

THE EPOCH TIMES

LIFE &

TRADITION

BIBA KAYEWICH



The dinner table is a place for good food, laughter, and building family relationships.

A Tradition That Nourishes Hearts and Minds

The benefits of family dinners are wide and varied

By Walker Larson

Meals are sacred times for nourishing not just the body, but also the heart and mind. From ancient days to the present, meals have been hallowed by a tradition in which they signify far more than mere caloric intake.

Throughout various world cultures and epochs, meals have taken on ritualistic meanings of friendship, respect, trust, hospitality, cultural expression, and even religious significance.

Feasting Together

In the Christian tradition, for example, we see the importance of a meal in the

Biblical parable of the prodigal son. What act seems most suitable to the father to express his joy when his son returns home? A feast. Only a feast is a fitting ritual to embody the joyful spiritual reality taking place:

“And bring hither the fatted calf, and kill it, and let us eat and make merry: Because this my son was dead, and is come to life again: was lost, and is found. And they began to be merry.” (Luke 15:23-24)

It has always been considered rather tragic to eat or drink alone. Of course, doing so fulfills your mere bodily needs just as well as eating or drinking in company, yet it remains

an unideal situation, which reveals how central communal eating is to human life and civilization, and how its importance goes far beyond just the “practical.”

Animals eat to satisfy, to survive. But with us, it’s different. Humans eat to celebrate, to commiserate, to converse, to commune. And that communing is not only with one another, but also with nature, insofar as eating puts us in touch with the natural and agricultural systems that underlie human life and civilization.

As Wendell Berry famously says, “Eating is an agricultural act.”

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Decades of research have shown the many benefits of consistent family dinners.

FAMILY

A Family Experiment: Fasting From TV

The Wingers believe in cultivating old-fashioned virtues and engaging in meaningful activities

By Louise Chambers

With a love for cultivating an “old-fashioned” life and returning to what truly matters, a mom of three encouraged her kids to adopt a “TV fast” for three months. The family was so blown away by the creative energy that emerged in the absence of the screen that they decided to continue.

Homeschooling mom of three, blogger, and author Jill Winger, 38, grew up in Idaho. Today, she lives on a 67-acre family homestead in the southeast corner of Wyoming with her husband, Christian Winger, and their three kids: Mesa, 13, Bridger, 10, and Sage, 7.

“We have a little bit of everything,” Mrs. Winger told *The Epoch Times*. “We raised a big garden and we also have a greenhouse garden, then we do milk cows, laying hens for eggs, we raise meat, chickens, and beef cattle. We also have goats and some geese. We try to grow as much of our food as possible.”

“We didn’t really ever watch a ton of TV, we just had Netflix and Hulu,” she said. “My kids would watch shows an hour and a half in the afternoons, then what we found was happening is, during the winter, because we have long winters in Wyoming, our family would kind of default to the TV in the evenings after supper.”

‘Let’s Experiment!’

It wasn’t all “bad programming,” Mrs. Winger said, but in December 2022, she began asking herself, “What other activities is the TV displacing?”

She posed the question to her husband and kids, and together, they made a decision: They would go on a TV fast.

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▲ Jill Winger says cutting out TV has helped her kids develop a love for reading and has even improved their concentration and focus.

COURTESY OF JILL WINGER



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Christian and Jill Winger and their children Bridger, Sage, and Mesa live in Wyoming.

FAMILY

A Family Experiment: Fasting From TV

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"We thought, what if we just try cutting it out completely for a while?" Mrs. Winger said. "Three months, we decided, from December 1, 2022, to March 1, 2023, we would not watch any TV. We would turn off our subscriptions ... we just said, 'Let's experiment with what happens.'"

"Shockingly, I expected more push-back; they were not super upset," she said of her kids. "I think they knew that they were turning on the TV as just a default activity, kind of mindlessly, without really enjoying it. So when we told them our plan, they were kind of like, 'OK, we'll try it, then!'"

"I think that our foundation that we've had with them since the beginning was a really big piece of that because they know we live life differently. Also, just having a really good conversation so they could see our thought process."

Together, the family discussed what to do with the time freed up by quitting TV. One of the first ideas to emerge was reading books together. They made it fun by digging out old lanterns, brewing a pot of tea, and reading together by lantern light.

"Maybe that sounds silly to some people, but the kids thought it was the coolest thing ever," Mrs. Winger said.

Another impulse that emerged was to learn new hobbies. Mr. Winger took up leather crafting; Mesa, Bridger, and Sage learned to braid leather. The three

kids together taught themselves chess, started cooking more, and became more engaged in homesteading activities.

Mrs. Winger said: "It was shocking to me, the changes, even though we hadn't been obsessed with TV before. ... They were engaged more in their hobbies and interests, and they were really digging deep. They just started to be more aware and involved in life."

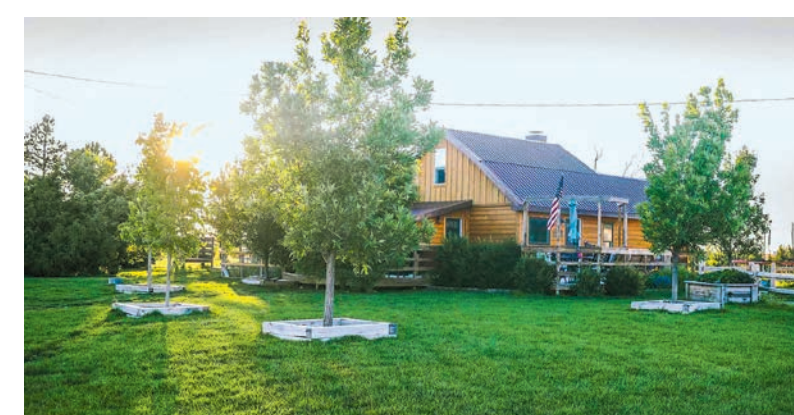
'The Real World'

When the family reached the end of their TV fast on March 1, they sat down to discuss the experience and came to a surprising conclusion: They wanted to continue. Rather than reactivating their subscriptions, they decided to set aside special time once or twice a month to watch a movie as a family and preserve their newfound free time for hobbies and creative pursuits.

The family has iPads in the house for homeschooling and for access to YouTube tutorials, but the parents monitor what their kids are watching. Their oldest daughter has a flip phone to call or text when she's out of the house. But none of the kids are on social media.

