

# THE EPOCH TIMES LIFE & TRADITION

BIBA KAYEWICH



Since the dawn of time, mothers have provided guidance, protection, and affection for children.

## The Sweet and Secret Influences of Our State and County Fairs

A reminder to come together and celebrate the land

By Annie Holmquist

The sawing of crickets and the sight of overgrown gardens, dried-out lawns, and back-to-school sales all signal that summer is drawing to a close. But that very last rose of summer is often the arrival of the county or state fair.

I've never entered anything in the state fair myself, but I've certainly looked over the various entries that I could have competed against with a critical eye. "Yes," I would tell myself as I walked through the vegetable displays at the fair, "my tomatoes definitely look better than those that hold the blue ribbon, although those green beans sure beat mine!" It was the same story at home, as I'd sit back and admire one of my freshly packed pickle jars, convinced that the cucumbers were straight and uniform enough to satisfy any critical state fair judge.

While I was never ambitious enough to enter the fruits of my labor at the fair, I have friends whose children regularly do. Photos of their grand-champion and first-place ribbons recently peppered my social media feed, and I got to thinking about the value of state or county fairs.

A picture of an old-fashioned fair can be seen in Laura Ingalls Wilder's book "Farmer Boy." Written about her husband Almanzo's childhood on a farm in upstate New York, part of the book describes the Wilder family's preparation for and attendance at the county fair following the conclusion of the growing season. Three lessons are evident.

### Connection With the Land

The Wilders were a family that pulled together to make their farm successful. As such, the children helped with planting,

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## Celebrating Motherhood

If family is the foundation of culture, motherhood is its cornerstone

By Jeff Minick

In early August, I had charge of four children ages 3 to 8 for three days and two nights while my son and his wife were in the hospital bringing a fifth member of the squad into the world. All went reasonably well on my solitary watch until that second night, when the 7-year-old came downstairs after I'd tucked them into bed.

"Cici's crying," she said.

I went back upstairs.

"I want Mommy," the weeping 5-year-

old was saying over and over again while I stood in the shadows of the bedroom, wondering what to do next. "I want Mommy now!"

"Sometimes I want my mom too," I said at one point, which is true, but I was hoping to distract her.

When that didn't work, I sank to the carpeted floor at the foot of her bed, worn thin by our busy day together, and just decided to wait it out. After a few minutes, she grew quiet, and her sister startled me by sneaking up behind me and whispering in my ear, "I think she's asleep. You

can go now." I said a second goodnight and trudged back down the stairs.

Those three days with the grandchildren brought some other moments of stress and fatigue, but the arrival home of Ignatius John, 8 pounds and all of 24 hours in the world, wiped away my weariness. He was, of course, the most handsome baby ever to take a breath of air.

I carried home many fond and humorous memories, but for the next few days, I thought most of all of Cici's plaintive cry, "I want Mommy!"

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▲ State fairs are a place to celebrate the bounty of summer harvests and good food.

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# Celebrating Motherhood

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In you not fourscore years can dim the flame

Of love, whose blessed glow transcends the laws

Of time and change and mortal life and death.

**The Everlasting Flame**  
Just before he dies in the film “Saving Private Ryan,” the medic, Wade, whispers “Mama” several times. A century earlier, the Union soldiers of the Civil War sitting around their campfires sang, “Just before the battle, Mother, I am thinking most of you.” When I was a kid watching football games on television, the cameras would pan the players’ benches, and invariably one of them would wave, smile, and say, “Hey, Mom.” Like many other poets and writers, in “Sonnets Are Full of Love,” Christina Rossetti paid tribute to her mother:

I love you, Mother, I have woven a wreath

Of rhymes wherewith to crown your honoured name:

Like Cici, everybody wants their mamas at one time or another. Even those adults I’ve known who had terrible mothers—women who berated, cursed, and even beat their children—still longed for the affection, care, and love of a mom.

**Motherhood Under Fire**  
In “The End of Woman,” author Carrie Gress spends much of her book analyzing the feminist movement of the past 200 years. She looks at the pioneers of early feminism, women such as Mary Wollstonecraft, Elizabeth Cady Stanton, and Susan B. Anthony, then brings

readers up through the 20th century with feminists such as Betty Friedan and Kate Millet. Unlike authors of other such historical surveys, Ms. Gress tears away the curtain so often thrown over the private lives of these women and reveals the roots of their radical ideas, often derived from personal experience—free love, the resentment of men, the demand for abortion, the arguments for a lesbian lifestyle, the attacks on the traditional family.

Most significantly, perhaps, Ms. Gress unveils the attacks by some feminists on childbearing. Babies, they contend, become shackles, keeping women from their careers and the freedom to pursue their own interests and pleasures. Birth control advocate and eugenicist Margaret Sanger, for example, long ago defined a mother as “a breeding machine and a drudge—she is not an asset but a liability to her neighborhood, to her class, to society.”

Just as damning is the silence of so many feminists regarding motherhood and children. Here, Ms. Gress writes, “There is a remarkable absence of discussion about children, about what it means to be a mother, about what a relationship with a child is like—the

highs and lows, the tender moments, the small victories.”

**Motherhood in the Shadows**  
If the family is the foundation of culture, then the destruction of the family, both in its extended and nuclear versions, means the destruction of civilization. In the United States, evidence abounds that the family is ailing and weakened.

Now, if the family is that foundation, then surely motherhood is the cornerstone. Since the dawn of the human race, infants and toddlers have needed feeding and protection for extended periods of time. Mothers provided those necessities, while fathers provided protection and sustenance for both. We have long since moved away

**A mother's work is the most necessary if we're going to preserve and build up this old, broken world.**

from that early formula for survival, but as Ms. Gress writes, until quite recently, our culture venerated motherhood and children.

