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The Impact of Seniors

By Esther Aardsma

Due to geographical distance, during my young life, involvement with my grandparents was limited to visits a couple times a year. Though I wish I could have seen more of my grandmas and grandpas, other seniors had major impacts in my life—and were probably not even aware of it!

The first woman who comes to mind was a sweet Sunday School teacher who shared my name. Esther being a relatively rare name, I counted our bond a special one, although looking back, I have no idea whether she regarded me differently from any of the other kids in the Sunday School program.

To me, Esther represented a sweet and loving character, always showing a genuine delight at seeing me and ready with a hug. I would frequently stay after Sunday School was over to help her tidy up the classroom, chatting with her and picking up the things off the floor that were difficult for her to reach.

She faithfully remembered my birthday, gifting me one year with twist-up crayons, back when they were still a hot new thing, and surprising me another year with a lovely angora sweater with pearl buttons (probably thrifted, as she loved to thrift). At some point, that sweater accidentally went into the clothes dryer and shrank; I was heartbroken when my mother gave it to my little sister instead. Esther and I were pen-pals for a school project

during one season; those letters probably still exist somewhere.

Another senior who impacted my life was my Awana leader through sixth grade, “Miss” Joan. Miss Joan’s stable calmness saw me through many stressful and emotional moments as performance-based, starting-to-think-about-puberty, skinny little me showed up for my competitive marks every week—and sometimes things didn’t go as I had planned.

Miss Joan also always remembered my birthday; I remember her giving me a brand-new shirt and jeans, with cute flower patterns. She had bought it at the mall. For a lower-ranking member of a large family, that outfit might have been the first brand-new clothes I had ever received, other than socks and underwear at Christmas. It was a sad day when I outgrew them! I kept up a sporadic correspondence with her for a few years, even after leaving that Awana program.

Geraldine was another woman who dramatically impacted my life. I’m not sure whether she technically counted as a senior at the time, but her kids were grown and gone, and she devoted much of her discretionary time to equipping 4-H girls with such practical skills as sewing and cooking. As an eight-year-old, I had a fledgling interest in sewing, and I showed up to the yearly 4-H sewing contest with a quite pathetically constructed tote bag.

Gerry, seeing I had the interest, but needed someone to show me the ropes, took me under her wing for the following seven years, teaching me not only how to sew dresses, but also how to tailor a suit, how to design and alter my own patterns, and how to “just *make* it work!” (i.e. think outside the box and creatively problem-solve.) Beyond the practical skill, she gave me the freedom to explore, learn, and gain confidence in an interest area that was mine alone, a challenging feat in a large family! She also frequently fed me supper, complete with brownies and ice cream.

Consider the youngsters your life touches. You have the precious opportunity to shine light into their lives. If you don’t have time or energy for volunteering, perhaps letter-writing, gift-giving, or crafting from home might be more your style—but don’t underestimate the power of a simple, genuine delight when you see a kiddo (including teens!) either. You might not immediately—or ever—see the fruit of your effort firsthand—but my young life was most definitely brighter for being noticed, appreciated, and invested in by the seniors around me. ♦

Copyright © Esther Aardsma. Esther resides in Thomasboro, Illinois, where she fills her days with homeschooling her five kids and with a love of all things creative, especially story. Email her at eaardsma@protonmail.com.

April is the sweetest month of the year, the mellow season of rebirth and renewal. —Mary Sojourner

MONEY MATTERS

Time for Some Financial Spring Cleaning

by Darrold Kennedy

Spring is here. It's once again time to wash the windows, organize your cabinets, and steam your carpets. This year, in addition to tidying up around your house, why not consider some *financial* spring cleaning?

Here are some suggestions:

“Declutter” your investment portfolio. When you embark on your home cleaning mission, you might notice that you have redundancies—three blenders, two vacuum cleaners, and so on. Similarly, you might find duplications in your investment portfolio, perhaps of multiple, near-identical stocks or mutual funds. If so, it might be worthwhile to consider selling some of these investments and using the proceeds to boost your portfolio in areas in which you might be lacking.

Cut back on overgrown investments. Now that winter is over, and you're venturing outside more, you might notice that some overgrown shrubbery or tree branches need pruning. Though it might sound counterintuitive, you could also have some investments that have grown too big for your needs. For example, you might own some growth-oriented investments whose value has increased so much that they now take up a larger percentage of your portfolio—and carry a higher degree of risk—than you originally intended. You might be better off selling some of these investments and purchasing others to help bring your investment mix back to

its desired alignment.

Dust off your investment strategy. With more sunlight now pouring in your house, you might notice that the corners of your walls and ceiling need a good dusting. And as you continually work to strengthen your financial foundation, you might need to dust off your investment strategy, especially if you've recently experienced changes in your life, such as marriage, the addition of children, a new job, and so on. And as you move closer to retirement, you might also need to adjust your strategy. For one thing, you might want to adopt a more conservative investment approach in the years immediately preceding your retirement, though you'll still need to have some growth potential in your portfolio to help keep you ahead of inflation.

Protect yourself from financial dangers. As you go about your household spring cleaning, you might find actual physical dangers that need to be removed or stored more safely, such as sharp objects or broken tools. And as you navigate daily life, you might also find threats to your financial safety—an expensive home improvement, major car repair, or an unexpectedly large medical bill. If you don't have the money available to pay these expenses, you might be forced to dip into your retirement accounts, run up your credit card, or take out a high-rate loan. To protect yourself from



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having to make these moves, you might want to maintain an emergency fund containing several months' worth of living expenses, with the money kept in a liquid account, separate from funds you use for your daily living expenses.

Of course, some of these moves can take time—but by getting started on them soon, you can help put your financial house in better shape before time for the next spring cleaning rolls around. ♦

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April distance brings May existence. —English Country Saying

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LIFESTYLES

Two Spring Fashion Tips

by Stephen Mey

We were going to be shopping in Miami. Because I am such a fashionista, I checked for fashion shows. Found one at Neiman Marcus and signed us up for it. Figured it would be a group of Q-Tips. [Editor note: this American slang expression refers elderly, white haired people with the the appearance of an end of a Q-tip.]

Turns out it was a lot of 20–30 year-olds (gen something or others); attendees seemed to really show their appreciation, both visually and orally, especially when the one male model was on the runway.

Turns out that flounces and peek-a-boos are really in this spring, but I personally don't think they're a good look on me, so I'm skipping them. Among the hot male items is the updated Army field jacket, so I'm hitting the closet for mine! (**This is tip one!**) The updated look includes butterfly and flower patches, so I'm trying to decide whether to put those over the holes in the elbows or over the paint spots on the front. Haven't decided yet.

I have decided to leave mine open in the front, as the model demonstrated, but I'll probably go with a classic T instead of a shirt open to my belly button—no sense having the females swooning (or gagging?).

You are probably asking yourself, "What about my old fatigue pants?" It turns out they are *not* in this season—**this is Tip Two:** Leave them in the closet. I have yet to come to grips with wearing pants below my seat, so I was relieved with this finding! Given my girth, I'm sure I would have to wear them open in the front (much like the jacket), *definitely not* a good look on me. ♦

Steve left the Army in 1971 and then worked at the University of Illinois for about 30 years. Email: yemevets@gmail.com.



SKYWATCHER

On April 1 and 2, the waxing crescent moon is near the Pleiades and Hyades star clusters. Locate the star clusters by finding Orion's belt of three bright stars. Follow a line from the belt west to the bright red star Aldebaran, which marks the Hyades cluster. Continue farther west to find the Pleiades cluster, appearing as a tight group of stars, slightly past Aldebaran. Both clusters are in the constellation Taurus.

On those same nights, Jupiter appears in the constellation Taurus. In the evening, Neptune will appear near Saturn.