"I feel very competent as a parent in the experiences we're providing them," Mrs. Winger said.

The family also owns a restaurant and raises grass-fed beef for sale to the public. "The kids are out in our community. They're working in the restaurant, they're



The family lives on a 67-acre home-stead in Wyoming.

working with the people on our farm, they're out learning those real-life skills, and that, to me, is the most important.

"I don't worry about their lack of ability to acclimate into our modern world, just because, I mean, we're not completely disconnected from it," she said. "But is mindless TV the real world? Or is that what someone else is creating and presenting to us to consume? ... The real world is out your front door, in the soil, with the animals in nature, relating to people in your actual community. And to me, technology is a nice little addition to that, but it's not the entirety."

Mrs. Winger runs a website, podcast, and Instagram page to share her thoughts on raising "old-fashioned kids in a high-tech world," and she said she believes hers was one of the first homesteading blogs when it started in 2010. She has received her fair share of criticism for her family's TV fast but is also supported by a like-minded community.

Addressing the critics, she said: "I think that it maybe triggered some feelings in people because they were perhaps feeling insecure about their own choices, with themselves, with their children. Not all TV is bad, but I think my husband and I kind of hold ourselves to a higher standard."

Capable, Creative Kids Mrs. Winger moved to Wyoming at 18 to pursue a career in the equine industry and met Christian, who lived in the area. They bought their first home, a "fixer-upper farmhouse," in 2008, and turned it into the homestead of their dreams, where they live with their kids today.

Mrs. Winger said that the lifestyle she provides for her kids is different from the "very conventional" one she grew up in and that she believes that her kids have benefitted from her and her husband's shared philosophy.

"My oldest is definitely an artist," she said. "My middle child, he is very much a builder. He loves taking things apart; he wants to know how things work. Then my youngest, she's kind of the wild child. She is a free spirit."

"I'm really big on encouraging curi-

osity in my children. I'm really big on inspiring independence. I think that our culture sometimes, because we want to keep our kids so safe and we want them to be successful, we end up covering and helicoptering them, and we actually end up creating negative effects when we really have the best of intentions. ... we need to fail because that's where our best lessons are. We can't be afraid of that."

Mrs. Winger said she hopes that by sharing her family's journey, she can inspire others to believe that kids are more capable and creative than we think. She insists that it's not crucial to live on a homestead; even in the city, there are free resources, such as outdoor play, board games, and local libraries.

"That's really where the value comes in, instead of sitting in front of a screen just zoning out," she said. "I've been there; you get done with everything you have to do as an adult during the day, and you're tired. ... [but] it doesn't always have to be a ton of energy from you, as the parents; I think sometimes the best thing we can do is to give our kids a little bit of an idea, and then let them go through the rest."

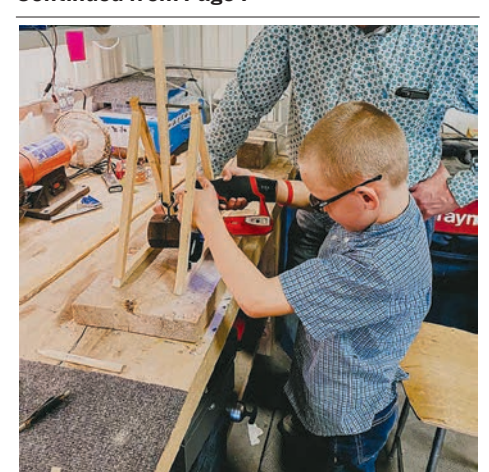
A TV "fast," by definition, is finite. "It could be a week, it could be a month ... pick your time," Mrs. Winger said. "Stick with it, be committed to it, even if you want to change your mind later. Then I think it's really important to have a conversation with the whole family, to get everybody on board and help them understand why you're doing this."

The Wingers don't have an end date for their TV fast. For now, they feel closer than ever, and Mrs. Winger is enjoying watching her kids grow and thrive.

"I see glimpses of the adults that they will become, what strengths they will have, and what curiosities they will have," she said. "I see this lack of TV giving more time for them to ... figure out, 'Who am I, and what am I here for? What is my purpose? What are my passions?' That's my goal, to just give them more time and space to explore that, and I think eliminating the TV from our house is a really big step."



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▲ Bridger Winger, 10, loves creating things. The family calls him a little builder who is full of innovative ideas and curiosity.



▲ The family farm.

A Tradition That Nourishes Hearts and Minds

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As aromas fill the dining room, they mingle with the laughter and conversation of those eating together, and the individual human spirit joins the spirit of the society, each being strengthened along with the human body.

The Importance of Family Dinners

The most obvious place where meals can form a kind of center of gravity for human life and community is in the family. Decades of research have shown the many benefits of consistent family dinners. Children whose families eat regular meals together enjoy benefits such as better academic performance, higher self-esteem, better eating habits, lower risk of substance abuse, and lower risk of depression. In light of everything stated above, family mealtime ought to be treated with respect. But how do we go about approaching dinner with a fitting emphasis and care?

Here are a few ideas.

instincts without thinking and not wait for it to be convenient for others. In other words, we put ourselves first if we are not willing to endure a little hunger so that we can eat in the company of others.

PRACTICE GOOD MANNERS. Manners are the bloom of charity and love for others, an outward sign of an inward disposition.

They may seem small, but they form in us a habit of being considerate of others and should not be dismissed as "old-fashioned" or "out-of-touch." Every little action we engage in shapes us to some degree, and poor manners chip away little by little at our concern for other people.

All too often, our familiarity with family members causes us to drop the small signs of being considerate—"he's just my brother" or "she's just my mother," we say. Yet we ought to save our warmest smiles, our most attentive thoughtfulness, and our most worthwhile conversation for the members of our own household.

Manners are the bloom of charity and love for others, an outward sign of an inward disposition.

PREPARE SOMETHING OF QUALITY. Here, I refer both to the food and to the conversation. The food, it goes without saying, ought to be truly nourishing to one's family. But so should the discussion. You might consider investing in a deck of conversation-starting

cards, such as Questions for Humans. Or maybe bring an interesting article or poem to read and discuss during or after the meal. I richly remember how my father would sometimes bring a poem to the dinner table, such as T.S. Eliot's "The Lovesong of J. Alfred Prufrock" or John Keats's "Ode to a Nightingale" and then discuss it with us. Those moments were incredibly formative for me.

