

* Reader's Digest

DECEMBER 2018/JANUARY 2019

The
Church
That
Wouldn't
Burn

By **BILL HANGLEY JR.**

BELIEVE *IN*

MIRACLES

REAL-LIFE STORIES OF HOPE

Secrets of
**HOLIDAY
SHOPPING**

An **RD ORIGINAL**

A 4-Year-Old
Hunger Activist

By **CLAIRE NOWAK**

Unfreeze
Your Brain

From the book
ELASTIC

The Man Who
Rigged the
Lottery

From **THE NEW YORK
TIMES MAGAZINE**

32 Brilliant
Made-Up
Words

By **BILL BOULDIN**





YOU CAN'T CHOOSE YOUR BARISTA

But you can choose to
switch to GEICO.

GEICO®

GEICO.COM 1-800-947-AUTO LOCAL OFFICE

AUTO

CYCLE

HOME

RENTERS

BOAT

RV

UMBRELLA

Some discounts, coverages, payment plans and features are not available in all states, in all GEICO companies, or in all situations. Boat and PWC coverages are underwritten by GEICO Marine Insurance Company. Homeowners, renters and condo coverages are written through non-affiliated insurance companies and are secured through the GEICO Insurance Agency, Inc. Motorcycle and ATV coverages are underwritten by GEICO Indemnity Company. The GEICO Personal Umbrella Policy is provided by Government Employees Insurance Company and is available to qualified Government Employees Insurance Company and GEICO General Insurance Company policyholders and other eligible persons. GEICO is a registered service mark of Government Employees Insurance Company, Washington, D.C. 20076; a Berkshire Hathaway Inc. subsidiary. © 2018 GEICO

CONTENTS

Features

58

COVER STORY
**REAL-LIFE
MIRACLES**

This holiday season, let these eight stories stir a sense of wonder and faith.

74

DEPARTMENT OF WIT
**The Best Made-Up
Words Ever**

Do you suffer from “carcolepsy”? Are you an “afterclapper”? The dictionary won’t tell you, but we will.

BY BILL BOULDIN FROM THE
DEL RIO NEWS-HERALD

80

FIRST PERSON
**The Magic Trick That
Changed My Life**

After perfecting it for six years, a magician tries out his big stunt.

BY NATE STANIFORTH
FROM THE BOOK
HERE IS REAL MAGIC

88

HEALTH & MEDICINE
**The Lifesaver on Dad’s
Computer Screen**

A daughter caring for her father finds help—and peace of mind—from a virtual companion.

BY LAUREN SMILEY
FROM *WIRED*

98

MILITARY LIFE
You Own Every Bullet

In the midst of a tense ambush in Iraq, a soldier recalls his father’s valuable lesson.

BY MATT SUSKO
FROM *REDDIT.COM*

104

INSPIRATION
**Luck and the
Four-Leaf Clover**

One woman’s knack for finding good fortune.

BY TEVA HARRISON FROM
THE WALRUS

108

TRUE CRIME
**The Man Who
Rigged the Lottery**

He got hold of the winning numbers—five times. But how?

BY REID FORGRAVE
FROM THE *NEW YORK TIMES*
MAGAZINE

ON THE COVER:
PHOTOGRAPH BY YASU+JUNKO
ORNAMENT COURTESY SWAROVSKI



Departments

- 6 Dear Reader
- 8 Letters

EVERYDAY HEROES

- 10 **The Caped Crusader**
BY CLAIRE NOWAK
- 14 **Dog's Best Friend**
BY ANDY SIMMONS

I WON!

