



**Grace Will
Be There**

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**Coach Should Have
Benched Me**

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Family Table**

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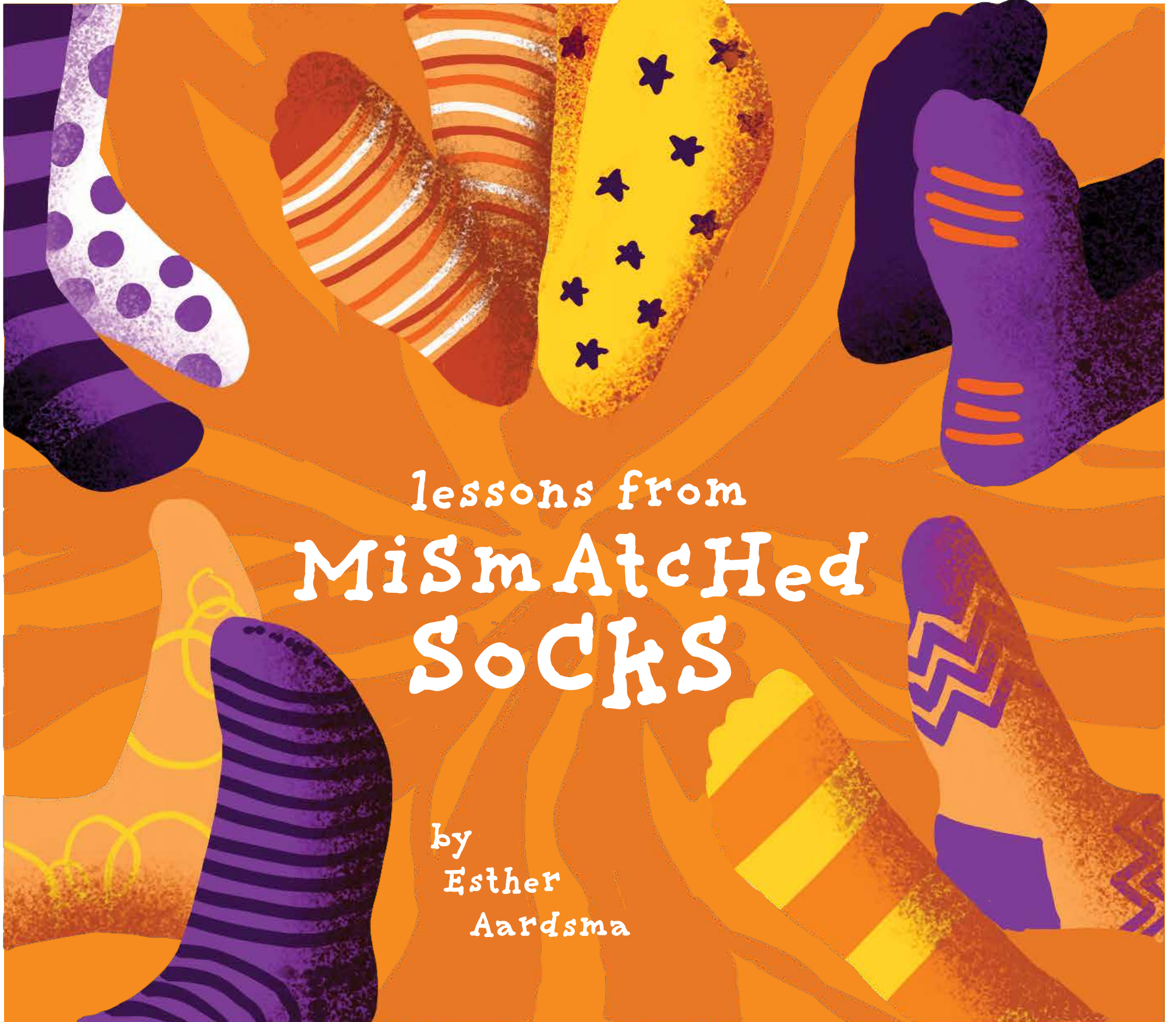
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My five-year-old son might be the smartest person I know. This has led to many challenging situations, such as needing to call Poison Control after I found him, at two years old, on top of the refrigerator with open candy and prescription medication strewn around his little knees. And needing stitches not once, not twice, but—is it four or five? I can't quite remember—times after his brain function and fearlessness didn't quite match his motor control.

Though his various escapades are by turn hilarious, fearsome, and frustrating, one interaction has left me pondering.

I recently assigned him the new task of matching socks. He resented being assigned this task, as it requires sitting still and focusing. The first morning of the new assignment, after I realized that he had put little effort into the task and had abandoned

the resulting laundry mess across the living room couch, I sat down with him to guide him through the process and conduct some QC.

"These two don't go together," I said, picking up a pair of kids' socks and starting to separate them.

"No, Mom!" he protested. He snatched the socks from my hands. "They do go together!"

"But they don't match!" I said. "See? This one has orange stripes on the bottom, and this one has gray stripes."

"They *do* match; you just have to *look* at it right," he insisted. "They came from the same package!"

He wasn't wrong. The socks had both come from the same package, and they were both black. The only difference was the color of the stripes—which were on the bottom of the socks. How much did my desire for perfection really matter? When worn, the socks *would* look like they matched. His perspective

was different from my perspective—but not actually false. In a certain sense, the socks did indeed match.

My son's statement has stuck with me, indicating applications in unexpected ways. How often do I demand, internally if not externally as well, that reality match my expectations regardless of how rigid those expectations might be? How often do I insist on something being the way I want it to be, when there might be hidden gifts in looking at it differently? How often do I complain to God, "These things you gave me don't match!"

Perhaps God responds with, "They *do* match. They came from the same package—the same Giver." ♦

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PEOPLE & PLACES

Mark & Friends

Grace Will Be There: Finding Strength for the Next Faithful Step

Have you ever looked ahead at tomorrow’s problems and wondered how you could possibly carry them, when today’s strength already feels spent? We often imagine grace as God’s kindness after failure or as a comforting religious idea. Yet grace is also his sustaining presence in the moments that expose our limits, providing what we need when we reach the next hard place.

On a recent segment of Mark & Friends (aired August 19), Thursday guest host Donna Leland welcomed author, teacher, and speaker Katie Kelly to discuss her book *Grace Will Be There*. Kelly described grace as “everything you need for life and godliness,” a truth made tangible while raising a son with severe nonverbal autism, walking through the end of her marriage, and suddenly single-parenting six children. In those seasons, self-sufficiency gave way to daily dependence on God.

A friend’s words became a lifeline: “Grace will be there when you get there.” Kelly explained that God does not always provide tomorrow’s strength today. Like manna in the wilderness, his provision arrives for the day at hand. Faith might not feel like confidence; sometimes it is simply taking the next step, while trusting that the Holy Spirit has not left us.

Kelly recalled one of those steps: taking all six



Scan to listen

children to a tire shop shortly after her divorce. Two children had no shoes, the shop was closing soon, and there was no partner available to call. She prayed, walked in, and discovered that her family could do the hard thing together. What looked like a small victory became evidence that God would meet them in the next challenge too.

She also experienced grace through community. When friends offered another meal train, Kelly realized what she needed was actually help cleaning her house. She worried that declining food might seem ungrateful, but her best friend encouraged her to say what would be useful. For 12 weeks, a rotating “Sunday Crew” came after the children were asleep, offering practical support, adult conversation, and laughter. Grace arrived through people who listened and showed up. Receiving help was not a debt to repay, but a gift to welcome.

Drawing from Katie’s story, here is a blueprint for trusting that grace will meet us in life’s hardest moments:

Receive Today’s Grace. Stop trying to manufacture strength for every future problem. Ask God for what you need today, and trust that tomorrow’s provision will arrive tomorrow.

Take the Next Faithful Step. Courage does not



require feeling fearless. Pray, move forward, and let each small act of obedience become evidence of God’s faithfulness.

Practice Honest Community. If you are hurting, tell trusted people what would genuinely help. If you are helping, listen before acting, and offer the practical care the person actually needs. ♦

For the full conversation and for a full archive of Mark & Friends, visit www.greatnewsradio.org.



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PEOPLE & PLACES

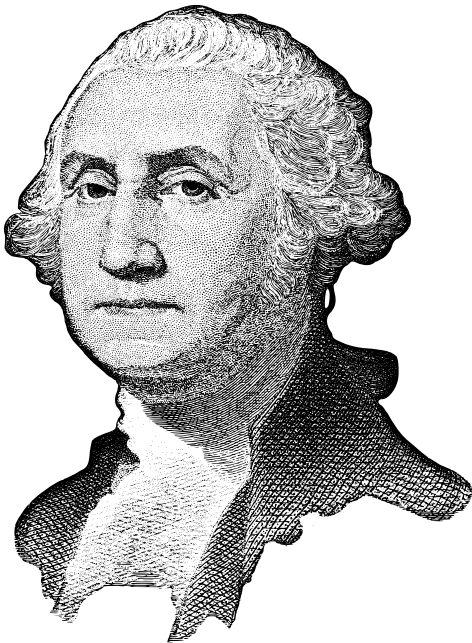
George Washington, the Man and the Myth

Many criticize the modern revision of history books, but some historical writing needs to be revised. For instance, a parson named Mason Locke Weems wrote a very popular biography of George Washington. The fifth edition of his book included the completely fictional account of George, a hatchet, and a cherry tree. This story served to further popularize the book but did nothing to improve its accuracy.