Everyone will come to understand the value of family meals together in direct proportion to the seriousness with which we treat them. These little suggestions may seem small, but, taken together, they form an entire attitude about meals and their importance that sends a real message, even if it's not spoken in words. That message, ultimately, is about the importance of good food, manners, and customs, yes, but most importantly, it's a message about the importance of family itself.

Walker Larson teaches literature at a private academy in Wisconsin, where he resides with his wife and daughter. He holds a Master's in English literature and language, and his writing has appeared in The Hemingway Review, Intellectual Takeout, and his Substack, "TheHazelnut."

PUT AWAY THE PHONES.

It's well known that electronic devices interfere with face-to-face human interaction and conversation. In fact, according to Sherry Turkle, an MIT professor who has done considerable research on the negative effects of technology on human conversation and empathy, just the mere presence of a phone, even if it's only in our peripheral vision, causes us to be less engaged in the conversation with the people around us.

Children will never learn how to have real conversations—which are the basis of all human relationships—if they have their noses in their devices all the time and if they do not see their parents modeling real human interaction.

LIGHT SOME CANDLES. Not the battery-powered ones, but real ones, with real flames. Candles instantly dress up any eating occasion—they light up the dinner table, both literally and figuratively. You will feel "fancier" and you will behave accordingly.

USE QUALITY PLACE SETTINGS AND SERVING DISHES, AND CUT BACK ON THE PLASTIC. Instead of the ketchup bottle, put the ketchup in a small bowl with a spoon. Instead of the chip bag, put the chips in a basket or bowl. We don't need corporate logos and garish wrappers cluttering our dinner table and distracting us as we try to see one another. Like candles, place-mats also instantly dress up the table.

DON'T LET FAMILY MEMBERS EAT BEFORE THE FAMILY MEAL. Eating alone the instant we become hungry trains us to indulge our



▲ Candles instantly dress up any eating occasion—they light up the dinner table, both literally and figuratively.



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▲ “Louise, Princesse de Broglie, Later the Comtesse d’Haussonville,” 1845, by Jean-Auguste-Dominique Ingres. Oil on canvas, 51 7/8 inches by 36 1/4 inches. The Frick Collection, New York City.



▲ “Joséphine-Éléonore-Marie-Pauline de Galarde de Brassac de Béarn (1825-1860), Princesse de Broglie,” 1851-53, by Jean-Auguste-Dominique Ingres. Oil on canvas; 47 3/4 by 35 3/4 inches. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York City.

FINE ART

‘Les Belles-Soeurs’: Ingres’s Portraits of the Noble Sisters-in-Law

By Michelle Plastrik

Two celebrated belles of mid-19th-century Parisian society were Louise de Broglie, Countess d’Haussonville, and Joséphine-Éléonore-Marie-Pauline de Galarde de Brassac de Béarn, Princesse de Broglie. They were “les belles-sœurs,” sisters-in-law, and each was immortalized in a spectacular portrait by the renowned French painter Jean-Auguste-Dominique Ingres. These paintings now reside, respectively, at The Frick Collection and The Metropolitan Museum of Art and are emblematic of their institutions, frequently used as publicity images, and beloved by visitors. Ingres, esteemed by scholars as the preeminent 19th-century portraitist and one of art history’s greatest draftsmen, trained in the Neoclassical style under Jacques-Louis David. Building on this Neoclassical framework, Ingres developed his own original, distinctive style. Drawing on elements of Romanticism and Middle Eastern designs, he created artworks that are always refined and beautiful. Ingres’s precise draftsmanship demonstrated his neoclassical training under David; however, his stylized contours and anatomical elongations asserted his originality and set the stage for the later Romantic movement in art.

These fundamental stylistic qualities can be seen in Ingres’s brilliantly splendid portraits of the Countess d’Haussonville and Princesse de Broglie. These portraits were painted in the latter part of his life, when he was at the height of his artistic powers.

The Captivating Countess

In the early 1840s, Ingres was asked to paint the Countess d’Haussonville. At

first, he was reluctant to do so, as he was tired of making portraits and instead was keen to focus on more ambitious, grand-scale paintings. However, he found his subject irresistible and her family’s power and status persuasive, so he accepted the commission. The countess was a charming and highly intelligent woman, the granddaughter of celebrated salon hostess and writer Madame de Staël, and herself an accomplished writer, watercolorist, and musician.

The creation of the portrait began in 1842, and “Louise, Princesse de Broglie, Later the Comtesse d’Haussonville” was finished three years later. This drawn-out process was typical of Ingres’s detailed, measured pace and perfectionism. The artist began with a series of preparatory drawings, producing a great number of sketches that include full-scale studies of the countess’s left arm, her head, and its mirrored reflection. In the final portrait, Ingres depicts the countess with elongated proportions and an anatomically unrealistic right arm that is too low, but these were deliberate artistic choices made in order to form a more harmonious composition and create an impossible idealized beauty.

Ingres depicts the countess in her luxurious appointed boudoir. She leans against an upholstered fireplace and appears to have just returned from a night at the opera. Opera glasses and an evening bag lie on the mantel, and her discarded wrap sits on a chair. These accoutrements and the room’s furnishings are as elegantly depicted as the sitter.

The work is a symphony of blues with accents of rich, warm reds and yellow

—all created by seamless, precise brushwork. Her gold bracelet and ring are set with turquoise, bringing in another shade of blue. Her snake-shaped ring is in a style known as “à la Cléopâtre.” Egyptomania swept France following Napoleon’s turn-of-the-century Egyptian campaign and continued throughout the 19th century and beyond, notably influential in the jewelry arts.

The countess’s thoughtful and beguiling gaze draws the viewer in, yet she remains tantalizingly enigmatic. The finished portrait was greeted by great critical acclaim and was treasured by the countess until her death.

Ingres was esteemed by scholars as the preeminent 19th-century portraitist.

The Pious Princess The grand success of the countess’s portrait inspired her brother, Albert de Broglie, to commission the artist to paint his own wife a few years into their marriage. History repeated itself: Initially, Ingres was reluctant, then he rendered, and the resulting portrait was received with praise and hailed as a masterpiece.