The full (pink) moon occurs Sunday, **April 13.**

The annual Lyrids Meteor Shower, **April 16–25**, peak each year from late evening, **April 21, through early morning, April 22**, with about 18 meteors per hour. Best viewing is between midnight and dawn. Meteors appear to originate between the constellations Lyra and Hercules. To find these constellations, look for the bright star Vega (our fifth brightest star) in Lyra in the northeast sky. The star rises higher in the sky as the night progresses, and the Lyrids also stream from higher up, later in the night. ♦

April, like a child, writes hieroglyphs on dust with flowers, wipes them away, and forgets. —Rabindranath Tagore



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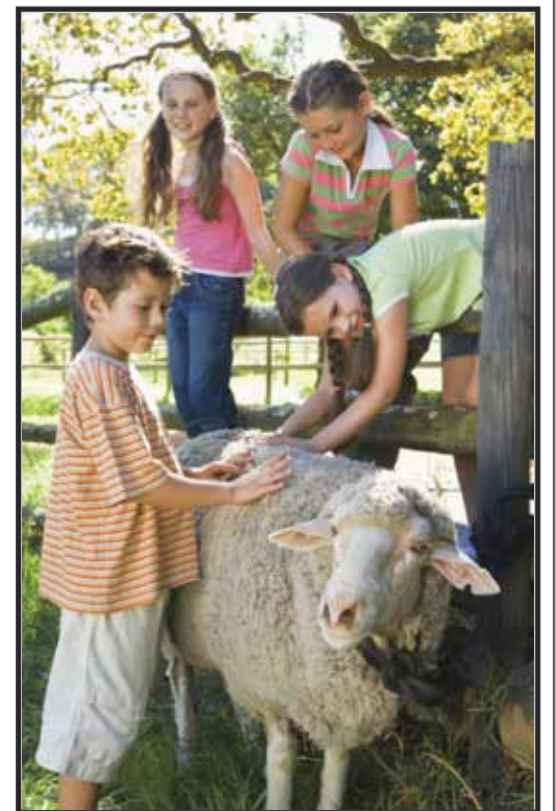
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*Tortola
British Virgin Islands*

Seeing the Island Through New Eyes

by Fyllis Hockman

My husband and I are travel writers. When we get to a destination, we explore every aspect, constantly seeking out stories. Until we got to Tortola in the British Virgin Islands, that didn't happen. And it was almost like—dare I say the word?—a vacation. But let's back up a bit.

We are a lot older than our last trip thirty years ago, and my husband had the temerity to actually hazard driving. To put the roads in context, they're dangerous and death-defying. We weren't trying that again. But to give them their due, as you drive around the harrowing roads (someone else driving), sometimes the fear subsides sufficiently to ooh and ahh around every turn at yet another spectacular view—cliches abound—and yes, more so

on Tortola than on other Caribbean islands. It's not unusual to hear someone say, "Don't bother craning your neck—it's just another magnificent view."

This time we were greatly limited in our usual practice of exploring every nook and cranny of a destination. This time, no crannies. So other options. A guided island tour, a ferry to Jost Van Dyke island, a lobster fest on Anegada. But we still had 10 days left, and we were stranded. So, we gave ourselves permission to enjoy the hotel beach and pool, something we had never before had time for.

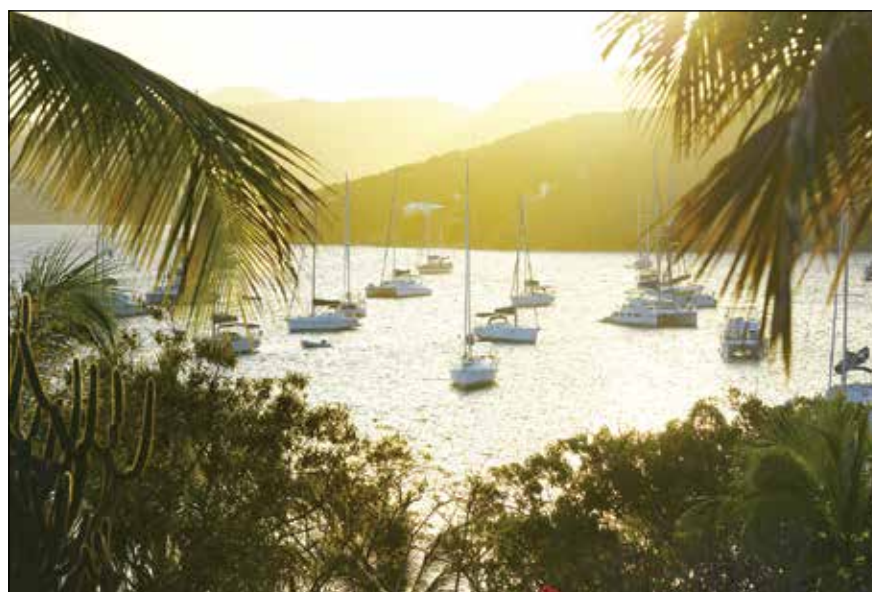
So, yes, the beach is pristine, the azure sea inviting, the canopy trees enveloping, the chaise unimaginably relaxing. The reggae music in the background toe-tappingly enticing. And I haven't even had my first Painkiller yet—more on that later. I lay cocooned, trying to visualize all the other island attractions I've yet to discover. I'm just not sure I want to. Fortunately, I pretty much wasn't able to.

Later, sitting on my hotel balcony, another rum drink in hand and listening to the maddening cacophony of coqui tree frogs singing their nightly repertoire, I couldn't be further away from the ambiance of my usual city life. I was very okay with that.

Although during certain times of year swimming is discouraged because of unusually powerful undertows, beaches still reign supreme. There are beaches for snorkeling, for diving, for surfing—secluded spots for quiet reflection, and beaches that attract the party crowd. The British Virgin Islands (BVI), comprising 60 islands and cays (six inhabited), is also

Please see Tortola on A-16

Sailboats and catamarans at anchor



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April is a reminder that life is a beautiful, ever-renewing cycle. —ee cummings

HEALTH & WELLNESS



by Jim Russell

There are many reasons seniors turn to alcohol or drugs in later life. Children grow up and leave home. It becomes necessary to give up a job or move to a smaller home. Friends grow fewer and farther apart. Physical health fails. A partner of many years gets ill or dies.

The very real difficulties of aging can pile up and impel seniors toward alcohol or drugs, or a person might have a longstanding problem that has continued to worsen over the years. The problem of addiction to prescribed painkillers also continues to rise.

Growing older brings on many changes in health, lifestyle, family obligations, work roles, and sources of support. It can bring physical pain, stress, loneliness, and loss of mobility. Not surprisingly,

the signs of alcoholism and drug dependence are different in older adults from those in younger people. Abuse among older people is often hidden, overlooked, and misdiagnosed.

There are some signs, however, that can indicate a drinking or drug problem. These include solitary or secretive drinking, a ritual of drinking before, with, or after dinner, loss of interest in hobbies or pleasurable activities, drinking in spite of warning labels on prescription drugs, immediate and frequent use of tranquilizers, slurred speech, empty liquor and beer bottles, the smell of alcohol on one's breath, changes in personal appear-

ance, chronic and unsupported health complaints, hostility or depression, and memory loss and confusion.

Although alcohol and drug abuse are harmful at any age, they are never more harmful than on the elderly. The impact of alcohol- and drug-related injuries is much more severe, the risk of harmful medication interactions is much greater, and the general physical effects of alcohol and drugs are more debilitating.

Some dramatic data reveal that 2.5 million older adults have an alcohol or drug problem; 6–11% of elderly hospital admissions are the result of alcohol or drug problems; 14% of elderly emergency room admissions, and 20% of elderly psychiatric hospital admissions are the result of alcohol or drug abuse.

Widowers over the age of 75 have the highest rate of alcoholism in the United States. Nearly 50% of nursing home residents have alcohol-related problems. Older adults are hospitalized as often for alcoholic-related problems as for heart attacks. Nearly 17 million prescriptions for tranquilizers are prescribed yearly for older adults. Benzodiazepines, tranquilizing drugs, are the most misused and abused prescription medications.

Alcohol and drug problems, particularly prescription drug abuse among older adults, are among the nation's fastest-growing health problems. Yet, our awareness, understanding, and response to this health problem are inadequate. Although people 65 years of age and older comprise only 13% of the population, they account for nearly 30% of all medications prescribed in the United States.

As a result, older adults are at significant risk for prescription drug abuse and addiction. In addition to prescription medications, many older adults use over the counter (OTC) medicines and dietary supplements, and they often share them with friends. Because of an increased rate of illness, changes in the body's capacity to process medications, and the potential for drug interactions, older adults are more likely to experience drug-related problems.

Reading these articles will not make you an expert. They cannot substitute for care from your physician or from a mental health professional. They provide basic information about the issues addressed, information from a variety of sources not all original with this writer. ♦

Jim Russell, MS, LCPC, is executive director of the Vermilion County Mental Health 708 Board.