Weems (*Parson* because he had been ordained by the Bishop of Canterbury in 1784) spent his life writing and selling his books, largely from his *Flying Library*, which he moved from town to town. Had he called his biographies *historical fiction*, it would have been closer to the truth. His life of Francis Marion departed so far from the truth of the accounts Marion’s friend General Peter Horry gave Weems that Horry complained, “You have carved and mutilated it with so many erroneous statements [that] your embellishments, observation, and remarks must necessarily be erroneous as proceeding from false grounds. . . . Can you suppose I can be pleased with reading particulars of Marion and myself, when I know such never existed?”

Despite the liberties Weems took with his version of history, his Washington biography for many years outsold all other books except the Bible. Weems also wrote that Washington threw a silver dollar across the Potomac. He couldn’t have because, at the place where he was supposed to have done that, that river is over a mile wide. Or maybe we can’t match his fabled feat because a dollar just doesn’t go as far now as it did then. ♦

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SKYWATCHER

On **October 4**, Saturn (at opposition) appears at its brightest and seems bigger than at any other time this year. It’s also visible for longer, rising just after dark in the south-southeastern sky, and remaining prominent throughout the night. Jupiter, high and bright in the south-southwest sky as dawn approaches, rises in the east-northeast after 10 p.m. Neither planet will twinkle, and Jupiter will be notably brighter than Saturn. Just after sunset, Mercury is briefly visible in the west-southwest sky, though hard to see because of seeming so near the sun. You can see Venus, bright and clear above the eastern horizon, in the predawn sky. Because we see it through so much atmosphere, it can appear to flash, twinkle, or wobble.

What else to see on October nights this year.

Date	Event
October 8–9	A fairly dark sky for good viewing, you can watch the Draconids, the only early evening meteor shower.
October 8–15	We have over nine hours of completely moon-free, astronomically dark night.
October 21–22	The Orionids meteor shower, with a three-hour moon-free window in the wee hours of the morning.
October 26	Full moon is called the <i>Hunter’s Moon</i> . Hunting is optional.
November 1	On this date, turn your clock back an hour if your state decides to continue the counter-productive twice-yearly time change.

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by Marvin Weinbaum

Most of us share two simple wishes: we want to live a long life, and we want to live it well. Many of us are on a path to achieve these goals through scientific advances, accessible medical care, good nutrition, and active, healthy lifestyles—plus family and community support systems. The lucky among us can reach our 70s, 80s, and beyond. Hopefully, we’ll remain independent for decades.

In this column I want to discuss how, having achieved these goals, we might reach a point where we need some help. Live long enough and you, or a loved one, will almost certainly reach that point. And—this is key—needing help is not the same as losing independence.

In fact, getting the right level of help, at the right time, is likely the best path toward extending independent living.

Let’s look into the issues that surround searching for, selecting, evaluating, and transitioning into *assisted living* in all its seasons. This overview is meant only to trigger a conversation before a crisis is upon us.

Recognize the Need

Falls, chronic fatigue, missed medications, the neglect of personal hygiene, disorientation: the signs of decline vary widely but are observable and point to a variety of interventions. Often, the aging adult is the last to observe that there is a problem. “I’m fine; stop worrying,” is not a solution; denial is not an option.

Have the Conversation

“That’s it! You can’t keep driving” is a bad start to a conversation. “Let’s figure out how to keep you safe” is much better. Hard as it might be, you must begin the conversation—with your spouse, your aging parent, or your friend. No one walks this path alone. And the conversation should begin now, before a crisis occurs. If necessary, script your opening comments. Practice them. Launch the conversation, and the process will flow. Discuss options, finances, locations, advantages. Dispel stereotypes.

Understand and Explore the Varied Options

Home Care. Often an event-driven intervention, this can be perfect if you wish to stay in your home. You bring in the right help, at the right time, for just as long as you need it.

Independent Living Facilities. These tend to be private apartments or cottages, offering multiple dining options. Typically, they provide housekeeping, maintenance, social activities, fitness classes, etc. They are meant to extend a life lived fully. They provide neither medical oversight nor personal assistance.

Assisted Living. This next step is for individuals requiring a level of personal assistance—bathing,

dressing, managing medications, and mobility issues. They offer a private apartment or room, caregivers (typically nonmedical) on site 24/7; they provide meals, housekeeping, laundry, and activities. This is for individuals who need personal assistance with previously routine tasks, who are physically *slowing down*, or who have become less mobile.

Skilled Nursing Facilities. These facilities are for clients (patients) who require ongoing, in-house medical support. Usually the patient has been under care in a hospital and achieved a level of recovery that lends itself to discharge—but is not sufficiently recovered to go home. The typical patient is receiving round-the-clock care for wound and catheter management, IVs, feeding tubes, physical therapy, etc. Residency requires preapproval from Medicare or private insurance. The goal is rehabilitation, not permanent residency. Generally, rooms are shared.

Memory Care Facilities. Everything about these facilities is designed for patient safety, care, and comfort. They are intended for patients who are lost in time and place, confused in their thinking, are fearful, suspicious, or agitated. Memory care is about providing a safe, supportive system that meets the patient’s needs now, and from moment to moment.

How do we decide what level of help is right? We observe, we communicate, we research and investigate, we visit, we ask questions. It’s complex and challenging. Be prepared to do the hard and necessary work. And don’t make the mistake of assuming that your decision is permanent. Our needs can change. The right solution at 78 might not be the right solution at 88.

Starting Questions to Ask at All Levels of Care

- Regarding costs—what’s included or available but for an added fee? What, if any, is the buy-in fee? What are the monthly and ongoing fees?
- Ask to see a schedule of activities, menus, services (meals, transportation, laundry, and etc.).
- Walk around everywhere and at different times of the day.
- Write down your questions in advance of the visit(s).

These questions and this overview are meant only to start you thinking and talking about the issue of assisted living in all its complexity. And the time to start is now.

Living long is a gift. Living well is a goal. Sometimes, knowing when to ask for a little help is part of achieving both. ♦

Marvin Weinbaum, senior life coach and columnist, writes about aging with purpose, dignity, curiosity and resilience, translating insight into practical guidance for everyday life. Feel free to send your questions to marvin@coachweinbaum.com.

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LIFESTYLES



The Biscuit Oven

When I lived on a small farm east of Carthage, Illinois, we heated our home with woodstoves. As the old saying goes, “Firewood warms you twice.” In our case, it often warmed us several times—while cutting trees, hauling logs, sawing stove lengths, splitting wood, carrying it indoors, and finally, burning it.

One of our stoves was an odd-looking fixture in the kitchen. Its cooktop contained several removable rings of different sizes, and we often kept a kettle simmering there to add moisture to the dry winter air. The rings could be lifted out with a special tool whose handle was wrapped with heavy wire to keep it cool enough to hold.

The little stove also featured something unusual: a biscuit oven perched above the firebox. Large wood-burning ranges often included biscuit ovens, but this narrow stove had only that small oven and no full-sized baking compartment.

For years, I didn’t know what the stove was called. It was an elderly neighbor who identified it as a biscuit stove. Once I learned its name, I began putting the oven to work. I baked biscuits, muffins, and bread, and the ladies of the family produced more ambitious creations, including whole-wheat cinnamon rolls.

Keeping the stove operating required care. By transferring red-hot coals from our larger stove and banking them with wood ash, I could maintain steady

heat for many hours. The arrangement provided reliable heat for both baking and home heating. At night, I could tell by the sounds whether the stove was drafting correctly, and I could hear by the cooling cast iron when the firebox was cooling down and needed more hot coals.

Our modest farmhouse comprised four rooms and two enclosed porches. The kitchen served many purposes. Along with the sink, it had a full-sized bathtub, a gas water heater, and a washing machine. We hung the clothes outdoors on a clothesline to dry.

Winter travel required careful planning. During bitter weather, we rarely left the house unattended for long because frozen pipes were a constant concern. Before making the four-hour trip to visit my parents, I would place metal-clad milkhouse heaters near the plumbing, open the cabinet doors under the sink, bank the biscuit stove with hot coals, and fill the large U.S. Army Cannon Heater stove in the living room with wood. A thick top layer of ash slowed the fires and extended their burn time.

Those precautions worked. Even after day trips lasting as long as eighteen hours, we returned home to find both stoves still alive with heat, despite the heavily frosted windows and the fierce winter wind raging outside.

Over time, the little biscuit stove stopped being just a curiosity that visitors admired. It became an indispensable part of our daily lives, helping heat our home, protecting it during winter absences, and supplying our table with fresh pastries. There’s nothing quite like coming home to the smell of freshly baked cinnamon rolls and the warmth of a hot wood fire. ♦

Copyright © Rob Siedenburg. When not writing these articles, Rob teaches a Bible study, gardens, and works with students who want to learn English.

Laughing Matters

Q: Why does Humpty Dumpty love autumn so much?

A: He always has a great fall.

My doctor said my sugar was too high. I went right home and moved it to a lower shelf.

Did you hear about the man who fell into the upholstery machine? He’s fully recovered.

On our way home from South Carolina, I was feeling a bit tired. Not sleepy, but tired. I considered stopping at a rest area, but decided to go on to the next one, about an hour farther on. As we passed the rest area, a state trooper pulled out behind us and turned on his siren and light. I pulled over. When he came to my window, I asked why he had stopped us. He asked whether my wife had suggested we stop, and I admitted that yes, she had. He then read me my rights and said I was under arrest. When I asked him what the charge was, he said, “Resisting a rest.”