Today's culture still recognizes the importance of children. Our government and various social agencies offer numerous programs of assistance for children, and we pour vast amounts of money and effort into their education. If nothing else, the battles now raging around the country over what, how, and when children should be taught is indicative

# The Sweet and Secret Influences of Our State and County Fairs

Working the earth, cultivating character

Continued from Page 1

tending, and harvesting the crops, often working on some special project to submit to the county fair.

For Almanzo, that project was the growth of a pumpkin. He and his father set aside a special vine, carefully picking off all blossoms but one. Almanzo then learned some tricks of the farming trade, as he and his father cut slits in the vine, daily feeding it with milk to stimulate growth. The visible result was a prize-winning pumpkin, but the less-visible result was that Almanzo grew in his farming skills, gaining a connection with the land as he worked with his father.

That connection wasn't a mystical

environmentalist experience; rather, it was one that fostered the character and mindset that made America great. “Those who labour in the earth are the chosen people of God,” Thomas Jefferson wrote in his “Notes on the State of Virginia,” “whose breasts he has made his peculiar deposit for substantial and genuine virtue.”

**Polished Presentation**  
In addition to Almanzo's pumpkin, the Wilder children entered other things in

the fair, including “jellies and pickles and preserves that Eliza Jane and Alice had made.” These were the fruits of their labors, the demonstration of their ability to produce edible goods from the land.

“To be interested in food but not in food production is clearly absurd,” author Wendell Berry once wrote. The fair gave the Wilder children a goal to aim for—a reward to earn for the best presentation of their harvest. But in the process, they learned the production skills necessary for survival, while also gaining an appreciation for the food set before them and the labor involved, something about which many of us in modern society haven't got a clue.

But presentation wasn't limited to the fruits of harvest and handiwork. It was also evidenced in the clothing that the fair's attendees wore. The whole Wilder family was “dressed up in their Sunday clothes except Mother,” who “wore her second-best and took an apron, for she was going to help with the church

dinner.” This well-dressed family was joined by other fairgoers dressed “in their best clothes” despite the dust that prevailed in the streets of the fair.

In other words, these people had respect for themselves, each other, and the gathering that they were attending, and they showed that through their dress.

Compared to today's fairs—at which the people-watching provides a plethora of tattoos, skimpy clothing, and various other demonstrations of eccentricity—it seems that the people of the 19th century managed to present a more polished appearance, which was likely also a demonstration of the internal character that they sought to practice.

**Community Cultivation**  
Perhaps one of the biggest benefits of the fairs in Almanzo's day was the fact that they brought the community together.

“The crowds were thicker than they had been on In-



of this emphasis on the young. But what about mothers? Do we still revere them as we once did? As noted earlier by Ms. Gress, not so much.

**The Most Tender of Bonds**  
In her book's final chapter, “Mother,” Ms. Gress reminds readers of the deep-down meaning of the maternal.

“Mothering and motherhood are essential pieces of womanhood,” she writes. “This is what keeps the species alive. It is vital and essential, and up until recently, it was recognized as the most tender and natural of relational bonds. It is one of the strongest of human bonds on earth. There are few things that elicit the strength, courage, patience, perseverance, fortitude, and innovation of a mother's love for her child.”

Ms. Gress further recognizes that most women who, for different reasons, have no children nonetheless “understand deeply the value of spiritual motherhood and the importance of mentoring, loving, and caring for the most vulnerable among us.”

**End-Note to Moms**  
On Mother's Day, we celebrate the women who bore and raised us with flowers, luncheons, and presents. Otherwise, moms receive short shrift with regard to status and respect. The millions of mothers who raise strong, intelligent, and virtuous sons and daughters win few accolades other than those bestowed by their children and families.

I'm a guy, and so I have scant knowledge of what it means to be a woman or mother. Yet I have eyes and ears, and every day makes me aware of the tasks and responsibilities, some onerous, some delightful, borne by moms. My daughter and the wives of my three sons are all mothers. My younger friends have children. At my church are kids ranging from newborns to wiggling toddlers to teenagers, all brought into this world by mothers and all attended by mothers and fathers. Into the coffee shop where I sometimes write troop moms accompanied by children, women who shepherd the kids through ice cream or drinks, who keep them seated at a table, and who remind them to wipe the chocolate from their lips and chin. Good moms, all.

Long ago, in elementary school, we learned that Mesopotamia was the “cradle of civilization,” but as a parent and grandparent, I know now that the real cradle of civilization is a baby's crib. And as evidenced by my granddaughter's tear-stained “I want Mommy!” a mother's work is the most necessary if we're going to preserve and build up this old, broken world. You're needed, moms, probably more than most of you realize.

Thank you for all that you do.

*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.*



# How Do You Show Up?

You have more influence than you think

By Barbara Danza

Have you ever stepped back and noticed the many roles you play in your life? You might be a mother, father, sister, or brother. You might be a grandparent, aunt, uncle, cousin, or friend. You might be a neighbor, a citizen, a group member, a volunteer, or a leader. Perhaps you're a student, an employee, an owner, a customer, or an acquaintance.

You could probably continue this list for a long time.

Through your various roles, you're someone to someone else and, often, to many others. Your personal network is likely in the hundreds, if not thousands, of people, even if you consider yourself introverted or even reclusive. In a 2006 study, it was estimated that the average number of people a person knows is 750. The number of people you affect or influence, of course, extends beyond those you personally know.