No winter lasts forever; no spring skips its turn. April is a promise that May is bound to keep, and we know it. —Hal Borland

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LIFESTYLES

CROSSWORD

1	2	3	4		5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
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Across

- 1 Ongoing drama
- 5 Sounds of revelation
- 9 __ bean
- 13 Cereal coveted by a silly rabbit
- 14 Garlic piece
- 15 Baaing mamas
- 16 *Playful semiaquatic mammal
- 18 Merit
- 19 “__ the Force, Luke”
- 20 Looked over
- 21 Green shade named for a fruit
- 22 Electric car maker
- 24 *Seafood served on the half shell
- 27 Flower starter
- 28 Thompson of “Thor: Love and Thunder”
- 29 Parcel of land
- 31 Mammal with elephant and leopard varieties
- 32 Chiding sounds
- 36 *Really get down to the music

Down

- 1 Walk like a peacock
- 2 Pop up
- 3 Volunteers in the community one grew up in, say
- 4 Cord cutter?
- 5 Take in or let out
- 6 Reason to get all gussied up
- 7 “__ Maria”
- 8 Spanish verb similar to “estar”
- 9 Is completely comfortable
- 10 Anticipate
- 11 Vivacity
- 12 Ed who played Lou Grant
- 14 Playfully shy
- 17 Share a bedtime story with
- 21 Kvetching cries
- 23 “Magically delicious” cereal
- 25 Has on
- 26 Norwegian city with a Viking Ship Museum
- 29 Prefix with athlete

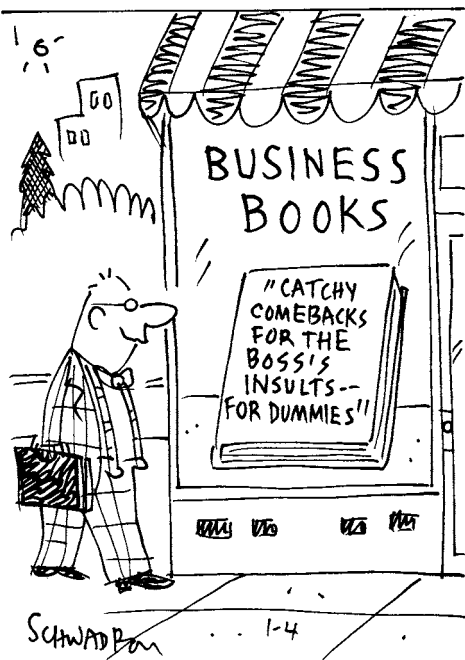
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- 21 Kvetching cries
- 23 “Magically delicious” cereal
- 25 Has on
- 26 Norwegian city with a Viking Ship Museum
- 29 Prefix with athlete

- 30 “Apollo 13” director Howard
- 31 Fine equine
- 33 “Really? There’s no more?”
- 34 Tool set
- 35 Wily
- 37 Cold War initials
- 39 Egyptian beetle
- 42 Long-fingered lemurs of Madagascar
- 45 “You’ve got mail” ISP
- 47 Politely declines, maybe
- 48 Development sites
- 49 Greet and seat
- 50 Very funny folks
- 52 Terse refusal
- 53 Total stranger, or a three-word hint to the answers to the starred clues
- 56 Rx writers, often
- 59 Animal logo on a Dodge truck
- 60 __-Wan Kenobi
- 61 Caveat in a text

See Answers on A-15.

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E ₁	I ₁	O ₁	K ₅	L ₁	B ₃	S ₁	Double Word Score					
A ₁	A ₁	E ₁	E ₁	H ₄	R ₁	C ₃						
A ₁	A ₁	E ₁	S ₁	T ₁	B ₃	K ₅						
A ₁	E ₁	E ₁	K ₅	T ₁	R ₁	M ₃	1st Letter Triple					

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EDITORS: Here is the solution to today's SCRABBLEGRAM. You can print the solution on the same day elsewhere in your paper, or beneath the following day's puzzle. If you choose to run the solution elsewhere in the same day's newspaper, See Answers on A-15.

Here are a few of the latest ball scores! 12-7! 14-9! 36-22! Tomorrow's weather - same as today except different! Uh-oh! A news flash has just been handed to me! It looks important!

One observer claims he saw a flying saucer circling in the midst of the drones! Officials disregarded his views as hallucinatory!

More on this puzzling phenomena as it unfolds! Stay tuned...

GZNX calling XLP! How can we find a parking space with all these drones flying around?

PEOPLE AND PLACES

“Before the Next Teardrop Falls”

Freddy Fender

by Randal C. Hill

Freddy Fender had just one year of mainstream stardom, but, man, was it a humdinger! It was also quite an achievement, considering how often he had stumbled on his way to the top.

Born Baldemar Huerta in 1937 in San Benito, Texas, to a poor, field-working family, he left high school to join the Marine Corps. Much of his military time, though, was wasted in an Okinawa brig, because of his drinking binges. But, during that soul-crushing confinement, he learned of a new type of music that sometimes wafted through the prison corridors. That music would change his life: early rock 'n' roll.

He returned to Texas, a goal of musical stardom burning in his being. “I grew my sideburns, put 50 pounds of wax on my hair, and thought I was Elvis Presley. That lasted several years. I was nothing but rhythm-and-blues and rock 'n' roll.”

At nineteen, he recorded a Spanish-language version of Presley’s “Don’t Be Cruel.” Huerta’s rendition earned airplay in Latin America, but north of the border nobody seemed to notice.

He soldiered on. In 1959, he adopted the stage moniker Freddy Fender, after the well-known brand name etched on his electric guitar. (“I

thought it would sell better with gringos.”) A year later, at a pivotal moment, he composed a catchy tune in the restroom of the Starlight Club, a Harlingen, Texas, joint: “Wasted Days and Wasted Nights.” Later, Freddy would proclaim, “I knew it was something special.”

However, as he prepared to release a single of “Wasted,” Fender and his bass player were busted for marijuana possession in Louisiana. Sentenced to five years each in Angola Prison, both served fewer than four. The future seemed anything but bright for the San Benito singer.

Sometimes he wondered whether his past poor choices would, in time, condemn him to never rise higher than performing in smoke-filled joints, while customers drank, talked, laughed—and all but ignored him.

Back in San Benito, Fender worked as a mechanic before meeting Huey Meaux, a shady businessman who owned the Crazy Cajun record label. In 1974, Meaux had Freddy cut a countrified single called “Before the Next Teardrop Falls.” The



Freddy Fender in Nashville, Tennessee after the The Johnny Cash Show in 1977

photo by Gene Pugh

song had been around since 1967, but it was Fender’s fervent rendition—sung in both English and Spanish—that drew interest from recording powerhouse ABC/Dot Records. “I was reluctant to cut country at first,” said Freddy. “I just wanted to do rock 'n' roll and rhythm-and-blues.” But when ABC/Dot leased Meaux’s disc, Fender was on his way.

In early 1975, his signature tune reached Number One on Billboard’s pop chart. He followed with his own “Wasted Days and Wasted Nights,” a Top Ten single, and ended the year with a version—sung partly in Spanish—of Doris

Day’s “Secret Love.”

Billboard proclaimed him Best Male Artist of 1975.

“I was just having fun,” Fender admitted later. “I never thought of becoming a great singer.” ♦
Copyright © Randal C. Hill. Used by permission. Randal, who writes at his Bandon, Oregon, home, welcomes emailed questions and comments at wryterhill@msn.com.

April is a promise of what's to come. —Gladys Taber

Why you need dental insurance in retirement.

Many Americans are fortunate to have dental coverage for their entire working life, through employer-provided benefits. When those benefits end with retirement, paying dental bills out-of-pocket can come as a shock, leading people to put off or even go without care.

Simply put – without dental insurance, there may be an important gap in your healthcare coverage.

When you're comparing plans ...

- ▶ Look for coverage that helps pay for major services. Some plans may limit the number of procedures – or pay for preventive care only.
- ▶ Look for coverage with no deductibles. Some plans may require you to pay hundreds out of pocket before benefits are paid.
- ▶ Shop for coverage with no annual maximum on cash benefits. Some plans have annual maximums of \$1,000.

Medicare doesn't pay for dental care.¹

That's right. As good as Medicare is, it was never meant to cover everything. That means if you want protection, you need to purchase individual insurance.

Early detection can prevent small problems from becoming expensive ones.