The highly respected young Princess de Broglie was famously shy, a pious Catholic, and author of several Christian volumes. Ingres, in what was to be his penultimate portrait, shows her piety via the cross pattée design on her necklace’s gold pendant. The pendant itself is shaped like a bulla, an ancient Roman protective amulet. It may have been made by the Roman jeweler Fortunato Pio Castellani, who started the archeological revival jewelry style in the mid-19th century, or by the French jewelry house Mellerio dits Meller, founded

in the 17th century and the oldest extant jewelry house in the world. Ingres personally selected the pearl necklace the princess wore, precisely arranging its graceful drape. These jewels, along with the portrait’s seed pearl earrings and ruby and diamond bracelet, remained in the princess’s family for generations.

Key compositional elements in the painting of the countess are similarly found in the princess’s portrait. Blue, again, dominates the canvas, in the form of her exquisite satin ball gown, but here it is an icy shade whose coolness is offset by the silky golden chair. The large crinoline underskirt acts like armor to prevent the viewer from getting too close to the shy and inscrutable woman.

In this highly personalized setting, the princess is elegantly posed leaning against an object, this time a chair laden with a gold embroidered shawl, mother-of-pearl fan, gloves, and a black velvet cape trimmed with fringe, jet beads, and feathers. Ingres brandishes his virtuosic painterly skill in these magnificently rendered realistic elements. The painting’s realism is balanced by deceptively flattened and elongated forms.



▲ Study for the portrait of the Countess d’Haussonville. Graphite and black chalk on cream paper glued down to a sheet of mulberry paper.

Kathryn Calley Galitz, a scholar of late 18th- and early 19th-century French art, wrote, “The virtuoso rendering of the multiple folds of her silk skirt, the tufted damask chair, and the marabou feathers of her hair ornament counter the mannered elongation of her arms, her seemingly boneless fingers, and her idealized face.”

The princess’s noble oval face, like porcelain, is dominated by deep-set eyes with an air of melancholia—precisely as a few years after the painting was finished, she became ill with tuberculosis and died, leaving behind her five sons and devastated husband, who had her painting draped in fabric the rest of his life.

Museum ‘Poster Girl’

Both “Louise, Princesse de Broglie, Later the Comtesse d’Haussonville” and “Joséphine-Éléonore-Marie-Pauline de Galarde de Brassac de Béarn (1825-1860), Princesse de Broglie” stayed in their families’ possession into the 20th century. During this time, the portraits were occasionally displayed in exhibitions, and these viewings inspired famous artists and the public alike. After the death of the countess’s youngest child, her portrait entered The Frick Collection via the Wildenstein gallery in 1927. The picture has since graced the cover of “Life” magazine and is colloquially known as the “Poster Girl” of The Frick. The princess’s portrait descended through her family until it too was sold through Wildenstein to the American banker Robert Lehman, who bequeathed his art collection to The Met in 1958.

Ingres once said that painting a woman’s portrait was the most difficult thing to do: “It can’t be done. It’s enough to make one weep.” Yet for all his protestations and reluctance to take the Haussonville and Broglie commissions, he created captivating portraits of two sphinxlike beauties who continue to enchant us today.

Michelle Plastrik is an art advisor living in New York City. She writes on a range of topics, including art history, the art market, museums, art fairs, and special exhibitions.

POETRY

What Makes a Good Haiku?

The required 5-7-5 syllable form alone does not make a haiku

By Margaret Coats

The haiku is a short form of poetry that originated in Japan, but has inspired writers in many languages. The Society of Classical Poets is sponsoring a contest for the haiku in English. A good haiku:

- presents an observation of nature, or of human activities in nature
- uses present tense (“goes” or “going,” not “went” or “has gone”)
- has a seasonal word or image, known in Japanese as a “kigo”
- has two parts or two images or two aspects
- offers an intriguing insight that arises from interaction of the two parts

Below are examples of good haiku, chosen from runners-up and other entries from a haiku competition held last year by the Society of Classical Poets, an organization “dedicated to the revival and proliferation of good, new poetry,” as their website states.

These examples fulfill all the above haiku requirements but are grouped to allow for easy discussion of one requirement at a time in the paragraph that follows each group.

The 17 Syllables in English

These first four haiku show how poets writing in English can naturalize the required Japanese syllabic form by using features of English poetry, including rhythm, rhyme, and alliteration. These things are neither required nor specially favored in this competition. However, they add beauty to the poem and demonstrate the poet’s skill with language.

Dark branches stripped bare
cold and sad, quite unaware
stirrings down below
—Linette Eloff

Snow falls through the night
Dressing farm and field in
white—
Dazzling dawn in sight!
—Martin Rizley

one lone(ly) mallard
ignored by his own echo
quacks again, hoping
—James Ripley

Curious concert—
crickets croon to a cornfield
of indifferent ears
—Martin Elster

Ms. Eloff captures late winter in three lines appropriately rhymed and metered. The third line, with the same number of syllables as the first, has more word accents or stresses. It thus has more of the deep “stirrings” it mentions—and it breaks away from the “bare”/“unaware” rhyme and tone of the other lines.

Contrast Mr. Rizley’s winter haiku, which exhibits regular English rhythm, rhyme, and alliteration in all three lines. These suit the exuberant tone of his poem.

Mr. Ripley uses another tactic. His parentheses in the word “lone(ly)” emphasize the meaning he can add to his first line with the required fifth syllable. The quacking mallard is both “lone” (solitary) and “lone(y)” (forlorn). Mr. Elster makes every syllable count, accompanying his farm concert with both alliteration from the noisy crickets and a pun on the indifferent ears of corn in the audience.



▲ The haiku centers on nature.

Artistry of the Present Tense

end of the summer—
the calm surface of a lake
absorbs the twilight.
—Marek Kozubek

Looming laden clouds
Blanket Bombay’s bustling
streets
And storms paint the sky
—Stuti Sinha

taste of morning tea
the delicate ray of sun
through an icicle
—Daniela Misso

The group above shows varied artistry employing the required present tense. Mr. Kozubek uses a single present tense verb (“absorbs”) to describe minimal action, but it manages to fill his noiseless scene with light and color.

Ms. Sinha’s poem brims with action: present tense verbs “blanket” and “paint,” present participles “looming” and “bustling,” along with the past participle “laden,” acceptable in haiku because it is used as an adjective. These combine to build up a picture of increasingly wild weather over a busy city.

In Ms. Misso’s haiku, there are no verbs at all. Present tense is presumed in the action of a human observer who notices the sunlit icicle while sipping tea.

