

THE EPOCH TIMES

LIFE &

TRADITION

LEGACY

The Last Gift: 4 Ways to Outlive Your Life

With some forethought and a bit of dedication, you can craft a legacy that your family will treasure for generations to come

By Jeff Minick

Peter Pauper Press's "Peace of Mind Planner" isn't only a bit of a tongue twister but an invaluable tool for preparing for death. Owners of the book will find sections in which to record bank and insurance information, passwords to accounts, email addresses of friends, the location of important documents, and a myriad of other details, all aimed at helping those we leave behind settle our estate.

For those looking for a dash of black humor, the publishers have issued an identical book under the title "I'm Dead. Now What?"

The final two pages in the planner are reserved for "Last Words," which will strike some of us as humorous. After all, any notes recorded on this page aren't really our last words. The diligent may complete this section, but then go on to live another 20 years, meanwhile filling the air with tens of thousands of other "last words."

Yet, "Last Words" reveals a real human desire to leave a piece of ourselves behind, some snatch of wisdom or advice, some lasting mark that we were here. A rich man may fulfill this wish by giving money to a university in order to have a building named after him. Memorial bridges, boulevards, and historic homes all keep alive the names of the dead. Writers leave behind memoirs, and the nobility of earlier times sat for their portraits so that the next generation might remember them.

Though most of us don't fit into these categories of fame or wealth, we can, if we wish to do so, preserve our memories and family lore for future generations.

Set a Spell

For most of human history, storytelling was the customary way the old passed their family traditions and wisdom to the young. As recently as the mid-20th century, families and neighbors might "set a spell" on the porch and swap stories.

Continued on Page 2

Books offer countless benefits for every period in one's life.

Why Every Home Needs Burgeoning Bookshelves

A house full of books is a house full of blessings

By Annie Holmquist

A few years ago, another bookshelf made its way into my bedroom. As the ample built-in bookshelf that had already graced the area was starting to acquire a sort of double-stacked look, and extra books were finding their way into cupboards and other piles around the room, the purchase definitely qualified as a necessity.

The new bookcase alleviated shelf constraints ... for a while. But soon I found myself buying a third bookcase. Unfortunately, the shelves on that latest addition are now rapidly becoming less empty, and it may take some creative thinking to find room for the next bookshelf that's likely to join my fleet down the road.

I suppose it's pack rats (or book rats?) like me toward whom Dorie Cheylen di-

rected her recent "Get Rid of Your Books" piece published at "Slate." Ms. Cheylen seems to take a Marie Kondo approach to books, arguing that they "should be read, then shown the door."

Books are more valuable than simply a nicely bound shelf decoration; indeed, they foster a mindset that our culture has lost.

While I somewhat sympathize with Ms. Cheylen's desire to reduce clutter and share with others, I believe she minimizes the value of books by advocating for owners to send them out the door as soon as they're read. Books are more valuable than simply a nicely

bound shelf decoration; indeed, they foster a mindset that our culture has lost, and encouraging that mindset by collecting books, both for our children and ourselves, is vital for the preservation of society, something that writings from C.S. Lewis confirm.

Books Challenge Our Thinking

"A young man who wishes to remain a sound Atheist cannot be too careful of his reading," Mr. Lewis writes in "Surprised by Joy." "There are traps everywhere." In other words, surrounding ourselves with books enables us to expand our horizons and broaden our minds.

As a researcher and writer, I've read a number of prominent works over the years. I could have crossed these works off my list, patting myself on the back

Continued on Page 2



▲ Old photos are a wonderful connection to the past, and a short description on the back of each will ensure that the events or people they depict will be remembered.



A Life-Changing Bestseller



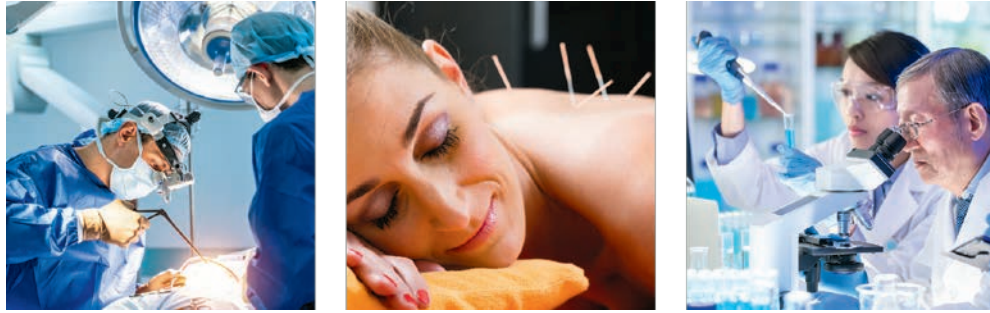
Zhuan Falun expounds on the profound principles of Truthfulness, Compassion, and Tolerance. It focuses on a long-forgotten term called “cultivation” and the importance of moral character on one’s path to spiritual perfection. The book is the main text of the spiritual practice Falun Dafa. It was a national bestseller in China in the 1990s, and has since been translated into more than 40 languages. Find out why it has captured the hearts and minds of tens of millions of people in more than 100 countries worldwide.

“What made Falun Gong stand out from other qigong exercises and meditation practices was a moral system—compassion, truthfulness, and forbearance—unmistakably Buddhist in origin.

Arthur Waldron
LAUDER PROFESSOR, UNIVERSITY OF PENNSYLVANIA

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LEGACY

The Last Gift: 4 Ways to Outlive Your Life

Continued from Page 1

Whatever our age, most of us today still enjoy stories, from fairy tales to movie thrillers. They’re an uncomplicated way to share your past with the younger generation, requiring only time, a sofa or some front porch rocking chairs, and an audience. Children especially enjoy tales of when their parents were kids themselves. Keep in mind, however, that these narratives are also unreliable. As a boy, I heard several stories of Grandpa Clarke, my paternal grandmother’s father. At age 3, he had immigrated with his family to America from Ireland, was a scrapper even as an adult, and loved his daughters. I still know some of the stories, and I’ve shared them with my grandchildren, but wish now that I’d had the maturity to write down names, times, and places.