The best way to prevent large dental bills is preventive care. The American Dental Association recommends checkups twice a year.

Previous dental work can wear out.

Even if you've had quality dental work in the past, you shouldn't take your dental health for granted. In fact, your odds of having a dental problem only go up as you age.²

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1 "Medicare & You," Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services, 2024. 2 "Aging changes in teeth and gums", medlineplus.gov, 4/17/2022. 3 American Dental Association, Health Policy Institute, 2020 Survey of Dental Fees, Copyright 2020, American Dental Association.

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LIFESTYLES



You Are Fatally Invited, by Ande Pliego

reviewed by Susan McKinney

Ande Pliego's debut novel, *You Are Fatally Invited*, reminds me of Agatha Christie's *And Then There Were None*. Famous but reclusive author J. R. Alastor hosts a writer's retreat for six mystery thriller authors on his private island, just off the Maine coast. He hires Mila del Angél as hostess. She takes the job because she has a personal reason to meet up with one of the authors.

J. R. Alastor and Mila create a week's worth of games, riddles, and revelations for the six invited authors. Mila plans to use the retreat to murder the person who betrayed her several years ago.

The guests are Rodrigo Sandoval, Spanish lawyer, and his wife Olivia, who cowrite legal thrillers, Thomas Fletcher, older British gentleman, who claims to be working on a book with Alastor, Ashton Carter, 30-something American mystery/horror author, Violet Blake, the youngest attendee at 24, and Cassandra Hutchinson, the oldest attendee, in her 70s.

Each chapter is narrated first-person through the eyes of a different character. You come to know each person, and you glean hints about the stains on their lives. There are also a cook and a housekeeper, rounding out the total of ten people on the island.

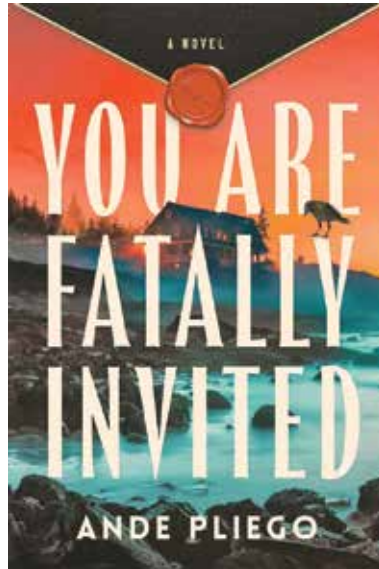
The guests arrive together on the island, where Mila greets them. Everyone is excited to learn who the elusive J. R. Alastor really is. There are things happening behind the scenes, between Mila and J. R., as well as things J. R. does, about which Mila has

no forewarning. Within hours of the guests' arrival, a horrific storm arrives, cutting them off from the rest of the world.

The very first night, a murder occurs, though the victim is not the person Mila had planned to murder. She is as surprised as her guests are. For the mysterious Alastor, all nine visitors are part of a macabre game of *confess your sins and live*.

To reveal much more would be to give away a wonderfully written mystery novel. I truly enjoyed this book, from first page to last. The reader is kept in the dark as to Alastor's identity and the identity of Mila's target. The insight into each character's thoughts—and being in their heads as they are about to die—are intriguing. This great twist on the locked room murder mystery scenario is well worth the read. I look forward to Ms. Pliego's next novel. ♦

Avid reader Susan McKinney, librarian at St. Joseph Township-Swearingen Memorial Library, enjoys mystery, suspense, fantasy, and action novels.



St. Joseph Used Book Sale Press Release

The St. Joseph Township-Swearingen Memorial Library, 201 N. Third Street, St. Joseph, IL 61873, announces its Spring Used Book Sale. The sale begins **Monday, April 28** and ends **Wednesday, May 21**. All items are for sale by donation. Pay what you want to pay!

We have adult fiction, nonfiction, mysteries, science fiction, fantasy, horror, romance, adventure, biographies, crafts, and cookbooks, as well as children's fiction, nonfiction, and picture books. There might also be DVDs, music CDs, audiobooks, and large print books.

The sale runs during normal library hours, Mondays 1:00–8:00 p.m.; Tuesdays 9:00 a.m.–6:00 p.m.; Wednesdays 1:00–6:00 p.m.; Thursdays 9:00 a.m.–6:00 p.m.; Fridays 9:00 a.m.–5:00 p.m.; Saturdays 9:00 a.m.–1:00 p.m.

Please call to arrange a time to bring donations for the sale. We can't accept donations after May 12. For more information, please call (217) 469-2159. ♦

April is a gentle reminder that life's transformations are beautiful and inevitable. —Ellen Lovell

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JUMBLE THAT SCRAMBLED WORD GAME
By David L. Hoyt and Jeff Knurek

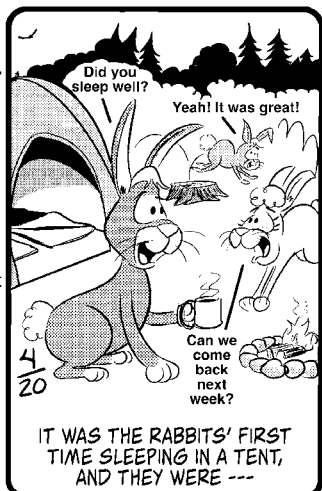
Unscramble these Jumbles, one letter to each square, to form four ordinary words.

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“○○○○○○” “○○○○○○○○○○”



IT WAS THE RABBITS' FIRST TIME SLEEPING IN A TENT, AND THEY WERE ---

Now arrange the circled letters to form the surprise answer, as suggested by the above cartoon.

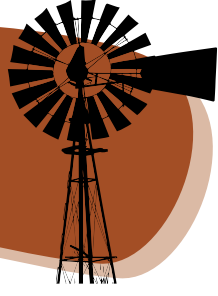
BLISS

SCOTT GARTLAND?! IT'S ME, DAVE SCHEFFLER! AP BIOLOGY. SPERRY HIGH SCHOOL - CLASS OF '87!!

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LIFESTYLES

Rural Memories



Dump Truck

by Rob Siedenburg

Where I farmed in the eighties, the LaMoine River ran through a corner of our farm, cutting off an acre of land. Dad visited and asked, “Have you explored that piece of ground?” I hadn’t, but he insisted we do so. We crossed the river by canoe and explored for half an hour. That was my last visit.

I used a little bulldozer to maintain roads to back fields and through the woods. I also used it to dig out the many half-buried old fences.

I filled the dirt bucket with cut firewood, which I emptied into the pickup or dumped near the woodshed. With the dozer, I could penetrate deep into the woods on very steep slopes, where I would otherwise have had trouble harvesting firewood.

I bought an old GMC dump truck and installed a \$50 clutch. That truck was super helpful for hauling our own gravel and fill dirt. My spare time earthmoving projects prospered with the dozer and the truck.

I needed an upgraded license to drive that truck. When I drove it into town, I stopped at the Phillips 66 station and picked up Fritz, a retired veteran who hung out there. He was licensed to drive the truck and had agreed to drive it a block to the Department of Motor Vehicles (they issued tickets to people not licensed for vehicles they arrived in). Twenty minutes later, I had my license.

I used that truck for years. I bought used school bus tires (deeper tread requirement than private

vehicle tires) for a tenth of new tire price. Though I bought the truck to use on the farm, I hauled some gravel and dirt for friends without trucks.

A tiny piece of land had been cut out of the southeast corner of our farm. A previous owner had built a logging road into the woods right there, but it was eroded and grown up in brush. I wanted to fix and extend that road to harvest firewood, so I cleared away the brush. An older neighbor told me the history of the missing quarter-acre:

A former owner of our farm wanted his neighbor’s Jersey cow. The neighbor swapped his cow for that little piece of land. My neighbor to the east said I could gravel a road down the steep incline and into the woods, so we could both cut firewood in my timber.

I drove the truck down the hill, spreading gravel. I’d have fresh gravel to drive on for improved traction backing the truck uphill. I had learned to spread gravel evenly, requiring less grading to even it out on the roadway.

Down I went, gradually lifting the dump bed. With the bed completely raised, I hit a soft spot on the left side of my new road. In a split second, the truck had rolled downhill. The truck would have kept rolling into a deep gully, but it hit a row of a dozen 6-inch-diameter shagbark hickories, which acted like springs, sending me back uphill and leaving the truck on its left side. Those trees probably saved my life. I crawled out up through the passenger side door.

