

# THE EPOCH TIMES

# LIFE &

# TRADITION

AMERICA'S MOST BEAUTIFUL PLACES

## Grandson, Grandmother Visit All US National Parks on 7-Year Journey

Joy Ryan, 93, is the oldest living person to visit all 63 national parks

By Louise Chambers

A grandson and his 93-year-old grandmother, who spent nearly a decade estranged, have come together to complete an epic quest: The pair has visited all 63 national parks in the United States in just over seven years. In doing so, the grandma made history.

On May 16, "Grandma Joy" Ryan became the oldest living person to visit every U.S. National Park. Her grandson, Brad Ryan, a veterinarian who lives in the same town, Duncan Falls, Ohio, told *The Epoch Times* that it was their shared penchant for nature that inspired them to embark on this ambitious trip.

While Joy suffered a bout of poor health before the trip began, she has since recovered. Brad says it's the travel itself that has rejuvenated Joy's love for life.

"The quest to visit every U.S. National Park was a mutual decision that evolved organically as we ventured deeper into the hidden corners of America," Brad said.

"The national parks are the most beautiful landscapes in America, but they are also a window to the world. We have made friends with people from every corner of the world; people she never would have encountered had she remained in rural Appalachia."

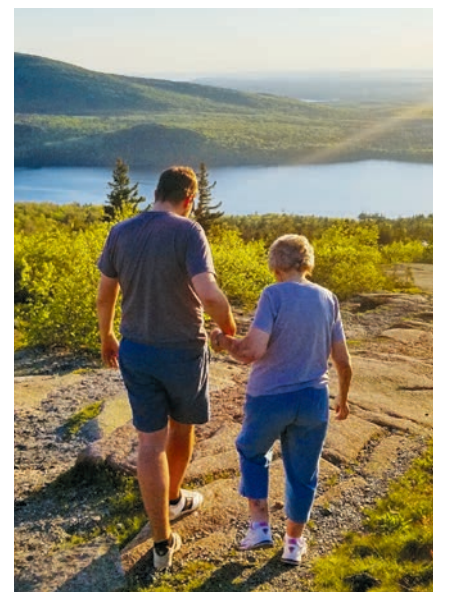
Grandma Joy said: "It's hard to believe, really. I have seen the most wondrous places. Brad took my photo next to all 63 park signs, so I know it's true. But I never imagined a woman from a little dinky town like mine could raise such a ruckus. I guess the one word to describe how I feel is 'proud.'"

Brad, who witnessed Joy white-water rafting in Class III rapids in Alaska when she was 91, says his grandma has shown that no one is too old to live their dreams.

"Grandma Joy taught me that aging has inherent limitations, but our choices are an immensely powerful counterbalance," Brad said. "Whether you are 39 or 93, life is happening right now. Widen your

*Continued on Page 2*

COURTESY OF BRAD RYAN



Brad Ryan and Joy Ryan may have completed all 63 U.S. National Parks, but their travel adventures have only just begun.



There are still plenty of wholesome books at the library if you just know where to look.

CULTURE

## Treasures and Trash: Visiting the Library

Libraries offer countless resources for fostering a love of reading, but don't leave your discernment at the door

By Jeff Minick

"I have always imagined that Paradise will be a kind of a library," Argentine writer Jorge Luis Borges wrote.

Like Borges, many of us find a little slice of heaven in a public library. There, standing straight as soldiers in tight ranks on the shelves, are thousands of books waiting just for us: stories, adventures, travel guides, histories, and a dozen other categories of the printed word. Best-sellers rub up against old favorites, and classics such as "War and Peace" and "Adven-

tures of Huckleberry Finn" bracket the works of less familiar authors, mines of gold waiting to be discovered.

In the Samuels Public Library in Front Royal, Virginia, patrons find a spacious vestibule, lit by a wall of windows and ideal for work or meals. Inside are well-organized stacks with plenty of desks and chairs, a large children's room with a play area for the little ones, and friendly and helpful staff. Warren County is home to many homeschoolers, and the kids and their parents trip in and out of the place throughout the day, lugging

bags and backpacks filled with returns and check-outs. A small secondhand bookshop operated by the Friends of the Library and serving up coffee and tea welcomes patrons near the entrance-way, and a full calendar of programs aimed at children and adults adds to this lively atmosphere.

### Pitfalls

By no means, of course, is Samuels a paradise of the written word. Adult fiction, for example, contains dozens of novels

*Continued on Page 2*



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Joy Ryan with her grandson Brad Ryan at the National Park of American Samoa. Brad says the national parks are "a window to the world."

