

ASIA Reader's

**MOST TRUSTED
&
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digest

Dealing with ROAD RAGE

PAGE 42

STRUCK BY LIGHTNING "I Survived"

PAGE 106

Advances in Knee Replacements

PAGE 56

Has Political Correctness Gone Mad?

PAGE 82

The Magic of a Four-Leaf Clover

PAGE 52



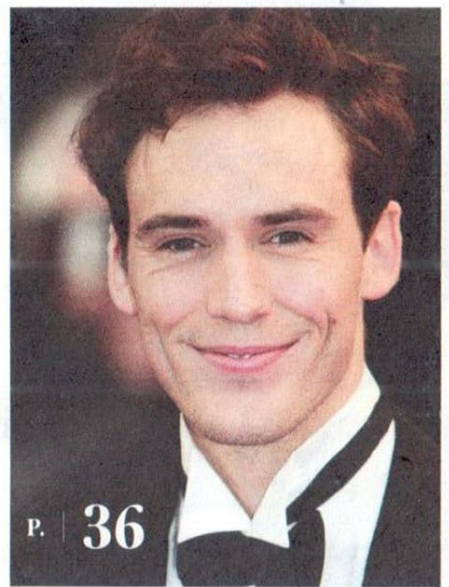
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Contents

AUGUST 2018

36 Entertainment
THERE'S STILL SO MUCH TO LEARN
Sam Claflin talks about family, fame and his new movie, *Journey's End*. EVA MACKEVIC



P. 36

42 Society
ROAD RAGE
Low-level frustration can quickly escalate into full-blown road rage. ELEANOR ROSE AND KATHY BUCHANAN

52 First Person
CHANCE ENCOUNTERS
Do four-leaf clovers bring you luck? TEVA HARRISON FROM *THE WALRUS*

P. 56

56 Health
NEW STRIDES FOR AGEING KNEES
Surgical advances and research are bringing new hope to arthritic knees. LISA FITTERMAN



62 Culture
CAN YOU SPOT FAKE NEWS?
Take a crash course on how to tell the difference between real and fake news. SITI ROHANI

Contents

AUGUST 2018



P. | 88 ▲



P. | 106

Drama in Real Life
66 PANIC ON THE MOUNTAIN
Two climbers fear for their lives when they come face-to-face with a bear. GREG BOSWELL

Photo Feature
74 DID SOMEONE SAY CHEESE?
Animals caught on film.

Humour
82 IT'S A MAD, MAD WORLD
When it comes to crazy laws, the planet has plenty of competition. DAVID THOMAS

Travel
88 HAPPINESS WITHOUT WORDS
Travelling around Japan without a word of the language. SILKE PFERSDORF FROM SÜDDEUTSCHE ZEITUNG

First Person
98 THE GIFT OF A GUITAR
The right guitar may not be the most expensive on the shelf. JEAN CHAVOT

Bonus Read
106 STRUCK BY LIGHTNING
There's a nine in ten chance you'll survive a lightning strike, but what are the lasting effects? CHARLOTTE HUFF FROM MOSAICSCIENCE.COM

THE DIGEST

- 18 Health
- 26 Travel
- 30 Home
- 32 Pets
- 119 RD Recommends

REGULARS

- 6 Letters
- 10 My Story
- 14 Kindness of Strangers
- 16 Smart Animals
- 65 Quotable Quotes
- 102 Look Twice
- 124 Trivia, Puzzles & Word Power

CONTESTS

- 7 Caption and Letter Competition
- 8 Submit Your Jokes and Stories

HUMOUR

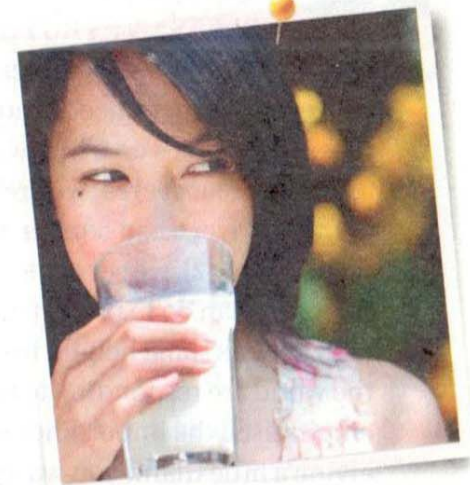
- 50 Life's Like That
- 80 Laughter, the Best Medicine
- 96 Day's Work



