exactly like the real car, inside and out-the bum

pers, everything. It's like the original: the steering wheel, the emblem on the horn button, the window cranks. All the gauges look

> To Adams, this antique dwarf car most closely resembles a '28 Chevy.

exactly like the original—the glove box, radio, heater." All of these he crafted with his own two

hands and homemade tools. "The only thing different about the dash

is it's got a CD player instead of a radio," he said. "It's a beautiful automobile."

The mechanic's dwarf cars can easily handle the highway, zooming at speeds up to 100 miles per hour, while traveling as far as 200 or 300 miles on a tank of gas. They run on Honda motors installed by Adams Sure, it's cozy but not uncomfortable,

as Adams drops the floors down low to provide legroom aplenty.

Plus, they're street legal; Adams, now living in Maricopa, contacted Arizona authorities and had them registered as "homemade" vehicles—as one would register a homemade trailer.

Having participated in dozens upon dozens of antique car competitions across the state and beyond, Adams boasts a wall full of trophies.

"Here's one that's five feet tall," he said, pointing to one from a church car show, awarded for People's Choice.

If Adams had to choose a favorite from among his antique beauties, it would be his '34 Ford 2-door sedan, which he never painted but chose to let rust, thus bearing raw steel for all to see.

There are many who consider it their favorite as well.

His pride and joy features all the original levers and styling. Its door handles, dash, and everything else are just like the original.

Adams's showroom eventually became so busy with visitors, he decided to have it registered as a legitimate museum the Dwarf Car Museum, located 17 miles southwest of Maricopa. "People come in here and look, and they said, 'Oh, this is just like a museum," Adams told the newspa-

per. "So we had it legally registered as a museum in 2009. "I think there's probably

been 20 here this morning already-or 30?"

Now 82 and retired, Adams has an entire fleet comprised of some **15 antique dwarf** cars-including several race cars -all made by his hand.

#### Adams's "Rebel Rouser," his dwarf '49 Mercury.

hhallstale

### **ACTS OF KINDNESS**

## Undercover Pharmacy Angel

An Alabama farmer's family makes a discovery about his good deeds

#### **LOUISE CHAMBERS**

The family of an Alabama farmer discovered a moving secret as the farmer lay on his deathbed: The 80-year-old donated \$100 to a local pharmacy every month for 10 years, in secret, to help people access the medicines they needed but couldn't afford.

Born and raised in the small town of Geraldine, Alabama, Buford "Hody" Childress served in the U.S. Air Force for eight years, was a farmer for 50 years, and worked at Lockheed Martin's Alabama Space Center



Hody Childress worked as a farmer for 50 years.

until he retired. He continued farming until two years before his death.

His daughter, Tania Nix, lives in nearby Ider, Alabama. When Hody suffered from chronic obstructive pulmonary disease and other health issues, he had trouble moving around and was pretty much bedridden. He knew by then his end was approaching and he couldn't keep his secret any longer. "I was going to the drugstore one day and

he told me, 'I've been doing something for a while, and I would like to continue doing this as long as I'm alive," Nix told The Epoch Times. "I said, 'OK, what is that, Dad?' and he said, 'I've been carrying a \$100 bill to the drugstore on the first of the month, I give it to Brooke, and she has the liberty to do what she chooses to help someone. I told her just to tell them it's anonymous, and it's a blessing from the Lord.'"

Nix told her father she would be glad to take the money on his behalf. She handed the bill in the pharmacy Geraldine Drugs but had no idea how long her father's tradition had been going on until after he passed away, peacefully at home, on New Year's Day 2023.

"Before the funeral, we gathered to reminisce about Dad," Nix said. "One of my cousins was a personal friend of Brooke Walker [the pharmacist at Geraldine Drugs] ... she immediately sat down and started telling the story ... that's how I found out about the depth and magnitude of what he had done." Walker had been "sworn to secrecy" by Hody but felt the family deserved to know about Hody's heartfelt mission.

Hody made his first monthly donation in 2012. Besides Nix's stepmother—Martha Jo—and Walker, nobody knew. But as Hody's fund gradually amassed thousands, word spread in the community that if someone was in bad need, there were donations at the pharmacy that could help. Walker used the money at her discretion.

"He was a very kind and gentle man," Nix said of her father. "He was a very godly man; the Lord came first in his life ... a lot of people that knew him, knew what his heart was like, and how kind and generous he was. I think people were surprised that he was committed to a mission that he followed for so long, that he made sure it happened every month."