AMERICA'S MOST BEAUTIFUL PLACES

## Grandson, Grandmother Visit All US National Parks on 7-Year Journey

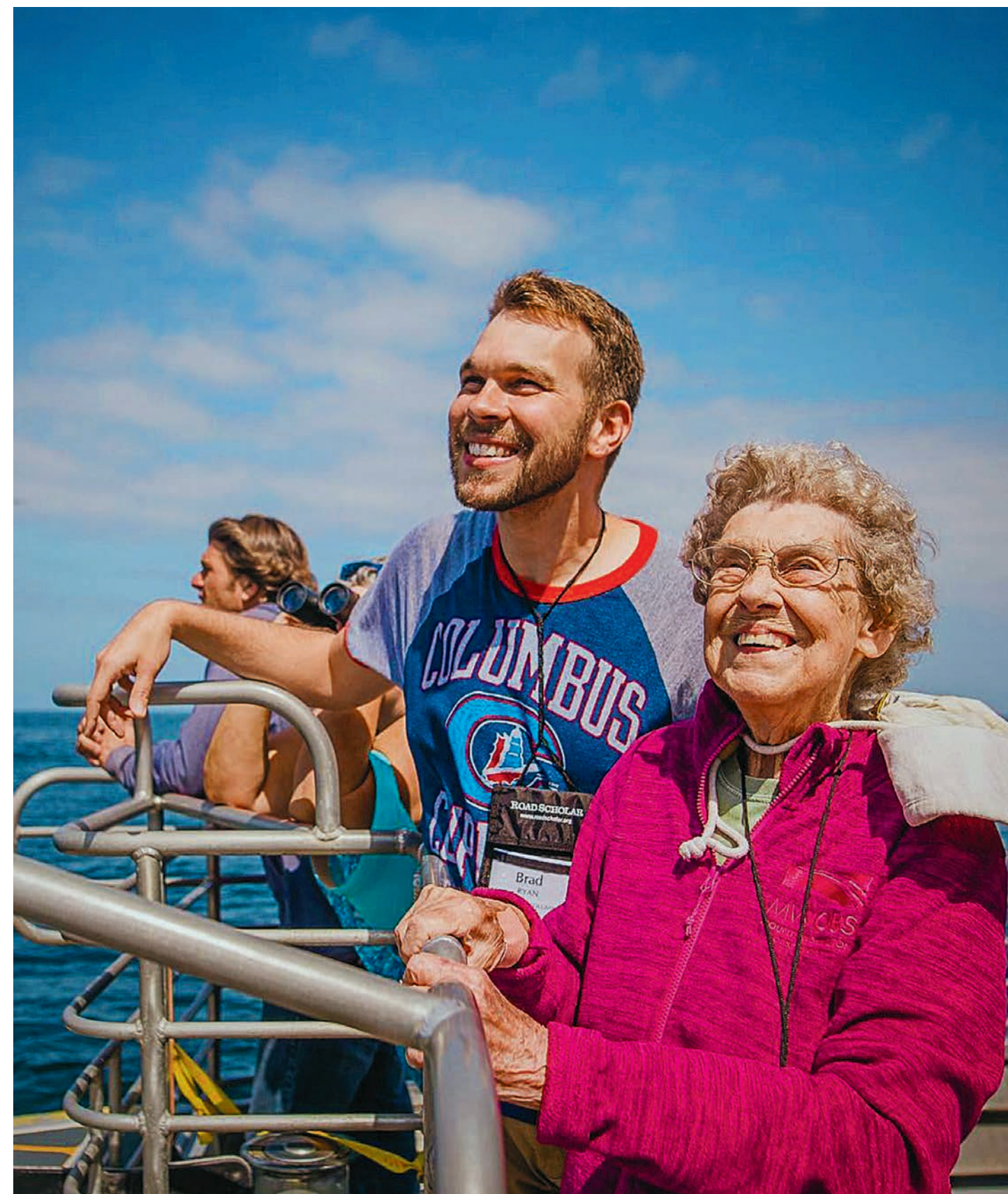
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lens and choose to see the possibilities that exist for your life at every age."

Sharing the milestone moment on their popular Facebook page, Grandma Joy's Road Trip, Brad wrote: "It was the greatest privilege of my life to be in the driver's seat. We defied erroneous assumptions about the limitations of aging. We defied financial and logistical constraints. We even defied a pandemic. And you might have noticed that I accidentally made Grandma Joy the superstar I always knew her to be."

The first park on the pair's itinerary was the Great Smoky Mountains National Park in Tennessee in September 2015. The years-long venture was part-funded by generous donations to a now-closed fundraiser campaign started by Brad in 2017.

"Grandma Joy and I were hiking in our local state park when she was 80, and she casually told me that she wished she had witnessed more of the great outdoors in her life. She casually mentioned that she had never seen a mountain, and it broke my heart," Brad said. "The seed was planted in my



Brad Ryan and Joy Ryan have traveled to all 63 U.S. National Parks, including those in American Samoa and U.S. Virgin Islands.



Joy Ryan had never seen mountains before she and her grandson began visiting the U.S. National Parks.



Joy Ryan is certified as the oldest living person to visit every U.S. National Park.

mind during that hike, but it would be another five years before I invited her on a road trip [in 2015].

"Initially, I envisioned our weekend road trip to the Smoky Mountains as a singular event, but watching my 85-year-old grandmother climb a mountain left me inspired and hungry for more adventures. All I had to do was open my passenger seat door and invite her along for the ride."

Before Brad and Joy's road trip began, Joy was working at a deli in Duncan Falls, living vicariously through travel documentaries. Brad, who had been

estranged from his grandma for almost 10 years following his parents' divorce, says that "nature was the most powerful healing force" in helping them find their way back to each other.

On May 25, as part of Older Americans Month, Brad and Joy took part in a ceremony where they were recognized by the governor of American Samoa, Lemanu Palepoi Sialega Mauga, and the Territorial Administration on Aging. Brad wore a traditional Polynesian ie lavalava and proudly spoke to island elders about the "immense value" of intergenerational connection.

Whether you are  
39 or 93, life is  
happening right  
now. Widen  
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choose to see the  
possibilities that  
exist for your life  
at every age.

Brad Ryan, veterinarian

"I could not have written a more perfect finale to our 7 1/2-year journey," he wrote.

Brad's father, Joy's eldest son, sadly passed away a week before their visit to American Samoa, making the finish line of their road trip "bittersweet." But Brad and Joy's reunion and the ripple effect of their great shared adventure is spreading far and wide.

After visiting every U.S. National Park, the pair plans to touch base on all seven continents. They are headed to Kenya for a National Geographic expedition in July.

THE  
EPOCH  
TIMES

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Don't let the few bad apples at the library stop you from fostering a love of reading in your child.

CULTURE

## Treasures and Trash: Visiting the Library

Continued from Page 1

of questionable morality or propriety.

Similar complaints might be lodged against the children's department. Here manga, those Japanese comic books and graphic novels and their American lookalikes, cover an entire wall, yet attract few young patrons. Some of the

books in the Young Adult section reflect our larger culture with their explicit sexual themes, including a number of gay and transgender works.

The latter have drawn the ire of some parents. Several of them now take extra care when selecting stories for their children, trying to make sure the books correspond to their family values. Others accompany their teenagers into the library to prevent them from stumbling into something offensive. A few have stopped visiting the library altogether.

Here, some questions arise: How can parents negotiate the roadways of good and bad literature? What impact can all of us have on our public libraries? Most important of all, what

are some ways that we can use the library to turn our children toward literature and reading?

### Books and Lists About Books

There are many excellent guides that can help steer parents and older children toward good books in the library.

