

ARTFULLY CURATED ARTICLES

BOOMERMAGAZINE.COM

# BOOMER

SPRING 2021

## From the Heart

READER CONTRIBUTIONS & OTHER ESSAYS

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*Randy Fitzgerald, Retired or Dotty*

*Mike Spriegel, The Greatest*

*Michele Minott, Rockaway Days*

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## ON THE COVER

"It is only with the heart that  
one can see rightly," the  
fox told the Little Prince, in  
the charming 1943 book by  
Antoine de Saint-Exupéry.

This issue of **BOOMER** mag-  
azine features essays from  
the heart, highlighting insights  
from our readers and other writers. May your heart and mind  
discover knowledge and comfort within these digital pages.



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# BOOMER Expands in the Digital World

By Annie Tobey

New ways to meet reader needs



If I suddenly started seeing the world accelerate – birds, people, cars, all moving faster, children growing up as we watched – I wouldn’t necessarily be surprised. After all, it seems that the older we get, the more time speeds up, and the more things change.

On the other hand, this past year has accelerated changes for people of all ages. Children and teachers transitioned to virtual learning and back. Adults lost jobs and businesses closed. Many fell ill with COVID-19, ending up in the hospital or suffering long-term effects. As I write this, more than 554,000 people have died – and many more have lost these loved ones.

In comparison, BOOMER’s need to transition from print to digital seems minor. The change continues a downward trend in the media industry writ large, which the pandemic simply accelerated. Advertisers have tightened ad spending and shifted it to social media and cheaper digital options. They’ve walked away from committing those dollars to ads in newspapers and lifestyle magazines, leaving these businesses with fewer resources.

But we are not letting that stop us!

## What have we here?

### The BOOMER magazine digital expansion

In September 2020, we became digital only. Although we regret no longer being able to provide a print magazine for our loyal readers, we’ve worked hard to provide digital options instead. The goal of our BOOMER magazine digital expansion is to meet the needs of our long-time readers while reaching out to an even larger audience!

To that end, we’ve expanded to include regular new content, including:

### From Our Readers

When BOOMER was in print, room for reader submissions was tight. With digital, we have much more space to include firsthand anecdotes and essays! This issue highlights some of our best recent submissions, plus firsthand essays from Greg Schwem and BOOMER favorite Randy Fitzgerald.

Do you have a tale to tell or to share? Check out our [writers’ guidelines](#) then send us your gem!

### New content weekly

Every weekday, you’ll find fresh articles, puzzles, and recipes:

- [Boggle puzzles](#) (Mondays)
- [Brother Rock comic strips](#) (Mondays)
- [Ask Amy advice columns](#) (Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays)
- [Rick Steves’ Europe travel stories](#) (Tuesdays)
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- [My Pet World animal wisdom from Cathy M. Rosenthal](#) (Thursdays)
- [Useful, everyday health articles](#) (Fridays)
- Occasional articles from Variety entertainment news, nostalgia, [humor columnist Greg Schwem](#), regional destinations and other travel, book and product reviews, and more!

### Newsletters

We’ve also expanded our selection of newsletters with [easy sign-up](#). Choose from:

- Top BOOMER stories (weekly)
- What’s Booming for Richmond region and virtual events (weekly)
- Book reviews (monthly)
- Fun & games
- Nostalgia
- Travel articles
- Ask Amy

Plus we have expanded our [Cartoon Caption Contest](#), providing a new cartoon each month and keeping voting on the previous cartoon open for an entire month.

### Digital editions

Quarterly [digital BOOMERs](#) help re-create a magazine-like feel. Besides reading on your desktop or laptop computer, you can open each issue on a tablet or smartphone.

Nothing beats print, but the digital edition does have advantages! Click the titles in the *Table of Contents* to go directly to an article. Click on links within articles to go directly to web pages. The *Return to Contents* button at the end of each article take you directly back to the *Table of Contents*. Or simply scroll through at a leisurely pace – like a magazine of yore.

### Social media

To keep up with our new content, you can bookmark BOOMER and visit our website regularly. You can also follow us on [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#), where we post new content and engage with readers.

Change is inevitable. We hope our modifications can provide readers with plenty of enjoyable, inspiring, and useful content!

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# The Greatest

By Michael P. Spiegel  
My Yankee Doodle Daddy



Commander William Triplett Spiegel, USNR, would have been 104 years old this coming Independence Day, 2021 – born on July 4, 1917, a mere 141 years to the day after the United States appeared on the planet.



He was a true patriot: A war hero who flew off Guadalcanal in the Pacific and received the Navy Distinguished Flying Cross for bravery when he landed his amphibious bomber under Japanese fire to rescue sailors who were drowning in burning oil from the torpedoed USS (something I had to learn from my mother, who said he cried when he told her about it). He kept that medal, along with others, in the back of his sock drawer with some broken watches. Yes, he and members of the Greatest Generation went off to save the world in

their teens and early 20s and then came back as if nothing ever happened, got jobs, and made babies ... lots of babies.

He was a sharp dresser and excellent dancer. He was a lady’s man and a man’s man. A real card-carrying gentleman with impeccable manners and kind words for almost everyone (including some who barely deserved them). If one’s race meant anything to him, his words and actions belied it. Presidents should aspire to his wisdom and tact.

He loved the English language, and he could wield words like Ginsu knives in the hands of a hibachi steakhouse cook, occasionally sending boorish fools on their way, scratching their heads and wondering if they had been complimented or insulted. He was a friend to admirals and janitors, and he taught me to respect women and those in positions of authority, whether they deserved it or not.

## Greatest generation and father

He never spanked my sisters, Patty and Mary, or me (that was a job he subcontracted out to my mother). Instead, he would sit me down and get me to point out how my errant behavior affected me and others (there were many times I wished that he had just whacked me and gotten it over with).

He took me to the movies: We saw “The Good, The Bad, and The Ugly,” “2001: A Space Odyssey,” “The Blue Max,” “How the West Was Won,” and other manly flicks, and he would solicit my input on what I thought about the moral and immoral choices made by the “good” and “bad” fictional characters. Then, we’d stop by Little Tavern in Alexandria, Virginia, on our way back to Springfield, and we’d sit at the counter, munching those greasy little sliders and talking about the mysteries of life and love.

He was kind to a fault with a marshmallow heart, and when Patty and Mary found an injured bird in our yard, they talked him into taking it to the vet, who “put it to sleep” for \$30 (a pretty penny back in the ’60s).

He was a hugger of women, men, and children, and he would frequently tell my sisters and me that he loved us while squeezing the daylight out of us.

His funeral at Arlington National Cemetery, in 1987, was awesome: A horse-drawn caisson with full Navy honor guard and 21-gun salute. And more than one person that day said it was a shame he wasn’t there to see it ... but he was. And now, he and his bride, Teresa, reside on a peaceful wooded hill overlooking the Potomac River and the city where they met and fell in love.

He and my mother were class acts. The best people I have ever known ... or ever will. The greatest of the Greatest Generation. Rest in peace, W. T. Spiegel, and give Mom a big hug for Patty, Mary, and me.



Mike Spiegel is a retired human resources manager and former Richmond resident who is trying his hand as a writer, inventor, and businessman. He currently resides in Fairlawn, Virginia.

Read more childhood memories from Michael L. Spiegel and other contributions from Boomer readers in our **From the Reader department**.

Have your own childhood memories or other story you would like to share with our baby boomer audience? View our **writers’ guidelines** and e-mail our editor at **Annie@BoomerMagazine.com** with the subject line “‘From Our Readers’ inquiry.”

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# Are You Retired, or Just Dotty?

By Randy Fitzgerald

An unexpected hazard of retirement



From my perspective, there are not too many negatives associated with retirement. I’m enjoying just about every aspect of it, like being able to stay up very late (into the wee hours) to watch a few more episodes of *The Marvelous Mrs. Maisel* and then opting for a leisurely breakfast around 10 or so the next day.

Barb and I like the sight of our Social Security checks appearing on the bank statement, and we enjoy going to an occasional afternoon movie. I appreciate not having to juggle jobs that are all due tomorrow, and a lot of days I’m happy not to use my brain for anything more serious than a crossword puzzle and a cut-throat *Jeopardy* competition when the show comes on after dinner.

Dinner, of course, can just as easily be a late lunch around 3:30 as a formal sit-down at seven. Retirement is a wonderful thing. And so is Medicare.

So what’s the negative? Have you ever noticed that a lot of retired people – Barb and I included – quite often have no idea what day of the week it is? After all, if you don’t have to get up and go to work on Monday, then Tuesday and Monday feel pretty much the same. If every day of your life is Casual Dress Day, then Fridays are no different from Thursdays. There is no Hump Day in retirement (sorry, Geico) and Saturday for all intents and purposes could just as well be Wednesday.

We were talking to our friend Hattie about this on a visit with her last Sunday. (That may have been last Saturday, now that I think about it.) Anyway, she said she makes it a point to check the paper each morning and then say aloud some version of “Today is Wednesday, February 6.”

That sounded like a plan, but it wasn’t foolproof. We take *The New York Times* at our house, and since we seldom finish reading the whole thing over a single breakfast, Barb often leaves the unread sections on the kitchen table to be read as catch can. I would have my choice of dates.

I worry about myself when I don’t know what day it is – Barb not so much. Example: For years we’ve been going out for New Year’s with our friends Stephanie and Judson. This past year Steph called and asked Barb which night of New Year’s weekend was good for us – Friday, Saturday, Sunday or Monday? Barb picked Monday, and we all went to a movie and then to an early dinner. As our friends drove us home, Barb innocently asked them, “What are you guys doing New Year’s?”

There was a long pause from the front seat until Judson quietly said, “Um, we’re with you all.” When we got home, Barb said to me, “Is tonight New Year’s Eve?”

“Yes,” I confirmed. “It is.”

“Did I ask them on the way home what they were doing for New Year’s?” Barb wondered.

“Yes,” I confirmed. “You did.” And then I sing-songed, “Awk-ward.”

Barb laughed and laughed. In all the holiday madness she had lost track of the days, and while she knew New Year’s was imminent, she obviously had not consulted the *Times* that day.

The next morning Steph called (no doubt to see if I had put Barb in a home during the night), and Barb recounted their conversation to me afterward.

“I figured, in for a penny, in for a pound,” she told me. “So after we talked for a minute, I said to Steph, ‘What did you and Judson do for New Year’s?’”

But before Steph could answer, Barb added, “I mean, at the stroke of midnight, of course.”

So she got herself off the hook by pretending that’s what she had meant all along. Barb followed up with the fact that we two had enjoyed a glass of wine, watched the ball drop and then slow danced our way into New Year’s Day.

“Which,” Barb pointed out to me, “fell on January 1 this year.”

Randy Fitzgerald was a longtime public relations director at the University of Richmond and columnist for The Richmond News Leader and later the Richmond Times-Dispatch. He taught modern American literature at Virginia Union University until he retired in 2012. His book, *Flights of Fancy: Stories, Conversations and Life Travels with a Bemused Columnist and His Whimsical Wife*, was published in 2017.

Enjoy more of his Boomer contributions on our website.

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# Rockaway Days

By Michele Minott  
Childhood beach memories



*B*aby boomer reader Michele Minott summons childhood beach memories near her home in New York

The bright June sun streamed through the windows of my uncle’s Oldsmobile, heralding in my freedom from school, on the first day of our summer vacation.

Uncle Chuck was in the driver’s seat. Dad was by the window, map in hand, with Mom sandwiched in between. All were stationed at their posts in front. In back, Grandma and I were flanked by a variety of boxes and bags filled with everything from kitchen utensils to bathroom toiletries.

All of us were in high spirits, as we set out for our annual pilgrimage to Mrs. Moss’ cottage rentals by the sea – a mere 10-minute walk to the sunny sands of Rockaway Beach.

“Could we have the radio, please?” I asked, knowing the time for directions and maps wouldn’t come until the Brooklyn Bridge. Uncle Chuck pressed the “on” button, fiddling to find the right station. “That one! That one!” I said, shooting up in my seat, straining to catch every golden note sweet as honey, warm as the summer sun, pouring out of the speaker. The voice filled my uncle’s car with a sound I was forever more to associate with summer. I didn’t know who the voice belonged to, but it really didn’t matter. Anyone whose voice could wrap itself around you like a dream had to be the handsomest man on the planet. And in that instant, with all the passionate conviction my 8-year-old heart could hold, I pledged my undying love to Andy Williams.

## Summertime childhood beach memories of games, routines, and Coppertone



Those halcyon summer days in Rockaway offered an endless array of possibilities for young children in the late 1950s. We could play simple games – like potsie, iron tag, hit the nickel, jump rope, telephone, dress-up – uninterrupted for hours, until mothers would lean out of open windows, calling our names for lunch. Then, one by one, we would scatter, scrambling to gobble down tuna or peanut butter and jelly sandwiches with milk, in eager anticipation of an afternoon at the beach.

My mom would pack up the Coppertone, some fruit, lemonade, a blanket, and towels, while I, peeling down to my bathing suit, red plastic shovel and pail in hand, would race her to the door.

“Slow down. Slow down,” she’d call from behind. By now I was halfway out the door. This was no time to slow down! Some things in life just couldn’t wait.

Once at the beach, the first thing my mother unpacked was the Coppertone. I can still feel the wet chill of America’s number one tanning lotion, as she smeared it all over my squirming, impatient little body. “You’re making this take longer each time you move,” she said, as I finally surrendered.

After a snack, body slick with the sticky white lotion, I made my way to the water’s edge. “Remember, you just ate,” she called after me. “You know the rule! Only to your knees. And stay where I can see you.”

“I know, I know,” I called over my shoulder. So little time. So many rules.

Far too soon, it was time to head back, shower, change, and get ready for dinner. This was my favorite time of day. I would set the table, munching on a carrot stick, awaiting my dad’s return from work.