Whether you realize it or not, your very existence and the way you show up in the world affect others—many others. We may wish to believe that what we do, what we say, and who we are affect only ourselves, but that's simply not the case.

Think of some people you greatly admire. What effect have they had on your life? Perhaps you know some of them very well and have shared many life experiences with them. Perhaps you don't know some of them at all but are aware of the work they do or their ideas.

Likely, you could also identify people you'd consider examples of what not to do or not to be. They, too, have had an effect on you.

Considering the many roles we each play and the connections we have to so many, it becomes clear that we each shoulder a certain responsibility. Our effect won't always be obvious, but clearly what we do, who we are, and how we show up matter.

**Take Care of Yourself**

So if how we show up matters, then taking care of ourselves takes on a new significance. “Self-care” is a tiresomely overused term, but you do owe it to yourself and your vast network to take care of yourself.

Consider that the next time you choose what you'll eat, get a haircut, shop for clothing, clean your home, go for a walk, or save for the future.

**Check Your Atmosphere**

What sort of vibe or energy do you tend to carry with you? Do you tend to be broad-minded and optimistic or narrow-minded and pessimistic? Do you look upon others with great suspicion or gratitude? Do you tend to smile more or grime more? Do you cheer others on or nag them? Do you listen to understand or for your next chance to speak? Do you complain or celebrate?

Your presence among others will have an effect. Make sure it's the one you want to have.

**Maximize Your Potential**

The fact that your effect can be so great, even unwittingly, might make you consider those innate gifts and talents you may or may not be making good use of.

Who are you? Who do you wish to be? Who could you possibly be? These are not simply self-serving questions; the answers may contribute positively to countless multitudes. Make the most of who you are.

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



John Milton reflects on the purpose and meaning of his blindness in Sonnet 19. A detail of "Blind Veit Stoss With Daughter" by Jan Matejko.



## POETRY

# We May Have to Wait to Be of Service

A sonnet on Milton's blindness

By Marlena Figge

"Doing nothing often leads to the very best of something," says Winnie the Pooh in the 2018 film "Christopher Robin." Despite Pooh's wisdom, there's nothing so stifling as the feeling of being unable to put our gifts to their proper use.

Like a child who receives a kite and must wait for the perfect blustery day to fly it, our

patience is tested by periods of waiting in which our talents lie unused. We yearn for purpose and thus we're anguished by uncertainty about the future as we discern the next step in our lives. It's a strong human desire to actualize potential, and thus it's innately frustrating to wait in stillness until we're called to fully employ our talents.

The resulting listlessness is agonizing. In the period of perhaps too much time for reflection, we dwell on all the possible uses for our seemingly wasted gifts, just as John Milton did in "Sonnet 19."

Written in the mid-1650s, "Sonnet 19" expresses Milton's spiritual crisis of los-

ing his eyesight. He turns this challenge into a more universal confrontation with the feeling of uselessness when we feel we could do more.

In short, it's a poem of loss, specifically the loss of the medium for our talents or a channel through which we can exercise them. As he mourns the loss of the light to illuminate his way, Milton shows us that perhaps the situation isn't as dark as it may seem and that the time isn't as lost as it may appear.

## The Dark Night

The first half of the sonnet unveils the speaker's grappling with his feeling of uselessness. Before half his days are done, he loses his sight and his ability to exercise his talent for writing. Milton references Christ's parable about the servant who buries his master's talent and must later account for it.

Just so, the speaker in the poem dreads the thought of having to say that he did nothing when the time comes to give an account to his Maker. He questions, "Doth God exact day labor, light denied?" and wonders whether God would demand from us a task for which we were not given the tools to complete.

meet Hermon Bumpus, director of the American Museum of Natural History (AMNH), and requested a job. Bumpus informed him that there were no openings, to which he responded that someone must mop the floors. Bumpus hired him to mop the floors, but also to assist James Clark, the museum's taxidermist.

Clark and Andrews became fast friends and were sent on an expedition—Andrews's first—to collect and then assemble the remains of a North American right whale that had washed ashore on Long Island. Braving brutal conditions of rain, snow, and strong winds in 20-below-zero temperatures, the two completed the project.

## The Great Expeditions

Before World War I, Andrews was being sent much further than the shores of New York. He was sent across the world to the then-Dutch East Indies

as a naturalist, where he would spend several years. While World War I was ongoing, Andrews conceived an idea that would cater directly to Henry Osborn, the president of the AMNH. Osborn believed that Asia was where man originated.

Andrews suggested that he could "reconstruct the whole past history of the Central Asian plateau" through the collection of fossils. After raising the money for what became his Asiatic Zoological Expeditions, he set off on the expedition, and by its end—though he didn't discover early man—he did collect about 2,100 mammals, 800 birds, and 200 reptiles and amphibians for the museum.

After these expeditions (there were two), he led five expeditions (in 1922, 1923, 1925, 1928, and 1930) into the Gobi Desert. No stranger to harsh conditions, Andrews and his team battled sandstorms, ice storms, bandits, and



"Waiting," 1875, by Vladimir Makovsky.

Milton's verses bring to mind what St. John of the Cross described as the "dark night of the senses." This theological concept explains how God allows periods of desolation in which we don't perceive his presence as clearly, but he allows these in order to increase our trust in him. If only we persevere and don't give up in despair, the "dark night" teaches us to rely on God and to walk by faith rather than by sight.