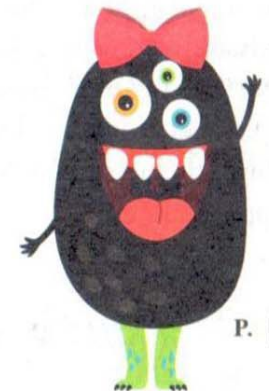
SEE PAGE 8



P. | 32 ▲



P. | 18 ▲



P. | 80 ▲

PHOTOS: GETTY IMAGES

Letters

READERS' COMMENTS AND OPINIONS

Taking the Plunge

One of the reasons I love *Reader's Digest* is because you pick the best stories, each one conveying a positive message. 'Ocean Challenge' (My Story, June) is no exception. Denise Strong's determination to swim one kilometre in the ocean at the age of 63 is really impressive. At times, we all long to perform something great but diffidence kills our spirit to achieve. After reading Denise's story, at age 73, I too have found the confidence to take up some challenging tasks.

THARCIUS S FERNANDO



Learning the Art of Conversation

'Can We Talk?' by Lisa Fields (Art of Living, June) immediately took me back to 1962 when I was a 24-year-old rookie teacher. I was given philately (stamp collecting) as a subject with which to captivate a vertical grouping of students, ranging from 12 to 18 years, who refused to choose any of the offered recreational subjects.

None of them collected stamps. Neither did I. At our first meeting I changed the topic to 'Conversation with people you don't know'. Starting the discussions with basics, such as sport, music, dance, books, camping – subjects that might interest a stranger – the class not only became hugely popular but helped the shy, satisfied the drama queens, and built bridges between the different grades.

CAROL MORGAN

LET US KNOW If you are moved – or provoked – by any item in the magazine, share your thoughts. See page 8 for how to join the discussion.

Faking It

I was amazed and shocked to read that we create false memories for ourselves ('False Memories', June). My mother died when I was two years old and I have always believed my memories of her – not many – to be real. I had what I thought was a clear and genuine memory of her and I playing with our dog in the garden.

Reading this article has made me realise that in all likelihood my 'memory' came from a particular photo of us and from hearing my aunts and grandmother tell me how much she enjoyed playing with me in this way. While this is a sad realisation, having those 'memories' was a special connection and it no doubt helped me deal with the grieving process as I got older.

AMANDA COLE

WIN A PILOT CAPLESS BALLPOINT PEN

The best letter published each month will win a Pilot Capless ballpoint pen bearing the Reader's Digest logo and an animal-print inspired barrel. From the Pilot MR Metropolitan collection crafted in Japan, this timeless ballpoint pen features stylish silver and bronze accents and is a joy to write with. Congratulations to this month's winner, Carol Morgan.



Prickly Subject

We asked you to think up a funny caption for this photo.

"I may be stand-offish, but YOU are decidedly prickly!" **AYESHA AZEEM**

Don't lift your leg on this one, mate! **ZETA HOPE**

"One step closer, mate, and you're cactus!" **KEITH HARKIN**

Talk about barking up the wrong tree. **HOLLY CLAEYS**

Continue your woofs and I will make you go *poofffff*. **VICTOR YEONG**

Be careful... curiosity killed the cat. **MAUREEN BUCKLEY**

Congratulations to this month's winner, Keith Harkin.



CAPTION CONTEST

Come up with the funniest caption for the above photo and you could win \$100. To enter, email rdaeditor@readersdigest.com or see details on page 8.

Cold Comfort

Life feels like a movie, until it becomes all too real in one frightening moment

BY LEONARD SAWCZUK WALKER



Leonard Sawczuk Walker is a 72-year-old retired management consultant. He lives with his wife Mira and has three children and five grandchildren. He enjoys dancing, singing and reading, and is currently working on a detailed novel about his life.

THERE ARE THOSE WHO SAY another 'cold war' is coming. Others believe it has already begun. Those of us who experienced the previous one would agree that no one in their right mind would want another.

It touched me late in September 1972, when I was 27 years old. I had spent a glorious month in Poland, visiting my father's family, and was at the train station in Warsaw, waiting to start my journey to Scotland to visit my mother's relatives. At the station was Mira, a 20-year-old girl I had met two weeks earlier at a family wedding.

