

Live Life

*“I remembered that the real world was wide,
and that a varied field of hopes and fears,
of sensations and excitements, awaited those who
had courage to go forth into its expanse....”*

—CHARLOTTE BRONTË, FROM *JANE EYRE*

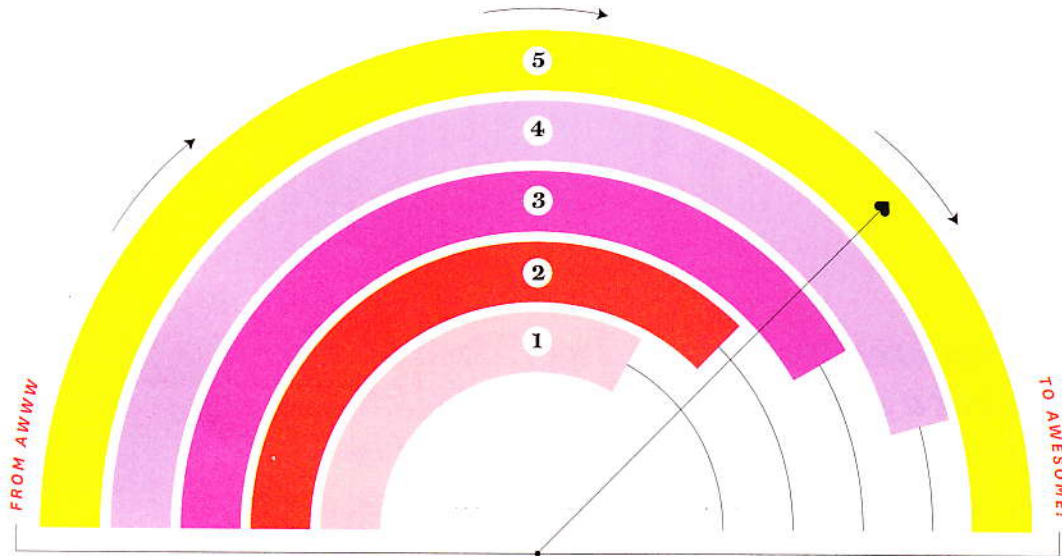


THE GRATITUDE METER

5

Things We Can't Stop Smiling About This Month

BY EMMA HAAK



1

MUSIC TO OUR EARS

In a Paraguayan slum, the students in the Recycled Orchestra play classical music on instruments made of repurposed trash. Check out the trailer for *Landfill Harmonic*, the upcoming documentary about the group, on YouTube.



2

SNIFF TEST

Researchers in the Netherlands trained Cliff, a 2-year-old beagle, to sniff out a common bacteria called *C. difficile*, which can cause extreme intestinal distress. Cliff's uncanny accuracy means that future doctor visits may involve fewer stethoscopes and more cold, wet noses.



3

NEW ORDER

Former McDonald's executive Mike Roberts has traded burgers and fries for Brussels sprouts and kabocha squash with LYFE Kitchen, his new, healthy fast food joint. With two restaurants in California, Roberts is planning up to 250 more across the country.



4

KINGS OF CABLE

HBO's epic *Game of Thrones* returns March 31. Watch it for the war, sex, betrayal, and mythical creatures—or just tune in for the breathtaking vistas of Northern Ireland, Iceland, Morocco, and the Croatian coast, where the series was filmed.



5

(SUGAR) HIGH ART

Caitlin Freeman, pastry chef at the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art's coffee bar, has written a new cookbook, *Modern Art Desserts*. Check it out next time you need to astonish dinner guests with intricate Mondrian- and Lichtenstein-inspired confections.

OPEN BOOKS

Little Free Libraries help forge new friendships.

One day in 2009, as a tribute to his late, book-loving mother, entrepreneur and amateur carpenter Todd Bol, 57, erected a dollhouse-size red wooden box, decorated to resemble a schoolhouse, in his Hudson, Wisconsin, front yard. Inside, he stocked two dozen or so books, and he put up a sign inviting his neighbors to take one and then return one. Soon his "magic little cottage," as he calls it, was drawing dozens of people to his lawn, not just to peruse the offerings but to strike up conversations. "Everyone loved it," says Bol. "They stood there reading right in my yard."