My neighbor Big Bill stopped by my place and offered to pull the truck out. First, we wrapped a chain around the truck and set it on its wheels. I

got in. Amazingly, the engine started. Bill began pulling the truck slowly backwards, up the steep incline, with his big tractor. I was barely helping with the truck engine.

It was an early April day.. I kept looking down into the deep gully I might have rolled into—and I broke out in a cold sweat. When we got the truck onto the road (with about 20 spectators), I set the hand brake and got out.

Everybody else was shivering with cold, but I was sweating as if it were really hot. Folks commented on that. Was I scared? Yup. You bet I was!

Only the driver’s side door was damaged. For a while, I just entered the cab from the passenger side. Finally I found a door (a different color) for \$20. I had to descend into a deep ditch, take the door off an old, abandoned pickup, and lug it a hundred feet uphill to the road. I installed it, and it fit perfectly.

Someone offered to buy the truck and my wife urged me to sell “that death-dealing machine.” The truck was *not* particularly dangerous: I’m pretty sure the problem was with driver error. I never again spread gravel on a steep sidehill with soft soil on the downhill side.

After I sold that truck, I saw it from time to time. I always recognized it by the odd-colored door—and that door always reminded me of my close call. ♦

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Watch Out!

by Lori Borgman

I came home the other day, and my hubby was not home. His car was here, so I figured he’d gone for a walk.

He didn’t come home and didn’t come home—so I was concerned he was collapsed on a sidewalk somewhere. He has never collapsed on a sidewalk before, but when you reach a certain age, and you have an active imagination, the possibilities are endless.

I called his cell. He answered. “Where are you?” I asked.

“I went for a walk.”

“You’ve been gone a long time. I was worried.”

“Did you see that big, downed tree when you came home?”

“You mean the huge maple that fell from the front yard of the corner house and covered their entire yard and most of the street? Yes, I saw it.”

“That’s where I am now.”

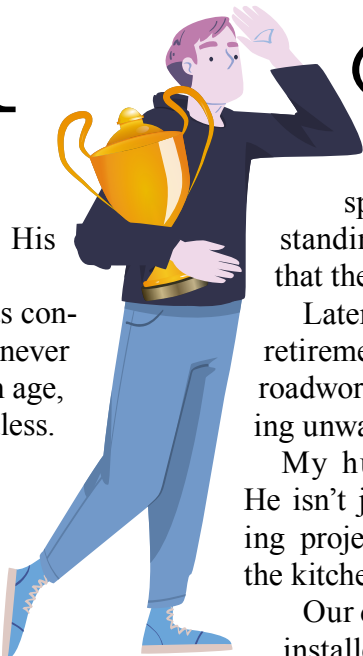
“Why?”

“I’m watching to see what will happen. Six Department of Public Works trucks have pulled up. Six trucks—and at least eight workers! Can you believe it would take that many trucks and workers to clear the street?”

“Call Elon Musk,” I say.

The husband doesn’t hear me because he’s focused on the excessive manpower and still narrating unfolding events.

I hung up. Worried sick one minute, not interested the next. Oh, the fickle human heart.



He texted a few pictures to me, our adult children, and their spouses of the downed tree from different angles, and of other people standing around surveying the scene. It is sometimes difficult to realize that the things that interest us might not interest others.

Later that night, our son sent a link to the Italian word, *Umarell*: men of retirement age who spend their time watching construction sites, especially roadworks, stereotypically with hands clasped behind their backs and offering unwanted advice to the workers.

My husband qualifies. He might be an umarell extraordinaire. He isn’t just a construction umarell, he is often an umarell to my gardening projects. And painting projects. Many evenings he is an umarell in the kitchen.

Our daughter-in-law says her dad is an umarell, as well. When the county installed new culverts in their rural area, he walked to the construction site with his dog every day, saying he was going to give the crew instructions. He was soon on a first name basis with the crew.

A few years ago, San Lazzaro di Savena, in northern Italy, a town in which a lot of older men are apparently fond of standing around watching construction projects, began awarding an annual *Umarell Prize*.

I’d like to know where to send my nominations. ♦
Copyright © Lori Borgman; used by permission. Lori is a newspaper columnist, the author of eight books, and an engaging, entertaining speaker, whose articles appear in more than 400 newspapers. Learn more at <https://www.loriborgman.com/>.



Spring is when you feel like whistling, even with a shoe full of slush. —Doug Larson

LIFESTYLES

Movie Reviews

FRONT ROW SEAT

by Larry Stephens



The Conversation (1974)

Directed by Francis Ford Coppola
 Rated PG
 Starring Gene Hackman, John Cazale, Cindy Williams
 Runtime 1 hr 53 min
 Available on Blu-ray, DVD, YouTube, Google Play, Amazon Video, and Apple TV

Like many of you, I was saddened to hear about the passing of Gene Hackman. I might even go so far as to say that I feel this loss more than most. When I think about my most memorable movie-going experiences, Gene Hackman was a part of so many of them. He could so naturally inhabit any role he played that it was impossible to tell where he ended and his character began.

Of all his performances, though, the one that stands out in my mind as his best will always be his portrayal of Harry Caul—the reclusive main character in Francis Ford Coppola’s 1974 neo-noir masterpiece, *The Conversation*. In the film, Caul, who is a freelance surveillance expert, is paid a lot of money by someone referred to as “The Director” to spy on a young couple who appear to be having an affair.

The movie opens with Caul and his team conducting an elaborate eavesdropping operation in a public park, where they manage to capture a recording of the couple talking about a future rendezvous. When Caul takes the raw tapes back to his studio to make a master for The Director, he hears something that leads him to believe his employer might want to kill the young lovers.

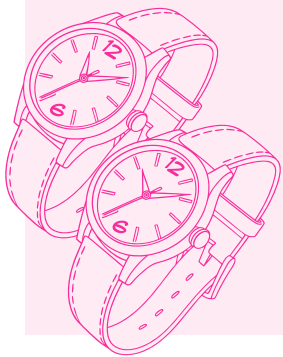
As we come to find out, Caul’s suspicions aren’t entirely unfounded. On a previous job he had done for another client, several people were killed because of the surveillance he provided. He’s terrified it might happen again. Compounding these fears is Caul’s own crippling paranoia, much of which stems from the kind of work

he does. As a result, he spends much of his private life in isolation, fearful and suspicious of every relationship that comes along.

The humanity and vulnerability Hackman brings to the character of Caul is what makes this film so memorable. He is a tragic figure who I think just about anyone can relate to. The movie also has many other performances worthy of note, including that of John Cazale, who plays Caul’s long-suffering business partner and only real friend. There are also several scenes involving a young Harrison Ford, who gives a delightfully creepy turn as The Director’s shadowy assistant, Martin Stett.

This is not a feel-good movie. It is, however, one of American cinema’s greatest works and a shining testament to the genius of Gene Hackman. Give it a look. ♦

When Larry isn’t sweating a deadline or fending off humorless gramarians, he likes to unwind with a good movie. If you have comments about this movie review or a suggestion for his next one, email him at larryav8r@gmail.com. You can also reach him through his personal Web site at chewytype.com.



Daylight-Saving Hack by Stephen Mey

Daylight-saving time events come twice a year, which means twice a year I must find the instructions for changing the time on my watch, reading the tiny instructions, getting the magnifying glass, reading the instructions again, setting the time—and then getting on with life.

A few years ago, I got tired of this. I bought a second watch, so I now have one for daylight-saving time and one for daylight-wasting time. ♦

Stephen retired from the U.S. Army in 1971 and then worked for 30 years for UIUC. Email him at yemevets@gmail.com

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PEOPLE & PLACES



by Roger Wisegarver

Joe Moscheo: Elvis's Imperials Quartet

Everyone knows about Elvis Presley: The King of Rock & Roll. His face is iconic. But what about the other faces, on the stage behind him? One of those faces belonged to a young man from New York, the versatile pianist, singer, and arranger Joe Moscheo [moss-KAY-oh].

Joseph Anthony Moscheo II was born in 1937 in Albany, New York, to Italian immigrant parents. Following the example of his father, a government worker turned preacher, Joe quit college in 1960 to join a gospel quartet, the Harmoners. He went on to perform with The Prophets before settling with The Imperials in 1964.