Gladys Hunt's "Honey for a Child's Heart" offers hundreds of selections with descriptive blurbs for the toddler to 12-year-old crew. Along with Barbara Hampton, Hunt also wrote "Honey for a Teen's Heart," with hundreds of choices for readers and some great essays to inspire teens in their reading.

Search online for "lists of books for kids," and you'll find a profusion of recommendations. To narrow the scope of your investigation, insert your child's age into the search. Sarah Mackenzie's "The Read-Aloud Family" contains a fine list of literature from infancy through adolescence, in addition to touting the joys and benefits of sharing books.

When in the library without a guide, and you're in doubt about the suitability of a certain book selected by your child, remember that you can quickly check out reviews of it on your phone.

### Interlibrary Loans and Books Ordered

Most patrons are aware that if their public library lacks a certain book, they can request it through interlibrary loan. If your library, for instance, doesn't own the "Julie Andrews' Collection of Poems, Songs, and Lullabies," put in a request form at the desk, and soon you'll have this splendid book in your hands.

Depending on its subject matter—a book must have some appeal to the public beyond your interests—our libraries will also order books for you to read that will then be added to their permanent collection. If you've never read North Korean escapee Yeonmi Park's loving critique of America and our drift into the "dictatorship of the mind," ask a librarian to order it from the publisher and add it to the shelves.

### A Special Tip for Teens

Though teens may be inclined to browse the shelves of the Young Adult collection, parents and teens should consider instead scouring adult fiction for novels and short stories, especially those written before 1970. Many libraries have held onto some of these dinosaurs, the popular fiction of their day, and these wonderful stories retain their power. Betty Smith's "A Tree Grows in Brooklyn," Herman Wouk's "Marjorie Morningstar," the Kenneth Roberts stories of the French and Indian War and the American Revolution, and the Western novels of Louis L'Amour—all these and other great stories can often be found awaiting new readers.

In addition to their entertainment and educational value, these older books offer one more special benefit for teens: The vocabulary and

the more complex sentences writers then used will help build skills for tests such as the SAT and enhance reading ability for college.

### Party Time

Gather with some friends at the library, spend some time browsing the stacks, take some books with you, and go out for coffee or a meal, or if you are

meeting families with children, to someone's house for refreshments. While you're enjoying the foods and beverages, compare your books and talk about why you want to read them. It's a great way to deepen our knowledge of our friends and to show children that others love reading.

### Libraries Online

Like some bibliophiles, I prefer books made of paper, ink, and glue, but many others, including the younger crew, are surely practiced at reading digital books.

Search on your device for "free books online," and up will pop a multitude of resources—outfits such as Project Gutenberg or Open Library—all offering a cornucopia of literature, biography, science, history, and so on. At OpenLibrary.org, click on "Browse," and you'll find thousands of e-books listed by grade and reading levels for students K-12. For students who have

difficulty reading, many of these selections are available in an audio format as well.

### Practicing Discernment

We mustn't shun or give up on our libraries. They belong to all of us, and despite some of the battles being waged in our culture and the rise of digital learning, libraries remain a foundation stone of our republic. Just as we would do in a bookshop, we must be aware of which books we wish our younger children to read and point our teenagers to selections that will help them grow in a healthy way. By teaching our children this art of discernment, they'll learn the difference between the treasures and the rubbish on those shelves of books and will pass those lessons on to their own children.

"Libraries allow children to ask questions about the world and find the answers," school librarian and First Lady Laura Bush once said. "And the wonderful thing is that once a child learns to use a library, the doors to learning are always open."

That's the goal.

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 nonfiction, "Learning As I Go" and "Movies Make The Man." Today, he lives and writes in Front Royal, Va.



ALL IMAGES IN THE PUBLIC DOMAIN UNLESS OTHERWISE NOTED



A detail of "Dante Meditating on The Divine Comedy," 1843, by Jean-Jacques Feuchère. Pen and brown ink with brown wash and watercolor over graphite, heightened with white gouache, on three joined sheets of laid paper; 16 5/8 inches by 14 3/16 inches. Gift of the Christian Humann Foundation (1996), National Gallery of Art, Washington.

## SACRED ART

# Painting Dante's Epic Poem 'The Divine Comedy'

Divine Dante at the National Gallery of Art

By Lorraine Ferrier

Where are we heading—heaven or hell? Poet Dante Alighieri explores that question in his epic poem "The Divine Comedy," which he completed in the year that he died, 1321.

Dante wrote 100 cantos (sections), averaging 142 lines, for his poem that charts the journey of the pilgrim Dante through hell to purgatory and paradise. The ancient Roman poet Virgil, symbolizing human knowledge, guides Dante through hell and purgatory.

And Dante's childhood love Beatrice, representing the divine mysteries, guides the pilgrim from the top of the mountain of Purgatory (the Garden of Eden) to Paradise. St. Bernard of Clairvaux guides Dante through the Empyrean, the highest levels of heaven, to see God and the souls of those who have been saved.

Throughout the poem, Dante uses Christian beliefs and Greco-Roman mythology, along with social and political tales of his day, to illustrate the narrow path to ascension.

"Dante's whole poem 'The Divine Comedy' can be said to be about the perversion of reason (the intellect) that leads to hell, damnation, and the unending misery of so much of the human condition in this life as well as the next," James Sales, an Epoch Times contributor, wrote in his article "What Rational Morality Is Based On."

**Washington's Divine Dante**  
Artists have long depicted aspects of "The Divine Comedy" on canvas,

on paper, and in stone. The National Gallery of Art holds a number of such works, 20 of which are now on display in the exhibition "Going Through Hell: The Divine Dante."

Excerpts from the poem accompany some of the artworks on display, highlighting the artists' inspirations and reminding us of the divine consequences of our actions.

Gallery visitors may feel as though they're being guided through the exhibit by Dante himself when they read wall quotes such as that which led the pilgrim Dante to Limbo:

"Let us descend now into the blind world here below," the poet began, all pale.  
"I will be first, and you second."