After Hody's passing, stories surfaced from some of the people he had helped. Nix shared the story of a 15-year-old boy who had an allergic reaction to a bee sting. His parents could not afford the \$600 EpiPen, but thanks to Hody's donations, the boy got the medication he needed.

It later transpired that the boy had worked for Nix's younger brother—Doug Childress and her nephew on the Childress family farm. The boy's family was very touched to find out that it was Hody who had provided the EpiPen.

Hody was a generous man despite having faced tragedy in his past. In 1973, a tornado hit Hody's parents' house, killing his father and his son. Shortly after, Hody's wife, Peggy—Tania's mother—was diagnosed with multiple sclerosis. Hody continued working full-time and became Peggy's caregiver until she died in 1999.

"He never was one to be down and out, no matter the circumstances," Nix said. "I

feel very blessed that I was raised by a man that was so gentle and kind, and I feel very thankful that he was able to give back to the

community." Nix believes that her father started a good and positive movement that could help the whole world.

Some of the people Hody helped donated money to Geraldine Drugs to pay it forward. Meanwhile, some others wrote letters to Walker expressing their gratitude. People in 11 different states have either been affected by Hody's generosity or have started a Hody Childress Fund in their own local pharmacy and Geraldine Drugs is one of them. Hody's story has also been shared in different parts of the world.

Nix said: "I feel like this story has given hope to many people that feel hopeless. I'd like for people to realize that there are people that love and care about you, no matter how low or how bad things get."



Childress with his family.

#### HISTORY

## **A** Military Historian's Break From Tradition to Get the History Right

Historian Michael Livingston details groundbreaking work in "The Battle of Crécy: A Casebook"

#### **DUSTIN BASS**

s with any story, over time, the facts can become distorted, turning the truth into a fantasy. In everyday conversation, we call Lit gossip or hearsay. Perhaps there are remnants of the truth, but the entirety of the story is far from an honest retelling. History, even academic history, can suffer from the same errant problems. Michael Livingston, secretary general for the U.S. Commission on Military History and a professor at The Citadel, one of the nation's six senior military academies, is known for setting historical records straight, even records that have stood or been accepted for centuries. His book "Never Greater Slaughter: Brunanburh and the Birth of England," about the Battle of Brunanburh, placed him on the map of

historiography as a voice of intellectual and historical reason, as well as a strong backstop against historical hearsay.

From Agincourt to Crécy His work on Brunanburh, a battle that took place in 937 and ultimately unified England, was one of controversy, as there were conflicting camps on exactly where the battle happened. But it was a theory about the Battle of Agincourt that caused his most recent discovery and controversy. This battle is one of the three most famous from the Hundred Years' War between England and France and is arguably most known for being one of the settings in William Shakespeare's "Henry V." It's on the eve of this battle that King Henry V gives the fictional, yet memorable St. Crispin's Day speech.

Livingston, along with colleagues and fellow historians Kelly DeVries and Robert Woosnam-Savage, wished to test his theory regarding Henry V and the battlefield, but within minutes, his theory fell apart. The trip to northern France, however, wasn't a complete waste, as it was near the site of another famous battle of the Hundred Years' War that DeVries had some concerns about.

The three historians walked the traditional site of the Battle of Crécy, which led to an odds-defying victory for England and King Edward III while at the same time espousing the legend of Edward IV, famously known as the Black Prince. As the three walked the battlefield, it became painfully obvious that there were problems with the site, or as Livingston stated in an interview in an episode of "The Sons of History" podcast, problems that were "disastrous."

"The Black

Crécy, 1888"

Story. Telfair

Museums,

Savannah,

Georgia.

Prince at

by Julian

Russell

A battle is its ground. You cannot understand the field of conflict until you understand the field.

