

THE EPOCH TIMES

LIFE &

TRADITION

RELATIONSHIPS

A Man, a Can, and the Oil of Love

Lessons on keeping our relationships running smoothly

By Jeff Minick

Wedding rings, Cupid with his bow and arrows, roses—red for romantic love, yellow for friendship—love knots and friendship bracelets, swans or doves: these are just some of the traditional symbols of love, romance, marriage, and affection. Many such symbols have deep roots in the past. From the ports of Greece to the coastal plains of India, for instance, seashells symbolized love. Botticelli’s “The Birth of Venus” depicts the goddess rising from the sea atop a lovely scallop shell. The Greeks and Romans deemed the apple representative of love and desire, and for centuries, the Japanese have considered the leaf of the red maple a token of love and loyalty. To these lists, I propose we add a new symbol of the heart’s affections: the Ted Leipprandt antique oil can.

An Unexpected Gift
In early August, a bit worn down from caring for grandchildren while my West Virginia son and his wife were bringing a little boy into the world to join the clan, I returned home and found a medium-sized package, light as gossamer and with a return address unknown to me. Inside was another box, darkly stained on one side. After cutting open that box, I found an oil can with a message attached by a piece of brown twine.

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To reader Ted Leipprandt, an oil can is a symbol of the power of love.



MOVIESTILLSDB

CULTURE

Portraits of Femininity

A look at literary heroine Jane Eyre

By Annie Holmquist

The release of Greta Gerwig’s Barbie movie spawned much discussion, with media commentators spilling tons of ink or waxing eloquent on the alleged messages of the film. Was the movie another feminist screed seeking to bash masculinity, people wondered, or was it really a knock on the extremes of both feminism and the patriarchy? And perhaps more important, what does real femininity look like? I think it’s safe to say that true femininity doesn’t look anything like strong, feminist Barbie, or even ditsy, blonde Barbie. Yet because these examples of femininity are the ones placed before



▲ Mia Wasikowska in 2011’s “Jane Eyre.”

us continually, today’s women naturally tend to drift toward one of them. Recognizing this, I began to ponder some of the other fictitious characters that I know, looking for glimpses of positive femininity that today’s women can glean insight from. I found several, not the least of which is one of my more recent literary favorites, Jane Eyre. For those who have read Charlotte Bronte’s classic novel—or perhaps watched some movie version of the story—Jane Eyre’s life as an orphan-turned-teacher who experiences many difficulties along the way can seem dark and dreary. But those who take time to read the book will find a picture of an

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CULTURE

Portraits of Femininity

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ordinary woman who combines inner strength with grace and dignity to weather challenging circumstances. Here are several feminine traits that Jane Eyre challenges us to incorporate into our own lives:

Principled Womanhood
Let's be honest: It's Jane's principles that make her one of my favorite literary characters. Upon finding out that the love of her life is already married, an anguished Jane leaves him and all of her belongings both to flee temptation in her own life and to remove it from her lover's life. She refuses to take anything with her when she flees, feeling

that the gifts from her lover aren't rightfully hers, thus causing herself to almost die of starvation as she seeks a new home.
Here, we have a woman who has inculcated principles of morality into her life at a young age and then has the guts to stick to them even when the going gets unimaginably tough. Although it would be easy to cave and follow her heart, Jane recognizes that she "need not sell [her] soul to buy bliss."

Welcoming to Children
Jane first comes to Mr. Rochester's house as a governess for his ward, Adèle. Likely seeking to give Adèle a happier childhood than she herself had, Jane sees her little charge blossom under her care. Later, when Jane legitimately could be consumed by her engagement and coming marriage to Mr. Rochester, she still extends kind regard toward the little girl, welcoming and encouraging her intrusion into the daily events of life.

selections and is content with items that don't seek to draw attention to her character or appearance.

Improving the Mind
After Jane removes herself from Mr. Rochester's home and employment, she finds a teaching job in another town far away. But work isn't the only thing that occupies her mind. She seeks to continue learning, studying the German language on her own and then agreeing to join one of her new friends in learning "Hindustanee." She doesn't let her mind dwell on miseries; instead, she fills her mind and time with worthwhile endeavors.

Rejecting Victimhood
If anyone has a right to play the victim, it's Jane Eyre. A poor, friendless orphan raised by abusive relatives, Jane again encounters abuse at the hands of a cruel headmaster when she is later sent to school. When her hopes for love, marriage, and a happy home are suddenly dashed by the realization that her lover is already married—albeit to an insane woman—she endures flight and starvation in her escape.
Yet after all of these trials, Jane doesn't turn bitter. Instead, she embraces the challenges that life gives her, diligently doing the work placed in front of her while also returning good for evil when she later has a chance to care for the very relatives who have been so cruel to her.