My mother would be in our cute kitchenette, preparing a pot roast so buttery soft, the caramelized onion gravy begged to be soaked up with noodles or rice, and, for starters, the sweet taste of melon. “You’re a good cooker,” I’d say with a smile, as she placed a carrot stick into my hand.

From time to time, I’d look up at our clock on the wall of the little country kitchen, in eager anticipation. At exactly 4 o’clock I’d announce the time, and, with a nod from my mom, I’d reach up for that ugly little wooden box out of which poured the most beautiful music I’d ever heard. But first the announcer would welcome me to the “Make Believe Ballroom.” Then, as if by magic, our modest little flat turned into the Star Dust Room, the little wooden radio swelling ripe crescendos of Doris Day, Patti Page, and Dean Martin singing “That’s Amore.” Happy as a clam, I’d sing along, waltzing around the dinner table.

Then at 5 o’clock sharp, I’d turn the radio off and stand at my post by the window, awaiting my dad’s arrival. When my dad’s familiar stride and smile came into view, I’d dash out the door, flying down the hall stairs, into his welcoming arms.

“Hello, Monkey!” he’d say, kissing my cheek, as he swung me ’round and ’round, till the room swirled in circles before me. Then up the spiral staircase we’d climb, to enjoy my mom’s sumptuous dinner.

## A season full of holidays

Weekends in Rockaway felt like a holiday. Moms were all about “the rules,” but dads were a very different breed: there to bend the rules, to tickle and tease and make you laugh all through dinner.



To add to the festive holiday mood, with my dad there to lend a hand, Saturdays on the beach were an all-day affair. My mom made the sandwiches, handing Dad the fruit, while he packed our red plaid, zip-top cooler with food and other supplies. A cold breakfast downed with efficiency, bathing suits under our clothes, we’d head out the door, in search of a good spot before they were gone.

We had some serious competition: dogs and kids with beach balls flying, grandmas, grandkids in their mother’s arms, vacationing couples hand in hand, and, of course, dads who had full time jobs, looking forward to the weekends. Everyone vying to get the best spots.

I’d always race for a spot near the water, with my mom close at hand to rein me in.

“Remember,” she’d warn, “in the afternoon when the tide rolls in, we’ll have to pack and head for home, or wind up in the very back where it’s hot and dry. All the other spots will be taken.”

“Okay,” I’d sigh, watching a group of kids building a sandcastle at the water’s edge. My parents found a more “sensible” spot a good deal farther inland.

Then sandwiches, fruit, and cold drinks were downed. Suntan lotion came next, as I gazed at the seashore with longing. When the last bite of food had dissolved in my mouth, fully oiled, I gazed up at my sleeping dad, sprawled out on our green and white chaise lounge. “Wanna go digging for salt water clams? You said we would do it. Remember?”

My dad opened one sleeping eye. “How about in a half hour?” he yawned, glancing at his watch. Seeing my puzzled expression, he went on, “It’s 11:45 now. When the big hand is on the three, and the little hand is directly under the twelve, we’ll go digging for clams.”

Throwing a cautious glance in my mother’s direction, I asked, “What if you’re asleep? Can I wake you?”

“No, you can’t,” my mother said, her tone leaving no room for negotiation.

Giving her arm a gentle pat, my dad smiled, “I’ll make up the sleep tomorrow morning.”

“I’ll be quiet,” I promised, catching the warning in my mom’s eyes. “I’ll wear my sneakers and let my Cheerio’s get soggy, so they don’t crunch.”

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# Rockaway Days – Page 2

By Michele Minott  
Childhood beach memories

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Dressed in newly washed clothes, stacked, ready for ironing, we’d triumphantly slip out the door, in those forbidden flip-flops, our mothers repeatedly warned were meant strictly for beach wear. One by one, we’d meet in the basement dress-up room Mrs. Moss stocked with cards and games for her grandchildren and everyone else’s. Sitting cross-legged, we’d play dominoes, Monopoly, go fish, and pick-up sticks; amusing ourselves for hours, until we heard the familiar voices of our mothers, calling us up for lunch.

## Beach dangers and childhood realizations



But this was Saturday! Sunday was 24 hours away. On Saturdays, families and kids reigned supreme! On Saturdays, all dads got to be kids as moms shook their heads, heaving an indulgent sigh.

Patiently as I could, I waited until the big hand barely rested atop the three, then staring up at my sleeping dad, I rose up on my knees, planting a kiss on his cheek. “Clams?” I whispered into his ear. Wiping the sleep from his eyes, he yawned. “Get your pail and shovel. I’ll meet you at the water’s edge.”

Casting a watchful eye over my shoulder, I waited until his handsome face and familiar stride cut across my line of vision. Then together, on our knees, we dug side-by-side in silent comradery. All at once my dad uncovered one trying to scurry back into the cool, wet sand. I gazed in wonder as he plunked the sandy little creature onto my outstretched palm, feeling it tickle and scratch as it frantically ran for cover.

When I had half-a-dozen clams in my pail, my dad said, “What do you say we set those guys free and go in for a dunk?”

He didn’t have to ask me twice. At once I nodded, capsizing my pail, watching the little clams burrow to their sandy home. Then placing my hand in his, I followed as he led the way to our favorite ocean game. Together we stood hand in hand near the colorful red and yellow buoys. With the waves breaking around my knees where the water deepened, he turned to me. “Further?” he asked, and I nodded.

Hand in hand, we walked a bit deeper. Now the waves were breaking at my waist, just above his knees. Again he turned to me and asked, “Further?”

Excitement coursed through me, and a touch of fear. But I knew I was safe ’cause I was with my dad. So I nodded.

Now that we were farther in, whenever a wave headed our way, he’d lift me up to his shoulders. As each wave rose to greet us, I’d giggle and shriek with excitement and glee. We’d outsmarted Mother Nature.

Then, just as he’d placed me back down on my feet, out of nowhere a wave rose up like a solid wall of water. I felt for his hand, screaming out for him, as green salty water filled my nostrils and mouth. After what seemed like an eternity, a familiar tug pulled me to my feet. “Why didn’t you pull me up sooner?” I wailed.

“I had to pull myself up first,” he said, wrapping his arm around me.

Thunderstruck, I walked silently at his side. The thought that a mere wave could topple ANY grownup, let alone my dad, had never even occurred to me. How could that be? I wondered. Weren’t parents put here to protect us kids? Wasn’t that their job in the universe? How could ANY force be greater than them?

Subdued, we walked hand in hand back to my mom, who was waiting with towels to greet us.

“You two look a bit green around the edges,” she said. “No more water for you today,” she added, her glance falling on me.

For once I didn’t quibble. Content to spend the rest of the day sitting in the shadow of my father’s chaise lounge, I silently pondered a question that chilled me far more than the ocean had: Who protected grown-ups when they needed help? The question rattled around in my brain till I rose, wrapping one sunburned arm around my dad, and he smiled, offering me the comics.

## Reflections on childhood beach memories from the distance of years

Looking back on the episode now, I’ve come to realize the mishap in the ocean was my first encounter with risk.

My two doting parents had served as a buffer against the slings and arrows of life.

While being cocooned had its advantages, I’ve learned over time that a life well lived involves a certain amount of risk. The trick is to strike a livable balance between safety and growth.

I’ve just turned 70, and I am still navigating.



*“As a Brooklyn born baby boomer, growing up in the ’50s and ’60s (a time many considered the golden age of television, movies, and shows), I was lucky enough to have parents that cultivated in me a love of the arts,” says Michele Minott. “I had a good ear and spent many happy hours belting out popular songs using our bathroom as a soundstage. An introvert by nature, singing and writing gave me the comfort, clarity, and sense of empowerment I didn’t always find in life. I even got to have the last word!”*

For more essays like Michele Minott’s childhood beach memories, check out the Boomer **From Our Readers** department.

Interested in submitting your own essay? Read our **guidelines** to learn how.

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# Greg Schwem, Humor Hotel: A State of Stupidity

By Greg Schwem

Should one’s place of residence provide an excuse for iffy behavior?



Eight girls, all in their early 20s and adorned with “Birthday Babe” T-shirts, frolicked along the Savannah, Georgia, riverfront amid the city’s St. Patrick’s Day celebration.

“Who’s the birthday girl?” yelled Savannah Mayor Van Johnson, interrupting an interview he was conducting with me.

“This one!” they yelled, pointing to one girl holding a pink beverage.

“Where are your masks?” Johnson said.

“We’re from Florida,” one replied.

“You’re in Georgia now,” Johnson retorted. “Please put them on.”

The girls complied as Johnson briefly stepped away from the camera to pose for a picture. Ironically, we had just been talking about Savannah’s mask mandate, a policy many revelers openly violated in a city known for raucous St. Patrick’s Day celebrations.

The following evening, as I performed stand-up comedy in Savannah’s entertainment district, a clearly overserved woman, in her mid-50s, constantly interrupted my act forcing me, at one point, to ask, “Is it OK if I talk every now and then?”

When the show ended, I slapped on a fake smile as she approached.

“Thanks for coming,” I said.

“I know y’all don’t mean that,” she replied, oblivious to the fact that she was only addressing one person. “But I don’t care. I’m from Georgia.”

## A new way to justify your behavior

In just over 24 hours I had witnessed two instances where state pride was deemed an excuse for risky, and stupid, behavior. I guess it’s time to tear up municipal code enforcement manuals, state regulatory guides and federal law books. Do whatever you want, America. Justify it with your place of residence.

Now of course, this is a humor column so I’m not actually condoning dangerous and illegal activities. In other words, Des Moines natives, don’t cause a miles long traffic jam by driving your John Deere tractor at 10 miles per hour in the middle of Interstate 80 and yelling, “I’m from Iowa!” at frustrated motorists.

But, Brooklynites, feel free to come to Chicago, purchase a slice of deep-dish pizza and fold it on the subway before you consume it. Yes, tomato sauce, cheese and probably a meatball or two will squirt out onto a nearby rider but that’s their problem. You’re from New York.

Conversely, Chicago residents, head to the Big Apple, order a hot dog from a street vendor, take a bite, spit it onto the sidewalk and then refuse to pay because the dog doesn’t contain celery salt. When he looks at you in confusion, show him your driver’s license.

Colorado, when it came to legalizing marijuana, you were trailblazers, no pun intended. But, if you plan to fire up a joint in Alabama, you could be looking at a year in jail and a \$6,000 fine. Or you could just tell the arresting officer you live in the land of ski resorts and Coors beer and continue walking toward the 7-11 for a bag of Doritos. I’m sure he’d understand.



According to a 2019 Thrillist survey, Heinz Ketchup is most popular in Pennsylvania, no surprise considering the condiment was invented there. So, Pittsburgh residents, just bring your own bottle into a high-end Nebraska steakhouse and slather it onto that 16-ounce T-bone. Better yet, do it in the presence of the chef and say, “NOW it’s perfect.”

Finally, if you are planning to cause a disruption and then proudly announce where you are from, it’s best to be from a state that isn’t known for much of anything. Walk drunkenly into a wedding you aren’t invited to, kiss the bride on the lips and say, “Don’t mind me, I’m from Maine.”

You can make a quick exit while all the guests Google, “wedding traditions in Maine.”

Greg Schwem is a corporate stand-up comedian and author of two books: [Text Me If You’re Breathing: Observations, Frustrations and Life Lessons From a Low-Tech Dad](#) and the recently released [The Road To Success Goes Through the Salad Bar: A Pile of BS From a Corporate Comedian](#), available at Amazon.com. Visit Greg on the web at [www.gregschwem.com](#).

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# Dog Adoption: The 'Tails' of Two Heroes

By Phil Perkins

Caregivers for the hearts of the caregivers

Not everyone grows up anticipating becoming a caregiver. Some say that women are more prepared for that eventuality than men. I don't know whether that generalization is true, but I do know that my wife, Sandi, has a wonderful capacity for looking after loved ones. During the past 15 years she's managed to help her mom and both of our dads along the last mile. I stand in awe of her courage and tenderness.

The latest parent to face his own mortality was my father-in-law, Charlie. He had worked most of his adult life in the gritty steel mills of Ohio. Before that he served in both the Army and the Navy during the Korean War.



Hero

## A HERO FOR A HERO

In his late 70s, Charlie was diagnosed with lung cancer. In due course we all agreed he was better off living with us, and thus we became caregivers and companions. Nonetheless, it was obvious that my father-in-law was lonely, having lost his wife some years earlier. My wife decided that adopting a dog as a Christmas gift for Charlie was just the boost his morale needed.

Enter Hero, a little terrier we met begging for dog adoption. My wife made a beeline for Hero on first glance, adopted him that very day, and we were able to present him to Charlie during the holiday season. After that, Hero was Charlie's constant companion, even sleeping in his recliner with him.

Charlie's cancer was terminal, and he passed peacefully at the VA Palliative Care unit. In deep mourning, the one thing my wife had of her dad was little Hero. He became her companion and in his own way *her* caregiver.

Several months after Charlie's passing, we noticed that Hero had stopped eating. As symptoms worsened, our veterinarian recommended a series of tests. We were shocked to find out that, like Charlie, and in a cruel irony, Hero was suffering from lung cancer. We had to let him go. It was extremely difficult, and my wife had lost the very support system she needed.

## HEALING THE HEARTACHE

I suggested we adopt again right away, but Sandi was having none of it. I secretly began researching potential adoptees on the internet. One day, there he was. Staring directly into the camera was a little terrier that looked much like Hero. I was taken aback to see that his name was Skippy, the name of my first dog when I was 8 years old. Hard not to take that as a sign.

My challenge was convincing Sandi to visit with Skippy at a dog adoption agency event at a local pet store. Agreeing that she would stay in the car, I finally got her over to the store one Saturday morning. Upon arrival I asked the attendants, "Is Skippy here?" Out he came, a beautiful little brindle terrier mix with a sweet personality. As I approached him, he did that dog bow as if to say, "Pleased to meet you."

I must admit I was smitten and, risking my wife's disapproval, I walked Skippy to our car. As I approached, I saw that Sandi was crying. While initially resisting she finally came out of the car and began to cuddle the little terrier. I looked at her to determine her interest in taking him home. With tears in her eyes she simply nodded. He was ours later that very day.