Pen in Hand

By writing about your life or the advice you wish to give to the younger gang, you can more reliably pass on information. Moreover, putting your thoughts into print gives your descendants a chance to return again and again to your words.

This project strikes many people as daunting, either because they see it as too much work or feel they lack the composition and organizational skills to pull it off. Here the apprehensive can rest easy, as there are plenty of online helps for just such a project.

Storyworth, for instance, works like a conversation. You answer one question a week via email, and at the end of the year, Storyworth turns your words into a handsomely bound book. The company offers several hundred questions from which to choose, like “What matters most in your life?” or “What is a favorite memory of childhood?”

The system is set up so that a relative may also select the weekly question and email it to some beloved aunt or grandfather, whose response is then recorded at Storyworth.

StoryCorps Inc. is a nonprofit organization that has collected hundreds of thousands of American stories. At this site, you’ll discover scores of excellent questions about your past. Answer the questions, or even some of them, with mini-essays, and again, you’ll soon have a written portrait of your life and interests.

Actor, Director, Producer: That’s You!

For those who dislike putting sentences and paragraphs together, but who have some lessons and stories they wish to share with their children and grandchildren, here’s a fine way to hand over some memories to

Imagine yourself, for instance, sitting in a favorite chair, a drink in hand—bourbon, tea, whatever you wish—while you tell your story of bygone days.

▶
Grandkids can learn more about their grandparents and their family history by recording their life stories.

the next generations. As a society enamored with podcasts and film, the young will likely get a charge out of seeing a video of their great-great-grandmother describing her girlhood so long in the past.

Moreover, in many ways, an autobiographical documentary brings you to life in ways unavailable in print. Your audience will react to your facial expressions, your asides, the quirks—we all have them—in your speech and demeanor. Imagine yourself, for instance, sitting in a favorite chair, a drink in hand—bourbon, tea, whatever you wish—while you tell your story of bygone days. If an interview format is more appealing, then your teenage grandchild could ask you prepared questions, which you could take from outfits such as StoryCorps.

Remembrance of Things Past

Many of us will leave behind furniture, letters, photographs, and other baggage from the past, some of which highlight our lives and our family history.

Some of my peers have told me they intend to leave their treasures and trash for their children to sort out, but that’s a mistake on



BIBA KAYEWICH

three counts. First, some of those treasures may end up in a dump or a second-hand shop along with the trash. Second, you’re leaving headaches for your loved ones as one of your legacies. One man I know spent hours and days for the past two years disposing of his mom’s belongings. Finally, you’re unwittingly treating your past and earlier generations with contempt.

From my mother, I inherited a secretary. The front pulls down to make a writing desk. There are slots for letters and papers, a tiny bookshelf at the top, and a drawer and a storage unit at the bottom. Yet, all I know about this lovely antique is that it belonged to Mom’s mother, who inherited it from some other member of her family. I’ve written down what little I know about the secretary for my children, but wish now I had asked Mom for more specifics.

The lesson here is to provide information on objects left behind. If we have a collection of photographs marking family events, or pictures of our ancestors, we should write out a minimum description on the back. If we own, as I do, a collection of letters written

over two decades, we should separate them and explain by way of a note why they are worthy of preservation.

If your great-aunt gives you a silver brooch, ask for its history, pen and paper at hand. If you want to know your mother’s feelings on her wedding day, ask her. Meanwhile, try some of the techniques above for depositing your own life stories with the next generation.

“You live as long as you’re remembered,” goes an old Russian proverb.

Live a life of virtue, leave a piece of yourself with your descendants, and you may be remembered longer than you can possibly imagine.

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.

“Not till the curiosity, the sheer narrative lust, has been given its sop and laid asleep, are we at leisure to savour the real beauties.”

I concur. L.M. Montgomery’s “Anne of Green Gables” series is one collection of books I’ve reread or savored numerous times, and such rereading promotes a familiarity allowing me to call on the series for quotes, provide humorous anecdotes to throw into conversations, and even discover nuggets of wisdom I initially overlooked. My “Anne” volumes aren’t fancy; in fact, they’re rather dogeared. But their ready availability continues to provide a reference and insight into life that I wouldn’t have if I’d neglected savoring them and instead approached them with a one-and-done mentality.

Books Transcend Age

“I need not remind such an audience as this that the neat sorting-out of books into age-groups, so dear to publishers, has only a very sketchy relation with the habits of any real readers,” Mr. Lewis wrote in “On Three Ways of Writing for Children.” “Those of us who are blamed when old for reading childish books were blamed when children for reading books too old for us. No reader worth his salt trots along in obedience to a time-table.”

Unfortunately, this “neat sorting-out of books into age-groups” that Mr. Lewis condemns is exactly what you get when books go out the door as soon as they’re read. Yet such a mindset inhibits interaction between the generations, preventing a legacy from being passed along from the older to the younger through books. Keeping them, however, opens a door of wisdom and maturity for the young, while providing youth and hope for the old.

This doesn’t mean that we should never get rid of books. After all, there is some truly trashy literature out there that really doesn’t deserve our time or space. Giving all our books a type of Marie Kondo treatment, however, causes us to miss out on some of life’s finest blessings.

One day, if we descend into a totalitarian society where books and the truths they contain are taboo or hard to find, we’ll wish that we’d heeded the call to preserve books in our own home libraries.

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.