The custom at Polish weddings is that each male guest hands the bride a flower, usually a red or yellow rose, wrapped in cellophane and tied in ribbons. When it came to my turn, I noticed that the bride had so many flowers that I turned to her bridesmaid, Mira, and gave her my red rose. She gave me a puzzled look, then smiled. My heart melted. It was love at first sight for me.

At the reception, I persuaded Mira to dance with me and for a brief moment I sat beside her. I proposed to

her there and then; with the help of my cousin who helped me translate. Mira was taken aback. "I've just met you," she said. "I know nothing about you. Who do you think you are?"

She wasn't easy to win over but the next day, with her parents and three sisters present, I met her at her home. We spent every day for the next two weeks together. Mira bought a pocket Polish/English dictionary - it was a fun time for both of us.

Back at the station, the scene resembled one from a movie. Boy on a train, leaning out of a window, girl looking up at him from the platform. He tells her that he loves her and that he'll come back for her. Before meeting Mira, I had planned to

spend a month in Scotland then fly home to Sydney. Now, I promised to return to Poland on my way through.

I eventually made my way to my compartment, where I met a young French lady and an elderly couple. We greeted each other with a nod and realised that we could communicate in limited English.

The Cold War began in 1945, at the end of World War II, when Germany was divided in two. Berlin, deep in East Germany, was also split in two when the Soviet-controlled authorities built the infamous Berlin Wall to keep their subjects in and everyone else out.

Our journey into East Germany had largely been uneventful, until we pulled into the famous Friedenstrasse Station in East Berlin.

The ticket inspector informed the elderly couple that they were in the wrong carriage. I offered to help them with their luggage and accompany them to the correct carriage.

As I was returning to my own carriage, I heard angry and aggressive shouting and the shrill blowing of whistles. German Shepherds straining at their leashes were barking and tearing along the platform with dozens of soldiers armed with automatic weapons. A Doberman was snarling at me and suddenly an officer appeared and ordered me to get into the adjacent carriage. I didn't speak German but

PHOTO: GETTY IMAGES

Rickshaw Kindness

Simple generosity can mean the world

BY JENNIFER CARDOZA

Jennifer Cardoza lives in Tamil Nadu, India. She is interested in writing, painting, singing and watching movies. After 15 years working as a teacher, she is close to retirement.

IT WAS A SUNNY APRIL MORNING last year when I was running late for work. To make matters worse, the driver of the autorickshaw who regularly takes me to the bus stop had rung to tell me he was unavailable that day.

I left my apartment carrying two bags, a handbag and a lunch bag, and boarded an autorickshaw passing nearby. As I walked to the bus stop, I realised I had only my lunch bag – I had left my handbag, containing two ATM cards, a new mobile phone and a sizeable amount of cash, in the autorickshaw!

It took me a few seconds to calm down. Here I was – without so much as a single cent to pay for my bus fare, no mobile to call for help and not a Public Call Office in sight. My work phone number was stored in my mobile so I couldn't even ring to tell them about my predicament. To add to my woes, I did not have the key to my apartment either. I felt as though I was blindfolded in the middle of a forest.

My mind was racing but I slowly began to regain my composure.

I decided I would go home and borrow my neighbour's phone to call my mobile. As I approached



the nearest autorickshaw, the driver, sensing my panic, offered his phone.

Appreciative of his generosity, I called my mobile and it rang and rang. Nobody answered. We tried a few more times without any luck. Then I remembered my brother's number and called him.

My brother suggested I go to his office and get some money and to report the incident to the police so my mobile could be traced. On the way to my brother's office, the driver got a call from my number. A lady informed me that the autorickshaw driver who had left me at the bus stop had my bag and wanted to return it to me. She told me exactly where he was waiting and it was not far away. To my relief I got my bag back with all its contents intact.

The driver apologised, saying that he

had to call on the help of this lady to use my mobile to return the call.

Moved by the honesty of this man, I offered him some cash as a token of appreciation but he waved his hand and with a smile said, "No, Madam. Travel safely, that is enough for me."

The other driver took me back to the bus stop and refused my offer of more than the actual fare.

This all happened within the short span of an hour and I became quite emotional. I had just been helped by two complete strangers who showed compassion. It also dawned on me that I did not even know their names. I returned to normalcy with the hope of meeting them again some day.

Share your story about a small act of kindness that made a huge impact. Turn to page 8 for details on how to contribute and earn cash.