Taking Jane Eyre as a Model of Femininity
Although Jane's story is unique in many ways, it isn't unlike many of the challenges that women in the 21st century face. Some have been horribly abused, both as children and adults. Others have been greatly disappointed in love, facing rejection or even temptation toward forbidden fruit. And then there are always the little feminine sins—the jealousies, coquetties, or gossip—that beckon.
Today's culture encourages women to give in to these things—to live an unprincipled life that wallows in misery and victimhood, that seeks to further our own beauty and position instead of seeking to help and encourage others before ourselves.
Jane Eyre challenges us to move to a higher form of femininity—one that embraces children, exhibits a modest and principled character, and improves the mind rather than dwelling on victimhood or petty indulgences. Let's not waste time trying to pattern ourselves after any form of femininity that does otherwise.

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.

Ruth and Joe's in July 2022.
"I was kind of nervous that [my nana] wouldn't love being in front of the camera," Ms. Miraglia said, "but they were just so cute with each other."
She also got to take pictures of her grandparents' favorite spots around the house, including where they liked to read, sitting on the porch, or by the garage, where they would welcome the family or wave goodbye to them each time they left.
She was also sure to snap photos in Ruth's favorite spot: the flower garden—the same spot where her photography career began.

Ms. Miraglia describes the pictures that were taken at her grandparents' home as some of the most "meaningful photos" that she has ever taken through her career.
"They're photos that I will be able to look at, as well as show my kids, and show their kids, the rest of my life," she said.
While the family was together at Ruth and Joe's, everyone wrote their best memory of the house on a card before sitting in a circle to share their stories. Ms. Miraglia's cousin, who had lived in the house, described her favorite memory of the house as giving birth to Ruth and Joe's great-grandchild and welcoming the child into the house.
For Ms. Miraglia, some of her favorite memories from the house included reading in the sunroom, learning to sew with her grandmother, and her grandfather's "ducky show" for the kids, using her cousin's favorite stuffed animal.
"There was a lot of tears, a lot of laughter; it was just really beautiful. It was a really good way to say goodbye to the house," she said.



▲ Ruth and Joe on the front steps of the home they've owned for over 45 years.

FAMILY

A House Made of Memories

When Maree Miraglia's grandparents decided to sell their home of 45 years, she pulled out her camera

By Louise Chambers

A loving granddaughter who was left heartbroken upon learning that her grandparents were selling their home of 45 years has immortalized the beloved house in a series of photos for the family.
Maree Miraglia, 27, is a photographer based in southern Utah. Her grandparents, Ruth and Joe, live in Chicago, Illinois, and have been married for 62 years. Their three-story, five-bedroom home with a basement, sunroom, and garden has become the heart of the family.
"My nana ... felt God had brought her to that part of the world," Ms. Miraglia told The Epoch Times. "They thought the house was so expensive at the time, but really felt that they were called to be there."
Ms. Miraglia, whose parents got divorced when she was a child, visited her grandparents every year for summer and Christmas.

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A Man, a Can, and the Oil of Love

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Instantly, I was swept back into that scene in the 1939 film "The Wizard of Oz" in which the Scarecrow and Dorothy use just such a device to loosen up the rusted hinges of the Tin Man. It's silver in color, with an inkwell-shaped base and a long thin pipe for the delivery of oil. One pumps the bottom of the can, just as in the movie, and out comes the oil.

The Note
The note tied to the can deserves to be quoted in full:

The Significance of an Oil Can
Growing up in a Christian home, in a farming community, I learned many life lessons that I have strived to embrace. This simple oil can is symbolic of the power of love.
Let me explain: Before heading out into the fields with a piece of important machinery, Dad impressed upon my brothers and me the importance of lubricating the metal parts to reduce the friction, and subsequent wear. Iron and steel can be easily worn and broken by not lubricating regularly. Consequently, we were reminded to oil and grease all the moving parts. We most certainly knew the value of the oil and the can that contained it.
Relationships are like that: We need to constantly "oil" them to keep them running smoothly. I personally believe that oil is synonymous with love. Our Christian teaching reminds us that God loves us, and we are to love our neighbor, as we love ourselves.
That being said: My purpose of giving you an oil can from my collection that I have acquired over my many years of antiquing is to remind you that love, like oil, will prevent friction from harming your many valued relationships.
Thank you for helping me to celebrate this milestone in my life.
-Ted S. Leipprandt



▲ Objects as simple as antique oil cans can carry symbolic lessons with them that can teach us about life.

THE CARE AND MAINTENANCE OF CONNECTIONS. Of relationships, Mr. Leipprandt believes that "we need to constantly 'oil' them to keep them running smoothly." After pondering his brief comparison of love and oil, three words came to mind: respect, tenderness, and caring. These are some of the oils that keep that machinery in operation.
Moreover, his mention of the Christian teaching that we are to love our neighbors as ourselves in fact extends beyond those bounds of religious faith and is universal in application. It simply means treating our family, friends, and yes, even strangers, as we ourselves wish to be treated. Think of the troubles that today plague our families, our communities, and our country, and then consider what a difference it would make if we all took those words to heart.

Relationships are like that: We need to constantly "oil" them to keep them running smoothly.