Now we have our second little hero in our lives. He's a hero in that he helped heal our hearts. His boundless, unconditional love made us remember Hero and his ability as a caregiver in the very best way possible. Our grief turned to reflection and love. And my wife was once again able to share her loving and caring nature with a very special addition to our family. Hero would be proud.



Skippy



*Phil Perkins is a writer, business owner and musician who lives in Richmond and Hilton Head Island, South Carolina, with his wife, Sandi, and two pups named Skippy and Jeter. He is the author of several business books and two novellas about a legendary surfer in the 1960s.*

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# A Horse of My Own

By Julia Nunnally Duncan

From Quick Draw McGraw to Thunder the Appaloosa



Baby boomer reader Julia Nunnally Duncan of North Carolina shares her passion for horses and the bond between young girls and horses.

One of my first toys was a Quick Draw McGraw doll. He was a blue stuffed horse with white hooves and a soft vinyl face. He had big blue eyes and a friendly red smile. I called him “Quickie” and spoke for him, like a ventriloquist, and we talked to each other.

One day my family drove from my Western North Carolina hometown of Marion to Drexel, 30 miles away, to visit relatives. Quickie came along, riding in my lap. Later that day when we arrived back home, I realized I had left Quickie behind in Drexel. I was lonely without him and relieved when my aunt and uncle brought him home to me a week later. But I was also ashamed to face him.



Julia's sixth birthday party

collection included many breeds and colors: bays, buckskins, palominos, pintos, and dapple grays. Two were outfitted with fancy Western saddles and bridles. I spent hours admiring and playing with my model horses.

When my family traveled to the Cherokee Indian reservation for a weekend vacation, my father always stopped along the way at a roadside riding stable to allow me a trail ride. Riding one of the old horses through the woods, a teenage guide leading us on his horse, was the highlight of the trip for me.

## The ultimate dream

But what I longed for was a horse of my own to love and take care of. I begged my father, “If you’ll get me a horse, I won’t ask for anything else the rest of my life.”

My dream came true when I was 10 and a fifth grader. My parents took me to a farm in Morganton, a neighboring town, to look at a Shetland pony we had heard about. I rode the black pony down a dirt road at the farm. But on the ride back, I noticed a pale horse in a pasture. He was a young Appaloosa-Quarter Horse cross named “Thunder,” and when I rode him, my mind was made up. My father paid the farmer 100 dollars, and our neighbor David hauled Thunder for us in the bed of his pickup truck. Our barn and fence weren’t finished yet, so David kept him in his pasture for a while. But soon I was able to bring him home.

In the next few years, I spent a lot of time with Thunder – feeding him, brushing him, and riding him.

We had many adventures together. One summer day as I rode him in my front yard, I noticed a copperhead stretched on the cement walk. I was afraid if Thunder saw the snake, he would spook and run wild with me, so I turned him quickly and cantered back to the corral. On a winter day, during a heavy snowfall, I rode him bareback in the field below our house. When I felt his hooves slipping, I grasped his wet mane. Yet I knew if I fell off, I would land in the soft snow. So we trotted joyously, snowflakes swirling around like the inside of a snow globe.

Those years with Thunder were dear ones, and I will never forget him. The bond between a girl and her horse is special – unlike any other. I’m grateful I had a horse of my own so I could experience such a friendship.

At my 6th birthday party in 1962, I sat at the head of the dining room table with my older brother, Steve, while my guests stood around waiting for me to blow out my birthday candles. Quickie was there with me, a birthday hat on his head.

## Bigger and more realistic

During my girlhood, I loved reading about horses. Some favorite books were *Album of Horses*, *Black Beauty*, and *All Horses Go to Heaven*. On sunny days, I would spread a blanket in our yard, pile my books around me, and read horse stories. These stories taught me about different breeds and told tales of courageous horses. I wrote my own horse stories, too. My first one, “The Story of a Jockey,” concerned a girl who finds a wild white stallion, tames him, and rides him in a horserace.

I liked to draw horses, following the steps in my Jon Gnagy *Learn to Draw* book. I kept a notebook of my drawings, and in a separate scrapbook I pasted horse-related pictures and articles I found in *Asheville Citizen-Times* and *Parade*. These clippings featured common horses and famous ones, like the racehorse Kelso.

I collected model horses that my mother bought for me at the Roses five-and-dime store. This



### Julia Nunnally Duncan

is an award-winning author of ten books of prose and poetry, including *A Place That Was Home* (eLectio Publishing, 2016) and *A Neighborhood Changes* (Finishing Line Press, 2018). A retired community college English instructor, she now enjoys writing and spending time with her husband, Steve, and their daughter, Annie in Marion, North Carolina.

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# Making a Change

By Diana L. Walters

At 61, was it too late?



My job had lost its appeal long ago. I spent my days filling out state-required forms for clients. I made a good salary, but felt mentally exhausted and unfulfilled. I wanted to do something new.

“Are you crazy?” my friend, Kathy, exclaimed when I said I was looking for a new job. “In the first place, no one will hire you at 61. In the second place, you have great benefits here and can retire soon.” Other friends agreed.

But I had to try, and I knew just what I wanted to do: work with seniors. I’d been thinking about it for years – ever since I’d volunteered at a healthcare facility where I’d helped with crafts and bingo and had simply spent time visiting residents. I’d loved it.

I scanned employment postings until I found what I wanted.

## Were my friends right?

The sprightly 30-year-old who interviewed me for the activity position looked skeptical but gave me a brief tour of the facility. She said, “I’ll call you.”

Months later I saw a similar posting. That interview was even briefer than the first. I wondered if Kathy was right about my prospects. I prayed, “God, please help me find the right position.”

I searched for several more months, my hopes dwindling. Then I saw it. “Position for caring, creative person to plan programs at senior community.”



After a phone interview with the company president, I was invited to a face-to-face meeting. But Kathy’s words haunted me, “No one will hire you at your age.” I decided to color my hair, have a facial, and buy a new suit. The suit wouldn’t make me look younger but would give me confidence.

My heart sank when I was greeted at Mountain View Manor by another perky young woman, but she led me to a conference room. “Mary’s waiting for you.”

When the president stood to greet me, I relaxed. She was about my age, had graying hair and a friendly smile. “I feel like I already know you after our conversation,” she said. “I’m impressed by your passion to do something meaningful with your life.”

## Moving on at any age

That was almost 10 years ago. I still love my work and have no plans to retire.

**A life-changing option besides career changes for baby boomers: AmeriCorps Seniors**

**10 top second acts after retirement**

Whatever our age or physical condition, there are opportunities for growth. Margie, a former ballet dancer, was 103 when she helped me teach ballet stretches to other residents. John was 80 when I met him in a creative writing class at the community college. He was pursuing his lifelong dream of writing a book. My friend, Olive, began training for the Senior Olympics when she was 70 and has won medals for race walking the past five years. But it’s not the winning that’s important, it’s the trying.

Older adults can be defined by others’ expectations, or we can defy their expectations and pursue our own paths to joy and fulfillment. We might even discover a new life purpose.

*Diana Walters continues to work joyfully with senior adults. She writes in her spare time and has been published in Upper Room, Chicken Soup for the Soul books, and Christian Living in the Mature Years. She and her husband develop ministry aids for people with dementia, which can be seen at [www.centerforboldaction.org](http://www.centerforboldaction.org).*

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# When a Caregiver Is No Longer Needed

By Rev. Dr. Brenda Walker | February 15th, 2021

Grieving and growing into a second career



Dad had a rare, incurable disease, Inclusion Body Myositis, that took decades to diagnose and slowly robbed his strength until he could not walk or stand, and at the end, had to be hoisted onto his huge electric wheelchair with a hooyer lift. Mom had Alzheimer’s. Mom died on Memorial Day, 2017, and my brothers and I moved Dad to a nursing facility that could accommodate his increasing need for care. After thirty-seven years serving Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) congregations, I decided to retire in order to help care for him. Pastoring a congregation while caring for my parents had taken its toll, and I wanted time and flexibility that a full-time job would not afford. I told my parishioners and we scheduled my final Sunday.

Dad loved to come to church; he’d roll in, his open jacket revealing red suspenders underneath, which he had taken to wearing because he could no longer manipulate a belt with his weakening fingers. The last time he attended worship, it was the coldest Sunday in years. Many members of the flock stayed home, not wanting to venture out, but there was Dad, determined to hear me preach, wheel forward to receive communion, and enjoy conversation after church.

Within days of that cold Sunday, Dad passed away from the flu as I sat beside him in the hospital. As we had done for my mother, my brothers and I held his service in my church’s sanctuary. There, three weeks later, I preached my last sermon.

## Dad was gone and I was retired. Now what?

I was overwhelmed with grief over the loss of both of my parents in less than eight months. My husband went to work each day. I took long walks. Forsythia and daffodils gave the promise of warmer days; the redbud announced the arrival of spring with an explosion of pink blossoms.

I scheduled several trips, visiting Sedona with a friend, skiing with my family. I walked and biked the Camino de Santiago along the coast of Portugal with a religious group from Richmond. But while I love to travel, I knew there was something more for me to do.

A friend gave me *The Artist’s Way* by Julia Cameron, which revealed forgotten memories and longings, sparking my dreams and creativity. I picked up a journal for my reflections as I worked through Cameron’s classic text. I retrieved the red suitcase that held the crumpled pages of the stories I had written as a child and the yellowed diary I began at age twelve in which I had scrawled, “When I grow up, I want to be a writer.”

## A new path

As the leaves turned amber, rust and crimson, I signed up to attend the James River Writers Conference. Unsure of myself and nervous in a crowd of strangers, I wandered to the safety of the book sale table; I discovered Valley Haggard’s *The Halfway House* for Writers and her classes at *Life in 10 Minutes*. I held my blue pen as the story of my family unfurled upon the page. Then I searched for answers to questions that lingered about our past. What I uncovered led me to begin composing my forthcoming book, *Martine: A Memoir of The Disappearance, Mysterious Death and Discovery of My Transgender Sister*.

I also discovered a new purpose: a second career as a writer and, after three years, I have returned to serving congregations, assisting them in becoming informed advocates and safe spaces for transgender people and their loved ones.

Now, I am flourishing. Looking back, it was key for me to take time for reflection, linger in nature, and find a community in which to pursue my childhood dream. “We make plans and God laughs,” is a paraphrase of Proverbs 19:21. As I opened my heart to the guidance of the Spirit, I was able to accept life’s limitations and explore new paths.



**Rev. Dr. Brenda Walker**

is the author of the forthcoming *Martine: A Memoir*, which tells of her transformation into a trans ally as she discovers that her oldest sibling, who died in 1982 under mysterious circumstances, was transgender. You can email her at [pastorbrendawalker@gmail.com](mailto:pastorbrendawalker@gmail.com).

Be inspired by more second act stories from former Boomer editor Ray McAllister.

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# Ennis

By Michael W. Updike

A childhood episode seared into memory



There was an ancient house in my childhood neighborhood that stood abandoned for years. It was a weathered green asbestos-sided mess covered in vines and weeds up to its broken and filthy windows. Trash and newspapers from long ago mounded up from the tattered front screen porch, through the dilapidated inside, and out the tiny back porch. It was different than most of the houses in our tired, poor area of town in that it was bigger and more decrepit to the point of appearing haunted.

One day, a long-forgotten member of the home’s original owner showed up. It was rumored that the old man had been released from a psychiatric hospital or mental health center of some kind.

Ennis Carr’s swollen lip hung off to one side and impaired the few words he struggled to utter. His face looked like it hadn’t been washed in years, and the several layers of his torn and dirty clothing were literally all he had in this world. He would wander the nights looking for junk to pick up and carry home. To this eight-year-old boy, he truly looked like a ghost or specter from some scary movie I had sneaked in to watch.

He had obviously had a stroke, or a mental collapse of some kind, and he frightened us kids in the neighborhood. And what do young folks, especially naïve, unsophisticated children do when they don’t understand something? I suppose they either run from it or make fun of it.

I was dreadfully fearful of the scary old man. So, when he’d come around with a nasty old pot to get some water from our outside faucet, I’d duck behind Momma. She would say, “Sure, Ennis, get you some water and here’s some biscuits you can carry home with you.”

I’d watch as he’d stagger on back across the street and drag his broken body up the moss-covered steps and into the condemned house.

## When laughter isn’t free

I was the youngest of all the kids in the hood, but that was no excuse for what we kids did next.

It happened to be election season during that particular year, and everywhere we went there were political signs, Vote for Me! Re-elect the Next Guy.

So we kids decided we would get into the act. We would start an election campaign and, you guessed it, Ennis Carr would be our candidate!

We made signs and carried them around the neighborhood chanting, “Vote for It! (boom, boom), Vote for It!”

I think back on that now and it hurts my heart that kids can be that cruel. Imagine if Ennis Carr was cognizant enough to realize we were referring to him. He probably did realize this.

I can almost picture his dirty, eternally sad face peering through the filthy, broken glass windows of the old house seeing us march around the block mocking him for simply being different and diseased. If you can recall the famous Emmett Kelly the clown, without the face paint, you can envision Ennis’ appearance.

Other than occasional raindrops, I’m sure the tears we caused were the only moisture that ever touched his dried-out face.

Our parents finally made us stop our campaign to elect “It” and the signs were discarded. That errant episode of my life faded into memory until a few dirty pots of spigot-water, left-over biscuits and midnight ghost-walks later ...

## You can’t take it back

It was a cold winter’s night and way later in the night than any of us children were ever awake when I saw some yellow flashes through the shades and thin drapes on my brother-shared bedroom window. We looked out and saw blazes that would be burned in my eyes forever.

Ennis Carr’s house was engulfed in flames and destined to be burned to the ground. All the fire-and-brimstone sermons I had survived in our tiny, 20-member church flashed by like the blazes. Half-smoked and re-lit cigarettes the old man picked up had caught his house afire and the piles of hoarded clutter had gone up like a tinderbox.