Sensing he was onto something, Bol dialed up Rick Brooks, a University of Wisconsin-Madison outreach program manager he'd met at a workshop on local business development. Brooks, 64, was fascinated by Bol's idea for tiny libraries, and the two decided to promote them on a larger scale. They started by selling fully constructed library models, then a kit of wood, screws, and Plexiglas, and offering them on littlefreelibrary.org. After the pair was interviewed on Wisconsin Public Radio, the calls and orders poured in. Now there are more than 8,000 "LFLs" around the world. "People who live near an LFL say they're meeting more folks than they've met in 25 years," Brooks says. Adds Bol, "Somebody said it's like having a front porch that extends to your sidewalk." —LESLIE GOLDMAN

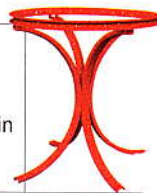




That's the Idea!

This Earth Day, O celebrates the planet-friendly passion projects of three inspired entrepreneurs.

Krystal O'Mara, 31, founder, ReMain Eco Designs



HER PRODUCT: O'Mara's modern furniture and lighting fixtures, fashioned from recycled bike parts, include side tables made from rims and sconces built out of spokes and hubs.

HER STORY: After quitting her hotel sales job in Amarillo, Texas, three years ago to spend more time with her son, O'Mara started her own interior design business. When she volunteered to donate a piece of furniture to a local bike race's charity auction, she made the piece herself using recycled bike parts. The small end table she created by bolting together old rims and spokes inspired her to gather more parts from local bike shops. Soon she'd taught herself to weld and added chandeliers and lamps to her repertoire. "I grew up on a farm where we reused everything," she says. "I love saving these old bike parts from the landfill." (remaindesigns.com)

—ARIANNA DAVIS

Kristy Lewis, 32, cofounder, Quinn Popcorn



HER PRODUCT: Savory organic popcorn in flavors like Parmesan and rosemary, olive oil and herb, and hickory-smoked Cheddar, all packaged in paper-only bags.

HER STORY: Two years ago, Lewis was torn between pregnancy cravings for microwave popcorn and her desire to avoid the unhealthy oils and chemicals often found inside the bags. After her son Quinn was born, she

and her husband decided to reinvent her favorite snack, starting with the bag. "We wanted to take out everything bad," explains Lewis. They eventually found a European manufacturer that makes compostable, chemical-free paper. Quinn Popcorn, which comes in five inventive flavors and uses only organic ingredients, first became available in Boston, Lewis's hometown, and is now sold in stores nationwide. (quinnpopcorn.com) —MARGARET RHODES

Heather Belle, 47, designer and founder, Heather Belle Co.



HER PRODUCT: Sleek, bright vegan handbags with a texture mimicking that of exotic skins. "My line lets people appreciate the beauty of these creatures without harming them," says Belle.

HER STORY: Belle's passion for design is in her genes—her mother was a sculptor and artist—and in 2010 she launched her own jewelry and leather handbag lines; she liked the look of exotic skins but knew that the practices behind them could be cruel and wasteful (the animals are often raised and killed solely for use in luxury goods). So she was excited to come across resin material that could be molded to uncannily resemble the skins of crocodiles, eels, pythons, and elephants. "Having the bags handcast and handpainted also allows me to evoke the imperfections in real animal skin," says Belle, who has plans to expand into belts, iPad cases, and even shoes. (heatherbelleco.com)

—KATE SZTABNIK

Good Eggs

With help from Jimi Hendrix and a high-speed dental drill, Beth Ann Magnuson creates breathtakingly fine art.



Beth Ann Magnuson
59
Bishop Hill, Illinois

→ HER BACKGROUND

Beth Ann Magnuson traces her affection for offbeat art to her mother and grandmother, whose “use what you have” mentality taught her to see aesthetic value even in humble objects. But it wasn’t until she moved from New York City to rural Illinois about 20 years ago that a local “farm gal” opened her eyes to the full potential of some of the humblest: eggs. Whereas most of us regard them as things to boil, scramble, fry—and, come Easter, dye—Magnuson looks at an egg and sees a masterpiece.

→ HER TECHNIQUE

On a typical workday, Magnuson retreats to her studio, cranks up Erik Satie or Jimi Hendrix on her headphones, slips on a protective mask, and carves intricate designs into a half-dozen eggs. She begins by drilling a small hole into the blunt end and blowing out the white and yolk. Next, she

draws a design—often based on handwoven Victorian lace or 19th-century floral wallpaper—on the shell. For the actual carving, she uses a high-speed dental drill—which, she says, cuts the shell “like a hot knife in butter.” She then cleans each egg in a bleach solution and applies a protective coating to prevent erosion. Once they’re dry, Magnuson sells the intricate creations on her Web site, windycornerfarm.com. While she prefers to come up with her own patterns (“It’s a doodler’s art,” she says), she has also carved swans, angels, and elephants for custom orders.