-Michael Livingston, historian

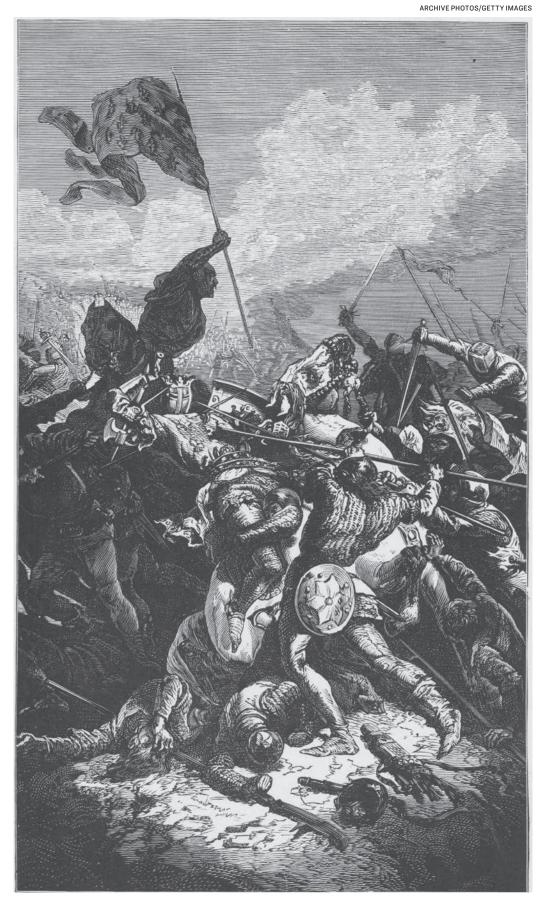
Engraved depiction of the Battle of Crécy, one of the most important battles of the Hundred Years' War, fought on Aug. 26, 1346.

### One question that Livingston and **DeVries looked** to answer was how the **French** lost the battle despite heavily outnumbering the English.



While legend states that the Black Prince Edward IV emerged from the Battle of Crécy a hero, Michael Livingston reveals a different reality.





'A Battle Is Its Ground'

"The more we walked the field, the more I was convinced that this isn't something where we need to rotate the battle, or if we turn it a little bit it will work," he said. "It was like, 'It's not here. Nothing about this makes sense."

From that point, Livingston and DeVries began their research into disproving the agreed-upon location and much of the **A Legend Is Born** folklore narratives that stemmed from formulating his thesis for disproving the centuries-old belief. He began by getting online.

"When I got back to my hotel, I got on the internet and looked up a dozen public and English translated sources and read them, and they said the battle was somewhere else," he said.

In the ensuing months, DeVries and Livingston researched and walked the battlefield dozens of times, even in attempts to disprove their theory. The work culminated in their groundbreaking work titled "The Battle of Crécy: A Casebook," which won the Distinguished Book Award from the Society for Military History. Just as with his work on Brunanburh, Crécy proved a point that Livingston hopes will echo throughout the history industry as much as it echoes throughout his classroom.

"A battle is its ground. You cannot understand the field of conflict until you understand the field," Livingston said. "If you're on the wrong ground, then you don't know anything about the battle."

#### More Than a Location Change

Proving that the battle took place somewhere else didn't merely change the battle's location; it changed much of the way we must look at the battle itself and the overall Hundred Years' War, especially how we view the English and the French.

"The main conclusion that people have come to with Crécy is that the French were stupid. They were getting mowed down for hours like they were Orcs in 'The Lord of the Rings,' just wandering into the line of fire," the historian said. "That tainted people's understanding of the rest of the war."

One question that Livingston and DeVries looked to answer was how the French lost the battle despite heavily outnumbering the English. Much of the credit has traditionally gone to the technological advantage that the English had against the French with their longbowmen. Although this did play a crucial role, it doesn't fully answer the question. The field, however, does

"The way I reconstruct it is that the big-

gest thing here is that Edward III took a great position and the French king (Philip VI) lost command and control," he said. "If you are a leader on the battlefield and you lose command and control, good things usually don't happen. It was an amazing storm of things going really well one way and really bad the other way."

Concerning the Black Prince, there's a the errant site. It didn't take long to begin legend that has grown over the centuries that Edward IV was a teenage Hercules of sorts, rushing from the frontlines into the foray of battle and killing countless French soldiers. The legend suggests that English knights warn the king that his son is hard pressed in battle and should be rescued, to which the king famously responds, "Let the boy earn his spurs [i.e., knighthood]." When the knights decide to disobey the king and rescue the prince anyway, they find him standing on the bodies of dead French soldiers, unharmed.

In reality, the Black Prince was indeed placed on the frontline, but apparently made the foolish decision to charge into the French despite the English longbowmen displaying their distinct advantage. Livingston said the reality was that the English prince was supposed to act as bait to lure the French into the firing line of the longbow. His decision to order a charge into the French, ultimately cutting off his own bowmen and placing himself in harm's way, nearly cost England the battle and the war.