The 2-Part Haiku

black skyscrapers scratch
at something beyond the gray
as white flakes drift down
—Spencer Green

As winter draws near
Fabulous floral worlds bloom
The solace of books
—Mia P Solomonides

Wisteria bloom
Along a sidewalk café
Coffee in the air
—Ravi Kivan

watermelon patch
I let the weathered scarecrow
try on my straw hat
—Darrell Lindsey

Like new fallen snow
Seabirds rest then I approach
White riot of flight
—Mike Bryant

A haiku should have two parts or two images or two aspects. The two things contrast or combine creatively to produce the poem’s overall effect. Mr. Green’s skyscrapers do not wait passively for snow, but actively scratch it out of the gray sky. Ms. Solomonides teases readers with a flagrantly impossible winter scene—then explains that it exists in the books one can comfortably read indoors on a cold day. Mr. Kivan makes clever

use of the related words “café” (a place) and “coffee” (a beverage served in such a place) to appeal to the two senses of sight and taste.

In all three poems, Part One is the first two lines, and Part Two the final line. This is usual among haiku but not universal. Mr. Lindsey sets the scene in his first line, then enters and alters it in the remaining two lines. Mr. Bryant’s poem is a very unusual haiku that divides exactly in the middle, where the quiet scene moves to action. His ninth syllable, the word “then,” is something like a Japanese “kireji” or “cutting word,” but such words have functions in Japanese that are unfamiliar in the English language. Poets writing in English shouldn’t save a syllable to slice lines, but simply make sure that each haiku has two elements that can interact in an interesting way.

The Intriguing Insight

How can haiku demand an original insight in every poem? Remember, first of all, that this most difficult requirement is simply a special perception from the poet’s own carefully observed scene.

Boughs froth with new blooms
when the monsoon rain sweeps
through
trees toss their bouquets
—Rachel Nel

How short is freedom
gained by the cherry blossom
released from the branch
—Germain Droogenbroodt

Falling August stars
The sky is full of beauty
So many wishes
—Vita

All three of these poems view something beautiful falling. Ms. Nel sees monsoon rain sweeping frothy blooms from boughs; she thinks of a bride tossing her bouquet to others as the wedding celebration ends. Good thought—and no more is needed. The poem is done, and the poet doesn’t have to picture anyone catching soggy flowers.

The more philosophical Mr. Droogenbroodt reflects on the distance between branch and ground when a cherry blossom falls. To him, this brings thoughts of short-lived freedom. Again, enough insight for an excellent haiku, expressed in terms of the bloom being released from the prison of the branch.

Ms. Vita sees stars fall during summer meteor showers. The additional light and motion brighten and beautify the already starry sky—and the observer gains hope for many wishes fulfilled, in accord with the phrase, “to wish upon a falling star.”

What is a Haiku?

Beautiful words ... not many
Alas! Not these words
—Norma Pain

This clever poem in haiku form is good and true and beautiful, but it is not a haiku. If you don’t know why not, please re-read this article. Looking forward to your haiku!

This article, slightly edited, was previously published on the Society of Classical Poets website.

Margaret Coats lives in California. She holds a Ph.D. in English and American Literature and Language from Harvard University. She has retired from a career of teaching literature, languages, and writing that included considerable work in homeschooling for her own family and others.

Haiku Competition

You are encouraged to submit a haiku to the Society of Classical Poets’s 2023 Haiku Competition until Sept. 15. Results will be announced on Sept. 29. Visit ClassicalPoets.org for contest rules.



Last Wishes: Lessons From the Dying on Living

Death can teach us how to better live our lives

By Jeff Minick

"What I wish for..." my mother said. She repeated, "What I wish for..." Those were her last words, spoken from the basement of consciousness. A few hours later, Mom was gone.

She died on Sept. 8, 1992, in Winston-Salem, North Carolina, in her bed in her townhouse, surrounded by her six children and their spouses, a few young grandchildren, and her husband. Her breast cancer, which doctors had treated two years earlier, had metastasized into her liver. During her final weeks, she received friends in her home; prayed with them, with us, and alone; and slipped into death as gently and as ladylike as she had lived in life.

For two months, Mom had known, and we had known, that no hope for a cure remained. To the best of my knowledge, she never discussed her impending death with anyone. Yet to me, a 41-year-old husband and father, Mom imparted two of the greatest lessons of my life. Like many my age, I hope for an easy death, but by her courage, resolve, and flashes of humor, Mom banished forever my fear of death itself. Even more importantly, she taught me that living well resulted in dying well.

If we're paying attention, the dying have some things to tell us.

Home Alone
Near the beginning of the film "Bridget Jones's Diary," the 32-year-old Bridget is living alone. In a voiceover, she says, "I suddenly realized that unless something changed soon, I was going to live a life where my major relationship was with a bottle of wine and I'd finally die fat and alone, and be found three weeks later, half-eaten by wild dogs."

If we look at what the dying can offer us, we might notice that, different as these people are in personality and character, each one of them is a guide showing us how to live better lives.

We are meant to chuckle at this line, but the truth is that many people die alone all the time in their homes, in hospitals, or elsewhere. More Americans than ever are today living by themselves, with more of us feeling lonely and isolated, and the consequences regarding death are as clear as can be. Death will find more of us alone at home. Some will succumb to an immediate cause such as cardiac arrest,

some possibly from a fall or an accident, perhaps lingering without the ability to communicate with anyone.

These solitary dead remind us that whether we are young or old, if we live alone, we need contact with others. A daily phone call to check in, even a text as short as "All's well" provides some protection. A friend of mine in her 90s once fell and broke her hip. She was quickly discovered and survived only because a neighbor saw that she hadn't opened her blinds for the day and called authorities for help. My friend was one of the lucky ones.

Whatever your circumstances, set up a system to keep in daily touch with at least one contact person.

Regrets
To feel some sort of regret at the end of life seems quite human. "Depend upon it, sir," Samuel Johnson famously remarked. "When a man knows he is to be hanged in a fortnight, it concentrates his mind wonderfully." That concentration at the end of life surely rouses in some of us sadness for any harm we've done and mistakes we've made.

In her book "The Top Five Regrets of the Dying: A Life Transformed by the Dearly Departing," former palliative caretaker Bronnie Ware sums up the regrets expressed by some of her dying patients.

Some wished that they had lived lives truer to themselves, some that they had not worked so hard. Others wished that they had possessed the courage to express their feelings more often, or stayed in better touch with friends, or allowed themselves to be happier.

