

Ode to E Pluribus Unum for Sunday November 28, 2021

Your Truckload of Antidepressants Has Arrived



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The Ode looks forward to other opinions.

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Sesame Street Debuts Its First Asian American Muppet

Noreen Nasir. The Associated Press



Ernie, a Muppet from the popular children's series "Sesame Street," appears with new character Ji-Young, the first Asian American Muppet, on the set of the long-running children's program in New York on Nov. 1, 2021.

What's in a name? Well, for Ji-Young, the newest Muppet resident of "Sesame Street," her name is a sign she was meant to live there.

"So, in Korean traditionally the two syllables they each mean something different, and Ji means, like, smart or wise. And Young means, like, brave or courageous and strong," Ji-Young explained during a recent interview. "But we were looking it up and guess what? Ji also means sesame."

At only 7 years old, Ji-Young is making history as the first Asian American Muppet in the "Sesame Street" canon. She is Korean American and has two passions: rocking out on her electric guitar and skateboarding. The children's TV program, which first aired 52 years ago this month, gave The Associated Press a first look at its adorable new occupant.

Ji-Young will formally be introduced in "See Us Coming Together: A Sesame Street Special." Simu Liu, Padma Lakshmi and Naomi Osaka are among the celebrities appearing in the special, which will drop Thanksgiving Day on HBO Max, "Sesame Street" social media platforms and on local PBS stations.

Some of Ji-Young's personality comes from her puppeteer. Kathleen Kim, 41 a Korean American, got into puppetry in her 30s. In 2014, she was accepted into a "Sesame Street" workshop. That evolved into a mentorship and becoming part of the team the following year. Being a puppeteer on a show Kim watched growing up was a dream come true. But helping shape an original Muppet is a whole other feat.

"I feel like I have a lot of weight that maybe I'm putting on myself to teach these lessons and to be this representative that I did not have as a kid," Kim said. But fellow puppeteer Leslie Carrara-Rudolph — who performs Abby Cadabby — reminded her, "It's not about us ... It's about this message."

Ji-Young's existence is the culmination of a lot of discussions after the events of 2020 — George Floyd's death and anti-Asian hate incidents. Like a lot of companies, "Sesame Street" reflected on how it could "meet the moment," said Kay Wilson Stallings, executive vice-president of Creative and Production for Sesame Workshop, the nonprofit organization behind "Sesame Street."

Sesame Workshop established two task forces — one to look at its content and another to look at its own diversity. What developed was Coming Together, a multi-year initiative addressing how to talk to children about race, ethnicity and culture.

One result was 8-year-old Tamir. While not the show's first Black Muppet, he was one of the first used to talk about subjects like racism.

"When we knew we were going to be doing this work that was going to focus on the Asian and Pacific Islanders experience, we of course knew we needed to create an Asian Muppet as well," Stallings said.

These newer Muppets — their personalities and their looks — were remarkably constructed in a matter of a months. The process normally takes at least a couple of

years. There are outside experts and a cross-section of employees known as the "culture trust" who weigh in on every aspect of a new Muppet, Stallings said.

For Kim, it was crucial that Ji-Young not be "generically pan-Asian."

"Because that's something that all Asian Americans have experienced. They kind of want to lump us into this monolithic 'Asian,'" Kim said. "So, it was very important that she was specifically Korean American, not just like, generically Korean, but she was born here."

One thing Ji-Young will help teach children is how to be a good "upstander." "Sesame Street" first used the term on its "The Power of We" TV special last year, which featured Tamir.

"Being an upstander means you point out things that are wrong or something that someone does or says that is based on their negative attitude towards the person because of the color of their skin or the language they speak or where they're from," Stallings said. "We want our audience to understand they can be upstanders."

In "See Us Coming Together," Sesame Street is preparing for Neighbor Day where everyone shares food, music or dance from their culture. Ji-Young becomes upset after a kid, off screen, tells her "To go back home," an insult commonly flung at Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders. But she feels empowered after Sesame Street's other Asian American residents, guest stars and friends like Elmo assure her that she belongs as much as anyone else.

The fact that Ji-Young was created to counter anti-Asian sentiment makes her more special to Kim in some ways.

"I remember like the Atlanta shootings and how terrifying that was for me," Kim said. "My one hope, obviously, is to actually help teach what racism is, help teach kids to be able to recognize it and then speak out against it. But then my other hope for Ji-Young is that she just normalizes seeing different kinds of looking kids on TV."

Vanessa Leung, co-executive director of Coalition for Asian American Children and Families, is excited about Ji-Young. The organization was not involved in Ji-Young's creation but previously consulted on anti-racism content for Sesame Workshop. It matters when Asian American families, especially with many of them being immigrant families, can see themselves reflected in an institution like "Sesame Street," Leung said.