Ted S. Leipprandt

The Gift Spreads Its Message
Today, the Leipprandt oil can occupies a place of honor on a low bookshelf in my den. The shelf rises only to my waist and so allows even children to see the device once used to keep machinery running. Already one of my grandchildren asked me about its function, and a visiting adult picked up the can, read the note, and opened a conversation about love.
Ted Leipprandt's oil can may never replace the hearts and roses on Valentine's Day, but as a symbol of love, it more than meets the criteria of truth, beauty, and goodness.

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.

Life Lessons From Mr. Leipprandt
By his gift and his letter, Mr. Leipprandt offered me, and the rest of us as well, some valuable lessons about living.

Is there an object that holds a special meaning for you? Let us know at features@epochtimes.nyc

Carol Huang dances to her own choreography in a piece called “Faith” during the preliminary round of the NTD International Classical Chinese Dance Competition in Purchase, N.Y., on Sept. 8.



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PERFORMING ARTS

Beauty and Virtue: The Art of Chinese Classical Dance

Dancers reflect on technical excellence, narrative expression, and moral character at the 10th NTD dance competition

By Catherine Yang

If you were able to read a Shakespearean sonnet with perfect pacing and enunciation, yet you had no idea what it meant, your reading would come off as dry and stiff, and even an audience who knew nothing about Shakespeare would be able to tell. It's the same with classical Chinese dance—an art form rooted in traditional culture that's five millennia deep. Every gesture or turn of the head has a meaning and is an embodiment of the culture. A dancer needs to have a thorough understanding of the culture to bring it to life. From Sept. 7 to Sept. 10, the art of classical Chinese dance was in the spotlight, as 140 dancers from three continents gathered in Purchase, New York, to take part in the 10th NTD International Classical Chinese Dance Competition. The com-

petition is part of a series of events that NTD hosts in its mission to support traditional culture, placing emphasis on “pure beauty and authenticity” in its judging of dance performances. Before communism took hold of China 75 years ago, the Chinese people held a much different worldview than that of today. They believed that human beings were created by God, and they valued the concept of harmony between heaven, earth, and humankind. To strive for this harmony, they sought to live by the five virtues of benevolence, righteousness, propriety, wisdom, and fidelity. This informed the civilization that lasted for 5,000 years. Dancers at the competition explained that understanding these principles of traditional Chinese culture is paramount to being able to perform classical Chinese dance well.

Understanding traditional Chinese culture is paramount to performing classical Chinese dance well.

Telling the Truth Through Dance: Carol Huang

“I think truly good art can evoke kindness in people's hearts,” said Carol Huang, a gold-award winner in the adult female division and two-time gold-award winner of past competitions in the junior division. “It's not just entertainment. ... It can give someone a lasting impression, a positive influence. It can lead one to think about what true human culture is and understand traditional culture. And afterward, he or she might have the thought, ‘What kind of culture is a good culture?’” For Ms. Huang, dance is a moral art form, and one that mirrors life. “In art, as in life, when you mend your problems, you improve—both morally and physically,” she said. Ms. Huang is an accomplished artist and a principal dancer at Shen Yun Performing Arts, the world's premier classical Chinese dance and music company. Her reason for entering the NTD competition was the same as that

of many of the dancers present: to improve themselves and deepen their understanding of dance. One of the things that the competition judges looked at was the dancer's use of “shen dai shou” (body leading the hands) and “kua dai tui” (hips leading the legs), a method of movement that was pioneered by Shen Yun dancers under the direction of the company's artistic director, D.F. A result of using this method is longer, grander movements and amplified expression. This year, Ms. Huang applied that method in her performance of “Faith,” a narrative dance about a Falun Gong practitioner in China. Falun Gong, also known as Falun Dafa, is a spiritual practice centered on the principles of truth, compassion, and forbearance. It was introduced to the public in the 1990s, and within the decade, it had spread widely via word of mouth. By 1999, an estimated 70 million to 100 million people were practicing in China. In July of that year, the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) launched an unprecedented persecution campaign to “eradicate” Falun Gong using the entire force of its state apparatus, perceiving the practice's popularity as a threat to its authoritarian rule. The CCP illegally detained and tortured untold numbers of practitioners with the aim of coercing them to give up their faith. The regime justified its persecution campaign to the public by spreading propaganda through its media mouthpieces. Rather than be cowed by the slander and suppression, practitioners resisted the persecution and courageously clarified the truth about the practice to the people of China who'd been brainwashed by the CCP's lies. “[In my performance,] I didn't base my character on any specific person,” Ms. Huang said. “What I wanted to portray was any Falun Gong practitioner who lives under the pressure of the CCP's persecution. When they go out to clarify the truth to others, they must feel some sort of fear. “I wanted to show how they overcome their fears and courageously step forward to tell the world's people the truth about Falun Gong, how they transcend their own fears and various worries to do so. “This is a very meaningful dance piece, to be able to, through this competition, tell a lot of people the truth about Falun Gong and the CCP's persecution.”



▲ Bella Fan performs “Moonlight Mist” in the semifinal round of the competition.



▲ Carol Huang performed in the Adult Female Division of the 9th NTD International Classical Chinese Dance Competition in New York state on Sept. 4, 2021.