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LIFESTYLES

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- Across
- 1 “Jurassic Park” resin

6 Big name in champagne

10 Pigpen

13 Glacier-climbing tool

14 First word of a fairy tale

15 ___ vez: again, in Spanish

16 Arbitrary allowance for error

18 Sonnet or ode

19 Phony

20 Margaret of “Fire Island”

21 Play parts

23 Ivy in New Haven

24 Poker player with the tallest stacks

26 Out of ___ world

28 Not online, online

29 Dove’s sound

31 Prefix similar to quad-

33 38-Down dispenser

35 Talk a big game
- 36 Sweet treats for a valentine, or what the starts of 16-, 24-, 47-, and 59-Across are

40 Inning’s six

41 Tyrannosaurus ___

42 Many Omanis

43 Shivered syllable

44 Barinholtz who won “Celebrity Jeopardy!” in 2023

46 Community FYIs

47 Rite of passage for a Jewish boy

51 Cheeky answers

55 Legal scholar

56 Organ with a lobe

57 Desert flora

58 Shortly, shortly

59 Words on a novelty apron

62 Piffing

63 Uffizi display

64 “Love that”

65 NNW opposite

66 Body positive activist
- 67 Brick-and-mortar worker?

32 Like a limited edition

33 Hardware chain that celebrated “100 Years of Helpful” in 2024

34 “appreciate u”

35 Mensches

36 ___ for apples

37 Lose sleep, maybe

38 Money

39 “Your Song” singer

44 Online convos

45 Apt candy for a snack break?

46 Take different paths

48 Like peaches in summer

49 Cocktail twists

50 Bouquet bearers

52 Sneeze sound

53 Oktoberfest mug

54 Verb in a bread recipe

55 Scone spreads

57 John of “Argyle”

60 Anger

61 That guy
- Down
- 1 Honda luxury line

2 Olympian’s aspiration

3 French loaves

4 Struck through

5 Penalty caller

6 Sweet rice cake

7 In first place

8 Prefix with hotel or tourist

9 Less verbose

10 Crustacean eaten by sea turtles

11 Moving sidewalk creators?

12 Thanksgiving tubers

13 Not without risk

15 Opinion piece

17 German cries

22 Berkeley, briefly

24 Bologna bye-bye

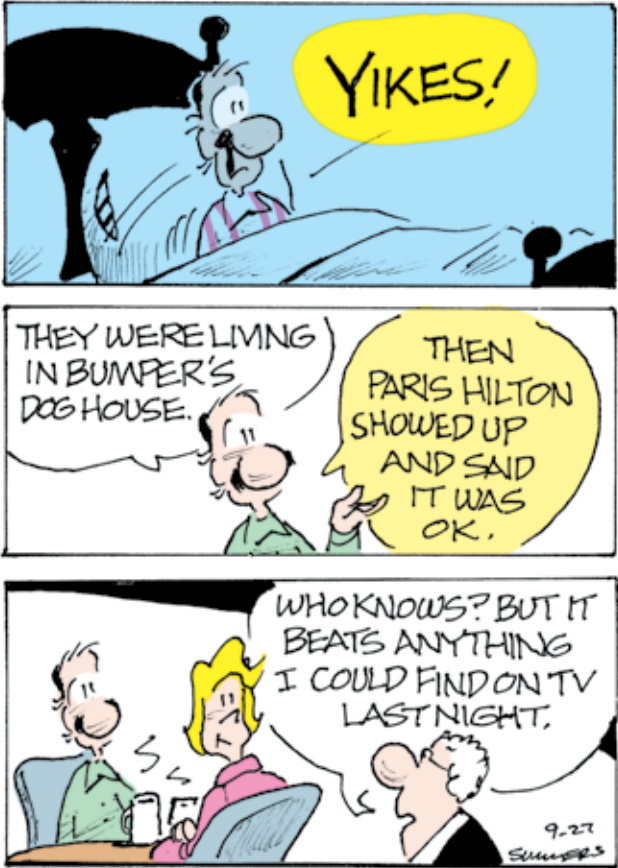
25 Long ride, for short

27 Bits of time?

30 Need to repay

31 Band wagons?

See Answers on A-15.



SCRABBLE

G R A M S

A1 E1 E1 O1 L1 P3 R1

O1 U1 T1 C3 L1 N1 S1

I1 O1 Y4 L1 S1 R1 L1

E1 E1 O1 O1 Y4 N1 M3

PAR SCORE 140-150

BEST SCORE 216

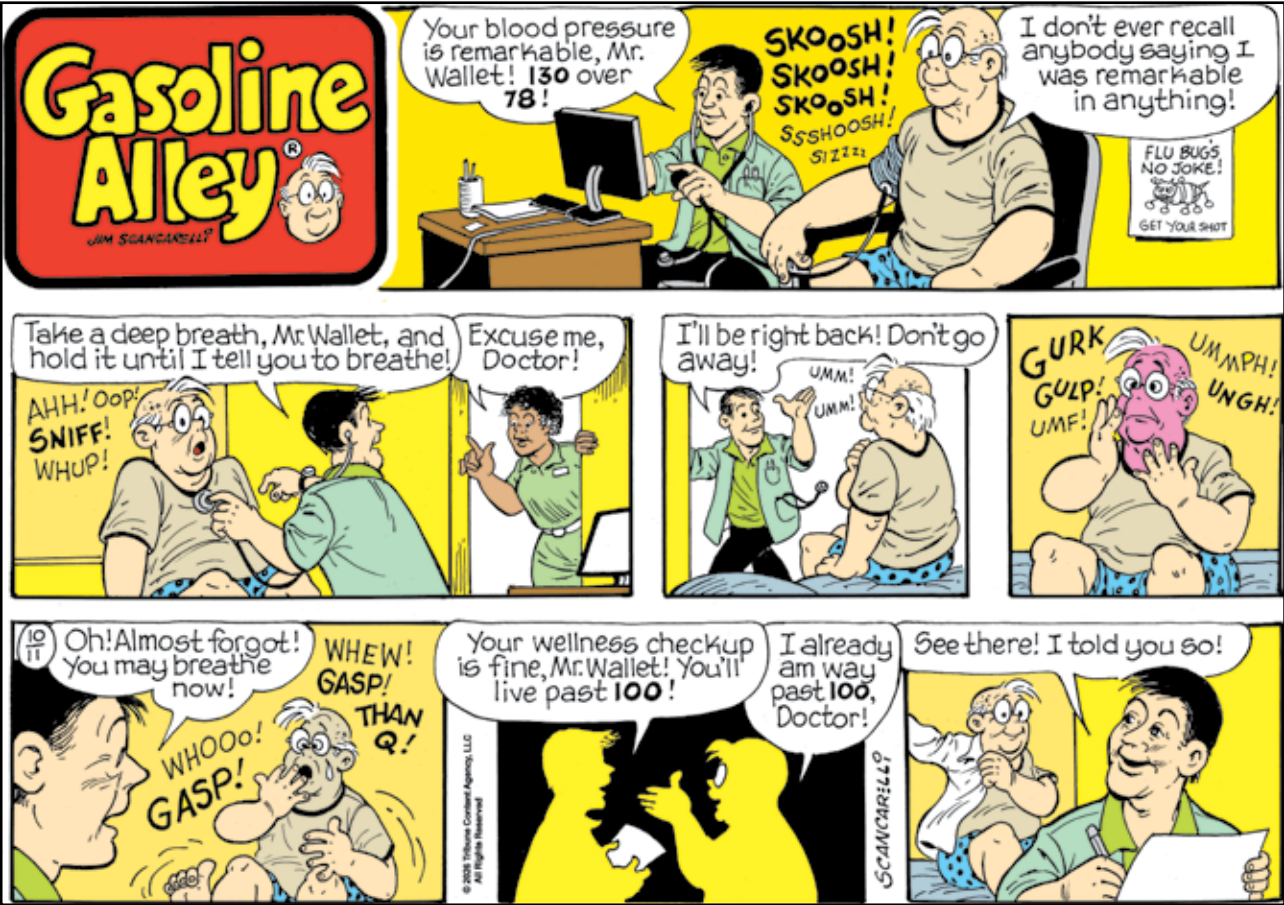
FOUR RACK TOTAL

TIME LIMIT: 20 MIN

DIRECTIONS: Make a 2- to 7-letter word from the letters in each row. Add points of each word, using scoring directions at right. Finally, 7-letter words get 50-point bonus. "Blanks" used as any letter have no point value. All the words are in the Official SCRABBLE® Players Dictionary, 5th Edition. SOLUTION TOMORROW

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01-06



See Answers on A-15.

LIFESTYLES

A Spotlight on Thoughts

by Greg Williams

Psalm 94

“Lord, how long shall the wicked, how long shall the wicked triumph? They slay the widow and the stranger and murder the fatherless. Yet they say, The Lord shall not see, neither shall the God of Jacob regard it.

Unless the Lord had been my help, my soul had almost dwelt in silence. When I said, My foot slippeth; thy mercy, O Lord, held me up. **In the multitude of my thoughts within me, thy comforts delight my soul.** Shall the throne of iniquity have fellowship with thee, which frameth mischief by a law? They gather themselves together against the soul of the righteous and condemn the innocent blood. **But the Lord is my defense, and my God is the rock of my refuge.** And he shall bring upon them their own iniquity, and shall cut them off in their own wickedness; yea, the Lord our God shall cut them off.” (vs. 3, 6, 7, 17–23)

The psalmist has a timeless answer for burdened souls navigating a season of distress. As our world struggles against the steady invasion of lawlessness and corruption, the rapidly shifting moral landscape can easily leave us stranded in despair. Yet, the words of this Psalm remind us that our anxieties are not new, offering a clear roadmap for hope. If we wish to embrace the resilience of the psalmist, we must follow his example with that same disciplined focus.