"It sparks curiosity and early understanding of the diversity of our community, the beauty in the diversity of our community," Leung said.

Ji-Young will be heavily present throughout the new season, Stallings reassured. She also won't just be utilized for content related to racial justice. She will pop up in various digital programs, live-action and animated.

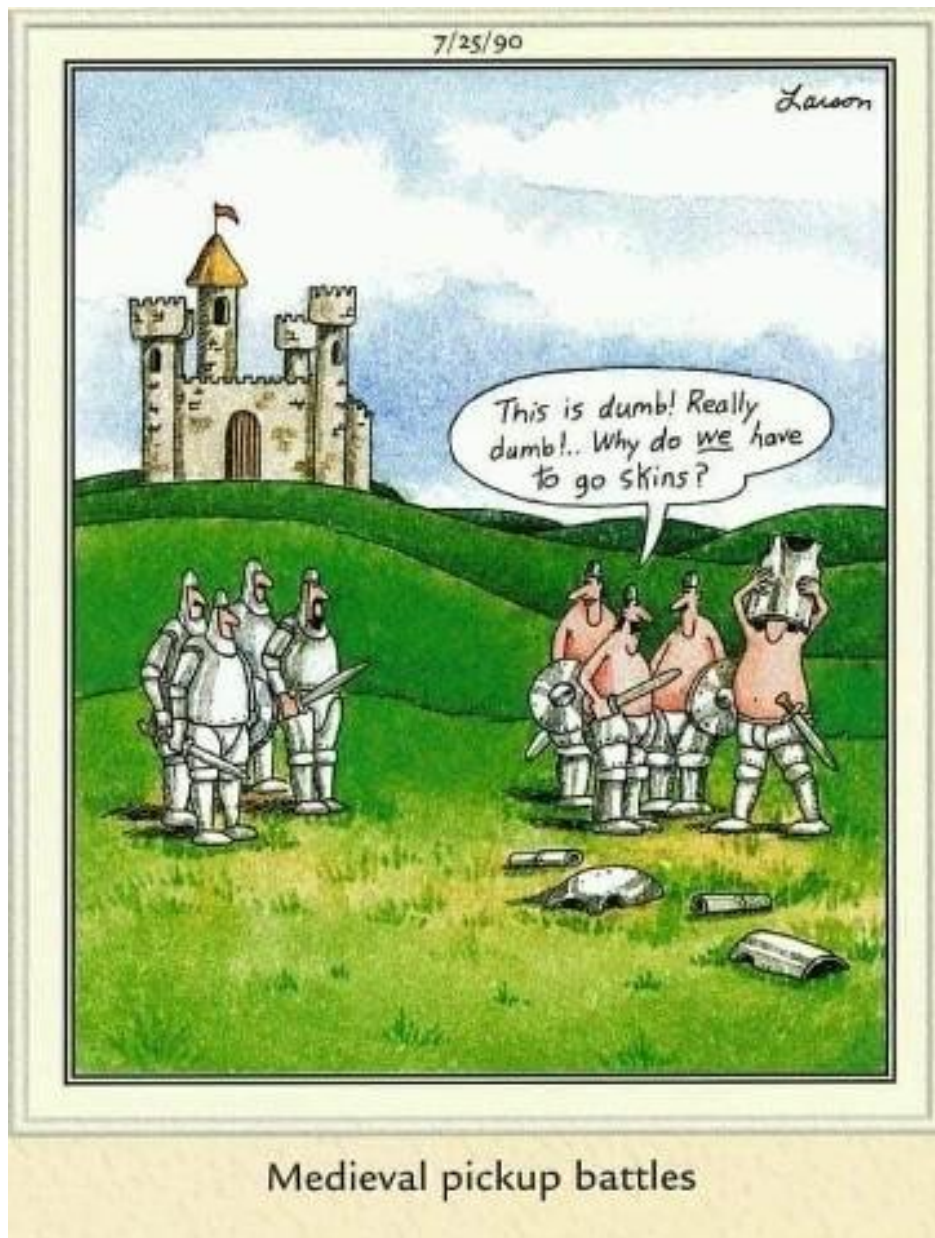
As the new kid on the street, Ji-Young is looking forward to showing her friends and neighbors aspects of Korean culture such as the food. She loves cooking dishes like tteokbokki (chewy rice cakes) with her halmoni (grandmother). And she already has one "Sesame Street" friend who wants a sample.

"I would love to try it," said Ernie, who joined Ji-Young's interview. "You know, I've tried bulgogi. I really like bulgogi. I'm gonna guess that maybe old buddy Bert has not tried Korean food."

Having already made several famous friends on "Sesame Street," is there anyone Ji-Young still really wants to meet?