→ HER DEVOTION

Describing the first time she carved an egg (“I stayed up all night, drilling and carving and doodling”), Magnuson speaks with so much enthusiasm that you’d be forgiven for thinking she discovered the art form only last week. But after two decades, the unusual work has in fact become soothingly familiar—a process as delicate and durable as the eggshells themselves.

—STEPHANIE PALUMBO

It can take Magnuson up to one hour to carve her intricate designs into an egg.

A “use what you have” mentality taught Magnuson to see aesthetic value even in humble objects.



Eva Mendes

The beguiling actress—whose new thriller, *The Place Beyond the Pines*, hits theaters March 29—revs up with a cup of joe and winds down with Morley Safer.

Best **COMFORT FOOD**

I always thought I'd outgrow pizza someday, but it's still my favorite. There's a restaurant here in Los Angeles called Masa whose deep-dish is really trending around my house right now.

Best **SURPRISE**

Hugo, who I got seven years ago, was supposed to be just a guard dog, but he's become such a force in my life. He's incredible: I pity the squirrel who thinks he can walk around the backyard after 10 P.M.

Best **PICK-ME-UP**

Coffee. Sure, it sounds obvious—but I'm Cuban, and in our culture, coffee is no joke.

Best **COMPLIMENT**

Years ago I did a film with Ellen Barkin, and when I met her she said, "You look like you swallowed a 10K light"—which is a really bright light used in making movies. It was such a blunt and beautiful thing to say, I teared up on the spot.

Best **MISTAKE**

I love when people spill things in my house—it adds to the place's history. Every time I see that wine stain on my couch, I'll think of the story behind it.