The secret to remaining steadfast against a chaotic society is tucked quietly between the verses. The psalmist writes, “In the multitude of my thoughts within me, thy comforts delight my soul” (v. 19). Every day, our minds are bombarded by what we hear, what we see, and the heavy concerns of life. This is the multitude of thoughts that can wear us down. If we fail to be selective about

which thoughts hold our attention—where we choose to fix the spotlight of our minds—we easily become captives of the chaos around us. If we focus exclusively on the evil in our world, we will inevitably live in fear.

Our worries only perpetuate the false narrative that God is neither concerned nor able to sustain us. True hope depends entirely on keeping our spotlight fixed on who God is and what he has promised us through his righteousness. If our gaze is fixed on God, there is no cause for anxiety; we become confident that his divine justice is certain. God has not only promised to set all things right, but he invites us to witness his justice unfold. We are not passive observers but active worshipers who celebrate the realization of our hope and the ultimate vindication of our faith. Guard your mind, brother and sister. Keep your spotlight fixed firmly on the things that are true, honorable, and sure. ♦

Copyright © Greg Williams. Psychiatrist Greg Williams, MD, who loves the Psalms, lives west of Chicago, Illinois, with his lovely university professor wife.



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“Magic Man”

by Randal C. Hill

There’s a little-known story—a doozy—behind “Magic Man,” Heart’s first Top-10 single.

Born in 1950 in Bothell, Washington (just northeast of Seattle), Ann Wilson began singing at age six to overcome her shyness and rid herself of a stutter. She developed a powerful, self-assured voice and later formed a singing and writing partnership with her sister Nancy, four years younger and a guitarist. They joined an all-male band called *Heart*, stepping into the spotlight and building a loyal fan base in the area.

In time, Heart problems began to loom large. In 1974, the Vietnam-era draft board tapped guitarist–band manager Michael Fisher for military duty. Opposed to the war, Fisher fled north to Vancouver, British Columbia. Ann, his then-girlfriend, opted to follow him, as did Nancy, later. She had hooked up with Roger Fisher, Michael’s band-member brother.

Ann had been living at home and studying art in college when she announced her decision. She later recalled for *Rolling Stone Magazine*, “My mom was, like, ‘You’re so young and immature. Do you even use birth control?’ Back then you didn’t talk to your mother about that kind of stuff.” The “Magic Man” lyrics reveal much of the story:

“Come on home, girl,” Mama cried on the phone,
“Too soon to lose my baby yet, my girl should be at home.”
But try to understand, try to understand,
Try, try, try to understand, he’s a Magic Man, Mama,
He’s a Magic Man.

Michael was two years older than Ann but light years ahead of her in sophistication, and his allure proved hard to resist:

“Come on home, girl,” he’d said with a smile.
I cast my spell of love on you, a woman from a child,
But try to understand, try to understand,
Oh, oh, try, try, try to understand,
He’s a Magic Man.
Oh, he’s got the magic hands



Nancy Wilson and Roger Fisher c.1978

Mrs. Wilson was resolute that her daughter stay in the United States. Ann: “She would go, ‘You don’t know what you’re doing!’ She had no idea about the reality in the seventies of girls and boys and free love and whatever. . . . She was formidable, but I won in this case.” Nancy followed soon afterward.

In Vancouver, Heart landed numerous gigs and eventually made a demo (demonstration) tape at the local Mushroom Studios. “Dreamboat Annie,” the hauntingly exquisite titular track from Heart’s debut album, became a hit on Canadian Top 40 radio. Opening for a Rod Stewart concert also helped to up the buzz on the band.

Two other Wilson-created works earned radio airplay—“Crazy on You” and “Magic Man,” the latter, Heart’s first foray into Billboard’s Top Ten list in America, and the beginning of years of best-selling releases on different labels.

“[Magic Man] is about leaving home,” Ann maintains. “It’s like looking back on a love affair of the past from this great distance. . . . to look back on all that naivete and just what it’s like when you fall in love for the first time.” ♦

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PEOPLE & PLACES



Lost: Amelia Earhart’s Three Mysterious Deaths and One Extraordinary Life
by Rachel Hartigan

reviewed by Susan McKinney

Rachel Hartigan, a *National Geographic* journalist for over 10 years, wrote this book after traveling with the 2017 and 2019 *National Geographic* Expeditions to find Amelia Earhart. I have always been fascinated by unsolved disappearances such as that of Amelia Earhart. As a child, I remember getting ahold of a *Stranger than Fiction* book at an aunt’s house and devouring it while visiting.

Like Ms. Hartigan, it’s good for us to remember that, at the end of the day, Ms. Earhart and Mr. Noonan had family who mourned their loss. Ms. Earhart’s family, particularly her sister Muriel, hated the fixation. Every time someone announced they had found something, Muriel and her family would grieve again.

Amelia’s mother, Amy Earhart, believed that if the Japanese had captured Amelia, that would be the best hope for her survival. To that end, she moved from Kansas to California to be closer to the ocean where her daughter had disappeared. She believed that, if Amelia was found, California was where she would return to. Amy died in 1962 at the age of 95.

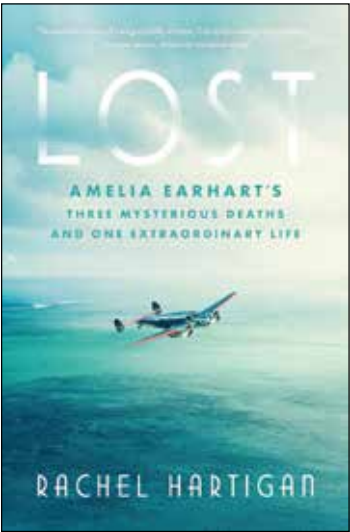
Muriel’s daughter, Amy Kleppner, passed away in 2024 at the age of 93. Amy said her mother Muriel always said, “I don’t believe one penny should be spent in that particular way. There’s a lot of misery in the world that can be alleviated by those millions of dollars that have been spent on searching the ocean and digging up graves on various islands, and all the rest of it.” Muriel always believed, just as her mother did, that the plane had crashed into the ocean and sunk.

One of the theories I had never heard was that Amelia had survived, was living in Japanese custody, and provided the voice of “Tokyo Rose.” It turns out that George, her husband, while serving in the Pacific during World War II, made a risky trip to a Marine Corps post to listen to the voice. He said he would stake his life on the fact that the voice was not Amelia’s.

The Earhart home in Atchison, Kansas, is a museum to Amelia Earhart. There is an annual Amelia Earhart Festival. There are reenactments, carnival rides, and similar staples of a small-town festival. Each year the organizers present a “Pioneering Achievement Award” to someone who exemplifies Amelia’s spirit and courage.

The author writes about our country’s fixation with this missing person. Over 1000 books have been written about Amelia. The books written for children talk about her fearlessness and accomplishments to encourage others to follow their dreams. ♦

Susan McKinney, St. Joseph Township-Swearingen Memorial Library librarian, is an avid reader who enjoys mystery, suspense, fantasy, and action novels.



Coach
Should Have
Benched Me

by Jean Brady



As a teenager, I lived for softball, both to watch and play it. My small village of 500 residents was likewise enthralled: the town trustees had a choice between purchasing a fire engine and installing lights at the ballfield—the lights won. Teams came from a wide area to play *under the lights*. Men’s teams, boys’ teams, girls’ teams, church teams, all vied for time on our ballfield.

During my teenage years, I played on two teams, one an all-girls’ team, the other a church team, which consisted of both boys and girls. The latter had to have at least three girls, and a girl had to be the pitcher. Both of my teams had wins and losses; memory says we won a lot more than we lost. Yet I don’t have any specific memories of great victories.

One of the things I do remember was the girls’ team meeting to discuss uniforms. I don’t remember other teams in our area having uniforms, but our coach, Mr. Gray, had come from the city, and he suggested that we purchase uniforms with the name of our team on the back. He did caution us that each letter would cost a set amount, so we should choose a short name for the team. We became the *IMPS*—how short could we get! I had started at shortstop, but I soon became the team pitcher. I had a good fastball and developed a deceptive curveball.

I also became the pitcher for the church team. One memory from that team involved our catcher. Our equipment in those days was minimal—only the catcher and first baseman had gloves, and the catcher had no mask or chest protector. In one game, the batter barely tipped one of my fastballs, which rose just enough to miss Howard’s mitt and hit him squarely in the eye. He continued playing, but the same thing happened a couple of innings later, hitting him in his other eye—poor Howard had two black eyes for a couple of weeks.

Another time we were playing in the championship game, with a small lead, entering the final inning. The batter hit a pop-up in the infield: I made the call—“I’ve got it!”—and I dropped the ball. The other team rallied, and we lost the game. If only I had caught that ball, the game would have been over, and we would have won the championship. I had let my team down. I remember that game!

As much as I regret that game, I have greater regrets for another game our IMPS played. We were outplaying the other team by a large margin, and Coach Gray, not wanting to run the score any higher, began instructing his players to bunt. When my turn at bat came, he gave me the same instruction: “bunt.” I was known as a long-ball hitter, and when I saw the pitch right down the middle, I couldn’t resist—I swung. Coach didn’t say anything, but in looking back, I realize he should have benched me.