Back up about three years: Moscheo was singing with the Harmoners in Memphis. Word was out that young Elvis Presley was expected in the same building later that evening. He was in town recording, and he loved gospel quartet music. Long after The Harmoners had sung, Joe hung around, hoping to meet Elvis. At nearly midnight, their paths crossed. Elvis recognized Joe right off as the Harmoners' pianist, as he followed gospel quartets very closely.

Fast forward to 1969: Elvis was committing to

be the exclusive music entertainer at The International Hotel in Las Vegas for four weeks. His appearances turned into a seven-year run of 636 consecutive sold-out shows. He wanted a gospel quartet to accompany him, but his first pick, The Jordanaires, were not available. His next pick was The Imperials, just named the Gospel Music Association's Male Quartet of the Year. Pianist, arranger, and vocalist Joe Moscheo was all in!

This version of The Imperials performed regularly with Elvis Presley in Las Vegas from 1969 to 1972. Between 1966 and 1971, The Imperials also appeared on several of Presley's recordings.

"There's only about 50 of us [musicians] that ever had the opportunity to perform with Elvis onstage," Moscheo said. "It's an honor and such a memory that is uniquely mine. It certainly has changed my life; I am grateful for it."

Moscheo revisited this phase of his career in his 2007 book *The Gospel Side of Elvis*. He also produced the PBS TV documentary *He Touched Me: The Gospel Music of Elvis Presley*, which became a DVD in 2002.

In 2007, he told the *Tennessean* newspaper, "I think (Presley) is the greatest gospel singer who ever lived because of the work he left behind. His Grammys are only for gospel. I think he would have been a gospel singer at age 72. Rock 'n' roll would have probably passed him by, but he would still be singing *How Great Thou Art*."



Joe Moscheo, about 46

After Elvis and The Imperials, Moscheo worked at the music performance rights organization, Broadcast Music, Inc. (BMI), where he was vice president for 16 years. He also served as president of the Gospel Music Association, the National Academy of Recording Arts and Sciences, and the Nashville Community Music School.

In the mid-1990s, he formed his own management company, representing multiple nationally known singers. In 1996, he worked for the First Union Bank of Nashville, establishing its new Entertainment Division.

Moscheo was inducted into the Gospel Music Hall of Fame in 1998 and again in 2007 as a member of The Imperials. He continued to make appearances relating to Elvis and The Imperials until his 2014 retirement. He was a talented painter who loved spending time in Sicily on his family's land.

After suffering from a degenerative neurological disease his last few years, Moscheo passed away in 2016 at the age of 78. In one late interview, he said, "I am saying this from my heart; don't leave Jesus out of your life." Moscheo's life was well remembered by the thousands he touched during his spectacular 55-year music career. ♦

Monticello, Illinois resident Roger combines his interest in music and history: roger_wisegarver@msn.com.



The beautiful spring came, and when nature resumes her loveliness, the human soul is apt to revive also. —Harriet Ann Jacobs

WOW!

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PEOPLE & PLACES

“You Are So Beautiful,” by Joe Cocker

by Randal C. Hill

Do you recognize these heartfelt song lyrics?
*Such joy and happiness you bring
 Just like a dream
 You're like a guiding light
 Shining in the night
 You're heaven's gift to me*

Unless you're a diehard Billy Preston fan, the answer is probably no. If you are, though, you might remember these words from his recording of “You Are So Beautiful,” a tune composed by Preston and collaborator Bruce Fisher. It was written as a loving tribute to Billy's mother, a stage actress.

It's more likely, though, that your recollections of “You Are So Beautiful” come from English singer Joe Cocker.

He first came to prominence in the States via the 1970 “Woodstock” movie, which featured the sandpaper-voiced Cocker—he smoked 80 cigarettes a day—with his amazing performance of “A Little Help from My Friends,” the Ringo Starr-led opening track of the Beatles' “Sergeant Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band” album. At Woodstock, in Joe's capable hands, “Friends” became a rousing yet tortured anthem as he flailed his arms, jerked his body about, played air guitar and air drums, and transported himself to another world for eight riveting minutes, as attendees watched slack-jawed.

Born in 1944, Cocker grew up in the rundown steel-manufacturing center of Sheffield, England. A school dropout, he worked as a gas-company apprentice, while drifting in and out of different pub bands. He hated the workaday world, and he never forsook his lifelong dream of becoming a recording star, having fallen sway to pioneer American rockers, such as Elvis and Chuck Berry, before Ray Charles's “What'd I Say” blew Joe's 15-year-old mind in the summer of 1959.

In Charles, Cocker found his mentor and set about working endless hours learning to emulate the American's approach to singing.

Since the mid-1950s, Charles had shown the world a voice and a style that he used to fashion a new form of black pop music by fusing gospel with rhythm and blues (R & B), creating an aural stew that music fans worldwide embraced with gusto. Like several UK singers of the 1960s—Mick Jagger, Eric Burdon, and Tom Jones—Joe Cocker



Joe Cocker, 1969

managed to sound Black, something British artists often saw as a coveted achievement.

Years later, Ray Charles himself said, “I would never say Joe Cocker is a disciple of mine. He's an equal of mine.”

In early 1975, “You Are So Beautiful” lifted Joe into the Top Five on the weekly Billboard Hot 100 chart. A tinkling piano introduces the composition before lush strings carry him away with passionate ecstasy, proving that he could be both breathlessly gentle and gloriously stirring within the confines of a single recording.

*You are so beautiful to me
 You are so beautiful to me
 Can't you see
 You're everything I hoped for
 You're everything I need
 You are so beautiful to me
 To me*

These were the only words Joe Cocker needed to show the world that Billy Preston's original version could be pared down to just 32 words of raw, Ray Charles-like emotion. ♦

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PrimeLife Poets

April

by Ralph Butzow (1935–2025)

April, when nature's delicate strength bursts forth over the awakening land,
 A month when leaves appear and trees can shade the area where they stand,
 When June brides-to-be quicken their pace as plans continue to be made,
 Sports teams are enthusiastic, and optimism is epidemic, even amongst the staid.

April, the lengthening days are warming now, though some be showery and wet,
 While in the cool of night old Jack Frost may contrive to visit a time or two yet.
 It's a time of anticipation, as nests are built and gardeners' dreams are strong,
 Young appear, tenderness and growth are rampant, and birds lift up their song.

In this period, after winter's frigid Sabbath and before the hot months of the year,
 Let's appreciate a time of greening before weeds and mosquitoes start to appear.
 So, whether you're a youngster, an adult, or gray haired and well along life's way,
 Stop, look around, count your blessings, and smile as you breathe in this April day. ♦

Copyright © Ralph Butzow. Used by permission. Before his passing, Ralph had been a retired farmer who had lived on his land at rural Wellington, Illinois. He authored *Some Poems by Ralph and More Poems by Ralph*, both available at [Amazon.com](https://www.amazon.com).

Sonnet 98

by William Shakespeare (1564–1616)

From you have I been absent in the spring,
 When proud pied April dress'd in all his trim
 Hath put a spirit of youth in every thing,
 That heavy Saturn laugh'd and leap'd with
 him.

Yet nor the lays of birds nor the sweet smell
 Of different flowers in odour and in hue
 Could make me any summer's story tell,
 Or from their proud lap pluck them where
 they grew;

Nor did I wonder at the lily's white,
 Nor praise the deep vermilion in the rose;
 They were but sweet, but figures of delight,
 Drawn after you, you pattern of all those.

Yet seem'd it winter still, and, you away,
 As with your shadow I with these did play. ♦

That Durned Thought I Lost

by Esther Aardsma

I came into this room for something
 Or something I was going to do,
 But I can't for the life of me remember
 Quite what it was; do you?

Was I getting scissors,
 Or was I cleaning my shoe?
 Was I adjusting the thermostat?
 I can't quite remember; do you?

It's bugging me, and as I'm waiting
 For the thought to come flying back through
 I'm feeling more and more impatient—
 I can't quite catch it; can you?

Maybe I was checking the stove,
 Or adding to the list something new,
 Or putting on the schedule something I'd
 forgotten—
 But I simply don't remember. Do you? ♦

Copyright © Esther Aardsma. A busy homeschooling mom of five little ones, in Philo, Illinois, Esther is an enthusiast for all things creative. Email her at eaardsma@protonmail.com.