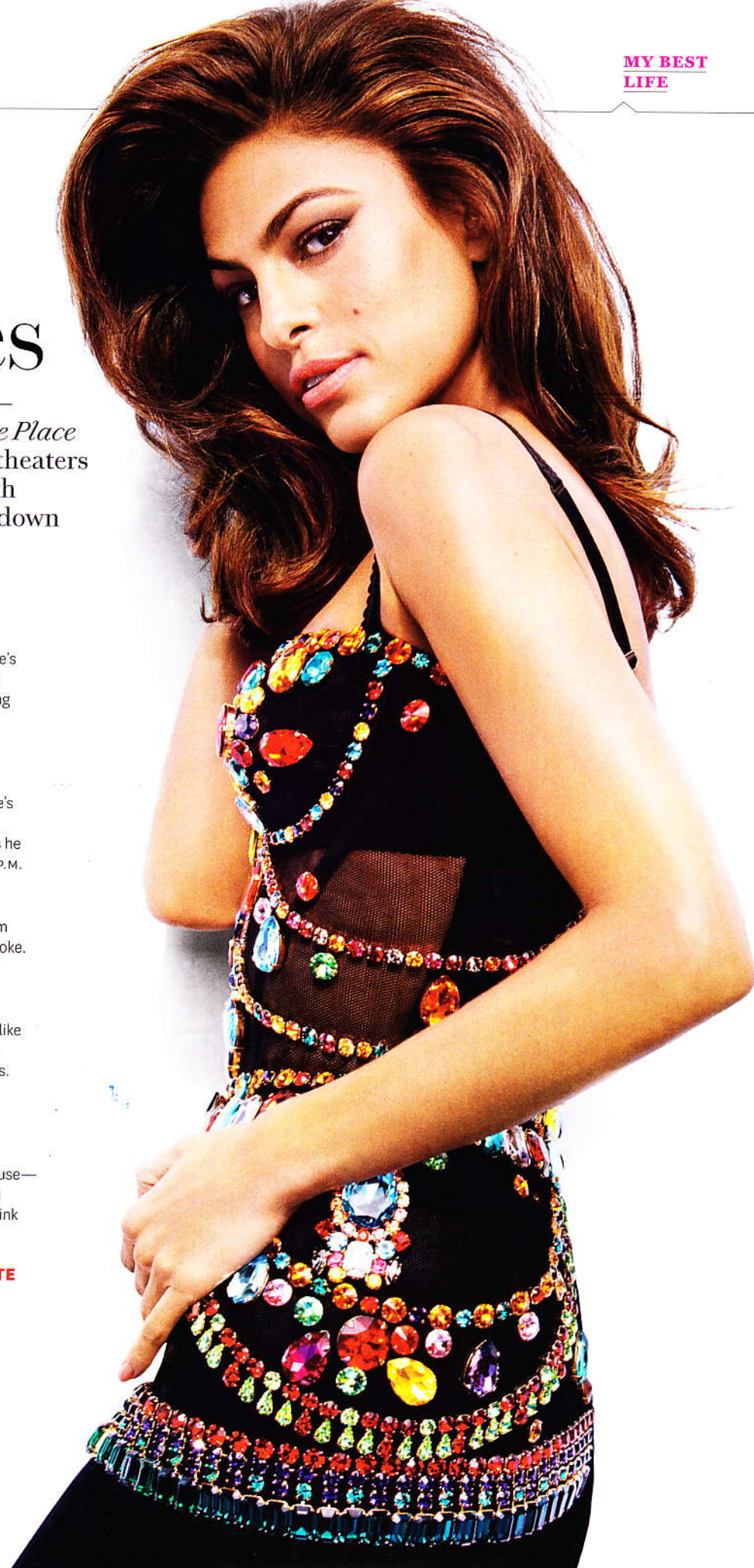
Best **REASON TO STAY UP LATE**

I like to pile up episodes of *60 Minutes* on my TiVo and have a marathon. They bring to light stuff I'd never have heard about otherwise.

Best **DISH**

I don't cook. I respect food too much.

—As told to Katie Arnold-Ratliff



BACKSTORY

Written in Ink

An eclectic blog uncovers the tales behind strangers' tattoos.

➤➤ Trendy haircuts grow out, unworthy boyfriends get kicked to the curb, but tattoos are forever. On their year-old blog, *Pen & Ink* (penandink.tumblr.com), illustrator Wendy MacNaughton, 37, and writer Isaac Fitzgerald, 30, reveal the often hilarious, sometimes poignant stories behind these permanent remnants of our fleeting opinions, passions, and phases.

The pair, who met four years ago while working for an online magazine, got the idea while discussing their own youthful body art. Now they find subjects at bars and dinner parties or via e-mail submissions; MacNaughton draws their tattoos in ink, then paints them with watercolor, while Fitzgerald collects and edits the backstories (see highlights below).

To date the blog has attracted more than 48,000 followers and even a book deal (look for *Pen & Ink* on store shelves next year). "It's easy to roll our eyes at our younger selves," says MacNaughton, "but tattoos are a testament to how strongly and deeply we felt things. Both of mine are embarrassing—but I'll never get them removed."

—LAUREN MURROW

HOW DO WE LOVE POETRY?

In honor of National Poetry Month, let us count a few of the ways.

2

Number of words in what may be the world's shortest poem, delivered by Muhammad Ali at a Harvard University lecture in 1975: "Me? Wheel!"

4,874

Miles then-88-year-old Robert Frost had to go before he slept—when, in 1962, President Kennedy sent him to Moscow to wax poetic with Nikita Khrushchev about fixing U.S.-Soviet relations.

365,000

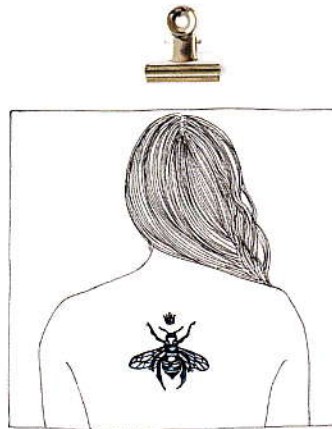
Number of high school students who entered the Poetry Out Loud Recitation Contest in 2012. There was only one winner, but each student walked away with respect for the spoken word.

600

Number of Scrabble tiles board-game-lover Mike Keith used to create a poem comprising six three-line stanzas in 2000. Each stanza used a complete set of 100 tiles; since we're counting, that's 1,122 points.

I Number of poetry-themed cocktails that have stolen our hearts (so far). To make the "Pablo Neruda," created by New York City's Back Forty restaurant, mix 1 ounce each Chilean pisco, Fino sherry, and lemon juice; 2/3 ounce maple syrup; and 1/3 ounce water. Cheers!

—ARIANNA DAVIS AND ZOE DONALDSON



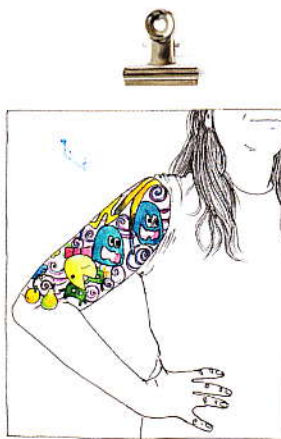
"When we were little, my sister and I would race after bees in the lavender bushes and try to pet them without getting stung. We were in awe of their tiny stingers that could bring a grown man down."