Just when he wishes more than ever to serve God, the speaker faces a profound desolation in which he feels left in the dark, both literally and metaphorically. Milton, therefore, unfolds a physical enactment of the dark night of the senses; the speaker in the poem is deprived of his sight, the means of employing his gifts. In consequence, he loses the feeling of fulfillment and closeness to God that comes from his vocation. He feels further from God even while, according to St. John of the Cross, God is calling him to come closer than ever.

## How to Serve

Why does it serve to only stand and wait? What good can possibly come from idleness?

The second voice in the poem speaks up to counter the first. Patience curbs the murmuring of the speaker, for even though the speaker's question is asked "fondly" and from a desire to serve, patience gently prods him to recognize that his fervor is misdirected.

Appropriately, given the loss of the speaker's sight, the poem is composed of voices. Just as blindness is often associated with a lack of faith in Scripture, so, too, the speaker's blindness is both a physical and spiritual condition. His voice dispels the blindness of those in the Gospels; likewise, God's voice must penetrate the blindness of the speaker in the poem to show him a new way in which he may serve.

The voice of the virtue reminds the speaker that God has no need of anything from us. Our work and gifts can add nothing to him; rather, Milton tells us "who best bear his mild yoke, they serve him best." Many are called to spectacular deeds on the world stage, traveling over land and sea, but just because the action is on a grander scale doesn't mean it is a greater form of service.

Because it's often a quiet and unspoken sacrifice, the humble and obedient submission to God's timing is often overlooked as a less important form of service. However, it requires an immense effort to sacrifice our will in such a way, to still the soul that yearns for action, and to give up the way that seems so evidently the best way for us.

"Serve" is repeated several times in the poem, and we, like the speaker, can often forget that obedience and trust are essential to serving well. It doesn't serve to be always imposing our will upon others, and much less so upon God. In the end, God restores light to the speaker in the form of spiritual illumination. By this light, the speaker can look forward with hope like the

psalmist in Psalm 130: "I wait for the Lord, my soul waits and I hope for his word. My soul looks for the Lord more than sentinels for daybreak."

The sort of waiting entailed in Milton's sonnet isn't an empty sort of nothing. Instead, it's a fruitful sort of readiness, full of deference to another. In "The House At Pooh Corner," A.A. Milne's characters have this exchange:

"What did you do?"  
'Nothing.'  
'The best thing,' said Owl wisely."

This reply comes in response to a decision not to act before consulting the wisdom of another. As Milton notes, we have a far greater source of wisdom that we may consult. We can wait in readiness until God calls us to take the next step in our journey. At that time, it's right to say, "They also serve who only stand and wait."

Marlena Figge received her M.A. in Italian Literature from Middlebury College in 2021 and graduated from the University of Dallas in 2020 with a B.A. in Italian and English. She currently has a teaching fellowship and teaches English at a high school in Italy.

## John Milton's 'Sonnet 19'

When I consider how my light is spent,

Ere half my days, in this dark world and wide,

And that one Talent which is death to hide

Lodged with me useless, though my Soul more bent

To serve therewith my Maker, and present

My true account, lest he returning chide;

"Doth God exact day-labour, light denied?"

I fondly ask. But patience, to prevent

That murmur, soon replies, "God doth not need

Either man's work or his own gifts; who best

Bear his mild yoke, they serve him best. His state

Is Kingly. Thousands at his bidding speed

And post o'er Land and Ocean without rest:

They also serve who only stand and wait."

an ongoing civil war in order to send back thousands of fossil specimens to the AMNH. During his expeditions, he made three of the most important paleontological finds: the fossil remains of a velociraptor; dinosaur eggs, which proved dinosaurs were oviparous; and the fossil of the first discovered Protocera-



Roy Chapman Andrews on his horse Kublai Khan in Mongolia, about 1920.

eratops, which was named "Protocera-tops andrewsi" in his honor.

In 1934, he was named president of the AMNH, a role which he didn't enjoy, going so far as to label himself in his autobiography as "a square peg in a round hole." It was far less his role behind the desk at the AMNH and far more his role as a great explorer that he's considered the inspiration behind the fictional archaeologist Indiana Jones. Andrews's fedora, revolver, rugged good looks, incessant adventurous spirit, and numerous close shaves with death are what made him the prototype for the fictional American icon.

Dustin Bass is an author and co-host of *The Sons of History* podcast. He also writes two weekly series for *The Epoch Times*: *Profiles in History* and *This Week in History*.

## BOOK REVIEW

# A Riverman's Journey

Canoeing rivers in the search of a hope-filled future

By Anita L. Sherman

As a former reporter and editor for several newspapers in the Northern Virginia area, I was immediately drawn to Ben McGrath's debut novel, "Riverman: An American Odyssey." Mr. McGrath is a longtime staff writer for *The New Yorker*.

The stuff of stories is ever present, but often sifting through fact, fiction, and rumor can be a challenge. Is this a story worth telling? Will it resonate with readers? Does it have heart? Fortunately for readers, Mr. McGrath has crafted an enthralling and often enchanting narrative that resonates on a variety of levels.

## A Chance Encounter

Mr. McGrath first meets Dick Conant on Labor Day in 2014, after a neighbor called his attention to a scrubby red canoe tied to the seawall near their properties on the west bank of the Hudson River in Piermont, New York. For Mr. McGrath, Mr. Conant, a large man with ruddy cheeks, a hearty laugh, sporting overalls and muddy boots, and who owned a canoe, was a larger-than-life presence and could have been Santa Claus arriving early via boat.