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It burned for hours as the firemen poured water through the blackened and broken windows, charred doors, and crispy roof timbers. They finally used their axes to break into the house. What we saw was a body bag being brought out of the scorched and steaming ruins and into the cold, wet street. The canvas encasing Ennis’ scalded and scorched corpse seemed to lie there for hours while we watched with eyes of fear and terror.

Momma let us sit up in the living room instead of sending us back to bed right away; she knew we wouldn’t sleep.

## The faces of disfigurement

I learned quite a lesson at that early age, even though I don’t think I was intelligent enough to continually apply that lesson as my life progressed.

I realize now that each and every one of us are disfigured, whether visibly or hidden, in ways others will never understand; some are castigated and abused simply for being different in color, size, or personal preference. Some because of their knowledge or education level, though we are all ignorant, just in different subjects. All of us can learn through our mistakes and victories.

I hope I have learned enough to be compassionate for the Ennis Carrs of this fragile, blemished world. I hope the folks that meet me are gentle in their judgment of my many imperfections.

*Michael W. Updike is a singer, songwriter, and author. He lives in a 1930s Virginia plantation-country farmhouse, which he renovated. Michael also collects and restores antique cars. He enjoys spending time with the love of his life, Jennifer, and their family.*

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# Freedmen’s Communities & Chef Edna Lewis

By Martha Steger  
Pandemic Driving Discovery



The killing of George Floyd and my feeling of helplessness surrounding it – during the long stay-at-home pandemic period – circled me as a White person to thoughts of African American heritage. Reflecting specifically on the post-Emancipation Proclamation period led me to tiny Virginia communities established by formerly enslaved people after Lincoln’s 1863 proclamation – and to one of Virginia’s, and the South’s, most influential cooks.

After figuratively going down rabbit holes of complicated history for a couple of Central Virginia’s early African American communities, I discovered Orange County’s wealth of well-documented freedmen’s communities. No structures remain at the sites, though communities such as Clifton, on Route 628 off Route 20, and Tibbstown, north of Barboursville on the west side of Route 20, are still active.

## A delicious discovery



Edna Lewis stamp

The community of Freetown – founded near Lahore by nine families of freed slaves – grabbed my attention when I learned that Edna Lewis, the woman credited with revolutionizing Southern cuisine from its reputation for limp, overcooked vegetables and greasy fried foods, had been born there. My drive on Rt. 522 through Louisa County into Orange County was a revisit to a bucolic part of Virginia, with a turn westward onto Rt. 629 for Lahore Road, off of which Freetown is located. Nothing remains of the early town’s school, church and community hall that had once stood; and no one is raising hogs and dairy cows the way the post-Emancipation Black families had been.

In searching for someone knowledgeable on the former Black community (now integrated), I stopped at a small, white bungalow with an “Eggs for Sale” sign (and roosters crowing out back) and purchased eggs in the hope that the people who lived there might be knowledgeable; but the White person who sold me the eggs wasn’t. The best source for community information is the African American specialist who works at the Orange County Historical Society every Friday.

She provided contact information for Edna Lewis’s sister, Ruth Lewis Smith, age 96, who lives outside of Chicago. “A lot of [Black] women learned to cook

by going to work for rich white people in Washington, D.C.,” said Smith in a telephone interview. “Edna learned to cook from Mother, who grew or raised everything we ate – except for soda, salt and sugar.” (In a family of women who knew how to do many things, Ruth and Edna’s mother had also been a brick mason.)

Disciplined to be attentive to details of good kitchen skills – and subtle tastes – by her mother, Lewis developed the confidence to seek work in New York. Her jobs as chef and restaurant owner in the Big Apple would have to wait a bit, as her most marketable skills initially were those of seamstress; her sewing talents became in demand – especially after being showcased in the 1947 Christmas windows of Bonwit Teller, the Fifth Avenue luxury retailer purchased in 1979 by Donald Trump and subsequently demolished.

Although Lewis died in Decatur, Georgia, in February 2006 having authored four cookbooks, Smith has continued to return annually to Virginia for Bethel Baptist Church’s Homecoming in Unionville, east of Freetown. While the pandemic kept her from returning in August 2020 for the church’s revival services and the local foods she fondly remembers, she thinks Reunion 2021 will be “the biggest one yet.”

## Memories

She reminisces about going to New York to help Edna in the first New York restaurant her sister opened in 1949 – Café Nicholson on 58th Street, “around the corner from the United Nations,” Smith said. “People loved her chocolate souffles – one of her specialties.” Lewis later opened and closed a restaurant in Harlem, New York’s preeminent Black neighborhood.

Lewis published The Edna Lewis Cookbook in 1972; Knopf published her Taste of Country Cooking in 1976, followed 12 years later by In Pursuit of Country Cooking; and, lastly, The Gift of Southern Cooking, with Georgia chef Scott Peacock. For a few of Edna Lewis’s tasty recipes – simmered greens with cornmeal dumplings, featherlight yeast rolls, baked tomatoes with crusty bread, Hoppin’ John and green beans in pork stock – go to [Epicurious.com](#). Whether or not you grew up in the countryside as I did (on the Eastern Shore of Virginia), a taste of these foods will conjure up the rich African heritage brought to the Americas – and handed down – by African Americans such as the Lewis family of Lahore.



Bethel Baptist Church

## Visitors’ Information

**Information on Orange County’s freedmen’s communities:** [www.orangecovahist.org](http://www.orangecovahist.org), 540-672-5366.

**Orange County travel information:** [www.visitorangevirginia.com](http://www.visitorangevirginia.com), 540-672-1653, Historic Train Depot, 122 East Main St., Orange, VA 22960

Midlothian-based freelance writer Martha Steger is a Society of American Travel Writers’ Marco Polo member. For 25 years, she was public relations director for the Virginia Tourism Corporation. She has received national awards for her journalism, essays, short fiction, and poetry.



Get a different taste of Orange County by exploring its boutique wineries – like Honah Lee Vineyard, pictured here.

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# Woodland Cemetery, a historic African American cemetery in Richmond

By Annie Tobey  
Reflecting the nation’s history



The Woodland Restoration Foundation is returning historic African American Woodland Cemetery in Richmond, Virginia, to its original beauty. The organization took over the process of restoring the sacred property more than three years ago, as a place for “families and friends to find comfort in honoring the deceased and for future generations to learn about their ancestors.”

In many ways, the story of Woodland and other African American cemeteries in Richmond reflects the history of Blacks in the city.

## Monumental disparities

Respect for the dead has not always been an across-the-board concept.

Beginning in the 1830s, the Medical College of Virginia in Richmond regularly robbed graves to acquire bodies and organs for anatomical study. The bodies would come from “the peculiarity of our institutions” – i.e., slavery – which offered “a steady supply of fresh corpses.” The steady supply of post-mortem bodies was acquired primarily by grave robbers who exhumed corpses of Blacks and some impoverished whites in the dead of night. This and other practices were considered in *The Organ Thieves*, a 2020 book by Chip Jones.

The theft continued after the Civil War. After thieves were arrested in 1882 for stealing cadavers, “The governor promptly pardoned and released all four of those arrested in a tacit understanding of the practice,” wrote VCU history professor Ryan K. Smith in *Death and Rebirth in a Southern Cemetery*.

Properties that became Evergreen, East End, and Woodland cemeteries were purchased and operated by Blacks at the end of the 19th and into the early 20th century. White cemeteries – including public cemeteries – were segregated, but Black families were proud of their hallowed grounds and found rest for their loved ones.

## Woodland Cemetery

The story of Woodland Cemetery began in 1891, when the Greenwood Memorial Association purchased 30 acres of farmland called “Hedge Plain” as a cemetery for African Americans. However, white landowners sued Greenwood, so cemetery plans were nixed. In 1917, John Mitchell Jr., the “fighting editor” of the Richmond Planet, revived the property and the plans, opening Woodland Cemetery.

“The cemetery’s radial design paid tribute to African American leaders, with circles named after Frederick Douglass and Booker T. Washington at its heart, and John Jasper Road bisecting it north and south,” reports *Richmond Cemeteries*, a website from author and VCU professor Ryan K. Smith. “Local contractor William R. Mason built an impressive front entrance with granite pillars and an iron gate. The company soon built a chapel and keeper’s house in the rear of the property.”

The challenges that Woodland and other African American cemeteries faced thereafter continued to reflect struggles of Black Americans. Richmond’s white residents resisted African American equality and participation in government and used Jim Crow segregation to restrict schools, jobs, and neighborhoods. In the 1910s, “the average yearly income of the poorest black families in town was \$516, only two-thirds that of the poorest white families,” says Smith in *Death and Rebirth*, while 20 percent of blacks were illiterate, compared to one percent of whites. Arrest rates were three times higher among African Americans; incarceration was similarly higher; and Black lifespans were about 12 years shorter. “The daily indignities of racist language, expectations of defential behavior, and segregated accommodations made life under these conditions that much more difficult.”

## Booms and busts



Six months before her death, Maggie L. Walker participated in a “Buy Where You Can Work” parade in Richmond, joining a thousand other marchers one evening in June 1934. The campaign had begun in Chicago in 1929, boycotting stores that refused to hire African Americans. Also known as “Don’t Buy Where You Can’t Work,” the movement spread across the U.S., where Black unemployment rates were often double or triple the national average.

Walker was buried with high honors from both the Black and the White communities in December 1934 in Evergreen Cemetery. Other notable Black leaders buried in Evergreen include John Mitchell Jr., funeral director A.D. Price, and Sarah Garland Jones, who was the first Black and first woman certified to practice medicine by the Virginia State Board of Medicine.

Given the challenges they were up against, patrons of Richmond’s Black cemeteries “could afford funerals, plots, and grave markers only by pooling resources through fraternal organizations or insurance companies, leaving little long-term care funds for future maintenance,” says Smith. “One generation following Walker’s heralded funeral, the cemetery started to become overgrown, to slowly slip into a state of near total disarray amid an untamed forest.”

As intentional signs of disrespect, trespassers dumped piles of trash and vandals destroyed graves, mutilated bodies, and removed grave markers. Overgrowth began creeping into the properties by the 1950s, engulfing them by the ’70s. Families of plot owners had died out or moved away. White leaders had taken over care of White cemeteries that faced financial challenges, utilizing government support and fundraising among wealthy Whites. But African American communities lacked those resources, and cemetery management crumbled.

When Richmond native and tennis great Arthur Ashe died in 1993, he was buried beside his mother at Woodland Cemetery, per his request. In advance of the visiting dignitaries and mourners who would attend the Ashe funeral, the City of Richmond and Commonwealth of Virginia sent maintenance workers to clean up the cemetery. Merely ten weeks later, the decay had returned. In those few weeks, the road leading to the cemetery once again became a dumping ground for appliances, tires, and other trash. A city official requested to move Ashe’s coffin and his mother’s to “a more dignified setting.” Never mind the others who were buried there.

## Working toward renewal



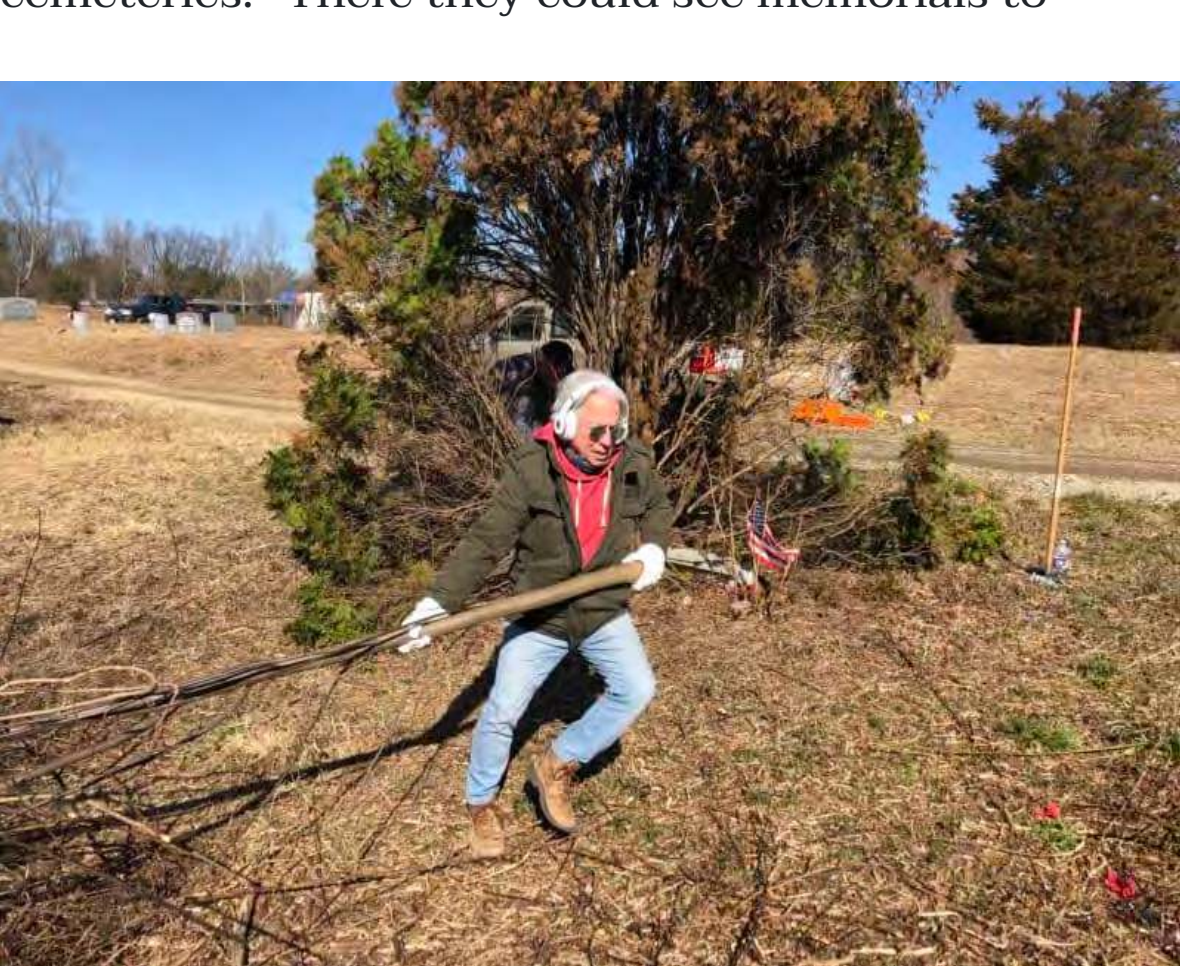
Volunteer tending a gravesite at Woodland Cemetery

grave markers. Restoration has begun on the chapel and office facilities, including a fresh coat of paint and a new roof.