We note that this inventory of regrets doesn't include never having owned a Lexus, traveled to the beaches of Tonga, or parachuted from an airplane. Instead, these thoughts in the face of approaching death have to do with our interior selves, how we spent our time, and the friends and family around us.

Of course, some of the dying have other valid reasons for feeling remorse: the man who betrayed his principles and so betrayed his friends, the father who never reconciled with his son, the woman whose alcoholism ended her marriage. When death comes knocking at the door, long-suppressed thoughts of what we have done and what we have failed to do may rush at us like a tidal wave.

But in these confessions by the dying is a hidden form of penance and absolution. When those near death express what they regard as their failings and missed opportunities, they're telling their listeners to take a different pathway.

Young or old, good or bad, the dying pass a torch to the living.

Goodness in Death
A woman I know quite well has worked as a nurse in palliative care for more than 10 years. When I asked what her patients might have shared during their final days, she said that a great majority told her they'd lived a full life and were ready to die.

"I don't remember anyone," she said, "telling me they wished they'd done something different." Some of her patients, she recollected, possibly carried unresolved issues from the past, for they would ask to speak to a hospital chaplain.

Sometimes, these patients would fight to stay alive until someone special to them—a son, a daughter—could arrive. She remembered, in particular, one man under her care who, though sunken into a coma and expected to die any moment, nonetheless held onto life for three days. "It's our 50th wedding anniversary," his wife said on the day of his death. "I know that's why he wanted to be here."

This hospice nurse also had many memories of families who treated both the ill and each other with kindness and respect.

"I saw men come to the nursing home three times a day to sit with their wives," she told me. "Observing these couples only increases your faith that long marriages can be loving and kindly."

The Final Gifts

If we look at what the dying can offer us, we might notice that, different as these people are in personality and character, each one of them is a guide showing us how to live better lives. Their example may be positive or negative, but they bring home to us the importance of friends and family, the healing that might come from rectifying, or at least attempting to set right, broken relationships, and the peace and beauty of a well-balanced life.

That last lesson yields one more gift left unmentioned until now. Hidden in the words of those who had led a full life was gratitude. They may not have said so, but they were clearly thankful for their time here on earth, for knowing and loving others, for being a part of the mystery of existence.

We can be certain that these people, most of them men and women advanced in years, had undergone some of the trials and struggles, the heartaches and sorrows endured by all human beings. Honey and vinegar are both condiments at the feast of life. Yet, the words they spoke to the hospice nurse as they neared the grave came as a benediction, a blessing of appreciation for all that they'd seen and done and felt.

Young or old, good or bad, the dying pass a torch to the living. The wise and observant use that flame to help light the path they're walking.

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

▲ A hospice nurse says that observing older couples increases her faith that long marriages can be "loving and kindly."

FOR KIDS ONLY

THE EPOCH TIMES

Trees
By Joyce Kilmer

I think that I shall never see
A poem lovely as a tree.

A tree whose hungry mouth is prest
Against the earth's sweet flowing breast;

A tree that looks at God all day,
And lifts her leafy arms to pray;

A tree that may in Summer wear
A nest of robins in her hair;

Upon whose bosom snow has lain;
Who intimately lives with rain.

Poems are made by fools like me,
But only God can make a tree.

When I admire the wonders of a sunset or the beauty of the moon, my soul expands in the worship of the creator.

MAHATMA GANDHI (1869-1948), INDIAN POLITICIAN, SOCIAL ACTIVIST, AND WRITER

HOW CAN YOU KEEP YOUR SLEEPING BAG FROM GETTING STRETCHED OUT?

DON'T SLEEP TOO LONG IN IT!

AROUND THE WORLD

On Sept. 6, 1522, the late seafarer and explorer Ferdinand Magellan achieved a posthumous victory. Though he had died the year before, the expedition he chartered continued. On the sixth of September, his ship Victoria arrived at Sanlúcar de Barrameda in Spain and completed the world's first circumnavigation.



The expedition led by Magellan began in September 1519 consisting of five ships and 270 men in search of a western route to Indonesia. Only one ship completed the treacherous journey.



By Aidan Danza

COPPICING

Many people assume that once you cut down a tree, it dies, and you get wood. However, there is a way to harvest wood from a tree without killing it. In fact, it can, theoretically, be harvested indefinitely.

Coppicing trees is a great way to continually collect firewood.

The process is quite simple (at least on our end): The tree should be cut, leaving a sloping stump, which is called a stool. Coppicing can be done at any point in the year, but it's best done in the winter, when the trees are bare and dormant. From the stool, new shoots will sprout up in 4 to 8 weeks, depending on the tree. At this point, all the shoots will be cut down except for the three or four strongest ones. These will be left to grow until they are big enough for whatever purpose they are needed for (mostly firewood), and will be cut down again, leaving the process to repeat itself.

Coppicing wood has been done for thousands of years. It's thought that the technique originated in the Stone Age. The advantage to coppicing

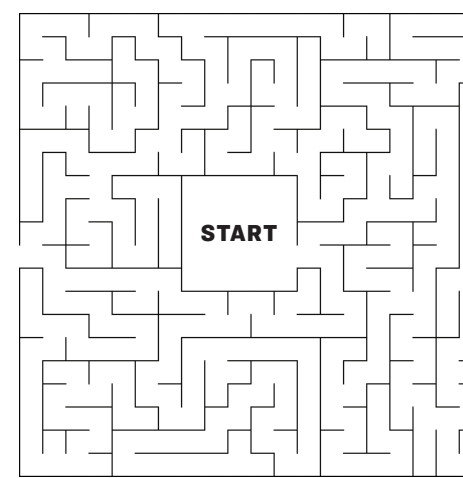
wood, as opposed to just cutting down trees and not maintaining their dead stumps, is that more wood can be produced in a shorter amount of time. A coppiced tree already has a root system in place, leaving just the trunk that needs to grow. Meanwhile, a wild-grown tree normally grows from seed. A normally grown tree can take more than double the time of a coppiced one. If coppiced trees are maintained, coppiced regularly every 8 to 12 years, they will never die of old age.

Most copes (woodlands maintained through coppicing) today are used for a practically unlimited supply of firewood, but in the past the technique was also used for woven fences, bean-poles, and wooden furniture.



Coppicing offers a sustainable supply of firewood.