Ms. Huang, who herself is an adherent of the meditation practice, said she applies amplified expression in her dance. “If you want to portray a character, you need to use their emotions to flesh out that character. And then, if you use your body to express those feelings that you want to convey, it'll come across very clearly,” she said. “Like in my piece, when people are scared, they shrink in fear. Your body caves and contracts like this.” Ms. Huang demonstrated the shrinking posture she used in one part of her dance. “But when you stand with faith and righteousness, your posture and body language is open and bright,” she said, showing the vast difference conveyed through the simple change in posture. “Your body can help you express this very clearly. “Your mind, your intention, has to constantly be on your body. Dancing isn't just about moving your arms and legs. Your body is the whole center of your person. If you use your body to express something, you express it that much more clearly.” Shen Yun has been using this method for several years now, and it has set a new standard for classical Chinese dance internationally.

The Inside Reflects the Outside: Roy Chen

Roy Chen is also a principal dancer with Shen Yun Performing Arts as well as an instructor of classical Chinese dance. A previous gold-award winner, Mr. Chen commented on the competition. “Your morality and character are conveyed when you're onstage,” he said, noting that he sees how it plays out every day in the classroom. “When you look at a dancer's movements, you can see what kind of artist he is, and you can see what kind of person he is.” If someone normally does things in a careless way and lacks attention to detail, it often shows up in his dance form, too, he said. Your mindset and worldview affect your idea of beauty, which is what you're presenting to the audience when you take to the stage. Understanding this is often one of the biggest gains that dancers who participate in the competition report, he said. “Everyone's upbringing, environment, outlook, philosophy, and sense of aesthetics is different. So even if they portray the same character, the way they do it will definitely be different,” Mr. Chen said. “Everyone has their own interpretation, and expression of it. So you can look at which is most beautiful, most grand, and you can learn from each other.” The ancient art form of classical Chinese dance includes the requirement of using movement “to express a dancer's inner world.” Done correctly, one's feelings drive the body into motion. “Classical Chinese dance is really something profound; it contains great meaning and depth, but also such breadth that it can be used to portray characters and every emotion. It can do so many things—it can even convey the image of God. That's not something every dance form can do,” he said.

A Gift to the Audience: Bella Fan

Bella Fan has participated in the NTD International Classical Chinese Dance Competition several times since she started learning classical Chinese dance. This time, she was awarded Gold in the female division, capping off her last competition. Ms. Fan performed “Moonlight Mist,” a dance of her own creation. In it, her character's mindset changes from negative to positive, as the character learns to look past the illusions of the human world. “For me, I like to immerse myself in the environment of the story as soon as I step on stage. Where am I in the story? I just let my imagination come out,” she said. She felt that her dance piece conveyed the virtue of temperance, in a way. “The ancients lived by this; you could also call it a principle of ‘just enough,’ with nothing done in excess. There's a moral standard to this,” she said. It was important to Ms. Fan that her dance expressed something virtuous because classical Chinese dance is an expression of a traditional culture in which virtue dominated, she explained. “I feel I have this mission to do this well,” she said of conveying traditional culture through this ancient art form. “Dance is a reflection of your character. If you're not positive or righteous, then when you dance, what are you giving to audiences?”



Vittoria Colonna, drawing by Michelangelo. “Poem 152” was written for his dear friend and fellow poet Colonna.

A Sonnet About the Gift of a Virtuous Friendship

Michelangelo, sculptor, painter, and ... poet?

By Marlena Figge

Few people immediately associate the name “Michelangelo” with poetry. Yet when one beholds the Pietà or the Sistine Chapel, it hardly comes as a surprise that the artist was poetically inclined. Indeed, the greatest surprise comes perhaps in Michelangelo's ability to complete so many poetic and artistic works over the course of his life. “Poem 152” was written between 1538 and 1544. This was around the time when Michelangelo was completing his work on “The Last Judgment,” adding this to an impressive artistic résumé that already included the sculptures of the Pietà and David. In fact, the poem sheds a great deal of light on the philosophy behind these sculptures. Along with Poem 151, 152 articulates the Neoplatonic theory of art, which held that the true form of the sculpture was hidden within the stone or other medium. It was the job of the artist to remove the outer shell to reveal the form or idea therein. Drawing from this idea, Michelangelo unveils the essence of the poem, which is the idea that the person addressed in the poem gradually draws out the inner goodness of the speaker just as the artist reveals the form of the work of art. In our modern age, we may be tempted to dismiss the theory in haste. However, if we examine the poem more closely, we come to understand a new understanding of a virtuous friendship as presented to us by Michelangelo. The first part of the poem presents us with the simile of the artist in place of the lady addressed, comparing the action of removing the outer mass of the stone to the action of the friend who brings out the goodness and virtue in the speaker. Michelangelo's thought rings with what Christ told the apostles, that “the spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak.” The speaker's intellect struggles against the will, and he lacks the strength to resist his impulses. Here, the body is described as the outer shell of the soul, and the soul must combat the coarse, crude nature of the flesh in order for virtue to reign. Just as the sculptor removes the exterior of the stone to reveal the form within, so too the friend addressed in the poem draws out the speaker's soul and inspires him to goodness. Without this friend, the soul trembles and fears for its own salvation, which is imperiled as the soul turns from goodness.