("Inferno," canto 4)

### The Art of Dante's Hell and Heaven

About a decade after Dante wrote the poem, Dominican friars commissioned Buonamico Buffalmacco to paint a fresco of "The Last Judgment and Hell" on the walls of the Camposanto (cemetery) in Pisa, Italy. In the exhibition, an engraving by an unknown artist shows Buffalmacco's graphic vision of hell in all its infamy.

Even in black and white, it's a graphic and repulsive picture full of torment and torture. A series of concentric rings show some of the punishments given for different sins in Dante's nine levels of hell. In the

center, a horned Lucifer devours and evacuates sinful souls.

From the mouth of each [hole] projected the feet of a sinner and his legs as far as the calf.

("Inferno," canto 19)

Other artworks on display delve into the consequences of specific sins, such as the lust that Dante described in canto 5 of the "Inferno." A wall plaque next to William Blake's engraving "The Circle of the Lustful: Paolo and Francesca" hints at their adulterous downfall.

How many sweet thoughts, what great desire, brought them to the woeful pass!

("Inferno," canto 5)

The couple had been reading the Arthurian legend of Lancelot of the Lake, when, driven by desire, Paolo and Francesca fell in love. Both were already married. Francesca's husband murdered the couple in a crime of passion. Blake depicted the couple at the moment of their embrace and about to be punished. Blake interpreted Dante's punishment as the couple being sucked into a whirlwind with other lustful souls, stuck in an eternal embrace thereafter.

Also included in the exhibition is Jean-Jacques Feuchère's painting "Dante Meditating on The Divine Comedy." Feuchère bathed one half of the painting in light, with Virgil wearing a robe and a laurel wreath and Beatrice wearing a veil. She raises one hand up to Heaven, where the artist painted the brightest of stars, perhaps a nod to canto 4 of Dante's "Paradiso," in which he cites Plato's philosophy that "the souls appear to return to the stars."

Artists have long interpreted the cantos of "The Divine Comedy" on canvas, paper, and in stone.

Feuchère rendered the rest of the painting in darkness, showing the beasts and shadowy realms of the afterlife. Dante dressed in a red robe sits in the center of the painting, between good and evil—heaven and hell. He's turned more to the light than the shadows, perhaps pondering the lessons of "The Divine Comedy." He's aware of the fierce serpent about to strike at his foot, likely indicating the ever-present temptations and danger of sin.

The gallery's curator of Italian and Spanish paintings and the exhibition's curator, Gretchen Hirschauer, summed up this universal predicament well, saying in an email to The Epoch Times that Dante's writing "reflects a timeless sense of the human condition."

If "The Divine Comedy" tells us of the perversion of reason, then the poem's corrective and cautionary tales remain antidotes for our transgressions today. And if each of our transgressions leads us downward, then living with goodness surely brings us closer to heaven's gates.

*The "Going Through Hell: The Divine Dante" exhibition at the National Gallery of Art in Washington, D.C., runs through July 16. To find out more, visit [NGA.gov](https://nga.gov)*

*Throughout the exhibition, the gallery uses excerpts from "The Divine Comedy" as translated by Charles S. Singleton, published in 1970 by Princeton University Press.*



"The Inferno, After the Fresco in the Camposanto, in Pisa, Italy" circa 1480 or 1500, artist unknown. Engraving; 9 15/16 inches by 12 11/16 inches. Rosenwald Collection, National Gallery of Art, Washington.

PUBLIC DOMAIN



"A Village Choir," 1847, by Thomas Webster. Oil on panel. Victoria and Albert Museum, London.

## SACRED MUSIC

## The Swedish Poem That Became a World-Famous Hymn

By Rebecca Day

A thunderstorm descended upon the southeastern coastal town of Kronoback, Sweden, in the spring of 1885 as poet and preacher Carl Boberg made his way home from church one warm afternoon. Although he was temporarily caught in the rain, by the time he reached his house, the rolling storm had already moved on. His office faced the town's sprawling bay, and he opened the windows to let in the smell of fresh rain mixed with the calm breeze. Church bells rang softly in the distance, and the glow of sunlight reflected off the water as birds chirped and took flight.

As Boberg was also a member of the Swedish Parliament, his penchant for writing poetry and preaching the gospel came in handy more than his diplomatic skills in this particular instance. Inspired by the understated grandeur of the moment, he fused nature's beauty with God's word and wrote the poem "O Store Gud."

Translated into English, the poem "O Mighty God" became the inaugural version of "How Great Thou Art," one of today's most popular hymns around the world.

### A Swedish Poem Travels Europe

After the poem was published in a local newspaper, readers became inspired by its spiritual message. As more and more locals shared the artistic work, the words were eventually set to music. An old folk melody was paired with the stanzas, and just a few years after the poem's first publication in 1886, worshippers were singing it in churches throughout southeastern Sweden.

The song's uplifting message, which centers around praising God for his loving grace and awesome power, soon made its way throughout Europe and was translated into multiple languages, including a popular German rendition. This in-demand rendition eventually even made its way to Russia for translation.

While Europe had been singing versions of "O Store Gud" for years, the first American translation didn't happen until 1925. Thanks to the work of Illinois professor E. Gustav Johnson, the song was brought to American churches and named "O Mighty God."

Appearing in America's official "The Covenant Hymnal," Johnson kept much of the original wording and melody, which emoted a traditional feel. Johnson's translation became a go-to hymn for churches across the country. But it was a British missionary who ultimately brought "O Mighty God" to the masses.

### A Moving Reinterpretation

Christian missionary Stuart Hine spent much of the 1930s with his wife, Mercy, in Ukraine, traveling through small villages scattered across the Carpathian Mountains and into Russia, doing work on behalf of the Salvation Army, an organization that brought Hine to Christianity decades before.

While traveling, Hine kept journals and wrote about his experiences, not wanting to forget details of how Christians in other parts of the world worshiped and how those differed from his own experiences in his home country. During one of his early trips, Hine heard a group of worshippers singing the Russian-translated version of "O Store Gud," known as "Great God," and he was so moved by their performance that the song stuck with him for years.

Stanzas of his own took shape via his writings. He soon began putting these words to melody, building off the hymn's original music but updating it with a more contemporary approach.