Marvin Harris, executive director of the foundation, appeals to the community for additional assistance. “Although our group is dedicated and strong, we cannot do it alone. We need community and family support, and we are asking for help in two ways: We request that family members of those interred at Woodland commit to contributing what they can afford for the perpetual care of gravesites.”

Second, Harris adds, “Our goal is to create a museum to house artifacts from Woodland that can be displayed for visitors to the grounds. If you or someone you know has photographs or artifacts that you would be able to lend or donate for use in the museum, please contact us.” Harris can be reached at 804-240-1418 or by email at [mharris@mapinv.com](mailto:mharris@mapinv.com).

Visitors have found comfort at Richmond’s Black cemeteries. “There they could see memorials to



Volunteer clearing brush at Woodland Cemetery

says Harris. “Together, we can complete the process of restoring it to its intended glory, and we can guarantee that it will continue to be a beautiful space for generations to come.”

With a recognition that all Americans deserve the promises that the United States of America was founded upon, perhaps the restoration of Woodland Cemetery can reflect a new spirit in our nation.



Before and after pictures at Woodland Cemetery

Volunteers began renewal of Evergreen Cemetery in the 1970s and 1980s and have continued and expanded to other Black cemeteries. Volunteers have come from diverse backgrounds, both Whites and Blacks. Efforts have ramped up recently with **growing recognition of racial inequities**.

After beginning work on Woodland Cemetery more than three years ago, the **Woodland Restoration Foundation** reports, “We are well into the process of restoring it to the sacred, beautiful space it was intended to be.”

Volunteers and caretakers work weekly to remove overgrowth, clear trash, mow grass, and unearth



Volunteer mowing at Woodland Cemetery

fearless community leaders only a generation or two beyond slavery, and they could find tangible evidence of mutual support,” says Smith. “[The cemeteries] were distinctive in their occasional, African-infused folk touches, in the separate fraternal traditions, and in the guidance of black funeral directors.”

“How people are treated and regarded in death is related to how they are treated and regarded in life,” *Richmond Times-Dispatch* columnist and racial justice advocate Michael Paul Williams told Smith. “As long as we allow these disparities to exist in death, we can expect them in life.”

“Woodland is a Richmond landmark and treasure,” says Harris. “Together, we can complete the process of restoring it to its intended glory, and we can guarantee that it will continue to be a beautiful space for generations to come.”

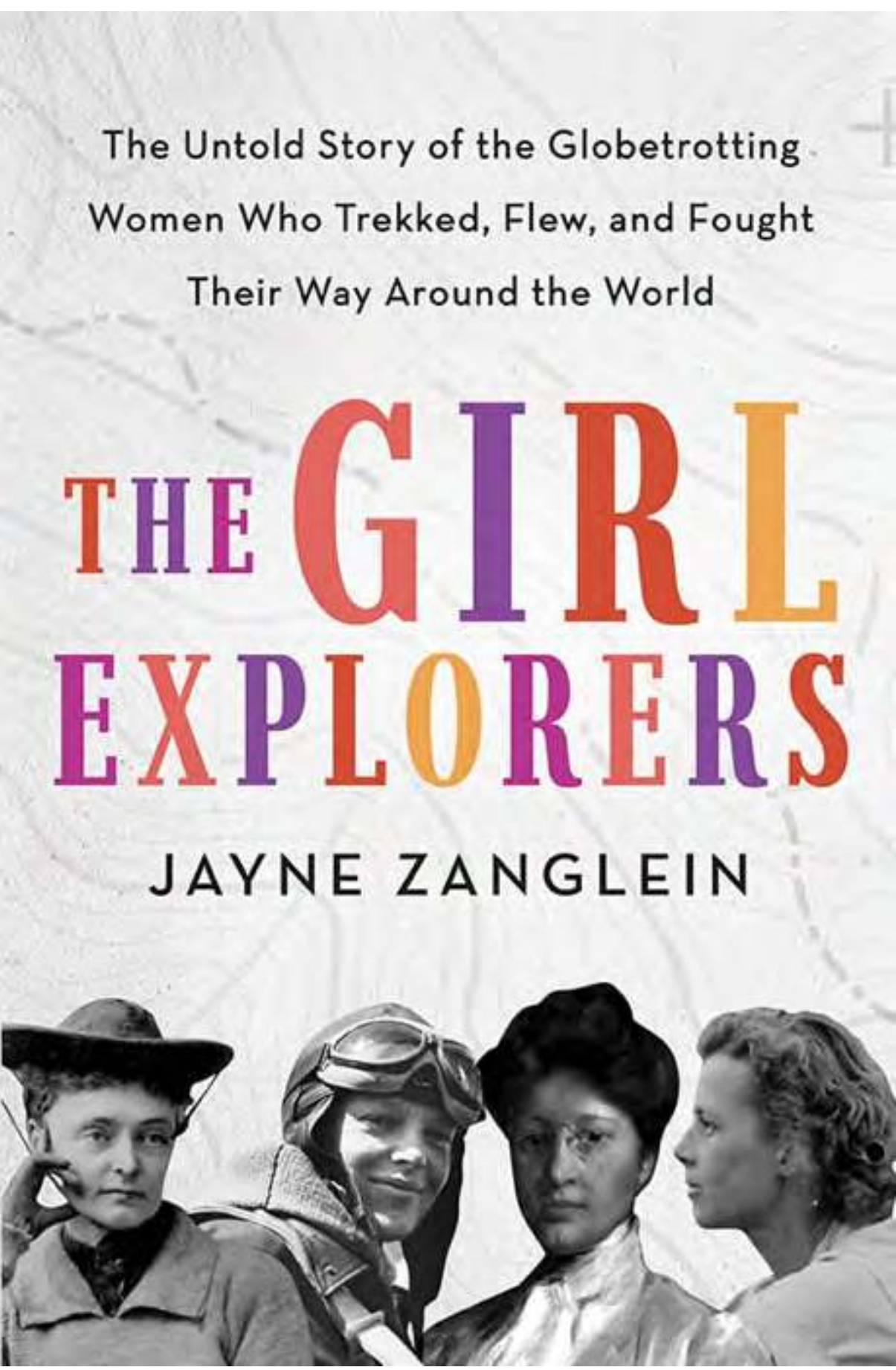


# 'The Girl Explorers' by Jayne Zanglein: Book Review

By Annie Tobey

The Untold Story of the Globetrotting Women Who Trekked, Flew, and Fought Their Way Around the World

I shouldn’t have been surprised by this book, really. I should realize by now that history holds many untold stories, especially of exceptional women and minorities. But when I settled in to read *The Girl Explorers* by Jayne Zanglein, I was thrilled to learn of many women of the late-19th and early-20th centuries whose names I’d never heard.



The book tells *The Untold Story of the Globetrotting Women Who Trekked, Flew, and Fought Their Way Around the World*. It tells of women like Blair Niles, born on a plantation on Virginia’s Eastern Shore in 1880, who became a world traveler and writer of innovative books on travel and compassionate books on the oppressed. *The Girl Explorers* tells of women like Annie Peck, born in 1850, who became a mountaineer and adventurer. Like Marguerite Harrison, a reporter, spy, and filmmaker; Gloria Hollister, zoologist and conservationist; and artist Malvina Hoffman, whose sculptures for the Races of Mankind exhibit were in turn thoughtful, empathetic, and – to today’s sensibilities, controversial. Yes, familiar names like Amelia Earhart, female aviator, and Margaret Mead, anthropologist. And about a dozen other women who lived life out of the boundaries.

Rather than simply offering an anthology of biographies, Zanglein weaves the women’s stories around a common thread: the Society of Women Geographers. This approach provides more than just an interesting literary device. The founding of the female-focused society sheds light on the prevailing attitudes of men. The all-male Explorers Club banned women from membership,

so the women started their own organization.

“Women are not adapted to exploration,” Roy Chapman Andrews, the Explorers Club president, told a gathering of female students at Barnard College in 1932. This, among Andrews’ other disparaging comments, motivated the women in their work and in founding the Society of Women Geographers. Zanglein writes,

It would not take long for members of the Society to prove him wrong. Members would set records as they climbed higher, flew faster, and dove deeper than men. But these women were not motivated by a desire to beat men’s records, for they knew that they were capable explorers. Nor did they find a need to confine their travels to expeditions approved by men or to seek male approval. As deep-sea diver Sylvia Earle, one of the more famous members of the Society alive today, explained, “Sometimes people find it hard to take us seriously. But most of the problems are in the minds of the men.” Several members of the Society would struggle to reorient the focus of history to include women by establishing archives so that women would not be ignored, for as Society member Mary Ritter Beard cautioned, “Without documents; no history. Without history; no memory.”

Zanglein tells of the women’s achievements as explorers, despite lack of support and despite attempts to squelch their ambitions and ignore their contributions. She shows how the women thumbed their noses at society’s expectations. She examines the women through their goals, pursuits, adventures, and accomplishments; through common threads such as efforts toward women’s suffrage and racial justice; through their attention to networking and supporting each other; and through how their efforts have affected women today.

## Aspire, admire, inspire

Readers will experience *The Girl Explorers* through a variety of lenses. We can all be inspired by people who strive for their goals, despite the obstacles. Even readers who won’t take the physical risks that the explorers took can admire their emotional fortitude.

Many readers – especially young women – can aspire to greater achievements, led by the perseverance of these role models. Their achievements reached higher than scaling mountains, visiting remote villages, and flying across oceans. Among the group were scientists, writers, filmmakers, photographers, geographers, artists, and activists. Some were involved in human rights, bringing to light the exploitation of marginalized people, including people of color, gays, and indigenous people.



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And some readers can simply thrill to the adventures that these women faced head on. Although the book bogs down for a chapter when delving into the organization’s leadership squabbles, other chapters are spellbinding looks into the womens’ lives, challenges, strengths, and victories.


The girl explorers’ achievements are remarkable – not because they are female, which we’ve only been led to believe makes achievement more astonishing. However, adding to the strength of their accomplishments is the fact that they reached these heights despite the extra hurdles they were, as females, forced to jump.

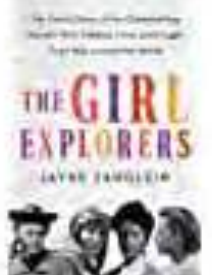
As a world traveler and lawyer with a heart for celebrating women, Jayne Zanglein brings strength and empathy to the lives of her subjects. As the tagline of her book and her website states, “Never tell a woman where she doesn’t belong.” The book is well-written and engaging, easy to to consume.

A final chapter in *The Girl Explorers* explains the “Matilda Effect,” a “cognitive bias that blots out the achievements of women in science,” in essence erasing their accomplishments from history (a view on history that parallels the erasure of Black achievements). Zanglein’s book takes a step toward overcoming that harmful phenomenon. We would all, men and women, be well-advised to read, learn, and do our part to recognize accomplished individuals equally. “The story of this group of women gives us hope in an era when Americans have become more divisive and less tolerant,” Zanglein writes. “It reminds us that if we are to soar to great heights as a nation, we must find the strength in our differences.”

*The Girl Explorers*, by Jayne Zanglein  
Sourcebooks, March 2, 2021

416 pages





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# Historic Baseball and Ballparks in Richmond, Virginia

By Annie Tobey  
Ghosts of the city



Richmonders have embraced numerous professional baseball teams over the years. A look at the historic baseball teams and ballparks in Richmond, Virginia, gives a sense of the sport’s enduring appeal – and a sense of the past, as you drive past locations that once were filled with cheers, jeers, a crack of the bat and the thump of a ball caught solidly in a glove. You’re out!



Numerous amateur teams, sponsored by local clubs, formed in Richmond during the spring and summer of 1866, and interest grew rapidly. By fall, at least 15 adult and a dozen junior teams had formed. Teams played at several different sites, especially around The Fan District and Church Hill, including:

- The old fairgrounds (called Western Square, now known as Monroe Park), at Main and Belvedere, hosted perhaps most of the games. The city’s first park, established in 1851, hosted the Virginia State Fair, but by the 1860s, the fair had relocated to a larger venue west of the city. This was the location of the first Virginia state championship game between the Pastimes all-star squad of Richmond and the Monticello Club of the University of Virginia.
- Rutherford’s Field, between Grace and Franklin streets
- Elba Park, at Broad Street and Brook Road
- At Franklin and Harrison streets
- The area bounded by 22nd and 23rd streets and Grace and Broad streets
- At the corner of 29th and N streets
- At the corner of Decatur and Lawrence streets

## A much-needed distraction

“Richmond was still under military occupation in 1867; but baseball seemed to have been a vehicle for promoting harmony between the people of Richmond and federal troops stationed in the area,” said W. Harrison Daniel and Scott P. Mayer in *Baseball and Richmond: A History of the Professional Game, 1884-2000*. Daniel and Mayer continued:

On one occasion, there was a game at the fairgrounds between a local team and a team of Union soldiers who were stationed at Camp Grant. On another occasion, in a game played at the same site before “several thousand ladies and gentlemen” between the Pastime club and a “picked 9” from other Richmond clubs, the crowd was entertained with music by the “fine band of the Eleventh United States Infantry.” The press noted that the band added much to the pleasure of the occasion by their “excellent music.”