Mr. Conant, at 63, was on a mission to paddle from Canada to Florida. His tales flowed from him like the many rivers—the Missouri, Mississippi, or Yellowstone—he had traversed over the decades. Mr. McGrath listened with interest and awe: Was it courage or folly that drove this man to America's waterways with most of his belongings stashed in the bow of the boat?

Mr. McGrath gleaned enough from the stranger, who landed in their backyard like a fish out of water, to write a story that was subsequently published and that Mr. Conant later read and liked.

The months passed. In November of that same year, Mr. McGrath received a phone call that an overturned red canoe had been found in the Outer Banks in North Carolina. Mr. Conant wasn't on board. Mr. McGrath's contact information was, and authorities from the North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission had reached out hoping to find answers.

Did Mr. McGrath now have a bigger story to write? What had happened to this gregarious and jovial man who was no stranger to the challenges that a river can present? Mr. McGrath had found himself captivated by his brief encounter with Mr. Conant and his quest—not only with the man but also with the mysteries surrounding him and his choosing the precarious life he led.

Mr. McGrath felt compelled to learn more and to share what he would discover. He decided to retrace many of the adventurer's travels and, thanks to Mr. Conant's meticulous journaling and photo taking, had copious notes as resource material.

## 'Riverman: An American Odyssey'

Mr. McGrath set out on an odyssey of his own, psychologically submerging himself, working his way through of-

ten murky waters as he persistently followed leads, made phone calls, checked records, and visited with hundreds of people across the country who remembered Mr. Conant and were willing to talk about those encounters, including members of Mr. Conant's family. He had several siblings.

In the book, Mr. McGrath often questions his own motivations and serves as his own emotional fact-checker. Was he reading too much Americana folk hero into Mr. Conant's often eccentric and paranoid behavior? Was this man delusional and Mr. McGrath seduced by his charms?

Mr. McGrath is a diligent journalist. He does his job as a conscientious writer to peel back the layers of this complicated character who, more often than not, greeted people graciously and most definitely had an effect on them. Mr. Conant shared more than stories of his river sojourns. Mr. McGrath unearthed numerous instances of his generosity and "be quick to be kind" demeanor.

Well-educated and intelligent, Mr. Conant, for many, was a floating encyclopedia paddling his way through life, always with a book to read and tidbits to share about what historical person or event had taken place at this juncture or around the bend. He was an enigma.

The members of Mr. Conant's network of contacts, which spanned many states along his thousands of miles of waterway meanderings, all had their stories to share. Mr. McGrath had to make many decisions about what to include in the book and what to leave out. It took him five years to complete, no doubt too long for those familiar with delirious deadlines.

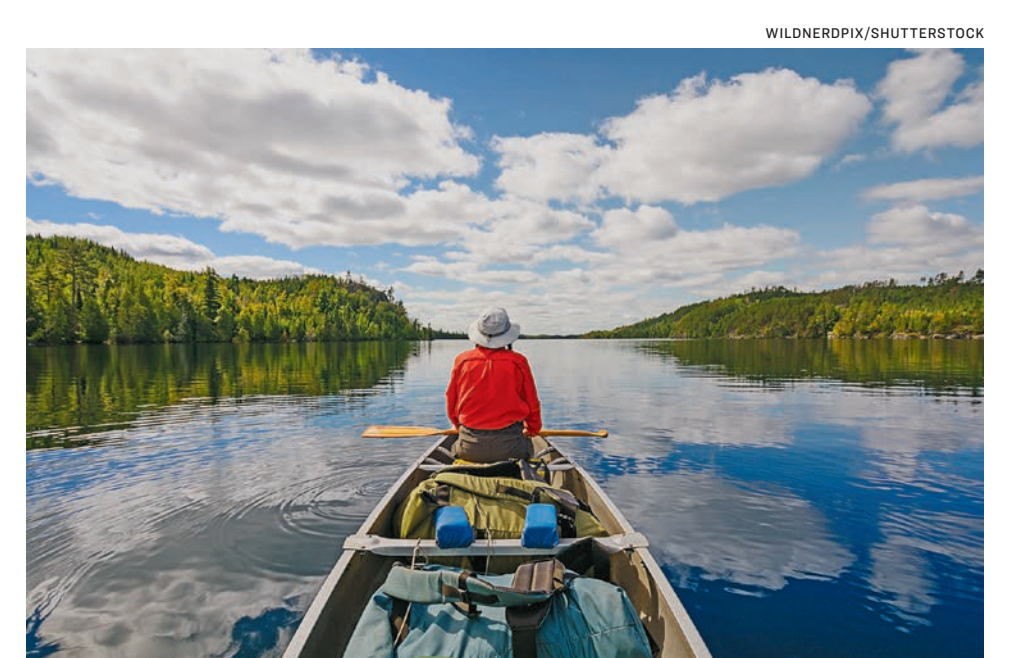
The end result is mesmerizing. There are unanswered questions. Mr. Conant's body was never found. His fate remains a mystery.

Mr. McGrath gives readers a deeply moving account of a troubled man beset with ghosts from the past but ever searching for a brighter and hope-filled future. His own perceptions change as he opens up a world of little-known small towns and remote waterways cascading with lush landscapes and poignant personalities. Mr. Conant is the observer, the one living on the edge but yearning for the fireside familiarity of family.

This is clearly a story of reinvention, renewal, and restoration for both Mr. Conant and Mr. McGrath.

It's a story worth telling and reading, an affirmation of spirit and soul, and a rekindling of all that is possible even in the confines of modern-day living.