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	7		
33			
3	5		
+	-	x	÷

Solution For Easy 1
 $2 - 5 \times (6 + 9)$
 $9 - 6 \times 9 \times 2$

Medium puzzle 1

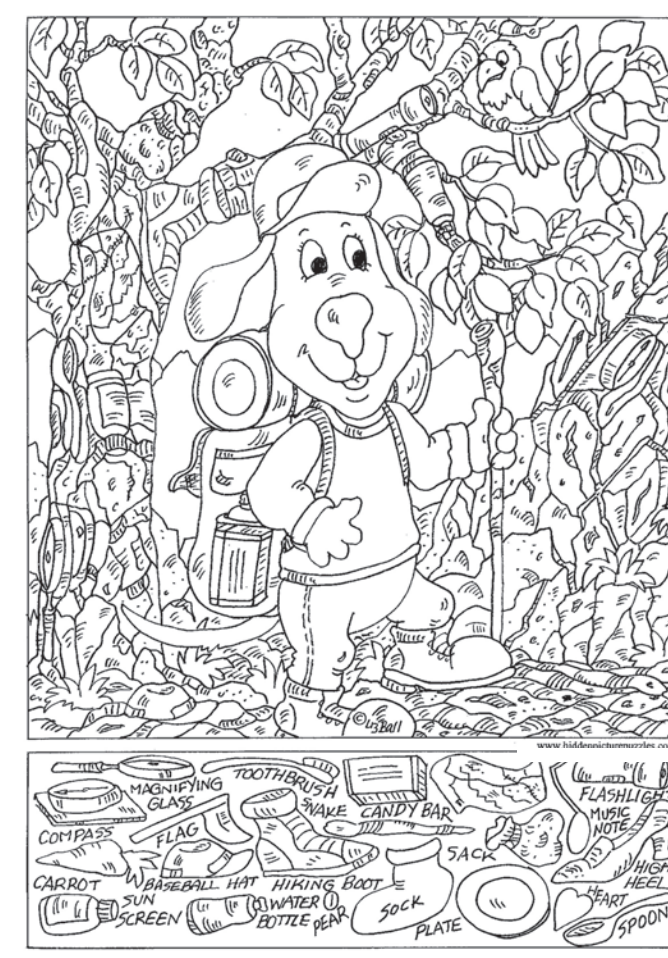
10	16		
80			
5	14		
+	-	x	÷

Solution for Medium 1
 $91 + 91 + 9 \times 01$

Hard puzzle 1

18	36		
48			
7	23		
+	-	x	÷

Solution for Hard 1
 $81 - 2 \times 62 + 96$



How many hidden objects can you find?

HIDDEN TREASURES by Liz Ball
www.HiddenPicturePuzzles.com

WORD SEARCH: Have You Been Camping Yet?

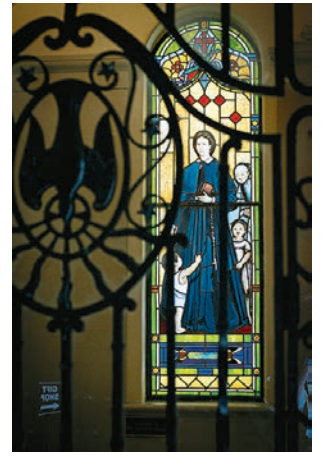
O	U	T	D	O	O	R	S	I	N	S	E	C	T	S
T	L	W	O	O	D	S	A	U	E	C	I	S	S	
F	R	C	A	N	O	E	F	U	R	S	T	G	Q	K
S	L	A	W	S	G	Q	E	U	Q	H	U	E	D	
J	T	I	A	L	N	T	S	G	B	F	S	O	B	
M	U	O	E	L	A	A	N	I	W	I	E	O	E	A
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N	N	Z	U	G	E	A	R	G	T	F	T	K	R	M
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H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

- | | |
|----------|-----------|
| Animals | Hat |
| Bait | Insects |
| Blanket | July |
| Boots | Knife |
| Bugs | Lantern |
| Campfire | Map |
| Canoe | Mess kit |
| Chair | Nature |
| Exercise | Outdoors |
| Files | Overnight |
| Food | Parent |
| Fun | Ranger |
| Games | Rope |
| Gear | Safety |
| Grass | Stories |
| | Swimming |
| | Tents |
| | Trail |
| | Water |
| | Weather |
| | Woods |

TRONG NGUYEN/SHUTTERSTOCK



▲ An overhead view taken by a drone provides context to St. Louis Cathedral's size and location. Even in modernity, the circa-1851 structure surpasses the surrounding buildings of the historic French Quarter. It sits in a crescent of the mighty Mississippi River and is located in the same place that Catholic churches have occupied for more than 300 years.



▲ Many of the stained-glass windows at St. Louis Cathedral, such as one showing St. Louis, for whom the cathedral is named, are about 100 years old. However, in 2015, the former baptistery of the cathedral was dedicated as the Venerable Henriette Delille Prayer Room with two newly commissioned stained-glass windows by local artist Ruth Goliwas. The stained glass communicates Delille's focus on bringing nonwhite children to the Catholic faith through baptism.

LARGER THAN LIFE: *Architecture Through the Ages*

On the Mighty Mississippi Stands a Magnificent Cathedral

By Deena Bouknight

As its spires seemingly yearn for heaven, the imposing St. Louis Cathedral overlooks New Orleans's Jackson Square, the center of the French Quarter. Since the city's founding in 1718, Catholics had attended church services in a wooden structure on the banks of the Mississippi River. A brick-and-timber building was erected in 1727.

The present structure bears the remnants of fires, hurricanes, and even a still-unsolved dynamite explosion in 1909, which blew out windows and damaged galleries. Within the square—designed to resemble the Palais-Royal in Paris—the church features architecture considered modern French romanticism in the Néo-Grec style.

The three dominant spires were originally made of wood and wrought iron, but they were covered in slate in 1859. The central tower was designed by Benjamin Latrobe; a bell and clock were soon added. After the Battle of New Orleans, "Victoire" ("Victory") was embossed on the bell.