ILLUSTRATION: GETTY IMAGES

THE DIGEST

5 'Harmless' Habits That Could Give You Osteoporosis

You know you need calcium for healthy bones. But is your lifestyle reducing its proper absorption?

BY TINA DONVITO

THE INCIDENCE OF OSTEOPOROSIS in the Asia-Pacific region is expected to surge in the coming decades. In fact, it is expected that by 2050 more than half of the world's hip fractures will occur in Asia. Osteoporosis is a bone disease that occurs when you lose bone mass and bone quality - and leads to an increased risk of broken bones. Globally, an osteoporosis fracture occurs every three seconds. These fractures impact one in five men aged over 50 years, and one in two women. But osteoporosis is not



inevitable. There are habits you can change now to reduce your risk.

1 TOO MUCH TIME ON THE COUCH

A sedentary lifestyle can inadvertently increase your chances of osteoporosis. "Bone is a living tissue and responds to load and stress placed upon it,"

says Greg Lyubomirsky, CEO of Osteoporosis Australia.

"For bone, the more you use it, the more it will adapt and strengthen." Studies in astronauts and people with prolonged bed rest have proved this. The weightlessness

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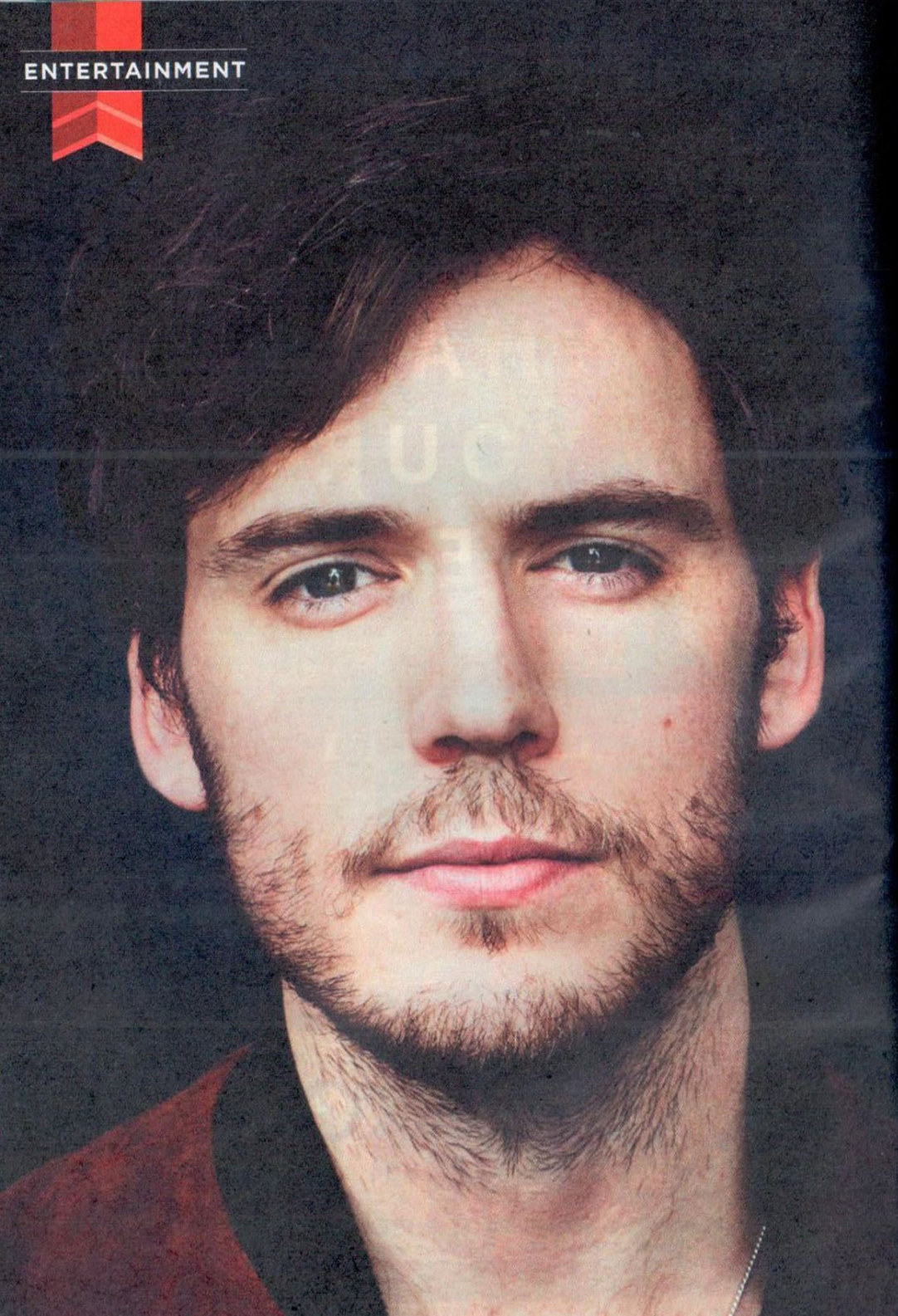
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THERE'S STILL SO MUCH TO LEARN