The Black Prince was actually captured by the French during the melee. It was during this time, while the French soldiers and nobility were arguing about who would claim the ransom, that Edward IV began to sneak away and English soldiers came through to rescue him.

"The Hundred Years' War, for the minutes he was captured, was effectively over. He almost cost his father the entire thing," Livingston said.

Nonetheless, the Battle of Crécy ended with an English victory and a young prince shrouded in a false, yet glorious myth.

#### The Choice Between Myth and Truth

"It makes sense why we get that story about earning his spurs because what we're getting is what we would now call spin," Livingston said.

He said there was a truth that was deflected and devolved into a myth. The fact that this story is mere legend goes well with the fact that the battlefield is wrong, too. Livingston said when the location of the battle was corrected, several other things became corrected, too, such as the military ALL PHOTOS BY SHUTTERSTOCK UNLESS OTHERWISE NOTED



King Edward III led the English to victory at the Battle of Crécy. Painted circa 1430-1440 by William Bruges.

PUBLIC DOMAIN



King Philip VI led the French troops in the Battle of Crécy, where he suffered an oddsdefying defeat. He is depicted here with his first wife, Joan of Burgundy, 14th century, anonymous artist.

tactics and strategies from both sides, as well as the Black Prince story.

As much as he understands why there was spin from the English side, he said he also understands why the traditional battle sites such as those of Brunanburh and Crécy have been accepted for centuries. "Traditions are hard to shake," he said. "Somebody put a location on the map in the 17th century saying this is where the Battle of Crécy happened and everybody just assumed that that was right. If you get enough people repeating a lie often enough, people begin to believe that lie."

He said historians have a difficult task of pushing back on what he terms "received knowledge." This is perpetuated information, which may be incorrect, that historians pore over and then regurgitate, often unaware that it isn't true. And when a historian pushes back on such a notion, even with compelling evidence, the pushback from traditionalists is inevitable. Livingston has received pushback on both the Brunanburh and Crécy investigations. He even received death threats about the Brunanburh research. One of the moments of disagreement with Crécy, which was far less dramatic than the death threats of Brunanburh, was from one of his colleagues.

"One of my colleagues said, 'In the end, the reason we know Mike can't be right is because if he is, that means we're all wrong," he said with a laugh. "I was like, 'I don't think that's the winning argument you think it is.' But I get it at the same time. As a historian, you are somewhat trained to build on the previous generations' work: 'We know this, so let's build on that to get closer to finding out what happened.' But that only works if the foundation is good."

Livingston said he isn't concerned about the disagreements, nor is he ever concerned about what other historians or traditions say about a historical subject. He followed up the award-winning book he co-authored with DeVries with his solo work "Crécy: Battle of Five Kings," which reiterates their findings and sets the argument on an even more solid foundation.

"The only thing that kept entering my mind was, 'Is there something I'm missing? Surely they know something I don't.' But it became more and more clear that, 'No, they don't. They're just all assuming," he said. "It's not a competition; it's just that we need to get it right. I want to get the history right. I don't want to be right. I want to get it right."

Dustin Bass is an author and co-host of The Sons of History podcast.



A view of the beautiful Visby Cathedral in front of the Baltic Sea. The cathedral is made of limestone from Gotland and was designed as a three-aisled Romanesque basilica, influenced by German models (particularly from Rhineland). It's composed of a square chancel, a square western tower, and two octagonal towers. The domes of all three towers burned down in the 18th century and were replaced with the current ones.

LARGER THAN LIFE: ART THAT INSPIRES US THROUGH THE AGES

## Visby Cathedral Gotland Island's Merchant Church

#### **ARIANE TRIEBSWETTER**

Once a strategic point for European merchants due to its proximity to the Baltic Sea, the old medieval town of Visby is filled with beautiful architecture. On the Swedish island of Gotland, one building in particular stands out: the Visby Cathedral.

Originally built as a church dedicated to St. Mary in the 12th century, it was rebuilt in the 13th century by the Hanseatic League, an organization formed by German merchant guilds. At that time, it dominated commercial activity in Northern Europe, and many Germans lived in Gotland.