- 18 **The Chicken Wing Super Bowl**

QUOTABLE QUOTES

- 22 **Paul Rudd, Gisele Bündchen, Bruce Springsteen**

HOW TO

- 25 **Maintain Your Purpose in Life**
BY DAVID G. ALLAN
FROM CNN.COM



Super helper Austin Perine with his dad, TJ Perine

FROM TOP: SERGE BLOCH, CARY NORTON



SWEET RAISINS

CRUNCHY BRAN FLAKES

PLOT TWIST
WE ADDED BANANA SLICES



**NEWS FROM THE
WORLD OF MEDICINE**

32 **Fasting,
Glaucoma, and
Spirituality**

LIFE WELL LIVED

36 **The Gift of a Great
Neighbor**

BY NICOLE BURRELL

49



YOUR TRUE STORIES

39 **Chance Meetings
and Christmas
Memories**

13 THINGS

40 **Holiday Money
Savers That
Work All Year**

**I AM THE FOOD
ON YOUR PLATE**

45 **Potatoes**
BY KATE LOWENSTEIN
AND DANIEL GRITZER

WE FOUND A FIX

49 **Airport Security
and More**

**The Genius
Section**

118 **Unfreeze Your
Brain**
BY LEONARD MLODINOW
FROM THE BOOK
ELASTIC

122 **Brain Games**
125 **Word Power**
128 **Photo Finish**



Humor

20
Life in These
United States

52
Laughter, the Best
Medicine

73
Laugh Lines

79
Humor in Uniform

96
All in a Day's Work

Reader's Digest (ISSN 0034-0375) (USPS 865-820), (CPM Agreement# 40031457), Vol. 192, No. 1146, December 2018/January 2019. © 2018. Published monthly, except bimonthly in July/August and December/January (subject to change without notice), by Trusted Media Brands, Inc., 44 South Broadway, White Plains, New York 10601. Periodicals postage paid at White Plains, New York, and at additional mailing offices. **POSTMASTER:** Send address changes to *Reader's Digest*, PO Box 6095, Harlan, Iowa 51593-1595. Send undeliverable Canadian addresses to ca.postal.affairs@rd.com. All rights reserved. Unauthorized reproduction, in any manner, is prohibited. *Reader's Digest* and *The Digest* are registered trademarks of Trusted Media Brands, Inc. Marca Registrada. Printed in U.S.A. **SUBSCRIBERS:** You may cancel your subscription at any time and receive a refund for copies not previously addressed. Your subscription will expire with the issue identified above your name on the address label. If the Post Office alerts us that your magazine is undeliverable, we have no further obligation unless we receive a corrected address within one year. A special *Reader's Digest* Large Print with selected articles from *Reader's Digest* is published by Trusted Media Brands, Inc. For details, write: *Reader's Digest* Large Print, PO Box 6097, Harlan, Iowa 51593-1597. **CONSUMER INFORMATION:** *Reader's Digest* may share information about you with third parties for the purpose of offering products and services that may interest you. If you would rather not receive such offers via postal mail, please write to *Reader's Digest* Customer Mailing List, PO Box 3123, Harlan, Iowa 51593-0189. You can also visit www.tmbi.com/preference-center to manage your preferences and opt out of receiving such offers via e-mail. Please see our Privacy Policy at www.tmbi.com/privacy-policy.

FROM LEFT: MATTHEW COHEN. SHUTTERSTOCK (3)



Leading Bladder Leak Pad

“A bladder leak pad that’s
a lot less bulky, and drier too.*
Need I say more?”



Always Discreet is made differently.
The super absorbent core turns liquid to gel,
for drier protection that’s a lot less bulky.*

Always Discreet. For bladder leaks.



*Always Discreet 4, 5, and 6 drop pads vs. the equivalent Leading Brand pads.



DEAR READER

The Miracle of Memory

AS I HANG the first ornament, I'm singing along with Eartha Kitt. I know I look like a fool in my Santa hat, belting out "Santa Baby," but it's the Sunday before Christmas, tree-dressing day.

I've chosen the towering Bavarian stick-skier in a red quilted jacket that my dad loved. "Not right in front, it's dorky," Rachel protests. She is grown, a working nurse, but revisiting the "OMG, Dad!" role of youth.



When I was a kid, my mother had the Christmas-tree bug, and I've taken the same silly joy in the ritual. I remember her holiday jazz albums (Jimmy Smith, Stan Getz) dropping from the stack onto the turntable as my two older brothers and I danced, quibbled, and dressed the tree.

So I string the lights and build the fire, then let each ornament trigger smack talk and memories. The ugly glass owl? A memorial to Neil's obsessive hunting for owl pellets when he was a kid. "I was a freaking Steve Irwin," he deadpans. The handmade sleeping kitty with a crack across it? My sweet mother-in-law, Ruth, glazed that in honor of our first cat. Only the ornament remains, glued and proud.

Each object fills me with emotions I can't otherwise always tap. Our dear friends the Nashes sent the jaunty mini cowboy boot after they'd moved away from us to Texas. The tiny San Francisco Giants baseball in glass brings back the incredible day in 2010 when we all finally celebrated, for real.

Bent, awkward, or old ornaments join the pretty bulbs up front. We sing along with Luther Vandross—"Have Yourself a Merry Little Christmas"—and I feel all the people and places life has lucked me with.

Bruce Kelley,
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

Write to me at
letters@rd.com.



This is Denali, the tallest peak in North America.
It's been waiting 56 million years.
Consider this your invitation.



Order your **FREE** Alaska Vacation Planner today
at TravelAlaska.com/rd

— TRAVEL —
ALASKA
It's waiting, for you.



Old-Time Doctor Remedies That Work

I can't treat eyestrain by placing cucumber slices on my eyelids because I'm allergic to cucumbers. I tried to achieve similar results by closing my eyes for 15 minutes, but I failed since I couldn't resist reading the rest of your fine magazine. However, I still wonder whether the secret to avoiding eyestrain is simply to close your eyes once in a while.

—MARKELL RAPHAELSON WEST *Laurel, Maryland*

You encouraged people to use aloe vera for burns, but you failed to mention that bottled aloe vera products may actually contain very little aloe vera. The most reliable source is the real plant. Everyone should have one on their windowsill.

—T.B.
via e-mail

How to Conquer Panic Attacks

I had panic attacks for 28 years, took every prescription drug in the book, meditated, exercised, etc. Three years ago, I went on a vegan diet but continued to eat seafood because my nutritionist advised against quitting meat cold turkey. In four months, my

panic attacks were gone. I have not had one since.

—JANY SABINS
Maplewood, New Jersey

Learn to Not Fall

I would add: Do not wear backless shoes. Twice, more than 30 years apart, I had falls from wearing backless shoes. The last one led to a broken arm—and the inability to do some ordinary things for myself. There is also a psychological component to a serious fall.

—ALICE MARCUS
SOLOVY Highland Park, Illinois

Sympathy for My Bully

I was bullied from sixth to eighth grade. When I complained to our vice principal, she told me she didn't believe the young man would do such things. I recently learned that, after being in and out of jail, my bully passed away of an overdose at 30 years old. I can't help but wonder, What if my report had been respected? Might it