EDUCATION

How a Superintendent Saved a Failing School

Escambia County, Alabama, experienced a transformation when Michele McClung came to town

By Randy Tatano

Imagine your son or daughter coming home with a failing grade on a report card.

And then one year later, that child came home with a B.

Now, imagine an entire high school showing the same improvement.

How did that happen? It took a new superintendent who arrived two years ago to lead a school system that needed major help academically, while nearly one-third of the facilities were a century old.

It helped that Michele McClung is a former math teacher and was familiar with what teachers needed to help students succeed.

Hitting the ground running as she headed the 12 schools in the Escambia County, Alabama, school system, she used her classroom experience to equip teachers with the latest resources to make their jobs easier, while also improving students’ chances for success.

However, her plan wasn’t about throwing money at the problem, as she focused on improving the morale of teachers and employees and visited schools regularly.

At the end of her first year, she hosted a formal red-carpet event and gave out awards for everything from the best principal to the top bus driver. Her philosophy of valuing the contributions of every single employee worked its way down into the classroom. Kids at one school who read the most books walked a red carpet and enjoyed a party. (Not everyone gets a trophy.)

Meanwhile, after a decade in which the system hadn’t even bothered to nominate anyone for the state teacher of the year award (which didn’t cost anything), Ms. McClung made sure to submit applications from each school.

She believes that fixing education starts with people.

“There’s nothing more important in today’s society than providing a safe, caring, and engaging environment for students to learn. It’s my job to lift up our employees, celebrate improvement, and lead the way no matter the challenges we face. Money can’t fix the problems we see in education today. Quality employees who are committed to students make the difference.”

But that school turnaround is what has everyone talking. W.S. Neal High School in the small town of East Brewton, Alabama, had been designated a “failing school” by scoring in the bottom 6 percent in the state. In a county where only 12 percent of residents have college degrees and the per capita income is less than \$20,000, the school had a lot to overcome.

Fortunately, the staff and student body are rich in pride. They embraced Ms. McClung’s ideas to incorporate ACT practice daily and made a huge academic leap.

What else changed? Ms. McClung has installed a state-of-the-art security system in every school; the “StreamVu” television program lets students do the daily announcements on camera; a technology “help desk” was created to instantly assist teachers who have issues during the school day, manned by computer-savvy students in the newly formed IT academy; websites were overhauled so parents could check on their children’s progress; and a bunch of signs magically appeared in the front yards of students to honor them for being in the top 10 in their class and for other academic achievements.

In addition, a \$900,000 grant will fund ACT training for teachers and students, summer camps for students in cybersecurity and robotics, advanced placement programs to prep for college, tuition for teachers, and virtual reality systems for career trade classes.

The annual “teacher institute” before the first day of school had often been a mind-numbing list of bureaucratic directives for teachers; now, it’s a pep rally with bands and cheerleaders. This year, the real “Coach Carter” gave the keynote speech that fired up everyone.

Teamwork is the hallmark of Ms. McClung’s philosophy. Her slogan “We Are One” has teachers and administrators rowing in the same direction. Some teachers had never met their counterparts from other schools; now, there’s a sense of family and authentic collaboration, in which teachers have created viable pacing guides digitized in a calendar.

School board member Mike Edwards has noticed a tremendous change since Ms. McClung took the helm.

“The system was dysfunctional before she arrived. She’s inspiring teachers to do more than just their jobs. Her enthusiasm and that of her staff has trickled down into the system. It’s the main reason for her success.”

W.S. Neal Principal Todd Williamson was reluctant to take credit for his school’s huge improvement.

“I’m just part of the team. We’ve made some changes that get teachers excited, and your teachers set the tone in the classroom. Enthusiasm is contagious. When a kid wants to do better, you’ve won half the battle. I think we have the best staff we’ve ever had. It’s from the top down.”

Ms. McClung isn’t looking for credit and considers her-

self a part of the team. While she’s thrilled with the progress, she notes that there’s still work to be done.

“We’re trying to stay steps ahead of state mandates by providing extra support to our teachers and staff, quality programs that engage our students and ongoing professional development, because continuous improvement should always be a priority.”

Is common sense the secret of turning around a school system? Simply giving teachers what they need, creating a culture of family, and letting every employee know they’re appreciated? And why can’t this happen in your community?

Congress is famous for throwing money at education, and it hasn’t worked. Sometimes, people forget that the Department of Education has only been around since 1979, and that schools did just fine before President Jimmy Carter created the massive bureaucracy. Directives from bureaucrats who have no actual education experience or aren’t actively involved in education make no sense.

Ms. McClung proves that when decisions are left to those who actually work in the schools, students have a better chance of success. Maybe Neal High School’s next grade will be an A.

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

ALL PHOTOS COURTESY OF MICHELE MCCLUNG



▲ Ms. McClung is a former math teacher.



▲ “Charles I and Henrietta Maria Holding a Laurel Wreath,” 1632, by Anthony van Dyck. Oil on canvas. Archbishop’s Castle and Gardens, Kromeriz, Czech Republic.

FINE ARTS

The Patroness Who Transformed English Culture

Queen Henrietta Maria helped her husband establish the arts

By James Baresel

Henrietta Maria arrived in England after her wedding to King Charles I, who was one of the greatest royal art connoisseurs in history. Descending from the family of preminent Renaissance patrons, the Medici of Florence, the new queen became a devoted patron of the arts, literature, and architecture in 17th-century England.

Lineage of Artistic Patronage

In the Anglophone world, Henrietta Maria is remembered simply as a French princess who became an English queen consort. Born a member of the royal House of Bourbon, she was the daughter, sister, and aunt of French kings. Her trip to England was her first outside of France’s boundaries.