Anita L. Sherman is an award-winning journalist who has more than 20 years of experience as a writer and editor for local papers and regional publications in Virginia. She now works as a freelance writer and is working on her first novel. She is the mother of three grown children and grandmother to four, and she resides in Warrenton, Va. She can be reached at [anitajustwrite@gmail.com](mailto:anitajustwrite@gmail.com)



Ben McGrath tells a story of one man's canoe adventure in "The Riverman: An American Odyssey."





DANIELGONZALEZPHOTO/SHUTTERSTOCK

Talking on the phone teaches valuable communication skills and the ability to personalize a message.

my contacts. It's something that can set a young person apart in today's digital world. Hearing a voice gives you insight into someone's personality and attitude, especially in business. What you pick up from a phone call can improve your decision-making process and help you develop critical business relationships needed in the real world.

You simply can't assume a text or message has been received. With a phone call, you'll either talk to someone or have the opportunity to leave a message. And if the person calls you back, the very first thing to say is, "Thank you for returning my call."

**A Personal Touch**

A phone call is a personal touch in the business world. It's old school, but it will set you apart. It's more than simply a call. It's an audio handshake, a friendly greeting, a welcome. It tells the people you call that you think enough of them to take some of your time to reach out.

Let's illustrate with an example. Suppose a company you deal with is inviting you to an event. You could get a text or email with a time and address. Or you could receive a phone call like this:

"Hi, it's Jennifer from the Company. Since you're one of our best clients, I wanted to personally invite you to an event we're having to roll out a new product. It's something I know you would find interesting. So I hope you can join us for dinner that evening. Chef Brian will be catering, and you'll be one of the first to see our newest offering."

A phone call like that shows not only that the caller cares enough to take the time to make a personal invitation, but also that the caller is excited about the event. Letting someone "hear your smile" in business is a great way to make a connection. Keep the energy in your voice and the person you call will pick up on that. A simple rule in television news when dealing with a teleprompter is, "talk, don't read" and "be conversational" when telling a story. Don't read a script like a telemarketer making a cold call, but actually talk to the person you're calling. You can turn even the most boring topic into a conversation.

Bottom line: Phone calls are personal. Texts are not. In business, personal usually wins. And young people need to remember that not everyone in the business world is from their generation. We don't all live on our cellphones.

Being a good conversationalist on the phone takes practice, but it's really simple. Just get in the habit of making actual phone calls instead of using a digital method of communication. You'll find that you can learn so much from hearing someone's voice. And they'll learn more about you.

Finally, the best part of making an actual call: You don't have to worry about autocorrect turning your message into something you didn't intend.

*Randy Tatano is a former local television reporter and network producer who now writes political thrillers as Nick Harlow. He grew up in a New York City suburb and lives on the Gulf Coast with his wife and four cats.*

EDUCATION

# The Life Skill Young People Really Need to Succeed

The simple but lost art of talking on the phone

By Randy Tatano

"You can't talk to a real person these days."

That's a complaint we all have when trying to call a business, as one can get lost in an endless loop of menus. So when you do find an actual human being who answers the phone, it's a real treat.

Which is why young people desperately need a basic life skill known as "talking on the phone." I know, that seems ridiculous to those of us at a certain age. But the young generation has gotten so used to texting or instant messaging that they almost become paralyzed with fear at the thought of making a call. And they've lost some-

thing valuable when it comes to communication: personalization.

**The Power of Voice**

If you're going to succeed in the real world, and one that has become increasingly more remote, your voice is one of your most valuable assets, and one that needs cultivating. Your speech, your tone, and your delivery can all convey so much in business that's simply not possible with words on a screen.

The things I picked up as a television news reporter would really help young people entering the workforce. As a rookie in the '80s, I learned the valuable skill known as "working the phones" to develop

**If you're going to succeed in the real world, and one that has become increasingly more remote, your voice is one of your most valuable assets, and one that needs cultivating.**

# How to Strengthen Your Child's Work Ethic

Tips for teaching your children the value of hard work

By Barbara Danza

Younger generations are commonly criticized for being lazy, lacking discipline, and being generally unwilling to do hard work. Whether it's a fair or unfair assessment, a strong work ethic is a positive character trait that parents would be wise to instill in their children.

Work ethic is something that can be taught and encouraged in different ways at different ages. Here are some ideas to foster your child's work ethic.

**Celebrate Work**

Even very young children set themselves to work. They may focus on building a castle out of blocks or coloring a picture beautifully. They may put away their toys or help clear the dinner table. They may help to care for family pets or make their beds.

Notice when your child works hard at anything or contributes to the household in any way, and celebrate their hard work.

**Dole Out Responsibility**

As your children get a little bit older, they can be handed simple household

responsibilities to manage on their own. For example, perhaps they're in charge of managing the garbage. They may have taken the trash to the curb before, but now they're in charge of the whole operation. It's up to them to collect garbage from any receptacles in the house and, if applicable, to make sure that the garbage cans are at the curb on the correct night. They're sure to make mistakes along the way, but parents can guide them with a teacher's heart and celebrate the work when it's done well.

**Work ethic is something that can be taught and encouraged in different ways at different ages.**

**Work Together**

Oftentimes, families need to work together to get things done. Perhaps you're coming off of a particularly busy time, and the home could use a deep clean. Come together, perhaps while enjoying your favorite energizing music, and clean up. Cooperating, being patient with one another, and having fun while getting good work done will reinforce the positive nature of work.

**Enjoy Your Work**

Too many adults harbor great disdain for their work in the world. What does that attitude signal to their children, who are observing intently?

If you can't change the work that you do, change your attitude about it. Find something you like about it. Appreciate the benefits it gives you. Share that with your family.