HEALTH & WELLNESS



Computer-generated image

Dementia in the Family

by Phyllis Godwin

Dementia can be a four-letter word of your choosing, however, if it runs in your family, you can attribute the word *hell*. Grandpa Bill was, to me, for most of my childhood, a sweet old man. He lived with us and had his own private room in our crowded house.

In my first attempt at writing in college, I wrote a story of the day of his demise, which was printed in the college's literary journal. On that day in the mid-1950s, he was carried out of our house screaming from the pain of a broken hip and carted off to the state hospital for the insane, never to be seen again by us until the day of his funeral a few weeks later. My last view of him alive was through my tears, as he reared up in the back of a big white ambulance screaming. He still had on his old dirty hat with earflaps tied together on top.

Grandpa Bill was not our biological grandfather; rather, he was our paternal great uncle, who had married our divorced maternal grandmother. We had fun most of our lives trying to explain how our grandfathers were brothers. I was told more than once: "Well, if your grandfathers were brothers, your parents married cousins, and you could be idiots." I suppose we could be, but they were not cousins in any sense—and none of us were idiots in the medical sense.

In my essay about Grandpa Bill, I described the smell of his pipe tobacco and the scratchy tweed of his vest, as he rocked a crying, five-year-old

me. Grandpa Bill was good to us little ones, and that was all we needed to know. He comforted us, made whistles for us, and showed us how to do many things.

He developed dementia gradually. As far as I know, his condition was undiagnosed, but obvious to us all. As a teenager in the fifties, I was ashamed to bring friends home because he might be sitting on the porch swing in dirty long underwear. He would claim he had no clothes to put on—the clothes in his dresser were not his. My true friends understood and just took the experience in stride.

Grandpa Bill's plight has always haunted me as unjust, but I learned as I got older that there was no money to do otherwise. Places to send him for long-term treatment were not worked out, no doubt because he did not live long enough after his fall.

I still feel the injustice, but I no longer blame my family. Despite the downside of dementia, there is no way I would have wanted to give him up. Although he yelled and threatened strangers in the basement, created unhealthy situations, and took up precious space, to me he was a kind, beloved member of the family. We can all wish for that love and tolerance. ♦

Freelance writer Phyllis Godwin lives in Urbana, Illinois, with her husband David. A retired administrative assistant and a graduate of University of Illinois–Springfield, she loves cooking, creating stained glass art, and taking road trips with David.

thoughts to ponder

by Tim Barber

Hope. A few years ago, the comic books usually had a back section with all kinds of advertisements. One that caught my eye was about Charles Atlas. Bulging muscles. I hoped I could look like that someday—if I just bought the proffered book and followed the instructions. All I had to do was send in a dime! (That tells you how long ago it was!) Didn't do it, I guess, because I didn't believe it. Hope depends on *believable* promises.

April is a month with celebrations of historic proportions: Passover, Palm Sunday, Good Friday, and Resurrection Day. All speak of great expectations and hope, based upon promises backed up by the only One who never breaks a promise. Do you need some hope that will get you through what's going on in your life right now? We all do.

Passover speaks of a promise God made to Abraham in Genesis 15:13–14 that his descendants would be enslaved in Egypt but would be delivered from bondage. That hope-filled promise took around 400 years to be fulfilled. The crucifixion, death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus were foretold hundreds of years before they happened. We are learning that, when the promises are secure, hope waits patiently.

I hope you will enter these celebrations, and, based on unshakeable promises, will experience encouragement, direction, forgiveness, and peace. God is always faithful. ♦

Copyright © Tim Barber. Tim is a retired pastor in the Champaign-Urbana area: tbarber@illinois.edu.

Our spring has come at last with the soft laughter of April suns and shadow of April showers. —Byron Caldwell Smith

Laughing Matters



A Scotsman, planning a trip to the Holy Land, was aghast when he discovered it would cost fifty dollars an hour to rent a boat on the Sea of Galilee.

"Hoot mon," he said. "In Scotland it wouldna ha' been more than \$20."

"That might be true," said the travel agent, "but you have to take into account that the Sea of Galilee is water on which our Lord himself walked."

"Well, at \$50 an hour for a boat," the Scotsman replied, "it's no wonder he walked."

Someone broke into our house and stole a dozen eggs. The thief also left a pan of hot water sitting on the stove. The police think it was probably a poacher.

A skeleton walks into a bar. He orders a drink and a mop.

Marley: "What's your dream job, Charlie?" Charlie: "Getting paid to sleep."

This morning at the store, I had the rudest, slowest, nastiest cashier ever! I guess it's my own fault for using the self-checkout lane.

PEOPLE & PLACES

SEVENTIES FLASHBACK

Were They Charged Too Much?

by Randal C. Hill



Imagine for a few moments that you are a fly on the wall.

It's 1970. You're in the offices of a top-rated Chicago marketing and advertising firm. Folks there are listening attentively to Orville Redenbacher, a Purdue University-educated agricultural scientist, with a somewhat goofy—almost cartoonish—appearance.

For three hours, Redenbacher has gleefully extolled the virtues of the “gourmet” popcorn he and his business partner, Charles Bowman, call *Red Bow*, a blending of their last names. “Reddy,” as he calls himself, is there to learn the best marketing strategies for their product, which has never sold well.

At the end of the meeting, they tell Orville to return in a week for the recommendations.

What he is told later leaves him almost gasping in disbelief. According to the Windy City wisemen, he and Bowman should rename their product Orville Redenbacher's Gourmet popping corn. Even more important, Redenbacher's grinning

country bumpkin image—wavy, snow-white hair, thick, horned-rim glasses, and absurdly oversized bow tie—should grace the front of every package.

Orville gets a bill for \$13,000 (about \$105,000 in today's currency).

Ouch!

He pays the fee, silently fuming and undoubtedly thinking, “*This* is what we're being charged for seven days' worth of collaboration from a highly recommended advertising team?”

But, as it turned out, taking the unorthodox advice was akin to hitting a home run with bases loaded. Before long, America's newest celebrity was appearing in national TV ads, smiling broadly and proclaiming, “You'll like it better, or my name isn't Orville Redenbacher.”

As a result of this sales blitz, the scrumptious snack flew off grocery shelves everywhere. By the mid-1970s, the brand had captured a third of the lucrative popcorn market—proof that snack-loving customers were willing to shell out more cash for popcorn that was larger, lighter, more flavorful—and that left few, if any, unpopped kernels.

Popcorn had always fascinated Indiana-born Orville Clarence Redenbacher. Named after aviation pioneer Orville Wright, Redenbacher partnered with Charles Bowman, a fellow Purdue agricultural

graduate. Together, they bought a small corn-seed company and set about toiling six long years, experimenting with over 30,000 popcorn hybrids, before declaring in 1965 that they had reached popcorn paradise with what they felt was the ideal product.

Their original offering—Red Bow Gourmet popping corn—soon appeared on market shelves. When buyers saw the higher price, though, they pretty much ignored it.

In 1970, Redenbacher and Bowman decided they needed guidance from savvy marketers. Thus Orville traveled to Chicago and met with the marketing team.

Were the Hoosier State partners charged too much for the unorthodox suggestions? Before you answer, consider this: In 1976, food giant Hunt and Wesson paid \$4 million to buy the thriving popcorn company (That \$4 million = \$22 million in today's cash).

Yet Redenbacher always grumbled that he had been charged a fortune for the name his mother had thought up when he was born, back in 1907.

Thanks, Mom. You did your part. ♦

Copyright © Randal C. Hill. Used by permission. Randal writes at his Bandon, Oregon, home. He welcomes emailed questions and comments at wryterhill@msn.com.

You can cut all the flowers, but you cannot keep spring from coming. —Pablo Neruda

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LIFESTYLES

No Surprises with God

“I will be glad and rejoice in thy mercy: for thou hast considered my trouble; thou hast known my soul in adversities. . . My times are in thy hand. . . For I said in my haste, I am cut off from before thine eyes: nevertheless thou heardest the voice of my supplications. . . Be of good courage, and he shall strengthen your heart, all ye that hope in the LORD” (Psalm 31: 7, 15, 22, 24).

This psalm addresses our concerns of challenging unexpected events. Each of us has unique concerns when we face unforeseen troubles; we frequently believe our challenges to be uncommon. However, the phrase “Thou hast considered my trouble; thou hast known my soul in adversities” tells us God understands every detail about us, even the values that drive us. He is familiar with our past, what troubles us, and our daily concerns.