Used both as a place of devotion and as a warehouse for the merchants' goods, what makes the Visby Domkyrka (cathedral) special is that it survived an attack in 1525, when all the other churches of Visby burned down.

The church isn't only of archaeological importance, but it's also an architectural gem. The three-aisled Romanesque church seen today has had a few renovations over the years, most recently in 1985. Two towers and a choir were added between 1230 and 1250. In 1572, the church became a cathedral. Stylistically, the cathedral resembles

medieval German and French models in its Gothic architecture, as seen in the vaulted ceilings, pointed arches, and stained glass windows. Other church highlights include the organs, religious artwork, gargoyles, chandeliers, and modern stained glass windows.

Bright, spacious, and airy, it isn't only the most important church in Gotland but it's also one of the best-preserved medieval churches in Sweden.

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









**1**. The facade of the great chapel on the south side of Visby Cathedral distinguishes itself with its extensive decoration on top of its undecorated walls. Original buttresses, pinnacles, and gargoyles combine to form an exquisite Gothic facade. In the upper part of the church's facade, most elements date from the 1903 renovation of architect Axel Haig.

**2.** None of the original medieval stained-glass windows remain. Here, we have three colorful stained-glass windows, framed by pointed arch windows and wooden flying buttresses. At the right of these Gothic windows is one of the church's six organs.

**3.** The south entrance of the cathedral is in the baroque style with a portal that contains the monogram of Christian IV of Denmark and the coat of arms of Jens Hög, a former governor of Gotland.

The church's interior, composed of two aisles and a central nave, is as beautiful as its exterior. Yellow plaster covers the walls and the vaults, and the rest is covered with white limestone. The interior is irregular because of renovations throughout the centuries.

Mixing things up with exciting activities, such as sledding, is

a great way for both

kids and adults to

have fun.

## Dial Up Fun There's no age limit to having a blast

#### **BARBARA DANZA**

f you've been adulting for any good stretch, you may have run into this phenomenon in which having fun doesn't come as naturally as it used to. Think about it—when's the last time you actually had some honest-togoodness fun? How often do you enjoy being silly or playful or childlike? If you're like most adults these days, it has probably been quite some time. The news cycle and overall state of the world haven't made having fun any easier, have they?

Well, all isn't lost! You can still have fun no matter the state of the world or the year on your birth certificate. Here are a few simple ways to bring back the fun.

#### **Prioritize Fun**

Your purpose-driven, responsible adult mind may resist the idea of focusing on fun. After all, you have all of these things to do and all of these people relying on you. Who has the time, right?

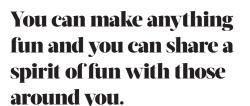
It can be helpful to remember the benefits of fun. Having fun can reduce your stress, improve your creativity, deepen your connections with others, and increase your energy. Fun is actually good for your productivity and adult responsibilities, wouldn't you say? So why not put fun on your to-do list?

#### **Define Your Flavor**

The thing about fun is that it isn't the same for everyone. While one person may find a 20-mile nature hike the epitome of a good time, another finds just as much fun in cuddling up with a good book and a cup of tea. Think back to the times in your life when you had the most fun: What were you doing? What made those moments so much fun? What is the most fun activity you can possibly conceive of? Define what's fun for you and then make a point of incorporating more of that in your life.

#### **Joke Around**

Having fun doesn't have to be comp ed or elaborate. Sometimes all you need to lighten things up is a good chuckle. Whether you're the sort that enjoys a lighthearted practical joke, like putting googly eyes on the food containers in the fridge, or one that can appreciate a solid dad joke, laugh it up with the people around you! You're sure to find yourself having more fun.



#### **Boogie Down**

Fun can seem elusive if you're low on energy. One simple way to amp your state is to boogie on down. Turn up your favorite dance tunes—you know the ones—and move your body to the beat. You'll lift your spirits and your mood and probably catch vourself having fun.

#### **Exercise Differently**

If you've been doing the same routine at the gym or running the same route for your exercise regimen, mix it up now and then with fun activities. Go ice skating or roller

skating like you did when you were a kid, go tubing or skiing in the snow, or organize a neighborhood kickball game. Who says kids have to have all the fun?