One of his most pivotal experiences happened while visiting a rural Ukrainian village where most of the townspeople were never taught how to read. However, one villager had managed to learn by studying scripture, and she went on to share the words of the Bible with her neighbors. This grassroots sharing of God's message turned into regular Bible study meetings for the villagers. And when Stuart and Mercy walked around the remote town one day, they heard the group shouting and singing from inside one of the homes. Hine struck up a conversation with the group and was so moved by their demonstrative ceremony of repentance that he began jotting down phrases he heard them shouting as they praised God and asked for forgiveness.

The British missionary turned these notes into verses, and his favorite phrase in particular, "How great thou art," became the new work's title.

His artistic journey began with a retelling of the "O Store Gud" hymn. But his original verses include the now-iconic chorus lines "Then sings my soul, my savior God, to thee/How great thou art, how great thou art." These memorable lyrics along with Hine's modernized melody and reworking of the song's message transformed his rendition into a truly unique reimagining worthy of its own place in history.

### A Lasting Legacy

When Hine published "How Great Thou Art" in a Russian magazine in 1949, he never imagined that the song would take the world by storm, just as a sudden storm had acted as inspiration for Boberg on that fateful spring day in 1885.

Throughout the latter part of the 20th century, "How Great Thou Art" was integrated into church services because of its popularity with congregations, and it ultimately became a central piece in church hymn books throughout America.

In the 1950s, the praise song reached worldwide fame when popular preacher Billy Graham used it as his signature song during a series of sermons in Europe and North America.

One of the most moving contemporary performances of the piece was passionately delivered by Christian country singer Carrie Underwood in 2011 for a televised Academy of Country Music special. After its airing, her recording of "How Great Thou Art" took the top spot on the iTunes gospel chart and is now recognized as one of her biggest hits.

To this day, "How Great Thou Art" is recognized as one of Christian music's most popular gospel songs, second only to the traditional hymn "Amazing Grace."

Hine's "How Great Thou Art" transformed Boberg's original poem set to folk music and relegated to church congregations and gave populations across the world a deeply affecting worship song that anyone can cling to in times of praise and need.

*Rebecca Day is an independent musician, freelance writer, and frontwoman of country group, The Crazy Daysies.*

For more arts and culture articles, visit [TheEpochTimes.com](https://TheEpochTimes.com)



DEAR NEXT GENERATION Advice from our readers to our young people

# Go the Extra Mile

Give it all you've got in life, work, and character

**Rein in your emotions.** Controlling your temper and emotions leads to so many benefits, from more friendships to better teamwork and thinking more about others than about yourself.

**Be frugal.** As a business owner, you can never run out of cash. You need to be frugal, as you never know when that unexpected storm will hit. It is a good way to be environmentally conscious, too! Live below your means. This reduces financial stress and keeps life simple and easier.

**Practice moderation.** Whether it is drinking, watching TV, or having fun, do it in moderation and you will enjoy life more and miss life events less.

**Do not expect work to be easy.** One of the best things my father did for me was to have me work my way up the company ladder, starting with cleaning the floors and toilets. I believe you should not handicap your children by making their lives too easy.

**Realize that love is a four-letter word spelled G-I-V-E.** Be a giving person. It is important to give and make a difference in the lives of everyone you meet. I like this quote from Jackie Robinson: "A life is not important except in the impact it has on other lives."

**Be thankful and grateful.** Being grateful is easy when things are going well. It is important also to be grateful when life is a struggle. Things will get better.

**Do more than you are asked.** Go the extra mile on and off the job.

**Don't look back.** People tend to dwell on the past. Don't look into the rearview mirror too long. Learn from yesterday, live today, and lean into tomorrow.

**Don't play the blame game.** Take personal responsibility, always.

**When things don't go according to plan, don't panic.** Improvise, adapt, overcome! You cannot think clearly when stressed out.

**Always do the right thing, and never do the wrong thing.** Doing the right thing is never wrong, even if it puts you out of your comfort zone.

**Self-reflect.** At the end of the day, reflect on what went well, what did not, and what you can do to make things better next time.

**Practice discipline.** This is one of the most important attributes. Once you

learn something beneficial, make it routine. I have a lot of exercise routines I do daily to prevent injury. One of my sayings is: The older you get, the harder you must work to stay young! Another of my sayings: Pain is fine if it does not linger in the same place too long. The Marines like to say that "pain is weakness leaving the body."

I once had an assistant who made me coffee every morning when I arrived at work. At the time, I was putting two packets of sugar in my coffee. She told me that was too much sugar. I quit putting any sugar in my coffee that day. The ironic part of the story is that she left our employment to work for her family business, which was wholesale cotton candy—pure sugar!

**Lead well.** Once you are a leader, success is all about growing others.

**Learn from history.** Ronald Reagan once said that we are only one generation away from communism. Learn from history by reading The Epoch Times, and beware of communism. Be a great American!

Gratefully,  
—David "Mickey" Nolen, Florida

My advice to the younger generation is more of a set of statements explaining life. Consistency is the key to progress.

Progress is defined by our own successes and failures.

Failures can be our best experiences; successes just are.

Experiences are learned and remembered the best!

—Valerie Smith, New York

**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*



# FOR KIDS ONLY

THE EPOCH TIMES

## This Week in History

# US CONSTITUTION BECOMES LAW

On June 21, 1788, the U.S. Constitution was ratified (or approved) by New Hampshire, the ninth state to do so, resulting in its officially being adopted as the law of the land. Fifty-five state delegates had been debating the details of the document. Federalists argued for a strong central government and anti-federalists argued for strong individual rights.

Once ratified, it was then decided that the government under the Constitution would begin on March 4, 1789. The Bill of Rights was added a few months later.



## Sunshine

By Thomas Hall Shastid

Thou dancing sunbeams through the happy day  
Dost cheer me on my onward path through life,  
You show to me more clear my stumbling way  
And lighter make my almost ceaseless strife.  
Thou art to me a greater friend indeed,  
Than others I have loved up to this hour;—  
They are oft but a wildly growing weed—  
But thou art like a shining summer flow'r.  
The world could not exist if not for thee,  
The Ice-King would possession then obtain;  
The light and beauty from all things would flee,  
And naught but lasting, dark'ning chaos reign.  
But now we have the cheerful, glittering light  
That keeps the universe alive and bright.