Better yet, love your work. Channel your productive energy toward meaningful and enjoyable work. Revel in the fact that your work is really more like play.

**Reward Work**

Children can be rewarded for their work when they do it well. Offer compensation for household chores or, if you own a business, offer opportunities to contribute their work ethic to the business in some way. When the connection between work and gain is made, they'll see the importance of fos-



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Children can wholeheartedly embrace small responsibilities that contribute to the running of the household.

tering a solid work ethic in their lives.

**Encourage a Job**

When they're old enough, encourage your children to seek employment elsewhere. The experience of working outside the home and outside the influence of their immediate family will provide countless lessons. Even if they work just one week for a local business, they may interact with customers, manage money, develop organizational skills, learn to follow instructions, be punctual, and forthrightly excel and grow in their ability to work.



# FOR KIDS ONLY

THE EPOCH TIMES

Week 35, 2023

## The Fairy Book

By Norman Gale

In summer, when the grass is thick, if mother has the time, She shows me with her pencil how a poet makes a rhyme, And often she is sweet enough to choose a leafy nook, Where I cuddle up so closely when she reads the Fairybook.

In winter, when the corn's asleep, and birds are not in song, And crocuses and violets have been away too long, Dear mother puts her thimble by in answer to my look, And I cuddle up so closely when she reads the Fairybook.

And mother tells the servants that of course they must contrive To manage all the household things from four till half-past five, For we really cannot suffer interruption from the cook, When we cuddle close together with the happy Fairybook.

ALL PHOTOS BY SHUTTERSTOCK

## WHAT IS THE LIBRARIAN'S FAVORITE VEGETABLE?



ALL IMAGES BY SHUTTERSTOCK

**"If you have a garden and a library, you have everything you need."**

MARCUS TULLIUS CICERO (106-43 B.C.), ROMAN PHILOSOPHER

ALL PHOTOS BY SHUTTERSTOCK

By Aidan Danza

ALL PHOTOS IN THE PUBLIC DOMAIN-US

# TRUFFLES

**I**f you've ever been to a very upscale restaurant, you've probably seen the word "truffle" on the menu. Indeed, they are considered a delicacy and are priced accordingly: The most prized white truffles can cost up to \$4,000 per ounce.

Just what are truffles and why are they so expensive?

The first question is an easy answer. A truffle is a fungus (not a mushroom, which is also a fungus) that grows underground. Though flavors vary by type, they are generally very nutty and earthy. Their flavors are extremely rich and, if infused into an oil which is then added to hot food, produce a very distinctive, rich aroma. This is in part why they cost so much—their taste is really like nothing else on this earth. To try to compare it to something else or describe it is really quite difficult.

The other reason for their cost is the difficulty associated with producing them. Truffles only grow in specific soils, in specific rain conditions, and under the roots of certain trees. Until very recently, farming

truffles was impossible. They could only be foraged for in the woods of Italy, Spain, or France with the help of pigs or men with rakes. However, both of these methods were very problematic, as the pigs would eat a large number of the truffles they found, and men with rakes can't smell the difference between ripe and unripe truffles, causing loss of crop.

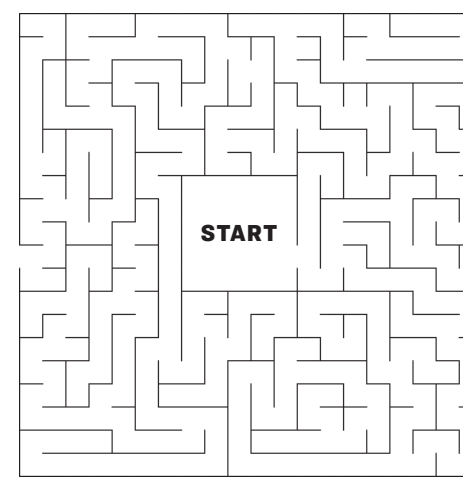
Now, specially trained truffle dogs (especially of the Lagotto Romagnolo breed) are used primarily, and it's now possible to farm truffles. However, the key to farming truffles is to just reproduce a place where truffles would probably like to grow, and then infuse the truffle fungus into the tree's roots. It's a toss-up whether this set-up will actually produce truffles but, if it does, a truffle farmer can hope for a crop in 10 years or more.



Sliced truffles.

Lagotto Romagnolo dogs are trained to sniff out truffles.

## AMAZING ESCAPES!



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

Easy puzzle 1

4	9		
81			
3	9		
+	-	x	÷

Solution For Easy 1  
8 = (6 - 9 x 6)  
6 x 6 = (8 - 9)

Medium puzzle 1

8	14		
10			
2	14		
+	-	x	÷

Solution for Medium 1  
91 = 2 + 8 x 91

Hard puzzle 1

21	30		
91			
10	30		
+	-	x	÷

Solution for Hard 1  
01 + 12 + 06 = 06

**HIDDEN TREASURES** by Liz Ball  
www.HiddenPicturePuzzles.com

WORD SEARCH: Read Any Good Books Lately?

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

Anthology	Picture Book	Sci-fi
Binding	Poetry	Spine
Biography	Journal	Textbook
Chapter	Library	Preface
Cookbook	Mystery	Reviews
Copyright	Paperback	Romance
Encyclopedia		
Fiction		
Flypage		
Horror		
Index		
Journal		
Library		
Mystery		
Paperback		



ALL PHOTOS BY SHUTTERSTOCK



▲ A panoramic view of the town and castle of Heidelberg. The beautiful medieval town and the Neckar River are on the right. On the left, set on a hill 330 feet above the river, is Heidelberg Castle. From its lofty position, the castle has dominated the old town's skyline for more than eight centuries.