Following Royalist defeats in the English Civil War, she fled back to her native country in 1644 and remained

until her son King Charles II restored the monarchy in 1660. She again returned to France in 1665 for the last time and died there four years later.

Henrietta’s mother, Marie de’ Medici, was herself a French queen by marriage. Marie was the daughter of a Medici duke of Florence and spent her first 25 years in the city, which had launched the Italian Renaissance and been home to many of its greatest masters. A true heir-

ess to her ancestors’ tradition, Marie patronized numerous artists and writers to revitalize the cultural life of the French court on the Florentine model. Henrietta was to spend her most culturally formative years in such an atmosphere.

England was then in a very different cultural condition than her home country. Englishmen were just beginning to develop a serious interest in art for the first time in more

INTERVIEW WITH AUTHORS

Satire in the Time of ‘Wokeness’

The Babylon Bee co-creators talk about their mission

By Dustin Bass

The Babylon Bee, with its tagline “Fake News You Can Trust,” is a conservative satirical website that marches out humorous takes on the inexplicable happenings in the world. The daily social media posts, the articles, the videos, and now the books are hardly a grind, as the jokes practically write themselves.

“That’s the weird thing with the time we’re in,” Joel Berry, managing editor at The Babylon Bee, said. “You can sometimes report the straight news and it reads as satire because it’s so absurd.”

Kyle Mann, editor-in-chief at The Babylon Bee, acknowledged that, of-

ten, the most difficult part of writing these satirical jokes is trying to stay ahead of reality.

“We are approaching the satire singularity now,” Mr. Mann said. “The Simpsons were predicting the future 20 years in advance. We put out a joke and it comes true the next week.”

The group has been keeping a tally of how many times they’ve predicted the future. They are currently on the cusp of the century mark.

Guides to Unacceptable Social Acceptability

The Babylon Bee has grown exponentially over the past few years. It has 3 million followers on X (formerly known as Twitter), 2 million followers on Instagram, more than 1.5 million followers on Facebook, and nearly 1.5 million subscribers on YouTube. Their spot-on humor pokes fun at the left, the Biden administration, Republicans, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, marriage, church, and pretty much everything in between.

The creators at The Babylon Bee are making the most of their success in a number of ways. With millions of fans and interested readers, as well as a weird counterculture to push back against, they’ve created social guidebooks. Their third “guidebook” was

published on Sept. 19.

The titles are rather straightforward, but that’s the beauty of subtitles. The first book was “The Babylon Bee Guide to Wokeness: How to Take Your Wokeness to the Next Level by Canceling Friends, Breaking Windows, and Burning It All to the Ground,” followed by “The Babylon Bee Guide to Democracy: How to Flawlessly Rig Elections, Bribe Any Politician, and Crush Your Political Enemies for Good.”

The latest is “The Babylon Bee Guide to Gender: The Comprehensive Handbook to Men, Women, and Millions of New Gender We Just Made Up!” The guides are full of nonsense and lunacy, which is precisely the point. The books’ sheer idiotic humor is sadly a direct reflection of the culture shift America is experiencing.

The books, just like the social media posts and videos, are funny. They are chock-full of well-conceived satirical jokes—presented through texts, graphics, charts, and drawings. Flipping through the pages, one can’t help but laugh. It’s a sign of good comedy when a hint of the truth comes through in

the punchline. And this satire packs a punch.

The Power of Humor

“Humor has a really unique power to communicate a message when straight talk isn’t getting through to people,” Mr. Mann said. “People become very set in their ways and worldviews pretty early on in life. So there’s not much

chance of getting through to them after that. Humor has a way of breaking down that barrier. When someone is laughing at a joke, they aren’t thinking, ‘Oh, what worldview is this joke communicating?’ Laughter is involuntary. Your guard is down and you appreciate the point, even if you don’t agree with it.”

Mr. Mann and Mr. Berry were heavily influenced by satirists such as Christopher Guest, known for “This Is Spinal Tap” and “Best in Show,” and the Monty Python comedy troupe, as well as those known for more thought-provoking work, such as G.K. Chesterton and Mark Twain. The Babylon Bee creators try to emulate these influencers’ humor-first style, which was such that the comedy al-



▲ Kyle Mann, editor-in-chief at The Babylon Bee and co-author of “The Babylon Bee Guide to Gender.” COURTESY OF THE BABYLON BEE

than half a century. It was English literature that was blossoming and into its golden age with Ben Jonson and John Donne both actively writing—although Shakespeare had died a decade earlier. The architectural aesthetics of the era were also beginning to transition from the uniquely English Jacobean style to strict classicism.

King Charles I was at the forefront of that transformation of English culture. Some of the first foundations had been laid by his mother, his prematurely deceased older brother, and his close friend the Duke of Buckingham. In 1623, the king spent several months visiting the Spanish royal court—home to one of the world’s largest collections of Renaissance art—and returned to England determined to emulate it. He and Henrietta would complement each other quite well—both in a remarkably close marriage and in the world of cultural patronage. His queen’s role in that patronage has often been misunderstood.

The Queen’s Benefaction

Henrietta’s most extensive patronage was to English literature and theater. Her employment of James Shirley as playwright for her troupe of actors and her central role in the appointment of William Davenant as poet laureate are particularly notable. Ranking among the more talented and important minor playwrights, both were leading members of their profession in 17th-century England after the retirement of Jonson.

Davenant was to become one of the few links between English Renaissance theater and Restoration theater. He kept English theatrical tradition alive despite attempts to suppress it by the Puritan regime, which ruled from 1649 to 1660. Shirley’s use of smaller casts of characters than his more illustrious predecessors was a model that would be followed by the great John Dryden and become common practice.

King Charles I and Henrietta would complement each other in the world of cultural patronage.