“Summer afternoon—  
summer afternoon; to me  
those have always been the  
two most beautiful words  
in the English language.”

HENRY JAMES  
(1843–1916), AUTHOR

(BUTTERFLIES) RANDI KAWANAGASOORIYA/SHUTTERSTOCK



(SHEEP) TYLER OLSON/SHUTTERSTOCK



(GIRL) PIXDELUXE/GETTY IMAGES; (BACKGROUND) ALICE ADLER/GETTY IMAGES



It's important to be grateful in both the good and the hard times.

Consistency is the key to progress. Progress is defined by our own successes and failures.

Valerie Smith

FAMILY

## Summer Tools for Mom's Back Pocket

When summer vacation hits and the kiddos are looking for fun, you'll be well prepared with these 10 tips

By Barbara Danza

Summertime can be a tricky season for moms. Our expectations can sometimes get the better of us. When we think of summer, there's the promise of sunny, care-free days filled with outdoor fun and happy family moments. There's the vision of lounging in the sunshine, reading those books we've been trying to find time for, and sipping a delicious iced coffee, without a care in the world.

Reality, however, can sometimes look like complaining kiddos, endless messes, and crankiness brought on by erratic sleep schedules.

With a little preparation, this summer can look a little bit more like the former and a little bit less like the latter. Here are 10 tools to keep in Mom's back pocket this summer.

**Movie List**  
When bedtime can be a bit more flexible, family movie nights can be a great joy. Pop the popcorn, pull out the cozy blankets, and enjoy family-friendly entertainment together.

The key to a successful family movie night is having the movie chosen in advance. The last thing you want to do is pick up the remote and start the night by scrolling through every streaming service you have for something everyone can agree on. Think it through in advance, and when the time comes, enjoy the show.

would benefit from very calming choices. Score your summer with an enjoyable background that inspires and delights.

**Book Stack**  
Encourage reading all summer long by keeping a giant stack of books to choose from. Take the time to find the best-quality books you can for yourself and your kids to enjoy this summer. Perhaps you'll share in an audiobook or two (ideal for road trips) and some read-aloud, leaving plenty of options for the independent readers to enjoy on their own.

**Prize System**  
You can gamify summer activities with a fun and light-hearted prize system. Perhaps you want to encourage responsibility around the house, increased reading, or specific habits that you hope to help your children foster. Offering summertime prizes (a trip to the ice cream parlor, a new summertoy, a new book, a backyard campout) to celebrate accomplishments can add another layer of fun to the season.

**Calendar Countdown**  
You may have a special trip planned or some other fun event that the entire family is looking forward to. Create

a visual way to count down to the big day. Whether you're simply crossing off days on a calendar, removing rings from a paper chain, or using some other creative display of anticipation, a shared countdown keeps everyone aimed at something joyful and lifts the spirits as summer presses on.

**Craft Supplies**  
You're bound to encounter the dreaded phrase of summer: "I'm bored." Rather than lament its utterance, celebrate. Tell your kiddos you think that boredom is great because it forces them to get creative and think of new things to do. Some eyes may roll, sure, but boredom truly is a wonderful and necessary state for kids to enjoy, and it can often lead to magical moments (as long as they don't head for screens in those circumstances). Having crafting supplies or tools on hand for them to engage in activities that they truly enjoy is a great way to foster creativity and point them in the right direction when boredom strikes.

**Snack Station**  
My completely unscientific research has shown that children's snack requests increase at least tenfold in the summertime. Prepare in ad-

vance, and stock up on healthy snacks that even little kids can retrieve themselves. Fruit, cut veggies, jerky sticks, cheese sticks, low-sugar yogurt, and nuts are great options along with lots and lots of water.

**Go Bag**  
This glorious season affords days at the park, beach trips, hikes, visits to local museums, and all manner of outings. Prepare a bag with the essentials that you'll need when it's time to head out with the crew for the day. Make a practice of keeping it stocked all summer long so that you can grab it and go whenever necessary. No need to reinvent the wheel every time you head out.

**Travel Games**  
If you're traveling this summer, it's always a good idea to have a few games on hand to enjoy along the journey. Reach for simple classics such as tic-tac-toe or the license plate game, and keep drawing tools and notebooks or journals available to enhance the time en route without relying on screens.

**Habit Tracker**  
As kids get older, teaching them to maintain good habits in their lives is essential, and a habit tracker can be a fun way to help them along. Find one online and print it out, or create one yourself, and write in simple daily habits that they can work on and track all summer. For example, a child's habit tracker might include tasks such as making the bed, brushing teeth, or doing 10 jumping jacks. Make each habit small enough to be easy to accomplish each day and valuable enough to establish a positive trajectory.



A trip to the ice cream parlor is a memorable summer activity for everyone.



Having a go bag prepacked with all of the essentials makes day trips easier.

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# SEABIRD: THE BOOBY

**BOOBIES** are seabirds that range all across our tropical oceans.

While the blue-footed booby is probably the most famous, there are six (or five, depending on which scientists you ask) other species of boobies, with varying colors and habits.

## BLUE-FOOTED BOOBY

The blue-footed booby is a large, long seabird, with brown upper parts and white underparts and brown flecks covering its white head. It has a blue mask, a grayish bill, and bright-blue feet. They nest in vast colonies on dry, rocky islands, spending their lives close to the island. To

feed, they fly over the surface of the water, looking for fish, diving in from a height of up to 80 feet when they finds one. They usually fish alone, but also sometimes as a team, whistling loudly to let the flock know there's a school of fish in sight.

Interestingly, males are smaller than females, meaning that the male usually catches smaller fish than the female. The blue feet are used in a courtship display, when the male will march around his territory, kicking up his feet to show them off. The female also uses her warm feet to incubate her eggs, setting the eggs on top of her feet. Even when the chicks hatch, they remain on their mother's feet for a month more. Half of the world's population of blue-footed boobies breeds on the Galapagos Islands.