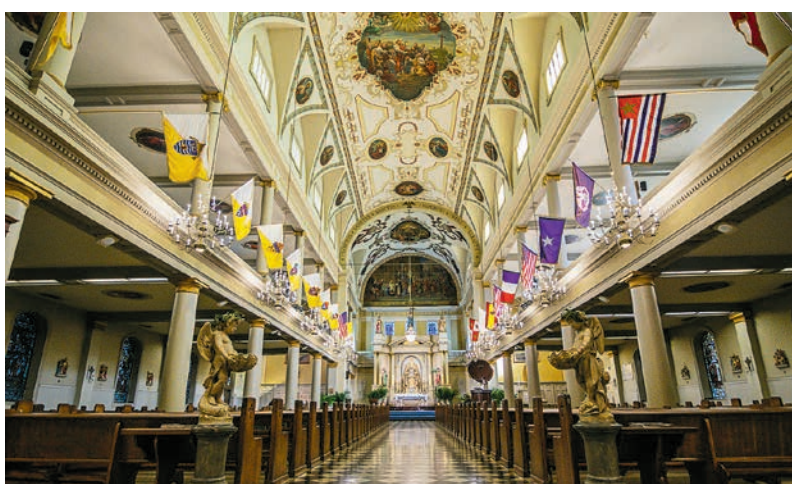
J.N.B. de Pouilly worked on the design plans for enlarging the structure for a growing congregation, and, in 1849, John Patrick Kirwan enlarged and restored the church using de Pouilly's plans. However, after many construction problems, Kirwan and de Pouilly were replaced. A new church was built in 1850.

The church sits near other historic buildings—the Cabildo (the former

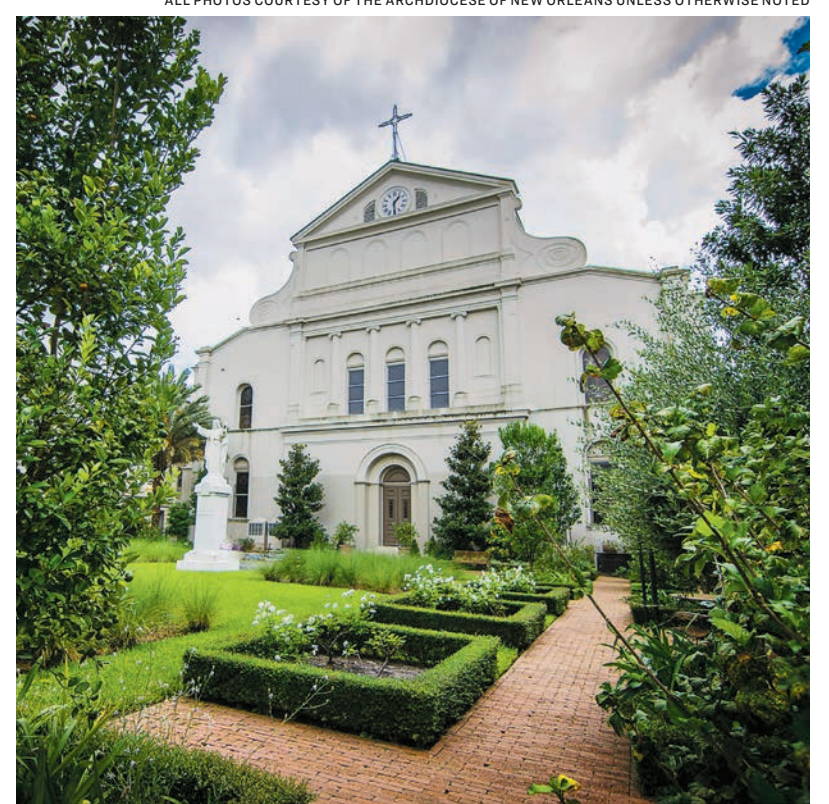
After the Battle of New Orleans, 'Victoire' ('Victory') was embossed on the bell in the central tower.

Spanish city hall), the Presbytère (formerly used by the Louisiana Supreme Court), and a block of Pontalba buildings graced with iron lace work.

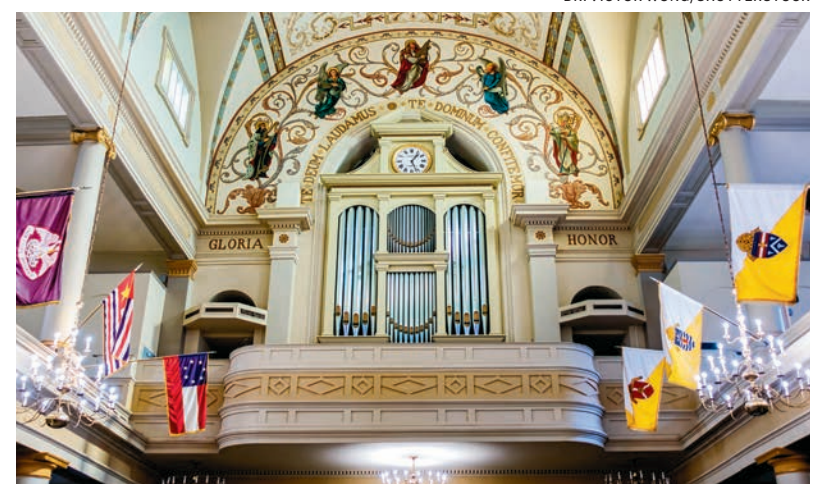
A 30-plus-year writer-journalist, Deena C. Bouknight works from her Western North Carolina mountain cottage and has contributed articles on food culture, travel, people, and more to local, regional, national, and international publications. She has written three novels, including the only historical fiction about the East Coast's worst earthquake. Her website is DeenaBouknightWriting.com



▲ Two stone angels grace the holy water fountains, and the ceiling of the cathedral features a painted canvas depicting various biblical scenes affixed to the plaster. Additionally, the painting over the altar depicts St. Louis, King Louis IX of France, calling for the Crusades. The flags on display represent nations that at different times ruled over the territory, and the stained-glass windows depict the life of St. Louis. Wooden pews seat approximately 1,000 people.



▲ The rear view of St. Louis Cathedral provides a glimpse into what is called St. Anthony's Garden, which features a marble statue of the Sacred Heart of Jesus. Although much less elaborate than its front, the back view of the cathedral also conveys the balanced architectural elements of columns and arches, with an exterior clock—similar to the one over the cathedral's entryway—offered to visitors of the garden as well.



▲ The organ was installed in 2004 by the Holtkamp Organ Co. of Cleveland. Rising 54 feet above the floor of the choir loft, it weighs more than 30 tons and sports more than 4,500 pipes, ranging in length from a few inches to 32 feet. Dentil molding-adorned columns flank the organ.

DR. VICTOR WONG/SHUTTERSTOCK

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