In the great game of *Life*, I realize I’ve often dropped the ball, and sometimes disobeyed a direct command, yet the LORD hasn’t benched me, even though I deserved it. Like Coach Gray, God is gracious. ♦

Jean Brady is the widow of a pastor and a church pianist. She writes in Farmer City, IL. Email Jean at canadajean35@yahoo.com.

SUDOKU

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JUMBLE

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

DTHIC

CPYIK

MLETHE

NCAELC

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

What's done is...uh... I forget what's next. There is so much to remember.

You need to remember it's two weeks until we open.

C'mon! You need to focus!

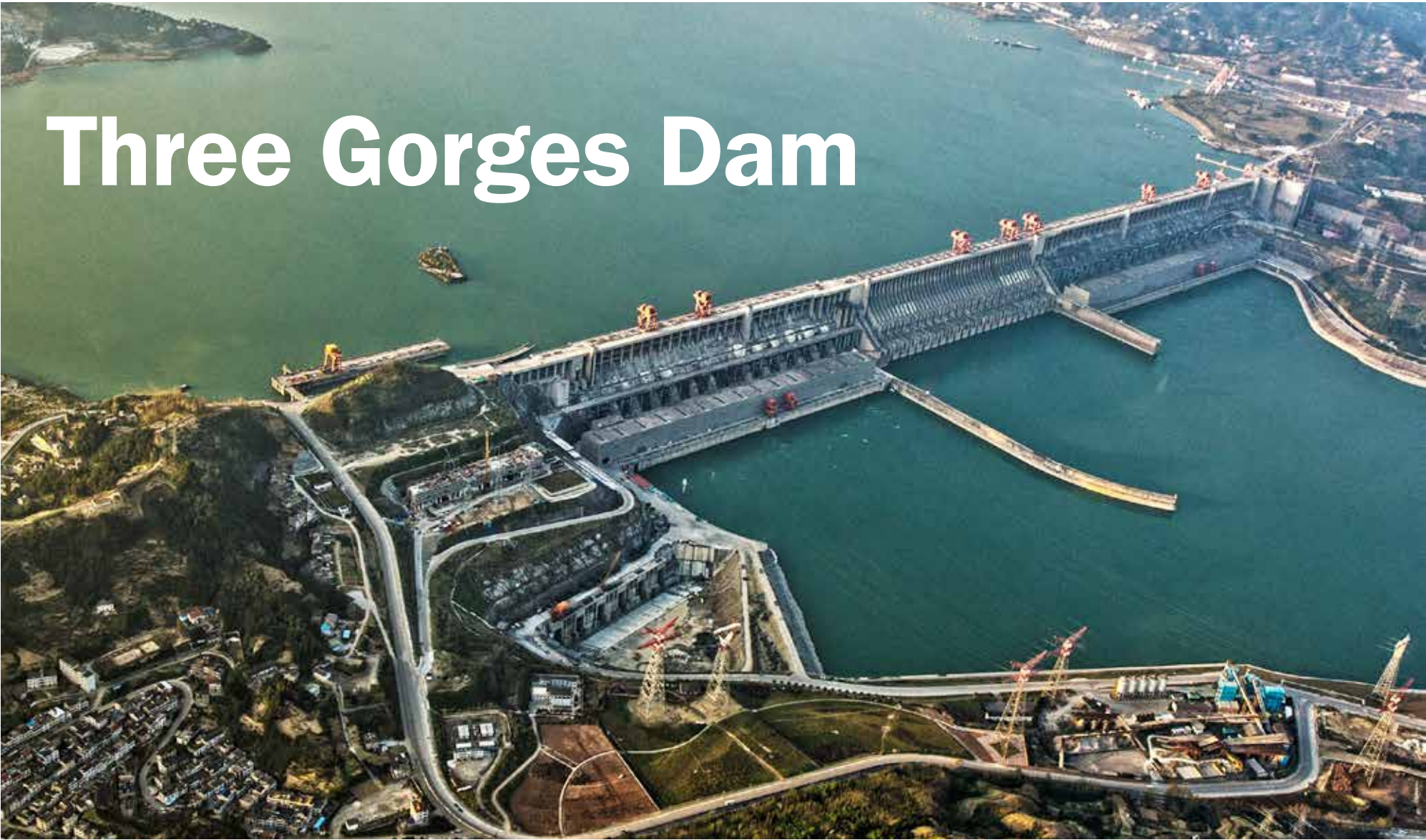
MEMORIZING LINES FOR THE PLAY WOULD REQUIRE A LOT OF EFFORT. SHE'D NEED TO ---

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

BLISS

"Don't worry — I got you."

PEOPLE & PLACES



©DoMinh / Adobe Stock

by Donald Freeman

The Three Gorges Dam in China was built in 2006. I am not an engineer, but in a past occupation I designed small ponds and reservoirs, so I have some knowledge of considerations in designing a dam. When I heard that China built a dam across the Yangtze River, my immediate reaction was, “that’s insane!” The river is known as the most rampaging, dangerous, and deadly river on earth. I knew that the watershed (the area that drains into the river) was steeply mountainous in many areas and subject to monsoon rains.

I thought to myself, “That would be like us saying, ‘Let’s build a dam across the Mississippi River.’” It’s just unthinkable.

“But what do I know?” was my next thought. After all, I’m not an engineer.

A few months ago, I started seeing several articles and videos raising questions about the current stability of the Three Gorges Dam. My curiosity got the best of me; I had to run the numbers.

The dam height is 575 feet. It backs up water about 350 miles. The actual concrete dam is about a mile and a half long.

It has the capacity to *safely* release a little more than 30 million gallons of water per second.

In 2020, monsoon rains tested it. They released 13,200,000 gallons of water per second. This release of water was so great that 3.68 million people had to be evacuated to get out of the way. This release of water was only 44% of the total amount that could safely be released from the dam. But how much water is this?

Lake Erie holds about 127.6 trillion gallons of water. At the 2020 release rate of 13.2 million gallons per second, enough water would pass through the dam in about 112 days to equal the entire volume of Lake Erie. At the dam’s maximum designed release rate of more than 30 million gallons per second, that amount would pass through in roughly 49 days.

The Mississippi River, at the delta where it empties into the Gulf of America, has a watershed of 284 million acres of drainage area. The Yangtze at the point where the Three Gorges Dam was built drains 247 million acres. That is 87% of the drainage area if we built a dam at the mouth of the Mississippi River.

The dam was controversial from day one. The intended purposes were threefold: flood control, hydroelectric power, and increased shipping capacity

for the river. Now the Yangtze is a monster. Its flooding has killed Chinese people throughout history. Flood control is certainly needed.

But is it possible? Given that the 2020 dam release resulted in massive civilian displacement, it appears the current flood control system was heavily overwhelmed.

Critics say the only true reason for the dam was the electricity generated. And they got it. The dam produces electricity equivalent to 15 nuclear power plants!

When the dam was built, it permanently displaced 1.4 million people. Many of these people had lived *by* the river and *from* the river all their lives. It didn’t just require them to move: they gave up a way of life that they had no way to recreate.

The monsoon season is June, July, and August. Many people say the reservoir level is already higher than it should be. Many videos say that the dam is in danger of failing. Some say aerial photographs show that the dam is distorted. There are recent reports that the government is producing assessments of what would happen if the dam failed. I have no way of knowing whether any of this is true. ♦

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LIFESTYLES

Poetry Corner

Practical Ways to Learn About Poetry

by Esther Aardsma

The previous “Poetry Corner” discussed setting goals for improvement in writing poetry. But what *sort* of goals will build stronger poetic muscles? Here are some ideas:

Read poetry! Expose yourself to different eras, styles, and genres of poetry. Start with famous poets, such as Emily Dickinson, Robert Frost, and Henry Wadsworth Longfellow. Try Mary Oliver, Homer, T.S. Eliot, Shakespeare, or Matsuo Bashō. Poems can be written in forms that have unique shapes—which can’t be appreciated without viewing. Some styles might not be for you, but that doesn’t automatically mean you don’t like poetry! Keep exploring.

Read form books that explain the mechanics of creating various poem types. One guidebook example is Robert Lee Brewer’s *The Complete Guide of Poetic Forms: 100+ Poetic Form Definitions and Examples for Poets*, available digitally online.

Learn words! Look up the meanings of words you don’t understand, and use a thesaurus to find synonyms and antonyms of words you already know. A richer vocabulary means a larger toolbox to draw from when writing.

Write. An athlete does not get stronger without exercise. So, too, a writer does not improve without

writing. Allow yourself the freedom to write badly at first; your desired results will be achieved more easily with practice.

Listen to poetry. The aural qualities of a poem cannot be fully appreciated without hearing it. Listen to poetry audiobooks or podcasts, watch poetry performance videos, or attend a live poetry performance or open mic session.

Read poetry aloud. The practice of reading poetry aloud gives you a unique perspective to appreciate the sounds and rhythms the poet chose. You can’t know how a poem feels rolling off your tongue unless you speak it aloud.

Try new things as you are ready. If you push yourself to, for instance, enter a contest before you feel ready, you can set yourself up for an incredibly discouraging experience if you get negative feedback. When you have enough confidence and resilience in your new skills to take some potential discouragement, though, you can expand your comfort zone’s boundaries by trying new things. An open mic event at your local library might be a good place to start!