Professional “base-ball” soon gained its share of residents’ free time, with changing teams and changing ballparks.

As you drive past the locations of these old professional baseball fields, imagine a virtual overlay of diamonds and grandstands, of players and fans – aka “cranks,” since “fan” did not rise to popular usage till the 1890s. Names, uniforms, equipment, and other details have changed, but enthusiasm, competitive spirit and other essentials remain.

## Historic Baseball and Ballparks in Richmond, Virginia: Professional teams & parks



Richmond Rebels, photograph courtesy of Virginia Museum of History & Culture

Dates	Team Monikers	Ballparks	Locations
1875-1885	Virginians	Richmond Base-Ball Park, aka Boschen Field	At the “head of West Cary Street,” now near the intersection of Cary and Lombardy streets
1884-1885	Virginias	Virginia Base-Ball Park	Near the western end of Franklin Street, across from Richmond College. The Lee Monument is now near the original main gate and home plate.
1890	Richmonds	Mayo Island Park	Mayo Island
1894-1901	Colts, Reds, Legislators, Crows; Bluebirds; Johnny Rebs, Giants; Grays *	West-End Park	Vine and Main streets
		Broad Street Park	Allen Avenue and Broad Street
1906-1914	Lawmakers, Colts	Broad Street Park	
1912	Rebels	Lee Park	North Boulevard at Moore Street
1915-1917	Virginians, the Climbers	The new Broad Street Park	A few blocks west of the original, also on Broad. RF&P railroad ended the lease and built Broad Street Station (now the Science Museum of Virginia)
		Boulevard Field	On the site of the abandoned Lee Park, North Boulevard at Moore Street
1918-1928	Colts	Boulevard Field	
		Island Park	Mayo Island, east of 14th Street
		Tate Field	New facilities at Island Park on Mayo Island
1931-1953	Colts	Tate Field	
		City Stadium	Between McCloy Street, Freeman Road and Maplewood Avenue
		Mooers Field	Scott’s Addition, at Roseneath and Norfolk streets
1954-1964	Virginians, Vees **	Parker Field	North Boulevard and Robin Hood Road
1966-2008	Braves	Parker Field	
		The Diamond	Replaced Parker Field
2010-present (2020)	Flying Squirrels	The Diamond	
* Early baseball teams didn’t give themselves nicknames but were named after locations or colors. On the other hand, newspapers and, later, radio announcers seemed eager to bestow nicknames on teams. If a team embraced a name, changing it was no big deal.			
** Briefly the Confederates, but the controversial name was quickly ditched.			

Has Baseball Lost Its Luster, in Richmond and Throughout the Nation? by John Packett

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# Paul ‘Crocodile Dundee’ Hogan is back – sort of

By Nick Thomas

Tinseltown Talks on a new film and book from Paul Hogan

*Best known as Mick “Crocodile” Dundee, Paul Hogan in the Mr Dundee comedy film pokes fun at social media, celebrity culture, and at Hogan himself. With an 80-year-old star, the movie may strike a chord with baby boomer viewers. Nick Thomas of Tinseltown Talks talks with Hogan about his films, his book, and life.*

It’s been 35 years since Paul Hogan unleashed the iconic character of rugged reptile-wrestling Mick Dundee onto the world in the ’80s hit film “Crocodile Dundee” and two sequels. Hogan returned last December – via digital download in the U.S. – in “**The Very Excellent Mr. Dundee**,” which was released on Blu-ray/DVD Feb. 16.

The Aussie actor is quick to point out that “Mr. Dundee” is not another Dundee movie, but a self-parody where the quiet-living Hogan (starring as himself) falls afoul of a series of ill-fated self-inflicted blunders that snowball, sullying his good reputation. The film also takes a gentle jab at celebrity culture and social media.

“But it’s not a deep meaningful movie, just a bit of fun,” said Hogan from his Los Angeles home. “While it pokes fun at Hollywood rules and how social media through the modern online community can give you a reputation that you don’t deserve, it’s mostly aimed at me.”



The screenplay, written by longtime collaborator Dean Murphy, is mostly fantasy sprinkled with factual tidbits about the real Hogan. Many more facts about Hogan’s life and career are recounted in his autobiography, ***The Tap-Dancing Knife Thrower: My Life (without the boring bits)***, published last year.

While the book has been highly praised, critics were not so generous when “The Very Excellent Mr. Dundee” was first released last year. No surprise, that didn’t bother the unflappable Hogan. “I ignored it; you just take it as it comes.”

## A wildly successful action comedy

Critics were much kinder when “Crocodile Dundee” was released in 1986 to international acclaim. “Its impact was staggering, and it turned out to be the most successful independent movie ever,” said Hogan.

The original film yielded one scene destined for cinematic comedy history where Hogan defensively brandishes that giant hunting knife on the streets of New York City.

“I’ve still got the original knife, safe in a bank,” said Hogan. “We also had rubber and wooden ones for various scenes, but I co-designed the original. It might be worth a bit of money to a collector now!”

Then there was the heart-stopping scene where Hogan’s love interest, played by Linda Kozlowski, encounters a huge crocodile.

“That was mechanical, but there were real crocs in the water during filming,” he recalled. “We had guys up trees with rifles just in case one came along and ruined everything.”



So did Hogan consider asking Kozlowski, his co-star and former wife, to take a role in the new film?

“No, she’s given up acting,” he said. “I see Linda a lot and we’re still friends. She was living in Morocco for a while but now is back in LA.”

## Not unlike the fictional Aussie

Despite all the money and fame his Dundee character generated, Hogan has remained grounded, unpretentious, and largely distanced from the Hollywood scene.

“I never really fitted in,” he admitted. “After the success of Dundee, I received all sorts of script offers, good and bad. But I wasn’t interested in becoming an actor for hire. My joy was seeing something that I wrote come to life on the screen.”

While fans may be disappointed that the new movie only features a luckless Hogan as himself, the spirit of Mick Dundee lingers throughout the film. Now 81, however, Hogan has no plans to resurrect the character.

“The original worked fine. I’d like to just leave it alone now.”

*Nick Thomas teaches at Auburn University at Montgomery, Ala., and has written features, columns, and interviews for over 850 newspapers and magazines and is the author of **Raised by the Stars: Interviews with 29 Children of Hollywood Actors**.*

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# Rick Steves’ Europe: Venice and the Stendhal Syndrome

By Rick Steves

Too much of a good thing?



As we’ve had to postpone our travels because of the pandemic, I believe a weekly dose of travel dreaming can be good medicine. Here’s one of my favorite European memories set in Venice – a reminder of the adventures that await us at the other end of this crisis.

One night, I was with a tour group of older American women gazing at the Bridge of Sighs. We were talking about Casanova, the famous Italian author and lover who was sentenced for spying in the Doge’s Palace. He crossed that saddest of bridges, casting one last look at Venice, before descending into the prison.

My tour group and I were absorbed in Venice. Suddenly, as if stepping out of an old movie, a debonair Italian man walked up, embraced a woman from my group, and gave her a deep and passionate kiss. Her glasses nearly tumbled into the canal. Five other women lined up and took their turn.

The man walked back into his movie. We all stood there in stunned silence – surprised at the man, but just as surprised at the women. Then Dave, my assistant guide, took off his shoes, stripped to his boxers, and dove into the canal. Venice is a seductress. She tempts people to do things they don’t normally do.

## Overwhelmed?

For some, the beauty of Venice can be too much. The 19th-century French novelist and art critic Stendhal became physically ill in Italy, overcome by trying to absorb it all. He gave his name to a syndrome all travelers risk.

Arlene had a classic case of Stendhal Syndrome. Many years ago, she was on one of our tours a day ahead of the tour I was leading. Throughout the trip, from Amsterdam to the Rhine to the castles of Bavaria, she left me notes and messages describing her enjoyment, which approached ecstasy. In the Tirol, she left me a postcard – which I still keep on my office wall – of hang gliders soaring through the Alps past King Ludwig’s fairy-tale castle of Neuschwanstein. She circled a distant glider and marked it, “This is me!”

Share the romance and humor of Randy and Barb Fitzgerald’s trip to Venice

Arlene’s tour arrived in Venice, followed by my group the next day. As usual, we got off the vaporetto at the Rialto Bridge stop, and I marched quickly ahead of the group to the hotel to arrange room assignments so the road-weary gang could go immediately to their rooms and relax. As I approached the hotel, a chill filled the alley. The boys at the corner gelato stand looked at me in horror, as if I were about to be gunned down.

Then, from the dark end of the alley, I saw her. Sprinting at me was an American, hair flying like a Botticelli maiden, barefoot, shirt half off, greeting me as if she were a drunk bride waiting for her groom. It was Arlene.

I climbed with her up the long stairway to the hotel lobby, humoring her as she babbled about how she loved Venice and she loved me and life was so wonderful. My friend Sergio, who ran the hotel, said simply, “OK, Rick, now she is yours.”

## All’s well

Arlene had flipped out the day before. Her tour guide opted to leave her in Venice and let me handle the problem. Sergio had watched her all day long. Taking me to her room, an exhausted Sergio explained, “She threw her passport and room key from the breakfast room into the Grand Canal. Look at this room.” She had been given the small room normally reserved for bus drivers. Strewn with dainties and cute knickknacks, it looked like a wind chime sounds.

Sergio said if she continued to run half naked through the streets, she’d be arrested. A doctor on the tour sedated her the best he could. My assistant guide, role-playing the happy groom, took Arlene by ambulance boat to the hospital while I carried on with the tour. A sensitive and creative person, Arlene had thrown away her regulatory drugs and overdosed on Venice.



Later, while waiting for her husband to call from the States, I packed up her things. Underwear was draped from old-time Venice prints on the wall. Tiny touristy souvenirs – a doll in a dirndl, a miniature glass bear with a red nose, a cow creamer, three shiny Mozart chocolate balls – were lined up on the windowsill.

Arlene’s husband flew over and checked her out of the hospital. With the help of her medication, she recovered and went on to continue her love affair with Italy.

When I returned to my office after the tour, Arlene had flowers waiting for me with a thank you and an apology.

I understood. It was Venice.

Rick Steves ([www.ricksteves.com](http://www.ricksteves.com)) writes European guidebooks, hosts travel shows on public TV and radio, and organizes European tours. This article was adapted from his new book, *For the Love of Europe*. You can email Rick at [rick@ricksteves.com](mailto:rick@ricksteves.com) and follow his blog on Facebook.

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# Tranquil Beaches on the Chesapeake Bay at Virginia Beach

By Annie Tobey

A different angle on a familiar destination



It’s said that familiarity breeds contempt. Richmonders who consider Virginia Beach a been-there-done-that destination just need to dig a little deeper. Even those of us who love the area could benefit from a different perspective on the historic coastal region. Rather than letting familiarity or even apathy turn your sights elsewhere, head up the coast for a distinct experience. Enjoy new and smile-enhancing businesses, soul-refreshing nature, and tranquil beaches on the Chesapeake Bay.

## Stay on the Bay

As a refresher: Virginia Beach divides itself into three waterfront districts.

The busy Oceanfront resort area is what most of us envision, with a boardwalk separating the groomed sandy Atlantic beach from hotels and restaurants, which are backed by the Atlantic Avenue main drag, followed by a multitude of other shops, restaurants, lodging, etc.

South of the resort is Sandbridge. Still fronting the Atlantic, Sandbridge offers a quieter blend of beach houses, sand dunes, and sea oats. Back Bay National Wildlife Refuge and False Cape State Park await nearby for kayaking, hiking, and fishing. And a smattering of restaurants and shops provide just enough of a link to civilization.

And then there’s another kind of beach north of the Oceanfront district. While the Atlantic Ocean crashes onto the resort and Sandbridge shores, the Chesapeake Bay provides a scenic, peaceful option. Bayside beaches afford most of our favorite beach activities – swimming, building sandcastles, reading, sunning, napping, strolling, people watching, and forgetting our cares. Although the gentle surf doesn’t make for surfing success, it’s perfect for young children and any others who prefer waves to lap at their feet rather than bowl them over.

The region fronting the Bay is known as Chesapeake Beach. Some locals have adopted the nickname “Chic’s Beach,” after a beachfront hot dog stand run by Luther “Chic” Ledington and his wife. A “k” sneaks into the nickname occasionally, making it “Chick’s Beach.” A few of the locals are loathe to use either.

## A new place to stay



A new hotel, which opened in March 2021, provides the ideal opportunity for enjoying Chesapeake Beach – especially during social distancing and contagion concerns. **Delta Hotels Virginia Beach Bayfront Suites** has 295 roomy suites, each with one or two bedrooms and separate living spaces. The décor has a modern but comfortable vibe, with a natural beach-inspired color palette.

The Delta Hotels Bayfront Suites has a large private beach and heated outdoor pool as well as amenities such as kayak and bike rentals, a fitness

center, a retail shop with merchandise by local crafters and artists, a coffee shop with specialty drinks, fresh-made donuts, and sandwiches, and a signature restaurant, Tin Cup.

As a Marriott property, the property has taken pandemic-protection protocols seriously. You can check out their **guidelines** before you book to make sure you’ll feel comfortable and safe.

## Taste a benefit of the pandemic

The coronavirus has wreaked havoc on restaurants and bars, even forcing many to close. Chef Kevin Dubel of the hotel’s Tin Cup Kitchen + Oyster Bar, however, realized an advantage.

“With many big cities shutting down amidst Covid-19, I had a few people I have worked with dating as far back as 2006 looking for work reach out to me, specifically to get away from major cities,” he said. “This allowed us to assemble a group of chefs, restaurant managers, and bar managers with a powerhouse resume.” These professionals have worked restaurants in New York City, Boston, Washington D.C., and Florida. “They will help bring fresh ideas and new approaches to hospitality to Virginia Beach.” And, he added, “It is also great to reunite with these old friends and see how we have all grown into our crafts.”