#### Reminisce

If having fun doesn't feel like it's coming naturally to you, take some time to remember what it was like to be a young child. Remember your toys, remember the games you played with your siblings and friends, remember things you created or the things

Maybe you convinced yourself that some of those things or activities were silly or useless. If you can't help but smile, if you feel butterflies when you think back on the excitement that simple pleasures brought you, perhaps there are keys within those memories of things you might still find fun now. There's wisdom in being able to maintain the childlike wonder we were born with. Tap into that. Does having fun seem more conceivable?

#### **Bring Fun**

At the end of the day, fun is a state of mind. You can have fun wherever you are and whatever you're doing, if you bring the fun with you. Say you're doing your taxes, a task few people deem fun. How could you make it fun?

BIBA KAYEWICH

Might you order a pizza or delicious snack to go along with the task? Might you set up a fun reward to celebrate completing the task? Might you play enjoyable music while you go? Might you set up you did that caused you to lose track of time. exercise or dance breaks every so many minutes to keep the momentum going?

> You can make anything fun and you can share a spirit of fun with those around you. Whether you're cleaning the house, helping the kids with math homework, doing laundry, weeding the garden, or trying to hit a work deadline—you can make it fun. Turn it into a party. Make it a contest. Reward your success. Just have fun.

## Finding Meaning in Your 2nd Act

Advice on how to navigate the transition from career to retirement

#### **BARBARA DANZA**

For most people, early and mid-adulthood consist of pursuing career goals, starting and providing for a family, and seeking extrinsic fulfillment. It can seem like one's whole life is preparation for these phases. But what happens afterward—when the kids fly the nest and it comes time for retirement?

That's the subject of the new book "Climbing Down the Ladder: A Journey to a Different Kind of Happy." by retired attorney, author, and speaker Laura Black. In it, she aims to help readers embrace their last chapters and find meaning beyond their careers. I asked Laura for her advice for those who are about to navigate this next phase of life. Here's what she said.

The Epoch Times: What inspired you to write "Climbing Down the Ladder: A Journey to a Different Kind of Happy?" Laura Black: In the same way women lacked role models on the way up, we lack them on the way down. When I left the workforce, it was a time of loss: My children moved out of the house for lives on their own, my parents were ill and eventually passed away, and I felt a loss of identity-without a business card, who am I? I was not alone—there are 29 million retired baby boomers. I hope my journey will empower others to find their own "different kind of happy."

The Epoch Times: Many people look forward to their retirement years with fantasies of free time and relaxation. What aspects of this phase of life have you found surprising?

### Test new leisure activities-don't rule things out before giving them a chance.

Laura Black, author and retired attorney

Ms. Black: I am not one of those people For us, Type As who are goal driven, at first, we feel the void. For those who can relax and enjoy free time, that's great. However, my journey forced me to look back and decipher what motivated me in the first place. What did I have to prove? Once I figured that out, it was easier to give myself permission to be present and enjoy the moment. I realized that I did enough, proved enough, and was enough. I am enough and must savor this sacred space between retirement and the final curtain.

The Epoch Times: For those approaching retirement or watching their kids grow up and looking ahead to their life's next act, how do you recommend they prepare themselves?

Ms. Black: When we leave the workforce, there is a void. I analogize this to a section on a wheel. There are lots of pie-shaped triangles. We do not have to replace this career section, but we can expand the other sections of our wheel: relationships, community, health, learning, spirituality, and leisure. I advise building up these sections before we retire.

The Epoch Times: What common mistakes do you see people making as they head into their retirement years? Ms. Black: Not preparing emotionally-realizing the loss of status, identity, and purpose.

The Epoch Times: What do you wish more people understood about the retirement years? Ms. Black: Once we do the work to find out what motivated us in the first place and give ourselves permission to enjoy, we discover a richer, more meaningful kind of happy.

#### The Epoch Times: If someone reading this is in this last chapter of life currently and struggling to find meaning and fulfill ment, what's the first thing you'd suggest they do?

Ms. Black: Look to those sections of the wheel that I mentioned above and make a concerted effort to expand each one: Find new friends and deepen old relationships; learn something, anything, new; test new leisure activities—don't rule things out before giving them a chance; get involved in your community-there is so much needed out there; take care of your health, whether through new activities, new foods, or new preparations; and get in touch with your spirituality, whether through meditation, formal religion, or just a wonder about our world.







beauty, but not everyone sees it. CONFUCIUS (551 B.C.–479 B.C.), CHINESE PHILOSOPHER

By Aidan Danza

THE FATHER OF **OUR COUNTRY** 

Augustine

Washington Sr

Mary Ball

Washington.

n Feb. 22, 1732, George Washington was born to parents Augustine Washington and Mary Ball Washington in Westmoreland, Virginia.