If you want to learn and grow, but struggle with feeling you aren’t making progress, actively shift your mindset from “I’m so bad at this” to “With practice, I can learn.” This reframe removes the paralysis of shame or fear and lends momentum to your personal learning journey. *Everyone* is only practicing—it’s only that some have practiced more. What do you want to explore? Go for it! Don’t let insecurity keep you from adventuring. ♦

Copyright © Esther Aardsma, multi-award-winning writer, editor, book coach, and busy mom of five, lives with her family in Philo, Illinois.

Giving Each Other a Little Grace

by Cynthia Germain

Lately I’ve been thinking a lot about grace. Not grace in a religious sense, but the grace we give another person when we stop before judging. When we ask a question—instead of making an assumption. When we recognize that what we see from the outside might be only a very small part of what is happening on the inside.

I think most of us have experienced a time when something didn’t sit right with us. Someone disappointed us. Something wasn’t handled the way we thought it should have been. We didn’t understand a decision or someone’s actions.

And, sometimes, we simply walk away. But what might happen if, before we did that, we asked a question?

Maybe the answer wouldn’t change our decision. Sometimes walking away is still the right choice. But perhaps we would understand the situation differently. Maybe we would discover something we didn’t know. Perhaps we would find a reason to stay. Or maybe we would realize there is something we could do to help.

That takes grace.

It means giving people room to be human: to have a bad day, to make a mistake, to be overwhelmed, to not communicate perfectly, or to be dealing with something we know nothing about.

The older I get, the more I think this matters.

Aging brings changes that aren’t always visible. Someone might be caring for a spouse. Might be grieving. Might not hear as well or move as quickly. Might be struggling with something that used to be

easy. Or might simply have a lot more going on than we realize.

But grace isn’t only something older adults need from younger people. It goes in every direction and across every generation.

The older person who gets frustrated with technology can give some grace to the young person trying to help. The younger person who doesn’t understand why something takes longer can stop and ask. Neighbors can give one another the benefit of the doubt. Volunteers can recognize that the person they are helping might be having a difficult day. And those receiving help can remember that volunteers have complicated lives too.

People are imperfect.

If we want communities where people look out for one another, we must leave some room for that imperfection. We must be willing to ask a question before we come to a conclusion. We must talk to one another instead of about one another. And sometimes, instead of seeing something that isn’t working and walking away, we might ask, “Is there something I can do to help?”

This grace simply means giving another human being the opportunity to be understood *before* we decide who the person is or what the person’s intentions are. Maybe that’s something we could all use a little more of as we age—not just grace for older adults, but grace for one another.

Because none of us gets through life without needing it. ♦

Cynthia Germain has an MBA and is knowledgeable in the field of aging and nonprofit community-based organizations and meaningful services.

The Adventures of Ozzie and Harriet Trivia

- From 1952 to 1966, millions of American families settled in on weekend nights to enjoy ABC-TV’s “The Adventures of Ozzie and Harriet.” Their sons David and Ricky grew from children to adults before our very eyes. The adventures the family experienced were half-hour episodes of ordinary domestic life with everyday comedic misunderstandings. Let’s see what you know about this now-classic family offering.
- 1. At age 13, Ozzie Nelson became**
(a) an Eagle scout.
(b) a newspaper reporter.
(c) a music teacher.
(d) a radio announcer.
- 2. At Rutgers University, he earned**
(a) a PhD degree.
(b) a BA degree.
(c) a law degree.
(d) an MA degree.
- 3. He married Harriet Hilliard, who had been his orchestra’s**
(a) roadie.
(b) vocalist.
(c) fan club president.
(d) manager.
- 4. Harriet’s birth name was**
(a) Marilyn Streep.
(b) June Christy.
(c) Zindy Looper.
(d) Peggy Snyder.
- 5. Harriet began her career in**
(a) school plays.
(b) vaudeville skits.
(c) B movies.
(d) talent competitions.
- 6. In 1952, the Nelson family starred in the feature film**
(a) “Ozzie and Harriet’s Beach Bash.”
(b) “Our Big Break.”
(c) “Here Come the Nelsons.”
(d) “We’re Headed to Hollywood!”
- 7. Ricky Nelson’s real first name was**
(a) Eric. (b) Nicky. (c) Mickey. (d) Dickey.
- 8. How did David and Ricky receive their education?**
(a) They were tutored during summer breaks.
(b) They took online classes.
(c) They went to private schools.
(d) They went to public schools.
- 9. At 16, Ricky wanted to make a record in order to**
(a) outsell Elvis Presley.
(b) grow his fortune.
(c) become more famous.
(d) impress his girlfriend.
- 10. Nelson’s first hit single was “I’m Walkin’,” originally recorded by**
(a) Jerry Lee Lewis.
(b) Fats Domino.
(c) Johnny Cash.
(d) Little Richard.
- 11. On his record label, Ricky officially became Rick with the release of his 1961 hit**
(a) “Garden Party.”
(b) “Runaway.”
(c) “Great Balls of Fire.”
(d) “Travelin’ Man.”

LIFESTYLES

SEVENTIES FLASHBACK

Revenge of the Spider Woman

by Randal C. Hill

Sigourney Weaver’s personal Yellow Brick Road seemed paved with gold. But was it? Let’s tick some boxes. Born into a wealthy show-business family. Check. Went to posh private schools and colleges. Check. Possessed a classically beautiful face and slender body. Check. Became an overnight film sensation. Check. Now, here’s the reality of a strenuous climb to stardom and respect. Born Susan Weaver in Manhattan in 1949, by age 12 she stood nearly six feet tall. “I was like a big spider moving around, knocking things over. Being that tall made me want to disappear.” In middle school, she adopted the moniker Sigourney from a minor character in F. Scott Fitzgerald’s “The Great Gatsby.” (“I felt too tall to have a short name like Susie or Sue.”) At Stanford, she earned a BA in English and was set to enter the PhD program, before deciding that the courses that lay ahead promised to be tedious. What to do? “I’d always done theater in extracurricular ways. . . . I applied to the Yale Drama School and got in.”

Elizabeth Weaver, a former Hitchcock actress, worried that her daughter wasn’t cut out for the acting world. (“Dear, they will eat you alive!”) A few Yale professors brought even more discouragement, Sigourney admits. “They told me I had no talent and that I’d never get anywhere.” Later, with a Yale drama MFA in hand, Weaver found agents often grumbling about her unusual height when she auditioned for various roles. This beefed up her resolve: “I thought, I’m never going to get it, so I’m going to go in and do what I want and not care at all about what they’re looking for.” That whimsical approach sometimes worked. Sigourney became an occasional understudy in a few stage plays, shot some TV ads, landed blink-or-you’ll-miss-her film roles. Then she met British movie director Ridley Scott, who was seeking an unknown actor with a commanding presence to star in “Alien,” his forthcoming sci-fi fright fest. The original role called for a man, but that would soon change. Sigourney explains, “The writers took a male part and made it into [Ellen] Ripley.” Scott’s wordsmiths assumed that theatergoers wouldn’t expect a woman to be the lone survivor from an ill-fated spaceship after a grotesque outer-space beast kills everyone on board but her. (Ellen eventually manages to slay the evil creature.) “I had doubts that I could play her as strongly as she needed to be played,” says Weaver. “But it was fun exploring that side of myself. Women don’t get



Sigourney Weaver with her parents on the set of Alien

to do that very often.” Dubbed the movie world’s first action heroine with “Alien,” Sigourney later professed, “I think I’ve been successful playing strong women because I’m vulnerable; I don’t try to pretend that I have the answers.” “Alien” became a 1979 blockbuster and threw open doors for the actor to shine in such future winners as “Ghostbusters,” “Gorillas in the Mist,” “Working Girl,” and “Avatar.” That once-gangly girl? Gone. Replaced by a Hollywood heavyweight. We’re glad she didn’t disappear. ♦ Copyright © Randal C. Hill. Used by permission. Randal writes at his Bandon, Oregon, home. He welcomes emailed questions and comments at wryterhill@msn.com.

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thoughts to ponder

by Tim Barber

Have you watched those short video clips about people missing a fatal collision by one step or a split second? A man pushing his bicycle across the railroad tracks, when a train whizzes by. Of course, we all want to yell, “What are you thinking?” That gate and those bells aren’t saying, “Ignore these and run across the tracks like crazy!” But think of all the views and likes you’ll get. Rather, think of those who love you, or of being in traction for six months.

Or how about the mom who snatches her child from the path of a car? Or the car that stops, and the gigantic 10-ton boulder rolls across the road just in front of it. We’ve all read the stories about people being bumped from their flight, only to learn that the plane didn’t make it.

You get delayed for a few moments by yet another red light and are tempted to do something totally out of character (thinking the best here), only to realize that you were spared some awful accident. “Thank you, God” comes to mind, when narrow escapes occur.

Certainly, not every delay means we just avoided something awful, and there are significant questions swirling around about bad outcomes, but events like these close calls certainly help us to be more patient, cautious, thoughtful, and grateful when unexpected things happen.

“The hurrier I go, the behinder I get” is an old quotation from Lewis Carroll, which certainly applies. A lot of these close calls happen (in my opinion) because people are in too big a hurry. So we can start a little earlier, be better prepared, or set more reasonable goals. Whatever it takes not to be on either side of a close call. ♦

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

LIFESTYLES

Life in 3D

by Donald Freeman

I discovered on YouTube a trio of sibling singers by the name of *Life in 3D*. I was so taken with them that for an hour and a half I was mesmerized by their exquisite harmonies. They sang classic old love songs, gospel, both traditional and contemporary, and modern pop and Broadway. I was moved to tears on several occasions.