A Figure That's Alive

“The perfect form of friendship is that between good men who are alike in excellence or virtue,” Aristotle said in Nicomachean Ethics. “For these friends wish alike for one another's good because they are good men, and they are good per se, (that is, their goodness is something intrinsic, not incidental). Those who wish for their friends' good for their friends' sake are friends in the truest sense.” Like Aristotle, Michelangelo distinguished the shared pursuit of virtue as the defining characteristic of true friendship. A virtuous friend spurs another on to virtue, not only because they're good themselves and inspire others to imitate them, but also because they desire the good of the other and will therefore encourage them in their progress. In fact, genuine friendship can't be based on pleasure or utility; virtue is necessary for the friendship to endure because other forms of friendship will eventually dissolve in self-interest. For these reasons, many of the saints stress the importance of good friendships in one's spiritual journey. St. Francis de Sales wrote, “It is necessary to find those who will support us and need our support in promoting the devout life.” The speaker in the poem exhibits just such a reliance on the friend he addresses. The lady addressed sculpts the good deeds the speaker performs, for when his will fails, hers is ready to carry him forward. Alone, the speaker can do nothing, but with the lady's encouragement and example, virtue can be called forth to action from the speaker's soul. In this sense, the friend becomes a reflection of God; in pursuing virtue, she draws closer to God and becomes more similar to him. In consequence, those who share in her friendship, in imitating and drawing nearer to her, will also imitate and draw nearer to God.

The Soul That Still Trembles

“Poem 152” is a madrigal, which is a form of lyric poetry that became popular in 14th-century Italy. It was written for Vittoria Colonna, a fellow poet and dear friend of Michelangelo. Bonded together by their shared faith and artistic pursuits, the two drew a profound consolation from the intellectual camaraderie. They had in common the fact that their art was infused with their faith, and their friendship served as a further source of inspiration for their poetry.

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.

‘Poem 152’

Just as by taking away, lady, one puts into hard and alpine stone a figure that's alive and that grows larger wherever the stone decreases, so too are any good deeds of the soul that still trembles concealed by the excess mass of its own flesh, which forms a husk that's coarse and crude and hard. You alone can still take them out from within my outer shell, for I haven't the will or strength within myself.



◀ Square dancing is a facet of American culture that's enjoyable for the whole community.

space will vary considerably. We used to rent an old school house for \$50—but that was partly due to family connections. Other venues we looked at cost as much as \$300 (and, of course, venues can be as much as many thousands of dollars, depending on where you are). If someone in your group already owns a shed or other suitable building, you may be able to use it for free.

The Dancers

With the first three ingredients in order, you're ready to find the dancers needed to complete the event. For our first dance, years ago, my friends and I put up full-color posters all around our area and simply invited all of our friends and family, and the turnout was quite good. From there, we began building an email list to inform participants of future dances. We didn't put up posters the next time, but our turnout was the same or greater—much of the growth came through word of mouth. If you begin hosting dances regularly, attendance will likely grow organically with little advertising—at least, that holds true in my part of the country. Other initial advertising methods would include publicizing in your local newspaper, on Facebook, on EventBrite, or through existing email chains.

Naturally, you'll want to take into account your venue's maximum capacity as you consider how many dancers to invite.

Additional Ingredients for Added Flavor

SOUND SYSTEM. If at all possible, I recommend using a sound system, at least for the caller. If the caller doesn't have a microphone and some amplification, it may be impossible to hear him or her over the music, which renders the whole effort a bit pointless. Providing sound for the musicians is also a good idea; just be sure to mix it such that the caller remains audible.

FOOD AND DRINK. Food and drink will add to the festivity. We've had bake sales before to help cover costs, but it's also a good idea to provide some free refreshments, if possible, even if that's just some lemonade and popcorn. You'll absolutely want to have free water available since dancers get very thirsty.

CHAIRS. Most of your space needs to remain open for dancing, obviously, but you should also provide chairs for people to rest on between dances or to sit and watch the merriment. We usually have a single row of chairs lining all four walls of the building, providing plenty of seating yet leaving the dance floor open.

DECORATIONS. String lights are a nice touch, as alluded to in the opening description of this article. For our first dance, which was in the autumn, we also drove some antique tractors (which friends owned) up by the entrance to the old schoolhouse and placed haybales and pumpkins around them.

Covering Costs

The main way of covering costs will be through entrance fees, though if the point is to provide wholesome family entertainment and bring in lots of folks, I recommend keeping the cost of entrance low. You might also consider a bake sale, raffles, or other fundraisers that could run simultaneously with the dance.

If all of this sounds a bit expensive, that's because, well, it probably will be, especially if you're hiring the musicians and caller. When I used to be regularly involved with dances, we were able to provide a lot of the key ingredients ourselves (music for free, venue for \$50), which greatly reduced cost. Even then, we only just broke even after paying the caller, though that was mainly because we kept the entrance fee as affordable as possible (about \$5 per person or \$20 per family). It was only once some of us also learned to call that expenses really became a nonissue.