**IS BORN** 

George spent his childhood on his family's farms, mostly Ferry Farm located along the banks of the Rappahannock River. Sadly his father died when George was only 11 years old.

As he grew up, he took on the responsibilities of farm life and studied books such as "The Rules of Civility," which helped shape the upright moral code he held himself to.

Of course, as an adult, he accomplished many great things including leading America to its independence and becoming the first president of the United States.

### ALL PHOTOS BY SHUTTERSTOCK IDENTIFYING 2 BIRDS THAT DON'T BELONG

ometimes birds end up where they don't belong—

places far away from their typical territory.

This may happen because they got lost or blown off course, and sometimes it's because the bird hitchhiked on a ship and ended up in a port far away from its origin. Whatever the reason, it stirs up excitement among birders everywhere when they see rare or vagrant species they weren't expecting. The following two species are among the most commonly occurring rarities that you can find here in America, if you're lucky.

The head turns almost completely white in the

winter

### **BLACK-HEADED GULL**

The black-headed gull lives in Europe, but turns up on the U.S. East Coast somewhat regularly. It's named for its head, which, in the breeding season, is usually a solid chocolatebrown color. The head turns almost completely white in the winter, aside from a few flecks of black behind the eye and on the back of the head. When they do turn up in America, they usually



will be found in flocks of the frustratingly similar Bonaparte's gulls, but sometimes they will stand out like a sore thumb among other larger gulls. To tell it apart from the Bonaparte's, look at the wings. The blackheaded gull has white wing tips, while the Bonaparte's gull has black wing tips. The black-headed is also slightly smaller and has a red bill, rather than a black one.



The tufted duck is common in scaup flocks, making in both Europe and Asia. Sometimes, though, it manages to cross the Pacific Ocean from Asia and the Atlantic Ocean from Europe, and it can be spotted along both the East and West Coast of the United States. It's similar in coloration and habits to a scaup, which is an American duck. Tufted ducks tend to stay

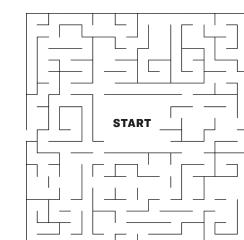
identification more difficult. If you have heard of a tufted duck sighting in the area, look for a scauplike duck with a small feather plume. Males are much easier to distinguish because they have white flanks, while a male scaup will have gray ones. Females, meanwhile, are so similar to female scaup that they often go undetected.



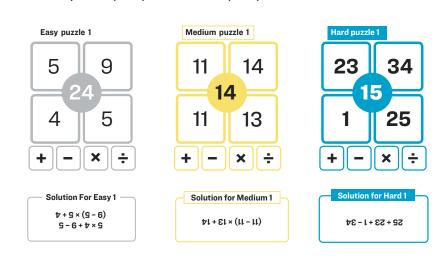
#### HOW TO **FIND THEM**

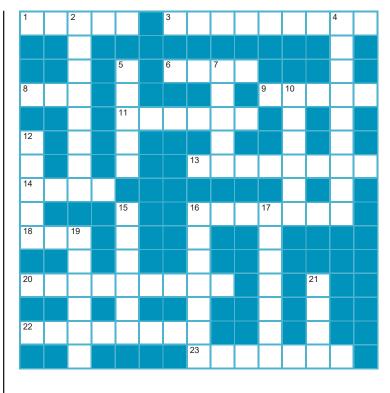
Sometimes, it's easier to identify birders than birds. They're usually people with optical equipment who are focused on a particular spot in nature. Talk to them and ask them what they're looking at. You can also search the internet. Many birders log their sightings on a website called eBird If there has been a rare bird in the area, it will very probably be logged on eBird.