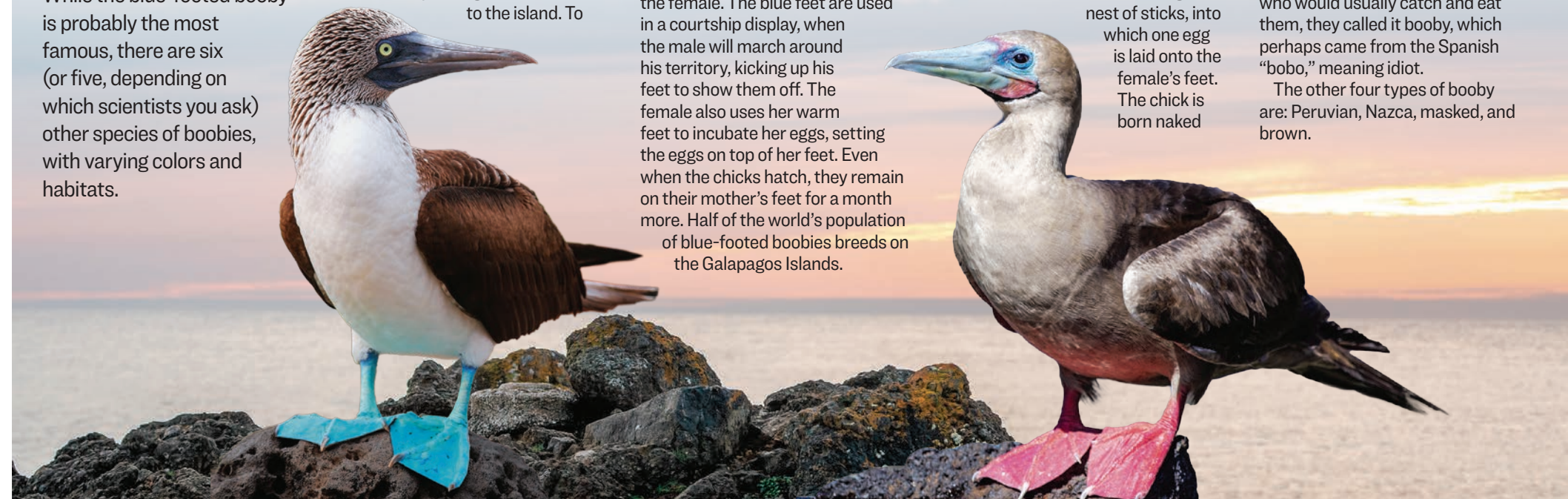
## RED-FOOTED BOOBY

Unlike the blue-footed booby, the red-footed booby lives all across the globe, although it also has a large population on the Galapagos Islands. It also has two color morphs, a dark morph and a light morph. They prefer to nest in trees and manmade structures, making a nest of sticks, into which one egg is laid onto the female's feet. The chick is born naked

and helpless, and it grows slowly, finally going completely out on its own after almost a year of care.

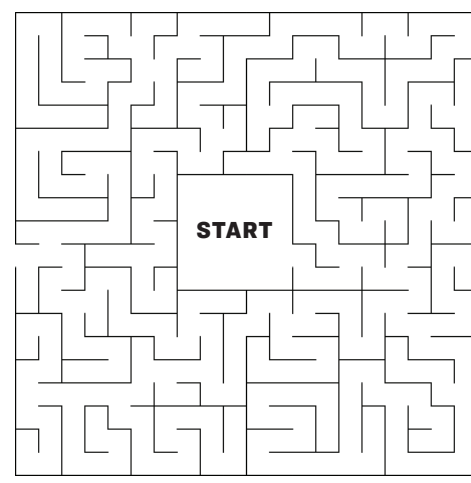
After chick-rearing season is over, parents go their separate ways to the sea, often riding on ships to catch the flying fish kicked up by the ship's wake. It's perhaps for this habit that the booby got its name: Since they have no fear of sailors, who would usually catch and eat them, they called it booby, which perhaps came from the Spanish "bobo," meaning idiot.

The other four types of booby are: Peruvian, Nazca, masked, and brown.



(RED-FOOTED BOOBY) JOANNE WASCHAK/GETTY IMAGES

## 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**

5	6		
72			
3	6		
+	-	x	÷

**Solution For Easy 1**  
 $6 \times (9 - 3 + 9)$   
 $9 \div 9 \times (6 - 3)$

**Medium puzzle 1**

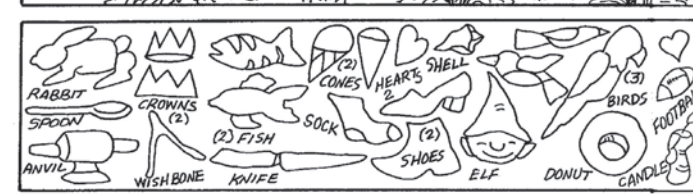
7	18		
32			
4	14		
+	-	x	÷

**Solution for Medium 1**  
 $7 + 4 \times (9 - 8)$   
 $9 - 81 \div 7 + 2$

**Hard puzzle 1**

16	36		
36			
1	16		
+	-	x	÷

**Solution for Hard 1**  
 $1 \times (91 - 91 + 98)$



**HIDDEN TREASURES** by Liz Ball  
[www.HiddenPicturePuzzles.com](http://www.HiddenPicturePuzzles.com)

**WORD SEARCH:** Summertime Is Here!

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

- |            |              |
|------------|--------------|
| Beach      | Heat         |
| Bees       | Hiking       |
| Bike       | Hobby        |
| Bikini     | June         |
| Blooms     | Kids         |
| Boat       | Kite         |
| Cookout    | Lake         |
| Cooler     | Outdoors     |
| Daisy      | Patio        |
| Dandelions | Perspiration |
| Desert     | Picnic       |
| Earth      | Pollen       |
| Fan        | Pool         |
| Frisbee    | Raft         |
| Fun        | Rainbow      |
| Grass      | Sand         |
|            | Shorts       |
|            | Sightseeing  |
|            | Snowcone     |
|            | Sun          |
|            | Surfboard    |
|            | Sweat        |
|            | Tent         |
|            | Weeds        |

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HISTORY

# Christine de Pizan and the City of Ladies

By Andrew Benson Brown

Good role models are hard to find. In most places where we look, we see celebrities glorifying “sexual liberation” (a promiscuous hook-up culture), expressing “nice” opinions about shifting cultural winds (virtue-signaling political correctness), and admonishing everyone to just “do you” (be narcissistic).