Architecture is perhaps the field in which Henrietta’s patronage has been most famous. The Queen’s House (now part of the Royal Museums) was the first building in England that was built in a strict classicist style and one of Inigo Jones’s first major commissions. Henrietta’s most personal contributions—a side of her patronage that’s often overlooked—were the paintings she commissioned for the Queen’s House. Her role as a patroness of painting is often thought to have been limited to supporting and assisting her husband’s efforts. However, her choice of Orazio Gentileschi to paint the Great Hall ceiling demonstrates her individual and classical taste.

Commissioning Gentileschi

Born in Tuscany in 1563, Gentileschi was originally trained in the classical tradition associated with the artists of Florence and the patronage of its Medici rulers. Later, he became influenced by Caravaggio and moved away from classicism toward the developing baroque style. In 1624, he left Italy to work for Marie in Paris, eventually moving to England a couple of years later upon being hired by the Duke of Buckingham.

Buckingham’s assassination in 1628 combined with Gentileschi’s return to a more classicist style left the artist without much patronage in a milieu devoted to the baroque. Henrietta, however, was an exception—buying up as many of his paintings as she could, she commissioned new works and persuaded her husband to commission others. “The Finding of Moses,” “Joseph and Potiphar’s Wife,” and “An Allegory of Peace and the



▲ The central panel of the ceiling mural “An Allegory of Peace and the Arts” celebrates the peaceful reign of her husband King Charles I and England’s flourishing arts. “An Allegory of Peace and the Arts,” 1639, by Orazio Gentileschi. Oil on canvas. Royal Collection, United Kingdom.

Arts” are among the most significant.

In 1743, 74 years after Henrietta’s death, the Medici fell from power with the end of the Grand Duke Cosimo’s bloodline in Florence. London, however, consolidated the status of a great artistic center, during the reign of Charles I, with an increasing number of native English artists inspired by the foreign masters who had lived and worked there.

Henrietta Maria was at the heart of England’s dramatic cultural el-

evation. London was experiencing a golden age comparable to what earlier members of her family had helped to achieve in Florence and Rome, making her the last of the great Medici patrons to have had a very direct effect on the high culture in Europe.

James Baresel is a freelance writer who has contributed to periodicals as varied as Fine Art Connoisseur, Military History, Claremont Review of Books, and New Eastern Europe.



▲ “The Finding of Moses,” 1633, by Orazio Gentileschi. Oil on canvas; 95.2 inches by 110.6 inches. Prado Museum, Madrid.

ways flowed through their worldviews. “[Monty Python] made these hilarious political points. I didn’t realize they were making political points when I watched it in middle school,” Mr. Mann said. “I don’t even think Monty Python was trying to make political points. It was just their worldview coming out in their satire.”

“[Chesterton and Twain] were brilliant critics of their current day and they did it with humor and a lot of fun,” Mr. Berry added. “I think if you have a worldview that you are very confident in and you set about making great comedy, it’s going to naturally come out in fun ways.”

According to Mr. Mann and Mr. Berry, getting laughs and having fun is the primary objective, especially with the constant doom and gloom in the news and on social media.

“One of the great things we can do at The Babylon Bee is inject a little bit of joy into people’s news feeds that are filled with darkness,” Mr. Mann said. “It takes the power out of and defangs how depressing politics can be and adds a little joy back into social media.”

The Worldview Influence

Mr. Mann and Mr. Berry will readily admit that their instinctive humor and the way they approach the current

culture stems from their worldview. The two are devout Christians, and the company they represent is deeply Christian.

“As Christians, we have this hope. We look far out beyond the rise and fall of America and other empires that will rise and fall, and we know that our king is on the throne and everything is going to be OK,” Mr. Berry said. “Keeping that perspective really helps us maintain a happy outlook. We don’t want the tone of our site to ever become one of anger or spite or rage or hopelessness, because that’s not the reality.”

The Babylon Bee had 3 million followers on X (formerly Twitter).

Mr. Mann and Mr. Berry’s worldview enables them to accept the world in which they live, with all its grotesque evil (some of those evils being the central focus of their books), but it also demands a certain responsibility from them. A responsibility they feel quite deeply. Their hope is that more Americans will abide by that responsibility, too.

“The simple step of a courageous individual is not to take part in the

lie. One word of truth outweighs the world,” Mr. Mann said, quoting Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn. “I love that sentiment. You think of cancel culture and conservatives afraid to speak up for very basic biological truths and very basic factual truths in a lot of different areas. Yes, your job may be at risk and you don’t know what’s going to happen, but it’s not your responsibility to know what’s going to happen. It’s your responsibility to not take part in the lie.”

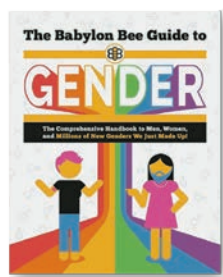
Mr. Mann referenced the unexpected outcome of The Babylon Bee refusing to delete a tweet that named Rachel Levine, the U.S. Assistant Secretary of Health and a man who identifies as a woman, as its “Man of the Year.” The moment was a modern American cultural standoff. It set off a firestorm that had the left claiming hate speech and Twitter locking them out of their account, which had economic repercussions for the company. But the creators at The Babylon Bee stood firm, knowing that to capitulate would be to admit to something that wasn’t true, and, in comparison, it paled to what Solzhenitsyn had to deal with under Soviet rule.

“It wasn’t a calculated move. We weren’t trying to change the world when we did that,” Mr. Mann said. “And it ended up where Elon Musk bought

Twitter in part because of that stand we took. I think it’s just that small step of ordinary faithfulness, not taking part in the lie, and seeing what God can do with it. That’s what we’re called to.

“The number one thing people need to do is buy 100 copies of our book.” Of course, he was just joking. Or was he?