British actor Sam Claflin opens up to Eva Mackevic about the importance of family, fear of the unknown and his relationship with fame

Sam flashes a big, warm smile across the room when I arrive at London's The Langham Hotel, jumping up from the sofa to greet me like we're old friends. I thank him for taking the time to meet me, to which he politely responds, "Thank you for... being here?" He giggles at his own awkward response. "Or... *wanting* to do this!"

This young, charismatic actor drew the attention of cinemagoers

across the world when he was cast in *Pirates of the Caribbean: On Stranger Tides* in 2011. He subsequently appeared in a slew of blockbusters, such as *The Hunger Games* and *Snow White and the Huntsman*, followed by his breakthrough role as the quadriplegic young man, Will Traynor, in *Me Before You*.

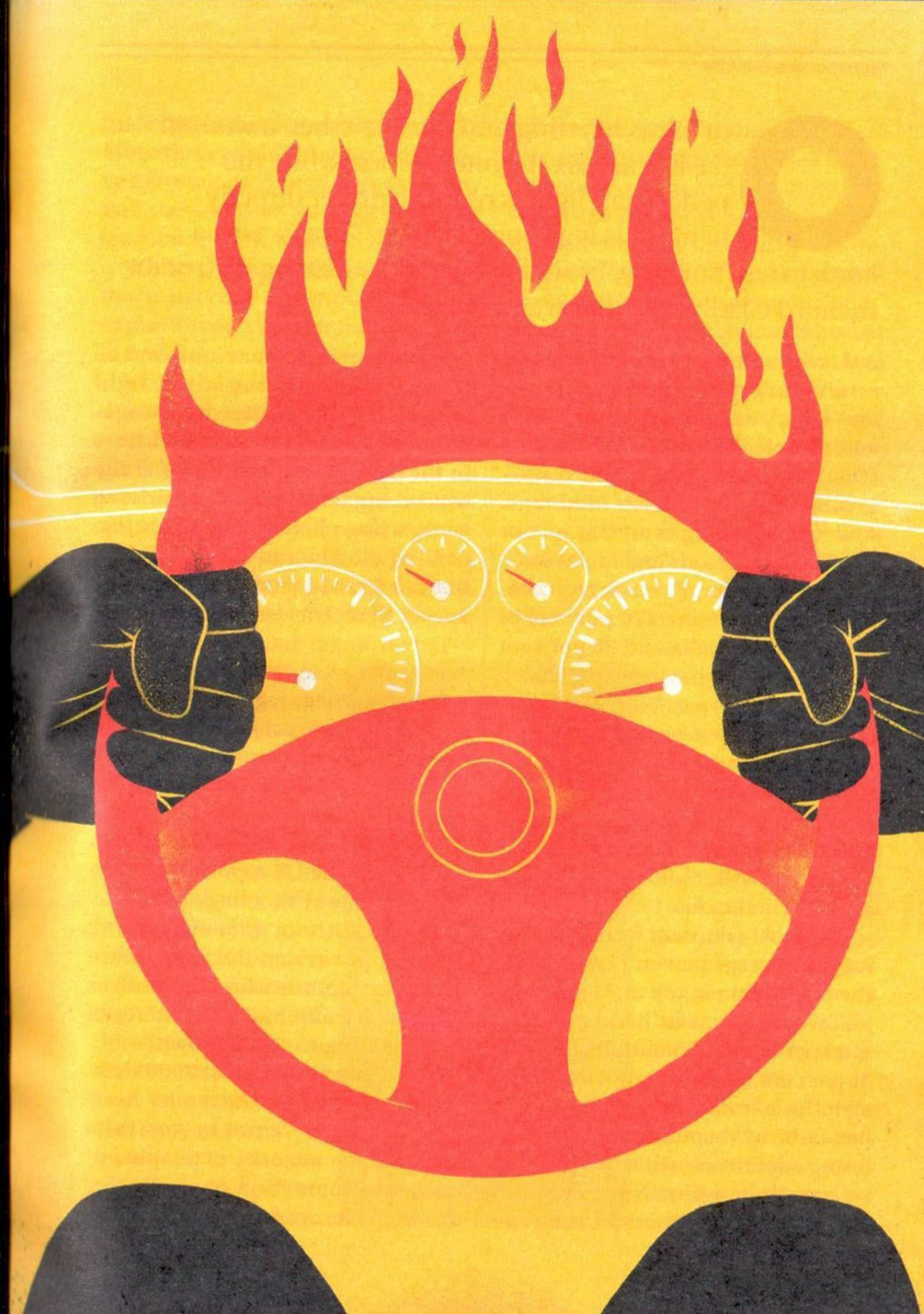
"People assume that I live my life trying to be beautiful all the time, whereas actually I live a very