Dances of this sort are definitely not a money-making proposition, and you may have to think of it instead as an investment in your community and family. That's how we viewed it, so it didn't bother us if we had to pay \$100 or more in order to pull it off. We thought this experience of true culture was well worth it.

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."

The Caller

The job of the caller is to come with several dances that he or she knows very well and that he or she will teach to the dancers and then "call," or announce, step by step, during the dance, to remind everyone of what comes next and to keep everyone in sync.

Learning to call a handful of dances isn't as hard as it sounds, and there are resources for it online and in a few books. One volume that I found helpful was "Square Dances of Today and How to Teach and Call Them" by Richard Kraus (of course, they're not dances of "today" anymore—the book is from 1950). So you could consider doing this yourself. Still, if this is your first dance, you're probably going to want to hire someone with

experience. The cost for a professional caller in my area is similar to the cost for a fiddler—about \$150 to \$500.

Once again, I recommend using word of mouth if possible so that you can find someone trustworthy and skilled. There's a lot of pressure on the caller—they are the leader for the entire group, and they need to bring a welcoming and enthusiastic demeanor in order to create the proper atmosphere.

The Space

The traditional space for a square dance is a barn—hence the common synonym of "barn dance." If you can find one in good repair, this is a great option to consider, since it helps create the authentic environment you're aiming for better than, say, a school gym. That being said, I've hosted dances in both a barn and a school gym, and they were still successful even in the latter case—plus there were no barn support beams for dancers to have to worry about running into.

Other options to consider include community centers, ballrooms, sheds, park lodges, or even just a stretch of lawn (if weather permits). The cost to rent your

with a few backup musicians), a caller, a space, and dancers. The first three, of course, must be secured before you have any hope of bringing in dancers. We'll take them one by one.

The Fiddler

The fiddler is absolutely essential to a traditional square dance. One could, I suppose, get by with canned music, but the lack of a live band takes a lot away from the energy and authenticity of the whole experience. You will need to find someone with strong knowledge of traditional American fiddle tunes, such as "Turkey in the Straw" and "Over the Waterfall."

They will also need to possess excellent stamina, as the fiddler has a pretty tiring job: playing the same tune for about 6 to 12 minutes straight per dance. An evening of dances might include 4 to 10 different dances, so you begin to see the endurance the fiddler must have. One consolation is that the band gets to rest between dances for roughly the same length as a dance while the caller teaches everyone the upcoming square or reel.

In my circles, we were fortunate to have a talented fiddler within the group of organizers, and he generally offered his services for free. If you don't know a fiddler personally, it's time to start asking around. Talk to your friends and family and see if they know anyone. You may also find a fiddler online, though I've never tried this myself—I prefer to rely on word of mouth. If you don't already have a friend or family member willing to play for free, then you will need to hire a professional. On the occasions that I've done this, the cost ran between \$200 and \$500.

You will also need, at a minimum, a backup guitarist for the fiddler. Bass, banjo, mandolin, etc. are great if you can get them.

FUN TRADITIONS

How (and Why) to Host a Square Dance

By Walker Larson

The fiddler taps out the rhythm with his toes: 1, 2, 3, 4— In a flash, the room surges to new life with the sweet scooping and soaring of fiddle strains, the deep resonating punctuation of the acoustic bass against the warm, golden background of guitar. The dancers wait in their square formations, still, expectant, smiling. The lights strung across the room twinkle, a miniature constellation of stars.

The caller's deep voice breaks through the flowing surface of the music, reverberates among the lights above, in a sing-song tone, announcing the first step with an old-fashioned rhyme: "All join hands and circle south; put a little moonshine in your mouth; you're all going wrong, go back the other way, hold your holts and re-sashay." The flush of exercise and exhilaration kisses the dancers' faces—they move in a complicated yet harmonious figure, each person relying on the others in his or her square.

The dancers are all ages: young couples shyly holding hands and catching one another's eyes in the swirl of the dance, husbands and wives dancing with their spinning toddlers, grandparents shuffling arm in arm, remembering the dance halls of their youths. In between figures, when squared in their sets, everyone begins to clap in unison and in time with the music, and looks to the caller for the next call. The next figure is about to begin. Outside, a great yellow moon broods over the valley and the crickets mingle their song with the fiddle's.