Tin Cup Kitchen + Oyster Bar is billed as a coastal American eatery. It offers seafood dishes such as New England seafood chowder, blackened shrimp toast, Chesapeake crab cakes, and Buffalo sugar toads (aka, the chicken wings of the sea). It also serves up oysters from the eight oyster regions of Virginia.

**Eight oyster regions of Virginia?** Why, yes! Because oysters reflect the waters where they grow, **Virginia oysters** can be very salty or not-at-all salty, bold or mellow, creamy, smooth, and savory. This has come to be known as “merroir,” aka the “terroir of the sea.” In Virginia, oyster beds range from full-on saltwater to (relatively) freshwater harvested. The saltiest oysters come from beds in the Atlantic Ocean, giving them a bold salty flavor on the front that mellows to sweet butter at the finish. Notably different are the oysters from beds farther up the Chesapeake Bay and closer to freshwater river outlets, for a sweeter, light cream taste.

To pair with your food, Tin Cup offers craft cocktails (including the signature The Cup Smash), local beer, and wine. And to round out your experience, the restaurant offers an outdoor terrace overlooking the Bay. If you prefer, the restaurant offers to-go orders and contactless delivery for room service.

## Besides the tranquil beaches on the Chesapeake Bay ...

Should you choose to venture out, these nearby sites can enhance your stay.

Head over to the new (2018) Lesner Bridge and check out “The Canoes” art sculpture. Ten 13-foot-long aluminum canoes arranged in a star pattern, mounted on an 8,000-pound stainless steel arch, pay tribute to the history of the local waterways. Each canoe is hand cut with intricate filigree patterns, inspired by the decorative arts of the early settlers. The sculpture cost \$350,000, which was raised through private donations to the Public Art Virginia Beach Foundation.



A stone’s throw from the bridge is **American Brew**, ready to fill your craving for coffee drinks and breakfast ... and for whiskey and lunch and dinner. Founded by fitness professional Ashley Horner, American brew offers food that’s deliciously fresh and healthy and food that’s deliciously decadent. After all, many of us exercise so we can splurge on a meal!

Head about a quarter mile from American Brew to **Pleasure House Point Natural Area**, one of the largest undeveloped parcels of land on the Lynnhaven River. Hike through acres of tidal marsh, sandy shores, and maritime forest.



Colorful, quirky, and delicious, **The Leaping Lizard Café** is my must-stop when I’m in the area. The seasonal menu features creative dishes to please hearty appetites and snobby eaters alike. Think hearty for options like the beef and venison burger, blackened salmon mac and cheese, duck tacos, seafood entrées, and small plates. Think healthy and order beet salad, sparkling herbal water, vegan desserts, and house-made juices.

Encompassing 2,888 acres, 1½ miles of beachfront, and 20 miles of trails, **First Landing State Park** offers a natural oasis for getting your nature fix. Look for the towering bald cypress trees. Meander onto the boardwalks and overlooks for swampland views inspiring prehistoric imaginings. Besides the Chesapeake beachfront, the park borders Broad Bay and offers a boat launch for motorboats and other small craft and plenty of spots for fishing and crabbing. Rent a stand-up paddleboard from **Tula Adventure Sports** to wind your way through the gentle Long Creek, rimmed with tall marsh grasses.

Three tasting rooms within a six-mile stretch offer the chance to check out some maybe-new-to-you Virginia craft beverages. **Deadline Brewing Project** brews creative seasonal beers like Dulce de Leche brown, Enigma IPA with Sauvignon blanc grapes, and cranberry maple stout. **Commonwealth Brewing** has gained a reputation for hoppy beers, wild and sour fermentations, Belgian-style ales, and big beers such as barrel-aged imperial stouts. **Mermaid Winery** produces and serves its own wines, made from Virginia and California grapes. Plus, visitors to Mermaid Winery (the Chic’s Beach location as well as the original Norfolk location) can also choose from a full menu and other wines from around the world.

And when you’re through exploring, Delta Hotels Virginia Beach Bayfront Suites is waiting. Enjoy a nightcap at the Tin Cup, a soak in the heated pool, stroll along the quiet beach ... or settle in to the comfort of your room, where familiarity promises relaxation.

Updated March 19, 2021, to note opening of the Delta Hotels Virginia Beach Bayfront Suites.



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# Northeast Tennessee Offers Entertainment, Amusement, and – Safety!

By Rachel Marsh

Take a road trip to a friendly area ready to welcome you with open arms (six feet away)



As wintertime blissfully fades and we all start to come out of hibernation, that travel bug that’s been plaguing us since last spring seems even stronger these days.

While flying still may seem too risky, there are still road-trippable destinations that can check all of the boxes you seek in a vacation:

- Leisurely
- Entertaining
- Not your house

Northeast Tennessee – the chunk of the state that shares a border with Virginia – is a treasure trove of entertainment for travel seekers. Get pleasantly turned around in its cluster of quaint towns, including Jonesborough, Kingsport, Bristol, and Johnson City. They’re only an approximately five-hour drive from Richmond, and they promise an enjoyable escape with activities to appease every type of visitor.

And with many outdoor recreation options, patios on which to dine, and overall socially distant safety, you can feel more comfortable about traveling – even with that pesky pandemic.

## Pay Mother Nature a Visit

The most COVID-friendly (well, I guess I mean COVID-unfriendly) activities include anything outdoors. And this area of Tennessee, fertile with woodsy trails and flowing bodies of water, is perfect for getting up close and personal with Mother Nature – without getting up close and personal with anyone outside of your “pod.”

### *The South Holston Dam and Reservoir*

Not only is it useful doing all the important things that dams do, the **South Holston Dam** – located just south of Bristol – is also a premium destination for nature lovers of all levels. The area itself features 10 miles of smooth hiking trails; plenty of reserved picnic spots; and the kind of environmental scenery your stuck-indoors brain has been craving.



*South Holston Dam and Reservoir | Photo credit: Jonathan Mostoway*

The reservoir has been a hotspot for fishing and fly fishing for decades; find trout-rich waters and an annual migration of white sea bass.

And if you’re feeling really environmentally inspired, the area also harbors the ever-popular Little Oak Campgrounds. It features universally accessible RV and tent campsites, many of which are right by the water.

More of a look-but-don’t-touch kind of explorer? Even a scenic drive through the dam/reservoir is worth the detour.

### *Bays Mountain Park and Planetarium*

For an even more well-rounded dose of wilderness, head to **Bays Mountain Park and Planetarium**. Located in Kingsport, Bays Mountain is the largest city park in Tennessee (and among the largest in the country!).

On the “park” side of this nature preserve, enjoy as much of its scenic 3,500 acres as you can take in. Walk, jog, run, or simply stroll through its 40 (yes, 40!) miles of scenic hiking trails; or hitch a ride on the park’s barge to float along Bays Mountain Lake and get a glimpse of the park’s aquatic side.

But the greatest appeal of Bays Mountain is, of course, its abundance of enclosed wildlife. Like if a zoo and a forest had a baby, the park has wide-open habitats for a variety of animals. Find otters, deer, wolves, bobcats, and raptors (think birds, not Jurassic World).



*Saturday morning wolf howling at Bays Mountain Park and Planetarium | Photo credit: Jonathan Mostoway*

If you’re in the area on a Saturday morning, pencil in a visit to Bays Mountain for the weekly wolf howling. Witness a session of primal howls throughout the wolf den, as incited by one of the park’s uniquely skilled rangers. (Hearing a human so accurately replicate a howl is worth a visit in itself). It’s (probably) (hopefully) the closest you’ll ever get to a pack of howling wolves without the fear of getting mauled.



## A (Masked) Nosedive Into History

Northeast Tennessee isn’t all scenic trails and crunchy granola, though. As a centuries-old state, it’s filled with historic tales and sites of all types.

### *Andrew Johnson Was Here*

The 17th president of the United States lived in Greeneville, Tennessee – and he’s got the homestead to prove it. Visitors are invited to take a **self-guided tour of the former president’s 19th-century house** just off of Main Street, where he resided before and after his term in the White House.

Explore his and his family’s authentic décor, artifacts, and furniture (many of which even resided in the White House with him!).

As you walk through the halls, decorated and trimmed as they would have been during Johnson’s time, learn the stories of the family members that these walls witnessed: from Eliza Johnson’s life as the First Lady to their son’s post-war battle with PTSD. The tour even dedicates ample attention to his most well-known slaves, like Dolly and Sam – including their stories and day-to-day lives. And don’t forget to look for the graffiti inscribed into the walls, placed by soldiers occupying the area during Johnson’s stint as military governor for Tennessee.

But if that’s not enough Andrew Johnson for you, take the three-block trek to the city’s visitor center; it features the small presidential museum, in addition to Johnson’s original tailor shop from the 1830s!

### *Tennessee’s Oldest Town*

For a very romantic comedy-like historic tour, might I recommend **Jonesborough**? Not only does this small town have the kind of charm that will make you want to open a boutique bookstore and fall in love, it’s also Tennessee’s oldest town.

Founded in 1779, the town is filled with historic buildings, landmarks, sites, and tales. And like a fine wine, artisan cheese, or friendship, this town has only gotten better with age.



*Jonesborough, Tennessee | Photo credit: Jonathan Mostoway*

Stroll along the delightfully vintage sidewalks of Jonesborough (because strolling is the only way to walk through it). And as you admire the classic architecture and boutique shops, get the full inside scoop with the town’s **Official Walking Tour**.

This carefully curated pamphlet features 30 historic sites and buildings relevant to the city’s history. Find landmarks like the old courthouse, where “The Lost State of Franklin” was formed; Jackson Theatre, the town’s first moving picture theater; and an authentic pioneer log cabin (built in the 1770s!).

Get an even more comprehensive picture of the town with facts, stories, and even photo-ops. All at your own pace!

## Wine and Dine Yourself in Northeast Tennessee

But as they say in Tennessee, man cannot live on recreational activities alone; so don’t forget to stop and give in to your epicurean pleasures.

### *Noms*

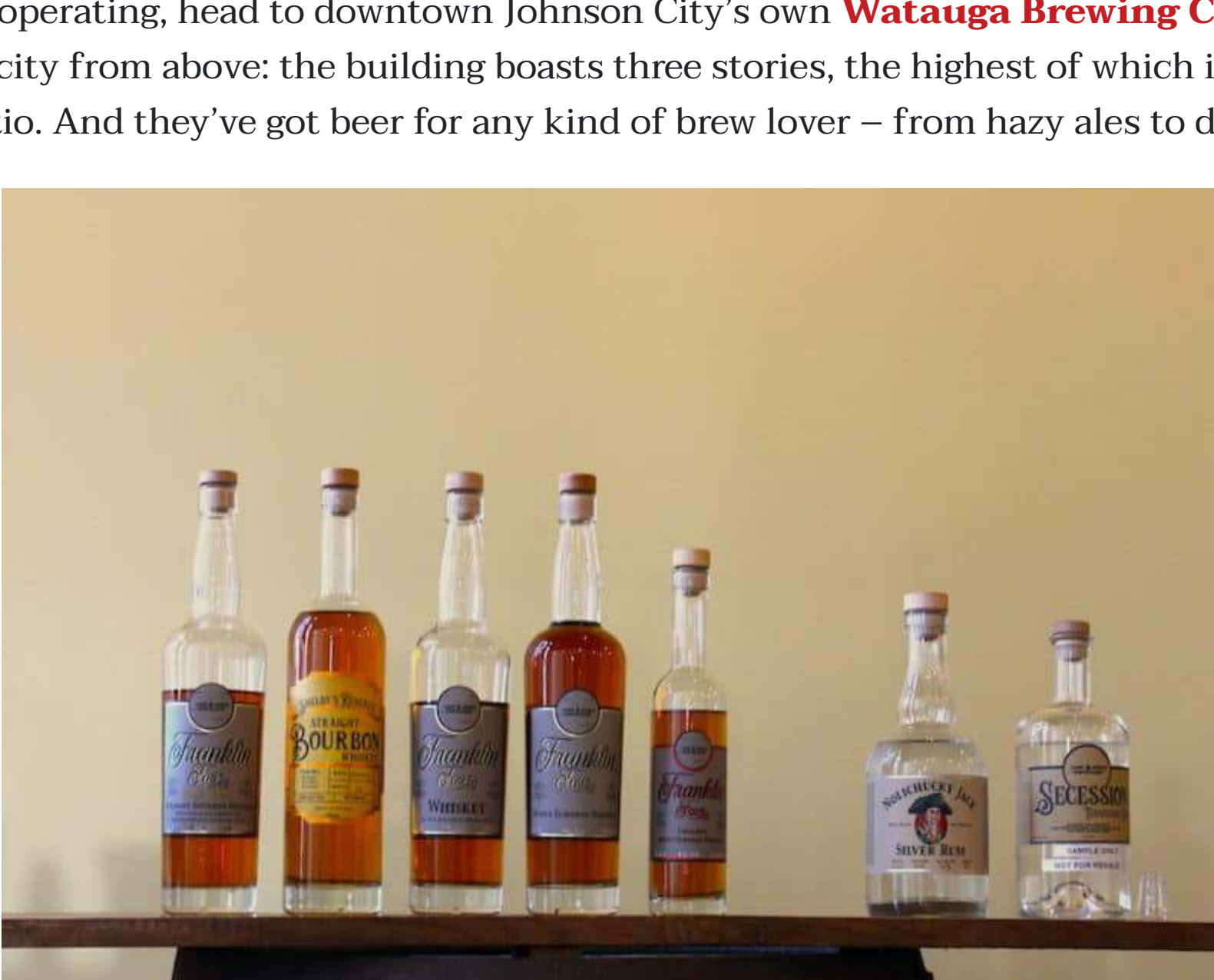
For legendary Americana fare in the heart of east Tennessee, take your appetite to **Label**. Their menu features an eclectic variety of cuisine to satisfy a wide variety of tastes; find seared steaks and unique burgers to fresh seafood and made-to-order sushi. After a satisfying meal and a patio that faces the city’s charming downtown, it may come as no surprise that Label was once voted the best restaurant in Johnson City!