Bombarded with a bewildering number of conflicting messages along with glamorous, but unrealistic, social comparisons, young people of both sexes (but especially females) are suffering from record rates of depression, anxiety, and other mental illnesses today.

One woman, renowned in her day, had advice of a different kind to offer. And in support of her views, she rallied all of the most famous women in history behind her.

### An Unprecedented Career Choice

Christine de Pizan was born in Venice in 1364 but spent most of her life in France. Her father, a court astrologer and physician to King Charles V, taught her to read and write and encouraged her love of study—an uncommon practice for women at that time.

She had a happy but brief marriage to a royal secretary. When her husband died of the Black Death (bubonic plague), Pizan was left with an extended family to care for and, in order to make ends meet, took a job in Paris copying manuscripts. After doing this for several years, she began writing her own books, which found an audience and earned her aristocratic patronage. Pizan is thought to be the first woman in France, and perhaps all of Europe, to successfully make a living from her pen alone.

Pizan wrote dozens of literary works spanning every genre popular at the time. Of all these, the one that she is most remembered for is “Le Livre de la Cité des Dames” (“The Book of the City of Ladies”), a biographical catalog of famous women. What sets it apart—not only from previous books in this genre, but all others authored before hers—is that she sets out to defend women from arguments that women were inferior to men.

The book begins with Pizan sitting in her study surrounded by books, wondering “why on earth it was that so many men, both clerks and others, have said and continue to say and write such awful, damning things about women and their ways.” As she is “sunk in these unhappy thoughts,” she has a vision in which three majestic ladies—personifications of Reason, Rectitude, and Justice—appear to her. They task her with building a City of Ladies (in book form) that will house examples of women who have made important contributions to civilization.

### The Foundations: Cornificia

In laying the foundations of her city, Reason describes to Pizan certain women of great ability and achievement. When Pizan asks Reason if there have been any women whose minds are equal to those of men, Reason answers that, although

women have weaker bodies, “their minds are in fact sharper and more receptive when they do apply themselves.”

Reason provides an example: the life of Cornificia, a noblewoman of the late Roman Republic. If you are like most modern people, you have never heard of Cornificia. But she was a remarkable woman who, Pizan tells us, “refused all normal female occupations in order to devote herself to her books.”

Through her unwavering scholarship, Cornificia drank in philosophy and other disciplines “as if it were mother’s milk,” and became one of the foremost poets of her time. Cornificia illustrates how one can overcome obstacles through effort and mental dedication.

### The Walls: Cassandra

To build the city walls, Rectitude gives Pizan instances of virtuous women who devoted themselves to others. One of these women is Cassandra, the daughter of King Priam of Troy, a prophetess who foresaw the fate of her fellow Trojans and tried to warn them of the imminent fall of their civilization.

Cassandra’s story is a tragic one. In Aeschylus’s play “Agamemnon,” she is cursed by the gods: Although Cassandra is given the gift of foresight, no one believes any of the truths she utters. She even has a vision of her own death and the deaths of all of the drama’s principal characters, but she is unable to prevent them. And yet she does not let up and continues to tell everyone what was going to happen.

In our own day, we can certainly think of many truth-tellers who are ridiculed and persecuted for having the courage to be honest. While their situations are not enviable ones, we should admire the sacrifice they make for their loved ones and countrymen through their refusal to be silent in the face of tyranny.

Through her unwavering scholarship, she became one of the foremost poets of her time.

### The Towers: St. Catherine

In building the city’s high towers and turrets, Justice provides Pizan with examples of women who remained steadfast in their religious beliefs. One of these women is St. Catherine, a faithful woman who was loved by Roman Emperor Maxentius.

The story goes that when Maxentius came to Alexandria to offer a pagan sacrifice, the young Catherine approached him to address the error of his ways. In response, Maxentius assembled 50 philosophers to debate Catherine, who defeated them in argument and convinced them to convert to Christianity. Maxentius, in a rage, ordered the philosophers to be burnt to death, but they emerged from the fire unscorched. Later, the emperor offered Catherine his hand in marriage. She refused, and he ordered her to be beheaded. When she was martyred, it is said that milk, rather than blood, poured from her wounds, and an oil that flowed from her



▲ In “The Book of the City of Ladies,” Christine de Pizan defends women from the common Medieval view that they were inferior to men.

tomb cured illnesses.

As was the case with Cassandra, St. Catherine’s life was, ultimately, not a happy one. But it still inspires others. She demonstrates a principle also held by Socrates: that it is better to suffer evil than to do evil. Although suffering brings pain, the sufferer remains free of spiritual corruption and can be held up as a moral example for others. And if evildoers do not receive just retribution in life (as Maxentius later did), then they will be fairly dealt with in the afterlife—both in the spiritual one and in the earthly one, where their memories will be vilified.

### A City of Spirit

While Pizan advocated for women’s moral equality with men, she was not championing legal equality or calling for a revolutionary restructuring of society. Moreover, the types of virtues that she upheld—chastity, piety, humility, and devotion to family and country—are antagonistic to most of the so-called “virtues” that are dominant in our mainstream culture.

Pizan’s city of the spirit is, ultimately, one that is meant to “accommodate all deserving women”—not only of the past, but of the future, as well. In the final chapter, she addresses those yet unborn, “My beloved ladies, I beg you not to abuse this new legacy like those arrogant fools who swell up with pride when they see themselves prosper and their wealth increase.”

But for those who “love virtue, glory, and a fine reputation,” the City of Ladies remains a place where women of all places and times are forever welcome.

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](http://Apollogist.wordpress.com).



▲ Christine de Pizan wrote dozens of literary works spanning every genre, and was the first woman to successfully make a living as a writer.



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