—Christine Hostetler, copywriter



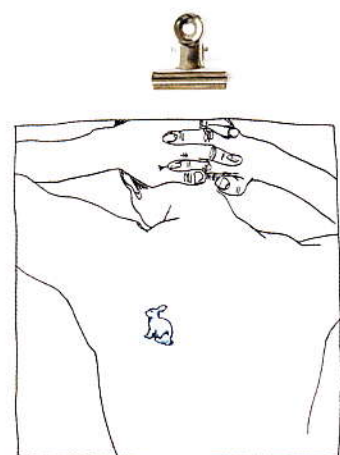
"On the way to the shop...I decided on a T. rex. This may or may not have something to do with my painfully small hands. And now...my T. rex reminds me not to take myself too seriously. After all, I have a dinosaur on my ribs."

—Alise Alicardi, between jobs



"I got these tattoos as a tribute to my grandmother. I grew up playing video games with her.... To this day, whenever I see her, she always starts the conversation by saying, 'Please don't get any more tattoos, Anna.'"

—Anna Schoenberger, thrift store manager



"I got this tattoo because I suspected one day I would think it was stupid. I wanted to mark time, or mark the me that thought it was a good idea."

—Chris Colin, writer

SINGULAR WOMAN

On Top of the World



In the extreme conditions of Everest's Base Camp, Luanne Freer, MD, cares for a neglected population.

➤➤ **IN 1999, EMERGENCY** room doctor Luanne Freer was invited on a volunteer medical mission to a remote Himalayan village in Nepal. Upon her group's arrival, Freer was greeted by 600 villagers, many of whom had walked for days just to be seen at the clinic. "They were lacking basic healthcare," Freer says. "I felt like I could offer something meaningful." Back in her home base of Montana, Freer found herself eager to return to Nepal.

Three years later, while volunteering at a clinic in

Pheriche, Nepal, Freer hiked to Everest Base Camp. She discovered that only a few of the climbing expedition teams there included doctors with high-altitude training. Freer, who had the requisite knowledge from her years working in the Northern Rockies, was even more dismayed to learn that the area's native Sherpa and Rai populations were sometimes turned away by the foreign expeditions' doctors. She was determined to find a way to provide better medical care to

both climbers and the hundreds of Nepalese working on Everest.

In the spring of 2003, Freer founded Everest E.R.—a small clinic at Base Camp that operates during the two-and-a-half-month climbing season. The clinic supplies free and heavily subsidized medical care to locals by charging climbing teams a nominal fee. During its first year, Freer dealt with malfunctioning equipment and flooding (in addition to freezing temperatures and no electricity). But the memory of the first life she saved—a Nepali porter

dying of cerebral edema—brought her back the following year. Since then the clinic has continued to grow: In 2003 it treated 84 patients; in 2012 it saw 570. Today nearly every expedition relies on Everest E.R. for medical care. But Freer, 55, says her connections with the local people are the greatest reward of all. "I have tangible evidence that I've made a difference in someone's life," she says. "If I never picked up another stethoscope, I would still feel complete."

—MOLLY LOOMIS



A LITTLE BIT LOUDER NOW!

The last week of April is National Karaoke Week (who knew?). To celebrate, we asked these music lovers to sing the praises of their favorite show-off tunes. —A.D.



Kelly Clarkson
"Alone,"
by Heart
"Who doesn't love a power ballad? And Heart plus vodka equals a guaranteed good time."



Rachel Maddow
"What'd I Say,"
by Ray Charles
"This is my favorite song, but it's the worst karaoke choice. The lyrics at the end are the musical equivalent of Sally faking an orgasm at the deli in *When Harry Met Sally...*"



Usher
"I'll Be There,"
by the Jackson 5
"It's a classic record, and when it comes to karaoke, I can't help singing the s*** out of it."



Megan Hilty
"Material Girl,"
by Madonna
"It's cute and upbeat. Plus, nobody wants to hear a singer actually sing; it's more fun to just belt out a song."



Gabrielle Douglas
"Eye of the Tiger,"
by Survivor
"Yes, it's a typical sports song, but it brings back memories of family karaoke nights with my siblings. And who doesn't love Rocky?"

DO TELL!

Don't limit spring cleaning to physical stuff—consider the information you're holding onto, too. In a study in the *Journal of Experimental Psychology*, researchers had subjects think of a secret they were keeping, then showed them a picture of



a hill and asked them to guess how steep it was. Those with small secrets believed the slope to be about 33 degrees, while subjects with big secrets judged it a more daunting 46 degrees. Spilling the beans just might lighten your load. —E.H.