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



‘THE BABYLON BEE GUIDE TO GENDER: THE COMPREHENSIVE HANDBOOK TO MEN, WOMEN, AND MILLIONS OF NEW GENDERS WE JUST MADE UP!’

By Kyle Mann and Joel Berry
Salem Books
Sept. 19, 2023
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BOOKS

5 Novels to Get Your Teen Reading

Young people will love the delight and entertainment of these timeless stories

By Walker Larson

Traditionally, a good education always included a substantial dose of classic literature. Students became familiar with the wisest and most beautiful things ever put down in writing—vital contact with their cultural heritage that expressed through art the heights and depths of the human condition.

The reading of good fiction and poetry was considered essential to the development of the full human person and the extension of all the powers of mind and heart along wholesome avenues. Literature opens the eyes to see and the heart to embrace the good, the true, and the beautiful.

What William Wordsworth said of poetry in his “Preface to Lyrical Ballads” applies equally to all great literature (including novels): “Its object is truth. Not individual and local, but general... carried alive into the heart by passion. ... It is an acknowledgement of the beauty of the universe.” And if that’s not enough, great literature is also just delightful and entertaining.

Yet many people, especially youth, deny themselves the joy, inspiration, and enlightenment that great fiction can bring. A 2018 study by researchers at San Diego State University found that one-third of teenagers polled hadn’t read a book for pleasure during that entire year. Teens simply don’t read as much as they used to. Often, novels—especially classic ones—are considered boring and difficult, largely because younger readers haven’t acquired a taste for fiction in an era that constantly bombards them with the overstimulation of the mental and emotional palate via social media, TV, and video games.

Here, then, is a list of novels to help readers of all ages, but especially teenagers, start to develop a taste for great literature. The list moves roughly from “easiest” and “most accessible” to “most challenging.”

‘Shane’ by Jack Schaefer

“A gun is as good—and as bad—as the man who carries it.”

The novel “Shane” by Jack Schaefer is as graceful, slim, powerful, and mysterious as its titular character. In its brief pages, one lives out the American past on our frontier. Beautifully narrated from the point of view of 11-year-old Bob Starrett, “Shane” tells of the conflict between ranchers and homesteaders in 1889 Wyoming, into which an enigmatic stranger wanders, calling himself “Shane.”

Shane teams up with Bob’s father, Joe, first to improve and cultivate Joe’s homestead, then to take on the aggressive ranchers. Although he’s always courteous and quiet, everyone can sense that Shane is a force to be reckoned with, and it will take a man of his caliber to bring peace to the region.

The West and the longings it stirs within us are such a part of our culture and history, and so potentially appealing to young readers, that I had to include a Western on this list. In addition, the exciting action and quick read time will appeal to teenagers, especially boys. Above all, Shane gives a glimpse at traditional masculinity as well as what a true, honorable friendship between good men can be. That’s something young men of today could benefit from.

‘The Lantern Bearers’ by Rosemary Sutcliff

“We are the lantern bearers, my friend; for us to keep something burning, to carry what light we can forward into the darkness and the wind.”

Despite winning the Carnegie Medal in children’s literature in 1959, this novel from the British historical fiction writer Rosemary Sutcliff receives less attention than it deserves. In fewer than 250 pages, Sutcliff paints in vivid colors the bulk of a man’s lifetime—from being a youth to being the father of a youth.

Set in the dark and tumultuous time following the Roman evacuation from Britain, “The Lantern Bearers” tells of a Roman legionnaire who has stayed behind with his family, only to see everything he loves swept away by a Saxon invasion.

Though the historical backdrop is convincing and exciting, dark and enchanting, the tale is told for all time, and the

struggles of young Aquila will resonate with modern teens.

There are two lasting impressions left on one’s heart after reading this story. The first is that tragedy comes to all and life generally doesn’t work out—at least, not as we may have hoped. The second is that, somehow, it’s OK in the end and maybe even more beautiful than what we envisioned for ourselves when we were young.

‘My Antonia’ by Willa Cather

“More than any other person we remembered, this girl seemed to mean to us the country, the conditions, and the whole adventure of our childhood.”

“My Antonia” isn’t the kind of book you remember. At least you don’t remember the plot (I can’t). And, to be honest, there’s not a lot of plot to remember anyway. What you do remember is much more than this: golden fields running on to kiss the horizon, ivory farmhouses atop waving prairie hills, picking vegetables under an autumn sun, Saturday night dances in the pavilion that last until midnight, the story about the wolves in the deep Russian forest, the mischievous eyes of the titular character, something of the pioneer spirit, and, above all, the general tableau of growing up. And you remember not just the growing up of the main characters in the book, but, somehow, through them, you see more clearly your own growing up.

The plot—to the degree that there is one—is this: The orphan Jim Burden is brought as a child to be a pioneer in Nebraska in the 1880s, where he meets the vivacious Antonia Shimerda. Their shared experiences shape them for life.

‘Pride and Prejudice’ by Jane Austen

“To be fond of dancing was a certain step towards falling in love.”

Though written in 1813, this novel is fairly accessible to contemporary readers. It’s a novel of manners that gives a glimpse into upper-class Regency England, its customs, expectations, and challenges. But more than that, it’s a profound study of human character, with unforgettable characters that include the lively Elizabeth (the novel’s heroine), the vexing Mrs. Bennet, the pompous Mr. Collins, the sly Mr. Wickham, and the brooding Mr. Darcy. The novel has much to teach young readers (including boys—maybe especially them) about the relationship between the sexes, the dangers of misjudging others’ characters, and the importance of finding a good spouse—all subjects that are very much on the minds of teenagers, though maybe they wouldn’t put it that way.