Everyone has experienced it
but so little has been done about ...

ROAD RAGE

BY ELEANOR ROSE AND KATHY BUCHANAN

ILLUSTRATIONS BY SEBASTIAN THIBAUT



What's the relationship between fortune and a four-leaf clover?

BY TEVA HARRISON FROM *THE WALRUS*

Chance ENCOUNTERS

WHEN I WAS IN GRADE 3 we had a scavenger hunt at school. We gathered up chalk, pencils, stones and poorly hidden trinkets, rapidly filling our checklists. It was a very close race. I was out of breath when I reached the clover patch in search of the last, most hard-to-find item: a four-leaf clover.

I was pretty sure I was going to win. I had a trump card. The thing is, I have been able to find four-leaf clovers for as long as I can remember. I just see them.

I spent my childhood collecting and pressing four-leaf clovers into books. I started with big leather-bound books: Joyce's *Ulysses*,

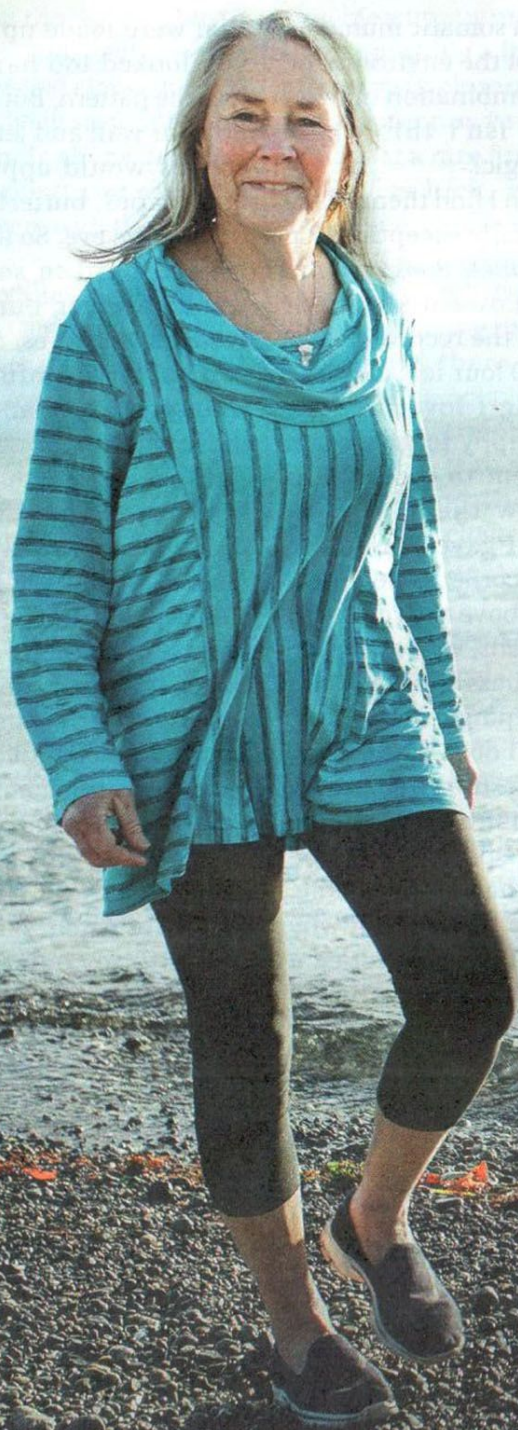
the complete works of Shakespeare, my great-grandmother's copy of *Les Misérables*. I usually hid only one or two clovers in each book – I wanted them to be a happy surprise, not an expectation. When I ran out of romantically bound volumes, I began to slip my treasures into anything I could find: well-thumbed speculative fiction paperbacks, cookbooks. The same is true in my house today. Shake a book and a papery treasure just might fall into your hand.