Take heart, my friend. There are no surprises with God. Have a great day! ♦
 Copyright ©, Greg Williams, MD. Greg is a psychiatrist with world-wide experience in such matters as neurological research (Germany) and brain surgery (Brazil). He lives west of Chicago, where his wife teaches at a major university.

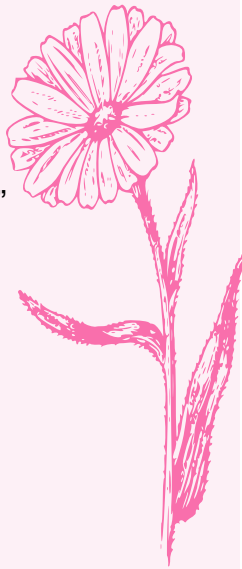
April Facts

April's birthstone, the diamond, Earth's hardest natural substance, takes its name from the Greek word *adamas* [ἀδάμας], which means “unbreakable.”

April's birth flowers are the daisy and the sweet pea.

April 1 is April Fools' Day, and many play practical jokes on that day. April 22 is Earth Day, set aside to consider the health of Planet Earth.

The entire month of April is National Poetry Month, designated to celebrate American poets and to encourage poetry reading.



WORDSMITH'S WORKSHOP

By Rob Siedenburg

Rope Idioms

As you might expect, the expression “To be on the ropes” comes from boxing. The boxing platform is roped off, and the concept is that of a tired boxer, driven right up against the ropes. A company that is “on the ropes” is possibly bankrupt and without hope, or on its last legs. A person who is on the ropes is in a desperate position, hopeless and defenseless.

“Showing someone the ropes,” on the other hand, or “learning the ropes,” come from nineteenth-century nautical terminology during the Age of Sail. They mean, respectively, *teaching someone what to do*—and *learning what to do*. Ironically, the ropes on a sailing ship are called *sheets*, as are the chains that serve the same purpose. Each rope or chain is named after the sail or other element whose angle and shape it controls. The *jibsheet* controls the jibsail; the *mainsheet* controls the mainsail.

Mooring ropes are called *lines*, typically *dock lines*, or *warps*. None of these nautical ropes is called a *rope*. (I wrote this to help you *learn the ropes*.) ♦

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Puzzle Answers

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

Crossword puzzle on A-6

Jumble on A-8

Jumbles: MONTH SPICY PREFIX PLACID
 Answers: It was the rabbis' first time sleeping in a tent, and they were — “HOPPY” CAMPERS

Sudoku on A-8

8	5	1	3	4	7	2	6	9
2	6	3	8	1	9	7	4	5
7	4	9	6	2	5	3	8	1
4	8	7	2	5	3	1	9	6
1	2	5	9	6	4	8	3	7
3	9	6	1	7	8	5	2	4
6	3	2	5	9	1	4	7	8
5	7	8	4	3	6	9	1	2
9	1	4	7	8	2	6	5	3

Scrabble Grams on A-6

SCRABBLE GRAMS SOLUTION													
O ₁	B ₃	E ₁	L ₁	I ₁	S ₁	K ₅	RACK 1 =	76					
E ₁	A ₁	R ₁	A ₁	C ₃	H ₄	E ₁	RACK 2 =	62					
B ₃	A ₁	S ₁	K ₅	E ₁	T ₁		RACK 3 =	12					
M ₃	E ₁	E ₁	R ₁	K ₅	A ₁	T ₁	RACK 4 =	69					
PAR SCORE 155-165											TOTAL		219

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PEOPLE & PLACES

Tortola

continued from A-4

the “Sailing Capital of the World.”

One getaway we allowed ourselves was a short ferry ride to Jost Van Dyke, BVI’s smallest inhabited island. White Bay, home of the infamous Soggy Dollar Bar, lives up to its name. So does the Soggy Dollar. Rumor has it that coming off the boats—the only mode of transportation—sailors’ money would get wet on the approach. The bar—home to the original *painkiller* (we’re getting to that)—accepted their mangled money, i.e., their soggy dollars.

People come to have a good time, and they’re determined to do so. Painkillers help. These magical drinks—Pusser’s rum (and only Pusser’s rum), with coconut cream and fruit juice—were first created at this bar in the 1970s. This has since become the signature drink throughout the BVI.

Because of high tides, swimming on Tortola is



Roosters roam everywhere across the island

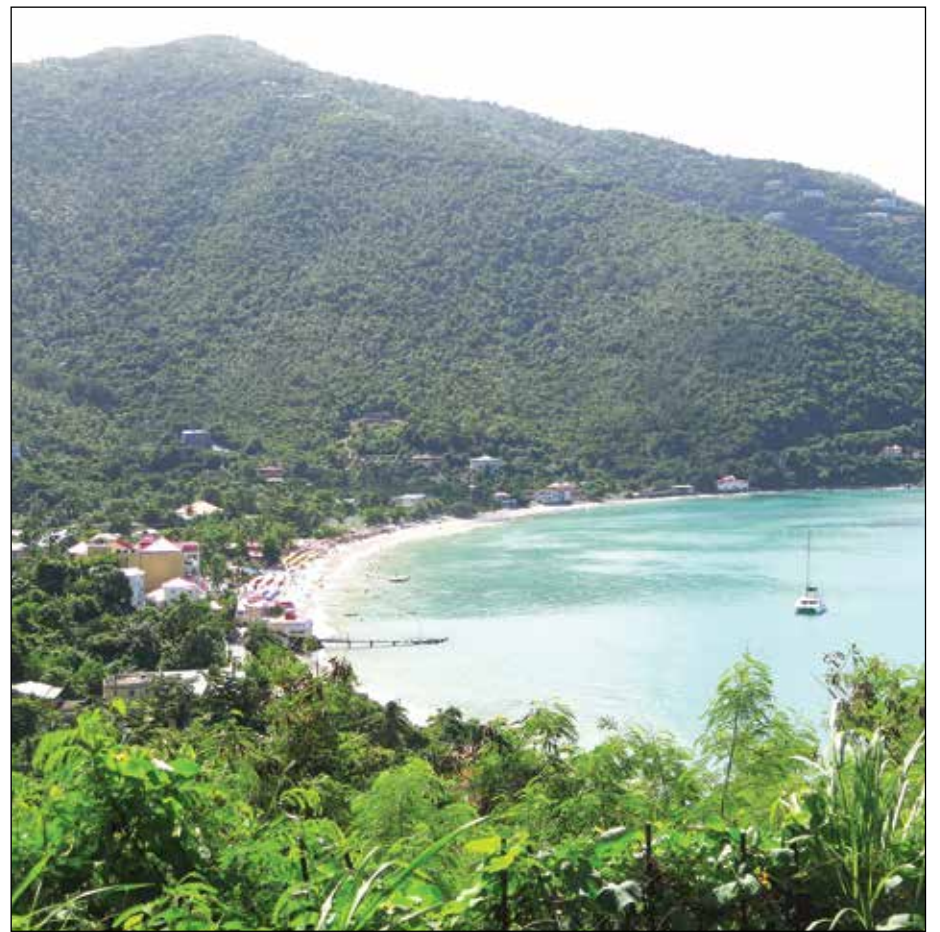
sometimes discouraged, but the water on Jost van Dyke is calm and inviting. I was so afraid I would have to go home and admit I had spent two weeks in Tortola without going into the ocean. Thank you, Jost van Dyke!

The city center of Road Town, Tortola’s capital, offers typical cruise ship fare. Not a dig at Tortola—just true of every Caribbean Island. But right in town are the J. R. O’Neill Botanical Gardens—a hidden oasis that justifies a trip to town. A labyrinth of interlocking paths, engulfed in greenery, admittedly a tad redundant because the entire island blankets you in greenery.

Small, large, low, high, and enormous, with leaves the size of surfboards that make you stop and stare. Plants are light, dark, thin, thick, mottled, marbled—a mini-rainforest in the middle of a city.

Did I mention roosters? They’re everywhere, strutting about in their feathered finery or sparking a cringe-worthy pillow on the head during very early morning greetings, repeated multiple times throughout the day. There’s no stopping them.

Alas, without a car, we returned to our pool and



beachfront. We managed to adjust very well to our new reality. We had never before had time to read books on a working trip. We could get used to this. ♦

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The beautiful spring came, and when nature resumes her loveliness, the human soul is apt to revive also. —Harriet Ann Jacobs



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