Later I pondered, “Why was I so moved by the music?”

The obvious but partial answer was the talent. Never had I heard such harmonies.

But I was moved even by some of the love songs. My mind cascaded through connections I had not made before. So many of the classic love songs speak of having such a deep connection that they wish they would never have to part.

I thought of my connection to my own wife Nancy. We did everything together. Although we had to make a living, so parting was necessary often, I would have been very happy to have spent all my time with her, working at home. I can relate to the love songs that pine for constant presence.

Then I started putting something together that

was new. I have been learning (and experiencing in a deeper way) just how close God draws near to us through the Holy Spirit. I have been awakening to the startling promises that Scripture sets forth regarding the person and work of the Holy Spirit. Let me be foolish enough to try to summarize in a few paragraphs what scripture tells us.

Jesus called the Holy Spirit “another helper.” He will thus help us, just as Jesus helped his disciples for those three years of ministry and adventure. Jesus said he would not leave us as *orphans* because he would come to us through His Spirit.

Most Christians have thought at some time, “How great to have been one of the disciples and to be with Jesus 24/7.” Yet this is clearly what Jesus intends: that the Spirit will be to us what he was to the disciples.

Add to this a penetrating story that Jesus told, and an illuminating encounter. The story compared the kingdom of God (and our entrance into and partaking of it) to a man who found a treasure so valuable that he sold all that he had so he could get it.

Jesus encountered a Pharisee, a religious Jewish leader in Jerusalem, who invited him to dinner. As he was eating, a woman who had been a prostitute came into the room and washed and dried Jesus’s feet with her hair. Suffice it to say that the woman’s action is a living example of what such a person does. I’m talking about a person who has found

their greatest treasure.

Then we come full circle back to the Holy Spirit. Jesus said he was sending him as *another helper*, and then adds, “who will be with you forever.”

Do you see? The love songs always talk about finding a love that is so strong that it reorients one’s entire existence. It speaks of union with another person that transforms and fulfills.

Such human love is great; but in truth it could never be strong enough to transform deeply. Why? Because the one we love is not God. Neither are we.

But the love songs (without knowing it) are pointing us beyond themselves to a reality that really can be ours. It’s why they strike such responsive notes in our hearts. Our union with Jesus Christ through the agency and power of the Holy Spirit can actually stand up to such lofty expectations. He becomes our greatest treasure and reorients and sustains our lives in a way that provides strength for all challenges. We never have to leave him, and he will never leave us. Never. This is true life; Life in 3D!

Check out the group, Life in 3D, on YouTube. They are a rare talent.

As you enjoy their harmonies, remember the transcendent reality those old love songs point to. ♦

Copyright © Donald Freeman. Retired scientist Donald teaches Sunday school, among other things. Reach out to him at dkfreeman52@outlook.com.



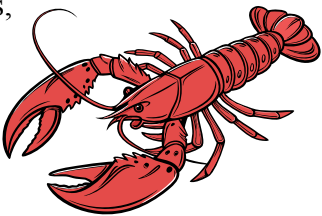
Marvelous Maine!

by Debra L. Karplus

Looking to explore a part of the U.S. you haven’t seen? Head to Maine, the Pine Tree State.

From Illinois, fly to Portland (PWM) with a connection in Chicago or Indianapolis, or take Amtrak’s *Lake Shore Limited* to Boston and connect to the *Downeaster* for Portland and other Maine destinations.

For a memorable road trip, the roughly 1,200-mile drive from Urbana to Portland takes about 21 hours and goes through 11 states. Along the way, stop at Buc-ee’s in Huber Heights, Ohio, then continue through the scenic Allegheny Mountains. A meaningful detour is the Flight 93 National Memorial in Stoystown, Pennsylvania, where interactive exhibits honor events



of 9/11. Peoria Charter Travel occasionally offers Maine motorcoach tours.

Portland, Maine’s largest coastal city, is an ideal home base. Stroll Commercial Street and Long Wharf, dine on fresh seafood at such local favorites as Lobster Shack or DiMillo’s Floating Restaurant, and visit Victoria Mansion, Portland Head Light, and Fort Williams Park.

Nearby, browse Len Libby Candies in Scarborough, then explore the charming towns of Kennebunk and Kennebunkport. Shop Dock Square, enjoy a smoothie at Fiafia, and ride a restored streetcar at the Seashore Trolley Museum. Guided tours pass the Bush family’s

summer home at Walker’s Point.

Continue north to the Maine Maritime Museum in Bath and the waterfront shops, restaurants, and railway village in Boothbay Harbor.

No trip to Maine is complete without lobster. Whether you order a classic lobster roll or a whole lobster, Taste of Maine Restaurant in Woolwich offers a memorable dining experience, complete with live piano music.

Before heading home, stop at the iconic L.L.Bean Flagship Store in Freeport, open 24 hours a day, and browse the many nearby outlet shops.

If you’re driving, consider adding the Boott Cotton Mills Museum in Lowell, Massachusetts, or the National Civil War Museum in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, to your itinerary.

With nearly 3,500 miles of coastline, charming seaside towns, and unforgettable seafood, Maine

is a destination well worth the journey. ♦

Debra Karplus is a Champaign freelance writer and retired occupational therapist: debrakarplus.blogspot.com.



Meat for the Family Table



I met George, my future husband, in college. He confessed that the only meals he skipped in the dining hall were those when we were served liver:

Jean Brady, a widow of a pastor and a church pianist, writes in Farmer City, Illinois. Email Jean at canadajeans35@yahoo.com.

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PEOPLE & PLACES

The Ryukyu Islands

Okinawa and Her Sisters

by Edward Lewis

The smiling skipper piloted the tour boat through the choppy deep, dark sea, where several big whales splashed, with their flippers flapping above the waves.

Watching whales swimming past your boat, enjoying longevity-enhancing Asian food, and shopping in huge, top-rated Asian luxury malls are just a few of the hundreds of amazing things you can enjoy in the Ryukyu Islands.

The Ryukyus are a string of islands stretching 700 miles between mainland Japan and Taiwan. The water is unusually clean and beautiful, with hues of blue and green. There are top-rated places to surf, swim, jungle hike, scuba, snorkel, get away, shop, dine, recreate, and rejuvenate—along with interesting WWII sites.

Where to go? What to do?

Each area has its own highlights. Try to stay near the places you enjoy, and you'll spend less time in transit and more time doing what you want.

Okinawa Island and the nearby islets have the best of almost everything: the quickest transportation, the most land area, the most interesting culture and history, and about the best natural beauty, seas, surfing, and scuba. Okinawa also has the best resorts, malls, and restaurants.

The one thing Okinawa lacks is isolation for a pristine getaway. More than a million people live on the island. Ishigaki and the adjacent Yaeyama islands in the far south of the Ryukyu archipelago are better for peaceful natural isolation and a remoter and warmer getaway.

Here are some recommendations, flexible for your preferences.

Whale watching. Go in the winter months and book a tour from Okinawa. It is the jumping humpbacks that bring out the most oohs and aahs.

Learning about karate. Okinawa is the homeland of karate. There are at least 400 karate schools and various street displays on Karate Day (October 25 in Naha).

Luxury shopping. The biggest luxury mall, AEON Mall, is filled with Asian and international boutiques, fine dining, and entertainment.

Surfing. The best is at Sunabe on the Miyagi Coast.

Modern culture, shopping, and museums. Check out the Kokusai area of Naha.

Luxury beach resorts: Visit Onna.

Forests, nature, beaches, mountain hiking, scuba, tourist attractions, and ethnic Okinawan villages. Visit the Kunigami area of northern Okinawa.

Some of the best beaches, nature, scuba, and sea wildlife: The Kerama islets are an hour from Okinawa by ferry.

WWII historical sites. You can tour the Japanese naval bunker headquarters and visit the big battle sites with a tour guide.

To get away to isolated islands and the best remote beaches, visit Ishigaki and other Yaeyama islands, about 300 miles south of Okinawa.

The world's fourteenth-largest aquarium. Churaumi Aquarium, which has Japan's

A group of boats in Kabira Bay in Ishigaki Island (Okinawa), Japan
photo by Roméo A.



Humpback whale watching off the coast of Okinawa photo by Abigail Lynn

largest water tank, is noted for preserving big and unusual sea creatures.

Your First Visit

The Kokusai area of Naha is the best for first-time visitors. You'll find convenient transportation and English language help. It is designed by the government for tourists to sightsee and learn about the island.

The island's main bus and tram station is within walking distance. The tram provides an elevated sightseeing tour of the urban landscape and takes you to the huge Provincial Museum and a famous castle.

Walking the famed shopping street brings you directly to the island's best market, Makishi Public Market. You can find authentic, delicious, freshly cooked meals at low prices.

Health tip: Okinawa is a place where life expectancy far surpasses the global average. Therefore, learn about the lifestyle and the food of the Okinawan people. Your body will thank you! For more about Okinawan medicinal cuisine, see "Okinawan Longevity, Cuisine, and Lifestyle" on page 11 of the September 2025 issue of the *PrimeLife Times*.

For more about things to do and the climate, see "The Beautiful Okinawan Islands" on page 1 of the July issue of *PrimeLife Times*.