A few years ago, while travelling in Canada, my husband and I pulled off the road for a picnic. The ground was thick with clover. Some shoots had four, five or even six leaves.



PHOTO: MASTERFILE

Emily
Patenaude
now walks
without pain



New Strides for Ageing Knees

Surgical advances and research are bringing hope to arthritic knees

BY LISA FITTERMAN

At first, Emily Patenaude didn't notice the pain. When she woke from the general anaesthesia after undergoing a knee replacement she was too high and happy. The pain and tenderness came a few days later, as she weaned herself off the prescribed opiates. She knew it would be bad. Her surgeon and his team had explained this to her during the months leading up to the operation. It would involve cutting an incision into her left leg, removing her old, arthritic knee and replacing it with a metal and plastic version.

It all began 21 years earlier on a learner's ski slope. An awkward turn caused a fracture that spiralled up from her ankle to her kneecap. Although the injury healed, the initial trauma caused the cartilage in her knee to break down; eventually the

CAN YOU SPOT Fake News?

With all the talk about fake news online, it can be hard to work out what's actually real news. Here's a crash course on how to tell fact from fiction **BY SITI ROHANI**

Fake news is everywhere – you see it on your social media feeds and group chats. There's always someone sharing unverified news on child kidnappings, stories of political unrest and the latest cancer scares from often dubious sources. It was even named 2017's word of the year by Collins Dictionary, which describes fake news

PHOTO: GETTY IMAGES



DRAMA IN REAL LIFE

PANIC on the Mountain

On a snowy Canadian mountain, two British men faced a bear - and their own fear

BY GREG BOSWELL FROM GREGBOSWELL.CO.UK



DID SOMEONE SAY *Cheese?*

No one knows what animals are thinking...
but it's fun to speculate

PHOTO: MELISSA AND JACKSON BRANDTS / GETTY IMAGES

5... 4... 3... 2... NOW!

An energetic squirrel
becomes the star of a
couple's timed selfie.



IT'S A *MAD,* *MAD* WORLD!

What's the craziest law on the planet?
There's plenty of competition

BY DAVID THOMAS

PEOPLE LOVE TO HEAR ABOUT the idiotic legislation that their country and others possess. But when looking further into these supposed laws, it soon becomes clear that many don't really exist at all, or have long since been repealed, or are phrased in a way that at first seems crazy but, in fact, makes sense.

There is, of course, plenty of absurd legislation that turns out to

be genuinely absurd. So it's worth sorting out the genuine crazy laws from the ones that are crazy but aren't real laws ... and from those that are real laws but which turn out not to be crazy.

So first up is the widely held notion that it is illegal in France to name a pig Napoleon. It's certainly true that there was a French law from 1881 that forbade offensive mockery of

ILLUSTRATIONS: STEPHEN COLLINS



the head of state during his time in office. But the law was only passed 60 years after the end of Emperor Napoleon's reign – and 11 years after his nephew Napoleon III was deposed – so it could never have applied to pigs called Napoleon while a Napoleon ruled.

In any case, the law was repealed in July 2013 after the European Court of Human Rights ruled that a protester's

rights had been abused in 2008 when he was fined \$45 for “offensive mockery” of then-President Nicolas Sarkozy by calling him “a jerk”.

On the other hand, it really is legal in France to marry a dead person, provided that there is evidence that the deceased wished to marry the surviving partner.

The law making this possible was introduced in 1959 after President

HAPPINESS

WITHOUT

WORDS

Can you travel around Japan without speaking Japanese?

BY
SILKE
PFERSDORF

FROM
SÜDDEUTSCHE
ZEITUNG

Crowds on the street at sunset in the Shinjuku district