LARGER THAN LIFE: *Architecture Through the Ages*

# Germany's Heidelberg Castle: A Monument to Past Greatness

By Ariane Triebswetter

Heidelberg Castle rises high above the medieval town of Heidelberg, Germany. First mentioned in 1214 as a fortified medieval castle, it later served as a royal residence for the prince-electors of the Holy Roman Empire. Different architectural styles are present throughout the complex.

The Ruprecht's Wing, the oldest castle, is an example of Gothic architecture with its ribbed vaults and keystones. The Ottheinrich's Wing epitomizes the ideal German Renaissance palace with its decorated façade, which features sculptures of figures from antiquity.

Heidelberg Castle expanded into a Renaissance-style castle throughout the 16th- and 17th centuries. Its most notable structures include the Friedrich's Wing (Friedrichsbau), the Ottheinrich's Wing (Ottheinrichsbau), the Glass Wing (Gläserner Saalbau), and the English Wing (Englischer Bau), some of the best examples of German Renaissance architecture. The Garden of the Palatinate (Hortus Palatinus)—a landscape garden—has

long been celebrated as the eighth wonder of the world.

Years of war and natural disasters wreaked havoc on the castle and, in 1764, a lightning strike set fire to large portions of its structure. The castle fell to ruin and was abandoned, and nearly forgotten.

Its decayed Gothic and Renaissance structures appealed to 19th-century Romantic artists, becoming a symbol of the German Romanticism movement. Artists and writers such as Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, Victor Hugo, J.M.W. Turner, and Mark Twain rediscovered the castle. In poems and works of art, they immortalized the castle and, from then on, awareness grew to preserve the historic castle.

In about 1900, experts decided to leave the castle as a "preserved" ruin. Only the Friedrich's Wing was refurbished and reconstructed in the Historicism style (rebuilding a historic style), while the other structures remained untouched.

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



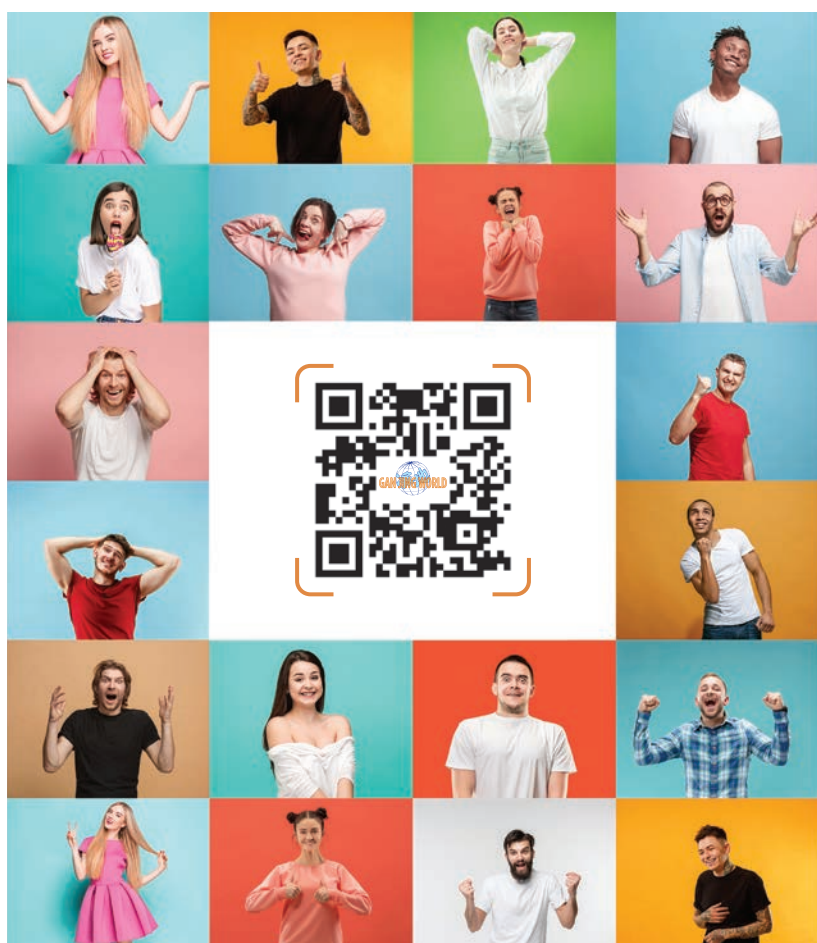
▲ The ruins of Heidelberg Castle are set against the green forest of Königstuhl Hill. The façade of the complex features red sandstone from the Neckar Valley. The castle has a collection of buildings in partial disrepair, with the most notable ones being examples of Renaissance architecture.



▲ Visitors entering the main courtyard of Heidelberg Castle will notice the eye-catching Friedrich Wing. The building was restored in the 1900s, and both the exterior and interior are close to the original look, in the Renaissance Revival style. The exterior features a black-gabled roof and a sandstone-elevated façade, richly decorated with Renaissance-style windows and sculptures. Friedrich IV displayed his power and his family's heritage through carved sculptures of his ancestors, prince-electors of the Holy Roman Empire.



▲ Leaving the main court of the castle, visitors pass through the Elizabeth Gate, a small entrance allegedly built overnight in 1615 as a present of Prince-Elector Friedrich V to his wife Elizabeth Stuart. The adorned Renaissance gate features carved sculptures and columns with natural motifs.



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