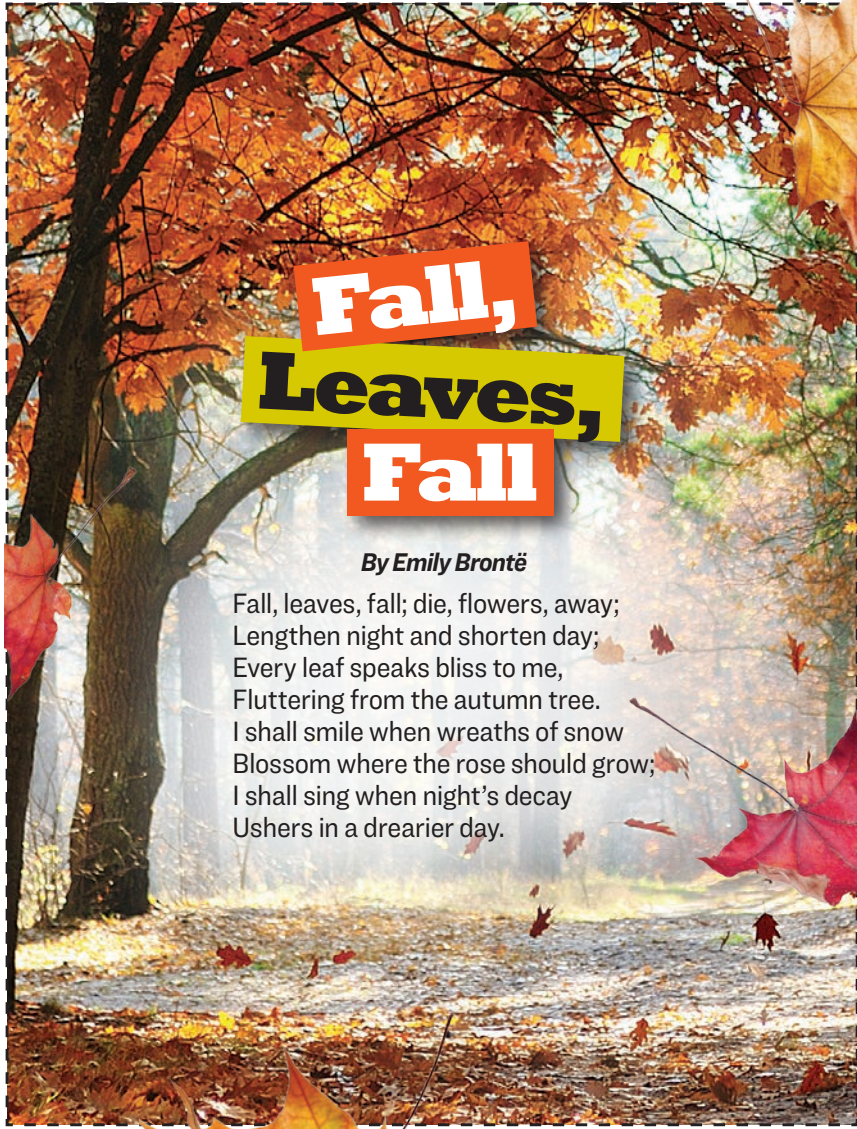
I was first introduced to square dancing as a teenager, and I have since attended, hosted, and called many dances. Few activities I know of seem to generate as much spontaneous joy and wholesome family recreation as a traditional square dance. Here's how you, too, can host such a dance and tap into that joy.

There are four main ingredients needed for a square dance: a fiddler (ideally



FOR KIDS ONLY

THE EPOCH TIMES



MNY-JHEE/SHUTTERSTOCK

WHY DID THE APPLE PIE GO TO THE DENTIST?



(PIE) DIMA MOROZ/SHUTTERSTOCK; (LEAVES) VALENTINA RAZUMOVA/SHUTTERSTOCK

“Autumn is the mellow season, and what we lose in flowers we more than gain in fruits.”

SAMUEL BUTLER (1835-1902), ENGLISH NOVELIST

ALEXANDER RATHS/SHUTTERSTOCK

By Aidan Danza

THE SOCIAL LIFE OF A SPOTTED HYENA

The spotted hyena is an iconic animal of the African savannah.

Though not as widely respected, perhaps, as animals such as the lion or elephant, it's nonetheless one of Africa's most common predators.

Like many large African carnivores, spotted hyenas travel in groups, which are called clans. A spotted hyena clan can consist of anywhere from three to 80 hyenas, with larger clans occurring in more fertile areas, compared with smaller clans, which are usually in sparse desert areas. The clan defends a territory that is shared among its members, almost like a town. Just like a town, the whole clan rarely is seen completely together, and mostly live their daily lives alone or in small groups. The exceptions are at kills, when defending territory from an invader, or at a communal den.

The social system of a spotted hyena clan is unusual (but not unique) among large carnivores in that males are always subordinate to females, seemingly without exception.

Among males and females, there seems to be a distinct "pecking order," or dominance hierarchy, that exists. There appear to be different "classes" of hyena that are inherited maternally. It's similar to the rankings of nobles: Kings are higher than dukes, who are higher than earls, who are higher than barons. So, if a hyena was the hyena equivalent of a duchess, so is her daughter. As the daughter hyena gets older, however, she might be demoted or promoted,