Magazine publisher Condé Nast's popular tourism list assigns Okinawa as the world's number two tourist location. It's ideal for seniors because of its comfortable climate, safe and polite culture, traditional respect for seniors, and healthy food and lifestyle. ♦

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MONEY MATTERS

Donor-Advised Funds: A Smart Way to Give

by Darrold A. Kennedy

Although there are many ways to make charitable gifts, a donor-advised fund (DAF) offers multiple tax benefits and an efficient platform for ongoing giving. Once you open a DAF, you can contribute many types of assets, including cash, publicly traded stocks, bonds, CDs, or noncash items such as closely held business interests, art, or collectibles. Then decide how to invest the money, potentially following a strategy your DAF sponsor suggests. Next, choose which charities to support, how often to give, and how much. You can direct the money to any IRS-approved charitable organization.

Tax Deductions

The standard deduction was raised in 2025 and has now been indefinitely extended. **Taking the Standard Deduction.** A new provision in 2026 lets you deduct up to \$1,000 in charitable cash contributions (\$2,000 if filing jointly) made directly to qualified charitable organizations. However, contributions to



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DAFs are specifically excluded. You can still receive other DAF advantages, including tax-free growth and capital gains avoidance, just not a deduction for the DAF contribution itself. **Itemizing Deductions.** A new 2026 rule limits what’s deductible: only aggregate charitable contributions exceeding 0.5% of your adjusted gross income (AGI) are deductible. If you don’t give enough in a single year to clear that floor, a DAF’s “bunching” strategy might be effective. You combine several years of giving into one DAF contribution and distribute funds at your own pace, making the 0.5% AGI floor easier to clear. **In the 37% Federal Marginal Tax Bracket.**

Your itemized deduction tax benefit is now capped at 35%, applied after any other deduction-specific limits, such as the 0.5% AGI floor. Factor this into your charitable giving strategy with your tax professional.

Tax-free growth of earnings

Once you contribute an asset to a DAF, any earnings growth is not taxable to you, the DAF, or recipient charities. This means charitable assets can grow, potentially increasing what recipient organizations receive.

Avoidance of Capital Gains Taxes

When you donate appreciated stocks or other investments—or virtually any appreciated asset—to a DAF, you can avoid the capital gains taxes that would be due if you sold the asset and donated the proceeds. Charities benefit because they receive the full appreciated value rather than after-tax sale proceeds. And you can still take a tax deduction for your donation.

Tradeoffs to Consider

Although these tax benefits can make a DAF attractive, it’s worth understanding the tradeoffs. Once you contribute assets to a DAF, that gift is irrevocable. Your investment options are also limited to what’s available in the DAF program you’ve chosen, and DAFs can incur administrative costs in addition to fees charged on the underlying investments.

A Good Next Step

Because DAFs can have significant implications for your tax situation, consult with your tax professional *before* taking action. Your financial advisor can also help you evaluate DAF benefits and tradeoffs and compare sponsors because programs offer different features.

If a DAF is appropriate, it can be a meaningful and efficient way to support charitable giving for years to come. ♦ *This Edward Jones article was provided through your local Edward Jones Branch financial advisor, Darrold A. Kennedy, AAMS: Edward Jones, 1912 Round Barn Road, Suite E, Champaign, IL 61821; phone (217) 398-6562; toll-free number (800) 203-5679; fax (888) 819-2146.*



WORDSMITH'S WORKSHOP
by Rob Siedenburg

Fellow

When I worked in book publishing, one of my fellow editors often felled his fellows with felonious folly and foolish frippery. (In *The Name of the Rose*, someone is supposed to have written an entire book in English, in which every word began with the letter F.) In my first sentence, *fellow* means a comrade, associate, or peer.

Our word *fellow* comes from Old Norse *félagi*, meaning “partner” or “associate.” The word referred to a person who contributed property to a shared enterprise. Old English borrowed the word as *fēolaga*, and after centuries of development it became our modern *fellow*.

The word has acquired several meanings: It can refer to a companion or peer; it can also mean one member of a pair. If you still have only one glove, you could appropriately say you had lost its fellow.

The etymology of the English words *felloe* (and its synonym *felly*, the rim of a wheel, supported by spokes) is quite different and likely comes from the same root as an old Slavic word for sleigh runners, *póloz*, related to the root for our English word plough.

A more distinguished sense of *fellow* refers to membership in an elite organization. In Britain, a person elected to the Royal Geographical Society (a fellow) may use the initials FRGS after his or her name. In the United States, a surgeon who becomes a fellow of the American College of Surgeons may add FACS.

Earlier English sometimes used *fellow* for a person of low social standing or even a worthless individual. Those senses have largely disappeared. Today, a *fellow* may be a researcher or scholar supported by a fellowship and appointed to a funded position: Dr. Smith was appointed John Wilson Fellow for Fine Arts.

The word’s deeper ancestry reaches back through Old Norse *fē*, meaning cattle, property, or money, from the Proto-Indo-European root *peku-*. English *fee* comes from the same source. In many early economies, livestock represented wealth, so the words for cattle and money were often closely connected.

You might say the words *fee* and *fellow* were bedfellows. ♦

Copyright © Rob Siedenburg. When not writing these articles, Rob teaches a Bible study, gardens, and works with students who want to learn English.

Puzzle Answers

Crossword puzzle on A-6

AMBER	MOET	STY
ICEAXE	ONCE	OTRA
FUDGEFACTOR	POEM	
FRAUD	CHO	SCENES
YALE	CHIPLEADER	
THIS	IRL	COO
TETRA	ATM	CROW
BOXESOFCHOCOLATE		
OUTS	REX	ARABS
BRR	IKE	PSAS
BARMITZVAH	SASS	
JURIST	EAR	CACTI
ASAP	KISSTHECHEF	
MERE	ARTE	INTOIT
SSE	TESS	MASON

Jumble on A-8

Jumbles: DITCH PICKY HELMET CANCEL

Answers: Memorizing lines for the play would require a lot of effort. She'd need to — KEEP THAT IN MIND

Sudoku on A-8

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

Scrabble Grams on A-6

SCRABBLE GRAMS SOLUTION									
P3	A1	R1	O1	L1	E1	E1	RACK 1 = 59		
C3	O1	N1	S1	U1	L1	T1	RACK 2 = 62		
R1	O1	S1	I1	L1	Y4		RACK 3 = 9		
M3	O1	O1	N1	E1	Y4	E1	RACK 4 = 86		
PAR SCORE 140-150							TOTAL 216		
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The Adventures of Ozzie and Harriet Answer Key (see page A-10)

1: a	2: c	3: b	4: d	5: b	
6: c	7: a	8: d	9: d	10: b	11: d

PEOPLE & PLACES

Musically Speaking

“Everything Is Beautiful”
by Ray Stevens

by Roger L. Wisegarver

Before “Weird Al” Yankovic ever picked up an accordion, there was Ray Stevens. These two singer–comedians have generated decades of laughter with their novelty parody music.

Ray Stevens was born Harold Ray Ragsdale. He formed his first band, The Barons, at the age of 15; he was both singer and pianist. In 1957, at only 18, he launched his career with Capitol Records. He was marketed as a country artist, with the debut single “Silver Bracelet.” It was at this time that he adopted the stage name of Ray Stevens.

In 1961, Stevens moved to Mercury Records. He also wrote his first novelty hit song, with perhaps the longest title ever: “Jeremiah Peabody’s Polyunsaturated Quick-dissolving Fast-acting Pleasant-tasting Green and Purple Pills.” It makes you chuckle just to say it! Stevens was on a roll, and he began writing and releasing a string of other comedic songs. He also gained experience as a music producer, writing songs for country singers such as Dolly Parton and Skeeter Davis.

Occasionally, Stevens would release straightforward, standard songs. In 1970, he wrote “Everything Is Beautiful” as the theme song for the NBC comedy–variety show he was hosting. The song became number one in the United States, Canada, and Australia with over 3 million records sold. It won



Stevens a Grammy Award for Best Male Pop Vocal Performance. It also won singer Jake Hess a Grammy for Best Inspirational Performance. It has appeared on many of Stevens’s albums and has become a common pop standard in religious performances.

“Everything Is Beautiful” reminds us that we don’t always need to go “out there” to look for something to make us happy. Though events may infuriate us, disappoint us, or let us down, it might be that what we want is already in our grasp.

The song kicks off with children from Oak Hill Elementary School in Nashville, TN, singing “Jesus Loves the Little Children” a cappella. These kids included Ray’s two daughters, Suzi and Timi. Then, backed by full instrumentation, comes the chorus:

*Everything is beautiful, in its own way,
Like a starry summer night, or a snow-covered winter’s day.
Everybody’s beautiful, in their own way,
Under God’s heaven, the world’s gonna find a way.*

The song encourages a realignment of mistaken judgment and a calming respite, especially towards its conclusion:

*We shouldn’t care about the length of his hair or the color of his skin.
Don’t worry about what shows from without, but the love that lives within.
We’re gonna get it all together now and everything’s going to work out fine;
Just take a little time to look on the good side, my friend
And straighten it out in your mind.*

Stevens’s career continued strong after this, including his second number-one hit, “The Streak,” and his Grammy-award-winning arrangement of “Misty.” Another classic in Ray’s comedic oeuvre was “The Mississippi Squirrel Revival,” released in December 1984.

In 2020, Stevens re-recorded “Everything is Beautiful.” This fiftieth-anniversary recording includes a spoken prologue and epilogue, noting society’s progress since 1970 and our continued need for vigilance.

Ray Stevens, now age 86, has lived in Nashville since 1962. He has recorded 50 studio albums, 3 live albums, and 125 singles. A true master of his craft, he has for decades filled fans with family-friendly laughter. ♦

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



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