**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





### Across

1 Children receive these on New Year (5) **3** Lunar New Year performance (9)

- 6 Open windows and doors on New Year for good \_\_\_\_(4)
- 8 2020 was the year of this quick-witted little animal (3)
- н госк

STIRICS

CHINEZE

ADNAJAO

HWONEA

GRATITUDE Y G

9 This might be in your red envelope (5) эомудионт st з 19 11 2023 is the year of the \_\_\_\_(6)

### Uown

- Celebration (8)
- We\_\_\_\_Lunar New Year (9) **5** 2014 was the Year of the \_\_\_\_, and energetic
- and sociable traits (5) Where the best Chinese food comes from (5)
- 10 On Lunar New Year this fruit represents luck,
- prosperity and long life (6) 12 Last year was the Year of the \_\_\_\_, with strong
- and brave traits (5) **15** "Houses of Heaven" (6)
- **16** Lighting a green one will bring good health (7)
- 17 These celebrations began on January 22nd (7)
- 19 Next year will be the Year of the \_\_\_\_, associated
- with nobleness, great talent and honor (6) 21 2015 was the last Year of the \_\_\_\_, and is
- associated with gentleness, mild manners, and being shy (4)

#### **13** The Zodiac is not quite the same as

- a Western (8) **14** This color represents wealth (4)
- 16 People and customs that come from China (7)
- 18 On New Year, lanterns of this colors scare
- away evil spirits (3)
- 20 We show this to our elders on New Year (9)
- 22 New Year treat (8) **23** Firecrackers scare away evil \_\_\_\_\_(7)

#### **TRUTH** and **TRADITION**

In Our Own Words



It finally seemed like there was someone out there listening to me—to my parents—and hearing us.

**Teresa You** Manager, Customer Service

# The Woman Behind the Hotline (Part 2) A Ray of Hope

#### Dear Epoch VIP,

To say that The Epoch Times is a special media to me would be an understatement. It's been there for me ever since I was a little girl in China, and one of the few places where I know I can read the truth, regardless of what the government's media outlets may say or do.

When I was nine, my parents were arrested before my own eyes from our home in Beijing. They weren't criminals: just Falun Gong practitioners.

My mother, a hospital worker, had just been looking for a spiritual practice, a way to live around her many illnesses. My father, a professor and Chinese Communist Party (CCP) member, followed suit after he saw my mother's improvement in health.

When I was younger, my mom would tell me stories about how people would commit suicide during the Cultural Revolution because they were so humiliated. And before that, how the landlords had all of their money taken away, simply because everyone had to be "the same."

#### My parents used to tell me these stories about other people, but when the Falun Gong persecution began, it finally happened to them too—even though my dad was a Party member who taught communism, socialism, and Marxism in school.

In an instant, my parents were handcuffed and taken away from me to a labor camp, to a place I had no idea about. A place that the news never talked about. I had no idea what the authorities would do to my parents and it worried me.

I saw the brutal treatment of Falun Gong practitioners in labor camps for the first time in the Chinese-language edition of The Epoch Times (via a VPN). Though this knowledge made me extremely scared and gave me nightmares, it also brought a sense of security in finally knowing the kind of place my parents were taken to and that people like my parents were not forgotten. They wouldn't just disappear, no matter how much the CCP wanted them to. Having lived through this experience, I can say there's no platform in China that gives a voice to the human rights victims. **For all the people who are persecuted and their loved ones—it's really a very alienating experience.**  But because there was a media like The Epoch Times, I felt less alone. It finally seemed like there was someone out there listening to me—to my parents—and hearing us.

When I was in high school, my parents (who had returned from labor camp by then) sent me to the United States as an exchange student. They told me to enjoy the freedom in America since by then, we all knew too well what a country without freedom for its people was like.

The American people that I've come across since then have been very nice, friendly, and helpful, and it's had a wonderful effect on me. But at the same time, it's always felt like some of them didn't really know what was going on outside of America.

In China, all of the elites and intellectuals including those I saw on the news when I was younger—always said that due to differences in ideology, sooner or later there will be armed conflict between China and America. If you watch Chinese state-run news, the narrative (though it fluctuates based on the CCP's diplomatic needs) has always been anti-American.

It's not the Chinese people themselves, of course, that have something against America. But many Chinese people live in this environment where they're being brainwashed, and every day they're being told that America is the enemy. It was so strange to me that Americans, and the American government, didn't seem to have any reaction to this at all.

A media doesn't just keep things that people know about from being forgotten, like with my parents; it also brings into view things that people didn't previously know about, that they should know. That is why I take my job at The Epoch Times very seriously so that the people I've met in America can have the knowledge they need to protect their freedom, and the

people living in fear in China can have the knowledge they need to win it back.

In Truth and Tradition,

Teresa You The Epoch Times



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