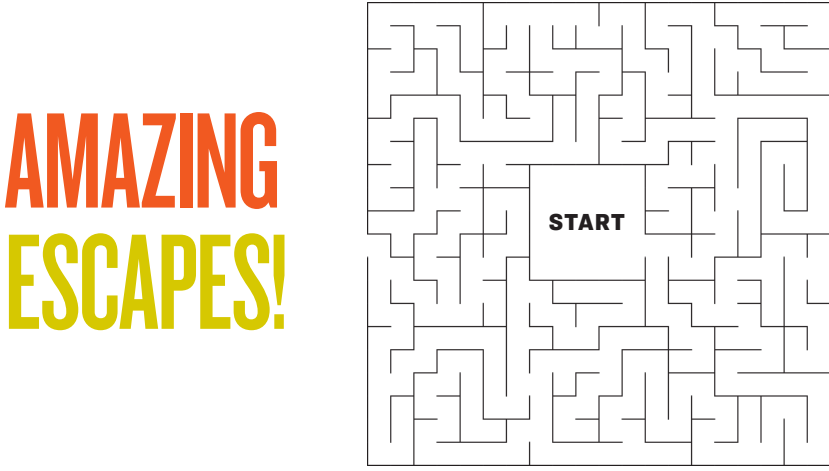
based on a wide variety of factors.

The hierarchy is completely different for males. Males leave the clan in which they were born and find another, where they appear to carefully cultivate relationships with existing females so as to gain favor and thus gain a place in their own hierarchy.

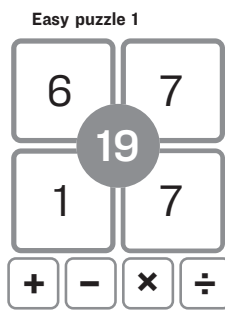
It's important to note that the scientific research showing these

relationships is quite new and might not be true for all spotted hyenas, but it does draw on a lot of data and appears to be the case most of the time.

So what does this hierarchy determine? Mostly which hyena gets to eat first and which is privileged and respected among hyenas.



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



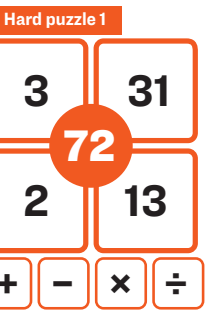
Solution For Easy 1

1 - 9 + 7 + 7



Solution for Medium 1

11 + (11 - 1 + 1)



Solution for Hard 1

2 - 6 - 61 - 18



HIDDEN TREASURES by Liz Ball
www.HiddenPicturePuzzles.com

WORD SEARCH: Fall Is Here!



Apples	Family
Autumn	Feast
Bake	Fire
Bread	Football
Buns	Friends
Carve	Frost
Casseroles	Ham
Chili	Harvest
Chill	Home
Colors	Leaves
Corn	Leftovers
Cranberries	Oven
Dessert	Rime
Fall	Salad

Season
Soups
Squash
Stuffing
Sweater
Sweet Potato
Yam

LARGER THAN LIFE: Architecture Through the Ages

FALLINGWATER:

Iconic home in Western Pennsylvania

By Deena Bouknight

While many of the United States’ most impressive cathedrals, buildings, and houses reside in major metropolitan areas, one of architect Frank Lloyd Wright’s (1867–1959) most notable works is in Mill Run, located in Pennsylvania’s Laurel Highlands area, 75 miles southeast of Pittsburgh. The Kaufmann family, who owned and operated Pittsburgh’s largest department store, commissioned Wright in 1935 to design their vacation house along a stream and over a waterfall. This house became known as Fallingwater.

Wright created for the Kaufmanns a 9,300-square-foot house, of which 4,400 square feet are terraces. Two terraces are dramatically cantilevered up and over a 20-foot waterfall. Local craftsmen quarried native sandstone and other natural materials from the property. By 1938, the one-of-a-kind house—integrated into the natural rock ledges of the wooded landscape—was completed.

The house’s interior includes low ceil-

ings and dark passageways that lead to light-filled, expansive common rooms. Wright’s design intention for all of the interior areas of the house was to direct occupants toward outdoor sensory experiences and the overall beauty of the woodland site. Native rhododendron-inspired hues, such as a light ochre for the concrete, were selected. And the architect’s signature red was specified for the steel.

In 1963, Edgar Kaufmann Jr. donated his family’s vacation estate, including 469 acres of surrounding wilderness, to the Western Pennsylvania Conservancy.

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



▲ Frank Lloyd Wright’s distinctive and daring cantilever design over a waterfall, using reinforced concrete, achieved not only a unique modern aesthetic but also safety over the falling water.



▲ Wright designed the clean-lined furnishings to provide function and comfort but at the same time to not take away from the views of the surrounding woodland and stream just beyond the large windows and glass doors. The study, which was used by Edgar Kaufmann Jr., boasts a desk and floating shelves that blend seamlessly with the window and door frames.



▲ Part of the living room at Fallingwater, the music space features Wright’s signature style of juxtaposing geometric shapes with natural textures, shown here in the combination of modern upholstery and stacked stone. The unique seating provides a place to sit and listen to music from the nearby record player, housed in a built-in cabinet.



▲ Stone walls, floors, and natural light are the defining features of this room, designed as an open-plan concept that Wright is credited with pioneering. His architectural goal with this space was to encourage gathering and functionality, as the room includes a two-sided desk, as well as spacious seating areas, with the fireplace as a centerpiece. A symmetrical ceiling design draws the eye in this airy space.

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TRUTH and TRADITION

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