In addition to her perceptive portraits of the human person, Austen is known for her shimmering wit. Her ironic style is quite funny once you get familiar with it.

‘David Copperfield’ by Charles Dickens

“Whether I shall turn out to be the hero of my own life or whether that station will be held by anybody else, these pages must show.”

The most autobiographical of Dickens’s novels, this coming-of-age tale I can only describe as a golden book—golden in its wisdom, golden in its charm, and golden in the warmth and light it provides. It depicts all the fluctuations of life, from childhood to middle age, giving a broad view of the human condition and particularly the process of growing up. It captures the vicissitudes of life, where joy is swiftly exchanged for sorrow and sorrow for joy, yet with an undercurrent of hope running through them all. The characters are delightful, their personalities writ large, almost caricatures, yet somehow still deeply authentic. It mixes humor, joy, and sorrow in just the right proportions as we follow the progression of young David Copperfield’s life from infancy well into manhood.

As the opening line of the novel, quoted above, suggests, the story tells of heroism and villainy—not, perhaps, on the grand scale of a Greek epic or medieval romance, but the kind of heroism and villainy that we encounter and are capable of ourselves—in “ordinary” life. Without sermonizing, it reveals the errors to which youth are prone and how to recognize both heroism and treachery in others.

Though by far the longest title on this list, it’s well worth the time and effort—you basically gain much of the experience of becoming an adult without spending all the years or committing all the mistakes.

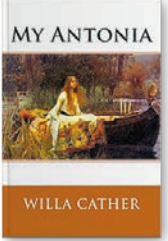
Walker Larson teaches literature at a private academy in Wisconsin, where he resides with his wife and daughter. He holds a master’s degree in English literature and language, and his writing has appeared in *The Hemingway Review*, *Intellectual Takeout*, and his *Substack*, “The Hazelnut.”



▲ “Shane” by Jack Schaefer.



▲ “The Lantern Bearers” by Rosemary Sutcliff.



▲ “My Antonia” by Willa Cather.



▲ “Pride and Prejudice” by Jane Austen.



▲ “David Copperfield” by Charles Dickens.

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FOR KIDS ONLY

THE EPOCH TIMES

Week 39, 2023

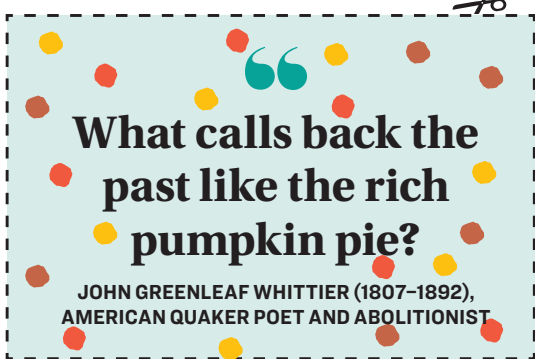


Two Sides (excerpt)

By Marian Douglas

The hives are full of honeycomb;
The barns are full of hay;
The bins are heaped with ripened grain,
That empty were in May;
The red and yellow apples now
Bend many a heavy orchard bough;
Dark purple, 'mid their withered leaves,
The frost-grapes smell of musk;
The pumpkins lie in yellow heaps;
And, in its silver husk,
The corn now shows a golden ear;
Come! why be sorry autumn's here?
The sharp frost cracks the prickly burrs;
The keen wind scatters down
Upon the grass, for eager hands,
The chestnuts ripe and brown;
The orange woods, the flame-red bowers,
Are brighter than the gayest flowers;
'Tis constant changes make the year
Then why be sorry autumn's here?

YASONYA/SHUTTERSTOCK



What calls back the past like the rich pumpkin pie?

JOHN GREENLEAF WHITTIER (1807-1892), AMERICAN QUAKER POET AND ABOLITIONIST

IRINA GORBUNOVA/SHUTTERSTOCK



ART VECTOR/SHUTTERSTOCK

By Aidan Danza

THE KELP FORESTS

When you think of the forests of California, you likely picture the famous redwood forests. However, just off the coast, there is an enormous forest that gives the redwoods a run for their money.

Under the waters of the Pacific, you can find the kelp forest. The kelp forest doesn't grow quite as tall as the redwoods. At a maximum of 175 feet, the giant kelp (the largest species) is about half the size of the largest redwood. However, when you consider that kelp is a seaweed (technically considered a “brown algae”), and when you consider that they can attain this height at a rate of up to 24 inches per day, it's really quite astonishing.

The kelp forest functions much like a forest on land. The seaweed grows up all the way to the surface of the ocean, and then keeps growing. Each kelp leaf contains a gas-filled bladder, allowing the plant to grow straight up, and then continue to float as it reaches the surface.

When several kelp grow together, then a kelp forest is formed. As they all reach the surface, the sea begins to become shaded and dark. The roots (called holdfasts) become great shelters for juvenile invertebrates, including sea stars, brittle stars, anemones, sponges, and urchins. Many invertebrates also eat the leaves, and fish take shelter inside the kelp's dense leaves when being pursued by predators. Sea otters even use the kelp as anchors. Whenever an otter wants to sleep, it will tie itself up in the kelp fronds to keep itself from drifting out to sea.

Human beings also utilize kelp. We harvest 100,000 to 170,000 wet tons of kelp (including the weight of the water that they carried when harvested) every year, just in the state of California. Kelp is used to feed farmed fish, but is more prevalently used for the carbohydrate algin, which the kelp contains. It's a very complex carbohydrate that is used as a binding and thickening agent in all manner of industrially produced products, such as milkshake mixes, canned foods, salad dressings, frozen foods, paper coatings, facial creams and lotions, antacids, and desserts.