Or to really delve into the kind of comfort food this corner of the south has to offer, grab a table at **Main Street Café** – located in Jonesborough. Enjoy a belly-pleasing array of hearty deli sandwiches, fresh soups, picnic salads, and more. And – al fresco dining? Absolutely; they’ve significantly expanded their patio to better accommodate a higher number of patrons.

For all of you Tex-Mex enthusiasts, Kingsport’s new(ish) eatery should catch your attention. **Fusion**, a great blend of Southwest favorites, features all of the usual suspects: tacos, sandwiches, enchiladas, and more ... with an extensive drink menu to round it all out. Like guac? Order a bowl and they’ll make it right in front of you!

### *Sips*

If the weather is cooperating, head to downtown Johnson City’s own **Watauga Brewing Company**. Grab a pint and enjoy the city from above: the building boasts three stories, the highest of which is a spacious rooftop bar and patio. And they’ve got beer for any kind of brew lover – from hazy ales to dark stouts.



*Lost State Distillery | Photo credit: Jonathan Mostoway*

If liquor is more to your liking, swing by one of the area’s nearby distilleries for a quick tasting and a bottle to go. **Lost State Distillery**, located in Bristol, features everything from bourbon to rum to gin to – yes – cinnamon maple whiskey! Or if you’re in the Jonesborough area, I would highly recommend popping up the hill past Main Street to **Tennessee Hills Distillery**. This locally owned business boasts a huge array of whiskeys; particularly appealing to those who like a little flavor in their sips (lavender lemon, pecan pie, or blood orange and honey, anyone?).

Even with socially distant considerations, this bordering-Virginia section of Tennessee is friendly and welcoming to guests from all over. It has plenty of diversions for your cooped-up brain, and is close enough for a long weekend trip – but has enough to fill a week-long getaway.

Hey, your house sure could use the break.

**NortheastTennessee.org**



# Rick Steves’ Europe: The Queen’s English

By Rick Steves

Don’t get your knickers in a twist when visiting Great Britain



*T*ake a trip through funny British phrases and idioms with travel writer Rick Steves, so you don’t get your knickers in a twist when chatting with locals.

As we’ve had to postpone our travels because of the pandemic, I believe a weekly dose of travel dreaming can be good medicine. These thoughts about communicating on the road in Britain are a reminder of the fun that awaits us at the other end of this crisis.

Oscar Wilde famously said that the English “have really everything in common with America nowadays – except, of course, language.” It’s still true. A trip to Britain comes with plenty of linguistic surprises.

I’ll never forget checking into a small-town B&B as a teenager on my first solo European adventure. The landlady cheerily asked me, “And what time would you like to be knocked up in the morning?”

I looked over at her husband, who winked, “Would a fry at half-eight be suitable?” The next morning, I got a rap on the door at 8 a.m. and a huge British breakfast a half-hour later.

## Britain can be an adventure in accents and idioms ...

Every day you’ll see babies in prams and pushchairs, sucking dummies as mothers change wet nappies. Soon the kids can trade in their nappies for smalls and spend a penny on their own. “Spend a penny” is British for a visit to the loo (bathroom). Older British kids enjoy candy floss (cotton candy), naughts and crosses (tic-tac-toe), big dippers (roller coasters), and iced lollies (popsicles). Kids are constantly in need of an Elastoplast or sticking plaster (Band-Aid), which their parents buy at the chemist’s (pharmacy).



*Traditional fish and chip (Erik Lattwein, Dreamstime)*

In a stationery store, you can get sticky tape or Sellotape (adhesive tape), rubbers (erasers), and scribbling blocks (scratch pads). At garden shops, those with green fingers (a green thumb) might pick up some courgette (zucchini), swede (rutabaga), or aubergine (eggplant) seeds. If you need a torch (flashlight), visit the ironmonger’s (hardware store).

In Britain, fries are chips and potato chips are crisps. A beef burger, made with mince (hamburger meat), comes on a toasted bap (bun). For pudding (dessert), have some sponge (cake).

## More funny British phrases and idioms

The British have a great way with names. You’ll find towns with names like Upper and Lower Slaughter, Once Brewed, and Itching Field. This cute coziness comes through in their language as well. You’ll visit “brilliant” (wonderful) sights that’ll give you “goose pimples” (goose bumps). Your car will have a bonnet and a boot rather than a hood and trunk. You’ll drive on motorways, and when the freeway divides, it becomes a dual carriageway. Never go anticlockwise (counterclockwise) in a roundabout. Gas is petrol, a truck is a lorry, and when you hit a tailback (traffic jam), don’t get your knickers in a twist (make a fuss) – just be patient and queue up (line up).

The British never say they have a two-week vacation, but many locals holiday for a fortnight, often in a homely (homey) rural cottage or possibly on the Continent (continental Europe). They might pack a face flannel (washcloth) and hair grips (bobby pins) in their bum bag (never a “fanny” pack – which refers to the most private part of a woman’s anatomy). If it’s rainy, they wear a mackintosh (raincoat) or an anorak (parka) with press studs (snaps).

If you get settled into a flat (apartment), you can post letters in the pillar box or give your mum a trunk (long-distance) call. If that’s too dear (expensive), she’ll say you’re tight as a fish’s bum. If she witters on (gabs and gabs), tell her you’re knackered (exhausted) and it’s been donkey’s years (ages) since you’ve slept. After washing up (doing the dishes) and hoovering (vacuuming), you can have a plate of biscuits (cookies) and, if you’re so inclined, a neat (straight) whisky. Too much of that whisky will get you sloshed, paralytic, bevved, wellied, ratted, popped up, or even pissed as a newt.

## Accent on regions

Then there is the question of accents. These days, accents are trendy in Britain. Politicians, newscasters, and movie stars have been favoring deep accents over the Queen’s English. It’s hard for American ears to pick out all of the variations – and some accents are so thick they sound like a foreign language – but most Brits can determine what region a person is from based on their accent.

All across the British Isles, you’ll encounter new words, crazy humor, and colorful accents. Pubs are colloquial treasure chests. Church services, sporting events, and local comedy shows are linguistic classrooms. The streets of Liverpool, the docks of London, and children’s parks throughout the UK are playgrounds for the American ear. One of the beauties of touring Great Britain is the illusion of hearing a foreign language and actually understanding it ... most of the time.

*Rick Steves ([www.ricksteves.com](http://www.ricksteves.com)) writes European guidebooks, hosts travel shows on public TV and radio, and organizes European tours. This article was adapted from his new book, **For the Love of Europe**. You can email Rick at [rick@ricksteves.com](mailto:rick@ricksteves.com) and follow his blog on Facebook.*

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# Boomer Brain Games

Exercise Your Mind with Our Fun & Games



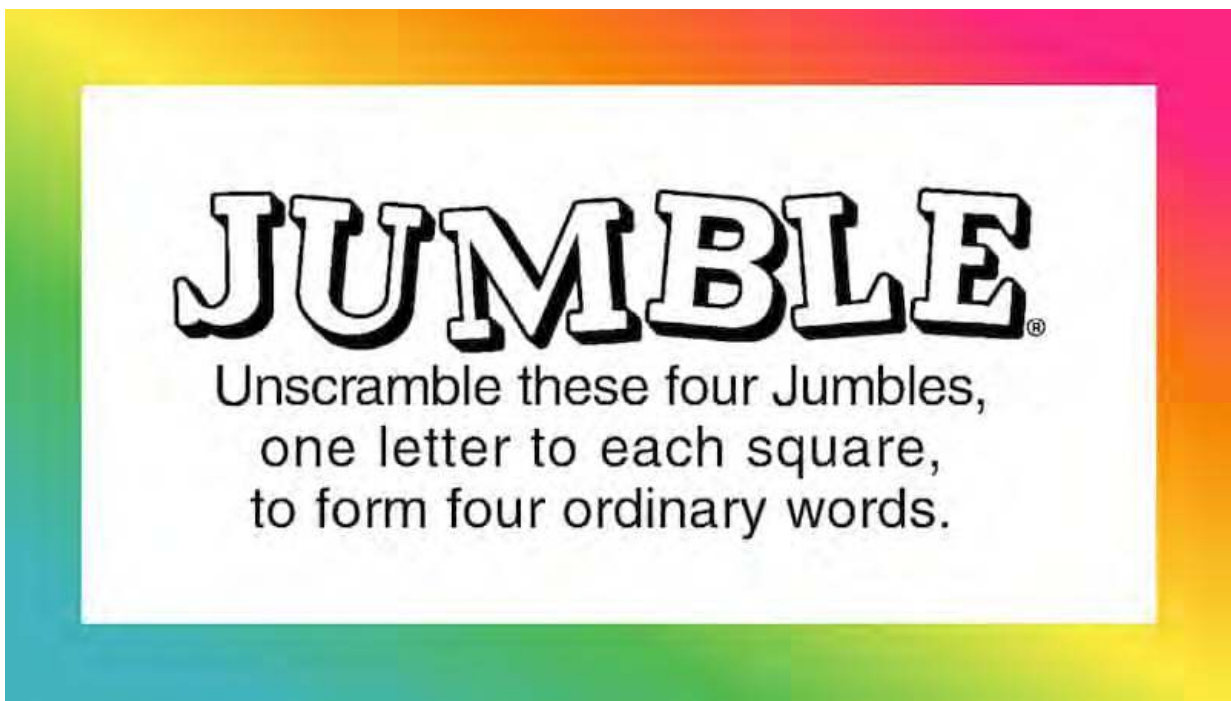
For mental fitness and fun, we present Boomer Brain Games for baby boomers, a mix of puzzles and quizzes to stimulate your mind and your sense of joy. We offer classic games such as Jumble and Boggle, a cartoon caption contest, and crossword puzzles and trivia quizzes with a hearty dose of baby boomer pop culture.

See, exercise *can* be fun!



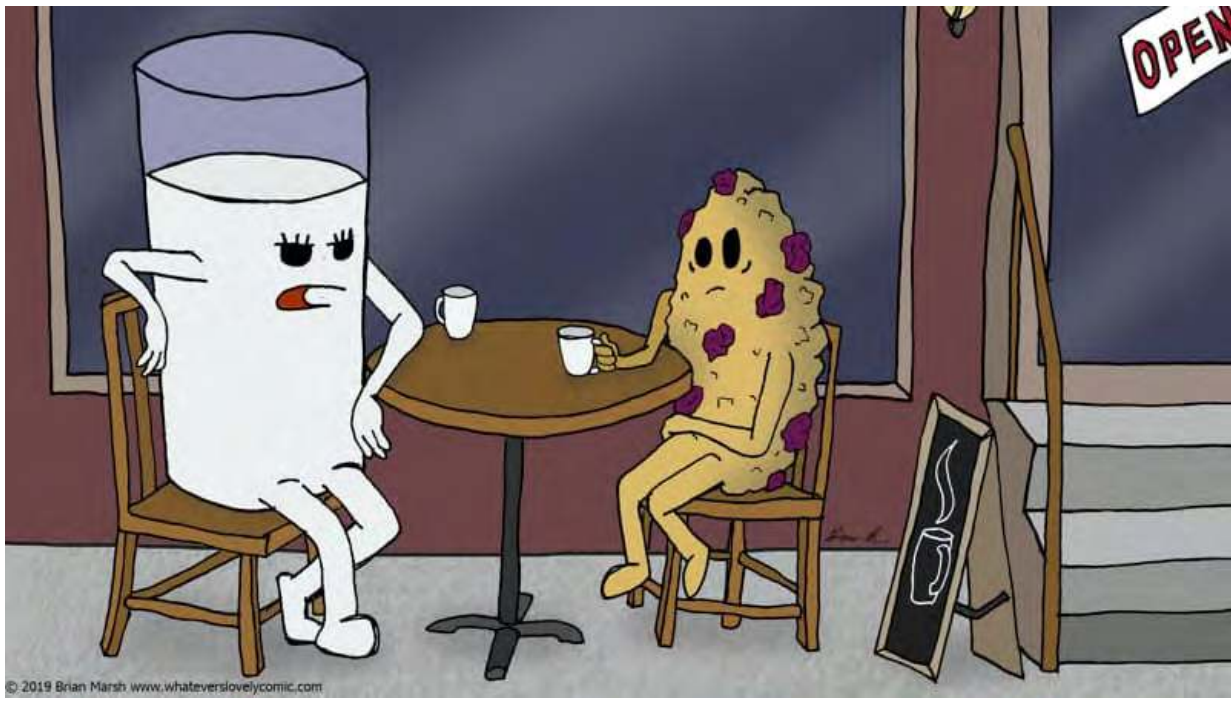
## Tackle BOOMER magazine trivia quizzes or interactive crossword puzzles.

Find **baby boomer-tailored topics such as** the Classic TV Ads trivia quiz, Wintry trivia and crossword puzzle, Virginia Historic Beverages trivia, Music, Spring, Feel-Good Fun, Gardens & Greenery, Dy-no-mite '70s trivia, Pop Culture Memories, About Those Museums, Behind the Curtain, Atlantic Beach Life, and Heavy & Groovy 1969.



## Unscramble the letters and straighten your mind with Boggle and Jumble.

Every Monday, we post a new **Boggle** puzzle, inviting you to find as many words as you can within the seemingly random letters ... always with themed bonus words! Then on Thursday, you can look for a new **Jumble** puzzle, four anagrams plus a surprise riddle made with select letters from the anagrams.



## Test your humor with our Cartoon Caption Contest.

Create a funny caption for our latest cartoon, vote on the best entries from the previous contest, and check out previous winners. Follow our monthly updates on the **Cartoon Caption Contest page**.

Want to learn more about maintaining a healthy brain? Read **our review** of *Keep Sharp: Build a Better Brain at Any Age*, by CNN Chief Medical Correspondent Sanjay Gupta.

Or cut to the chase and purchase a copy of **Keep Sharp** now!

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