INVERTEBRATES LIVING IN KELP FORESTS



Sea stars



Brittle stars



Anemones



Sponges

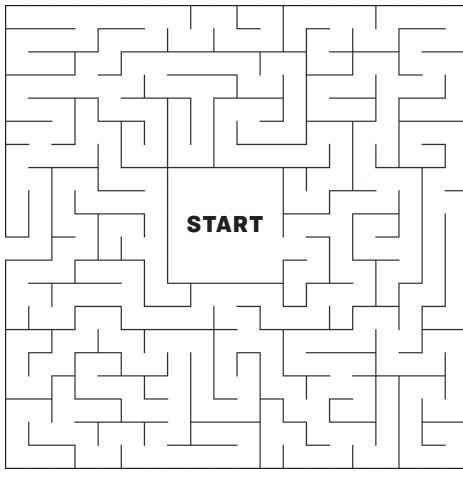


Urchins

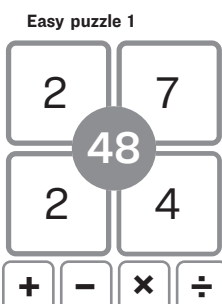
100,000 TO 170,000 WET TONS OF KELP
The state of California harvests 100,000 to 170,000 wet tons of kelp every year.

(KELP FOREST) KGRIF/GETTY IMAGES; (INVERTEBRATES) SHUTTERSTOCK

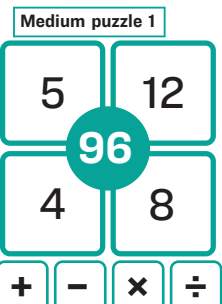
AMAZING ESCAPES!



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



Solution For Easy 1
7 - (2 - 2 x 2)



Solution for Medium 1
7 - 5 x (8 + 2)
8 x 21 x (4 - 5)

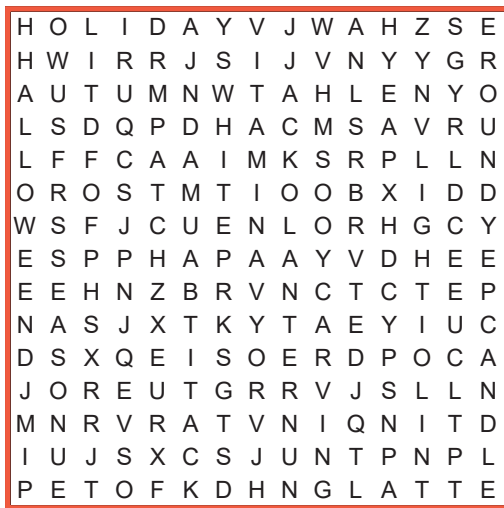


Solution for Hard 1
8 - 28 - 28 + 27 + 28



HIDDEN TREASURES by Liz Ball
www.HiddenPicturePuzzles.com

WORD SEARCH: Pumpkins!



Autumn	Scary	Squash
Candle	Season	Treat
Carving	Soup	Vitamin A
Halloween	Spice	White
Holiday		
Jack'o lantern		
Latte		
Light		
Orange		
Patch		
Pie		
Puree		
Round		

ALL PHOTOS BY SHUTTERSTOCK



▲ The west side of Aix Cathedral features a Gothic façade with intricate carvings and ornate details. The exterior combines various architectural styles, with Romanesque stone walls and flat square yellowish buttresses topped with pinnacles, contrasting with the central structure of the portal.

LARGER THAN LIFE: Architecture Through the Ages

French Cathedral on a Sacred Site

In a charming city in the south of France, a cathedral features many architectural styles

By Ariane Triebswetter

Aix Cathedral, also known as the Cathedral of the Holy Savior (“Cathédrale Saint-Sauveur”), is located in the heart of the charming city of Aix-en-Provence in the south of France.

The site was considered sacred for thousands of years. Legends say it was a pre-Roman pagan temple, then a Roman temple, and eventually, the site of a Christian church. According to Christian tradition, St. Maximinus of Aix built a chapel on the site dedicated to the Holy

Savior. The chapel was destroyed in succeeding centuries; the present cathedral replaced the chapel in the 12th century. It took almost 200 years to finish the Cathedral, which explains the varied architectural styles in Aix Cathedral today.

Aix Cathedral is mostly Gothic but also features elements from the Roman, Romanesque, and Baroque styles. One of the oldest features of the cathedral is the baptistery rotunda, older than the cathedral itself, by about 700 years. Constructed from the fifth to the sixth century, the baptistery is one of the oldest in

the region, with an octagonal basin and eight marble and granite columns probably dating back to the Roman temple that once stood on the same site. There's also the 11th-century Romanesque style on the south side of the cathedral. The north side features Baroque elements dating from the 17th century. Surprisingly, these contrasting elements blend to form a unique ensemble.

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



▲ On the left of the central nave is a small Baroque nave, featuring a beautiful “green and gold” organ case in the Louis XV style, built by Jean-Esprit Isnard. The organ case is made of pine, and although the case style dates back to 1745, the instrument was only added in 1855. On the opposite Epistle Wall, there is a similar organ case for aesthetic symmetrical reasons, but this one contains no instrument.

▲ The St. Lazarus Chapel holds the Triptych of the Burning Bush, painted by Nicolas Froment in the 15th century. The painting depicts the burning bush from the Book of Exodus in the Bible, and the Virgin and Child sitting atop the burning bush.

▲ The portal of Aix Cathedral is in the Flamboyant Gothic style, a form of late Gothic architecture characterized by the embellishment of technical and decorative elements. It features red walnut doors, with three statues of Apostles on each side. The central pillar, located between both doors, holds a sculpture of the Virgin and Child. The doors are topped by the colorful half-circle of the tympanum.

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Prevented Gum Recession

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* Research conducted by HK Green Eastern World Ltd. in 2023 (465 volunteers)

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