"The Linda Lindas because they're so cool," Ji-Young said, referring to the teenage punk rock band. "And they rock out and they're cool girls and most of them are Asian. They're my heroes. If we can get the Linda Lindas on 'Sesame Street,' I would show them around."

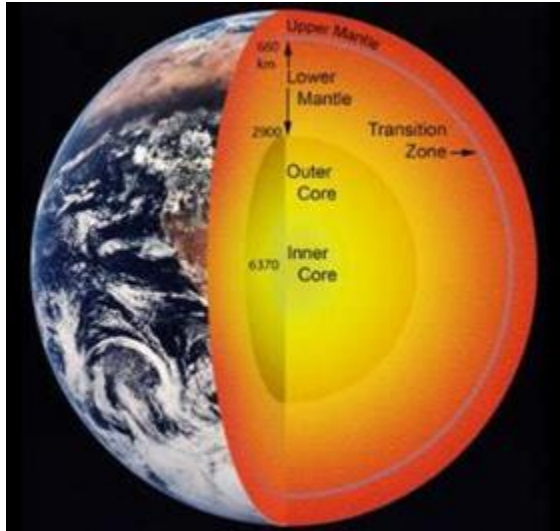
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Meteorite Holds a Mineral seen in the depths of the Earth

By Shubashree Desikan



The Earth's lower mantle is thought to be composed of primarily aluminous (Mg, Fe) SiO₃ perovskite, now known as bridgmanite

The key findings of a study led by IIT Kharagpur researchers could help us understand the formation and evolution of the Earth. They have studied a meteorite that fell near the town of Katol in Nagpur District of Maharashtra on May 22, 2012, reporting for the first time, presence of veins of the mineral bridgmanite, which is the most abundant mineral in the interior of the Earth, within the Katol L6 Chondrite meteorite. This finding adds evidence to the Moon-forming giant impact hypothesis.

Abundant mineral

"Bridgmanite is the most volumetrically abundant mineral of the Earth's interior. It is present in the lower mantle (from 660 to 2700 km), and it is important to understand its formation mechanism to better comprehend the origin and evolution of planetary interiors," says Sujoy Ghosh, Department of Geology and Geophysics, Indian Institute of Technology Kharagpur, who designed the study and is the lead author of the paper published in Proceedings of the National Academy of Science (the U.S.).

The Moon-forming giant impact hypothesis is that long ago, nearly 4.5 billion years ago, the Earth collided with a planet the size of Mars named Thela, and the force of this impact was so huge as to melt the Earth down from the surface to a depth of 750 km to 1,100 km. The hypothesis goes that this caused the Earth to be bathed in a magma ocean, and the ejecta from the collision led to the formation of the Moon.

This is the most favored hypothesis on the formation of the Moon and the present finding by the Kharagpur team lends further support to it.

Magma ocean

"Earth was an ocean of magma in the past. The heavier iron and nickel went to the core while the lighter silicates stayed in the mantle. By studying the meteorite, we can understand more details about the formation of the Earth and other planets," says Kishan Tiwari, research scholar from the Department of Geology and Geophysics, Indian Institute of Technology Kharagpur and an author of the paper, in an email to The Hindu.

"Bridgmanite consists of magnesium, iron, calcium aluminum oxide and has a perovskite structure," says Dr Ghosh. He further explains that while the crystal structure of natural bridgmanite has been reported in other meteorites such as the Tenham and Suizhou meteorites, their chemical composition does not fully match with the terrestrial bridgmanite present in the Earth's interior between 660 and 2700 km depth.

"Our findings led to numerous other advances to understand how the Earth's core formed about 4.5 billion years ago," says Dr Ghosh. This finding could also help investigations of high-pressure phase transformation mechanisms in the deep Earth, which the group is planning to continue in future studies.

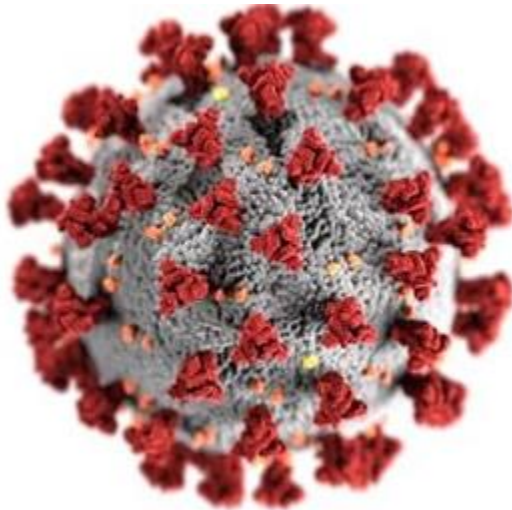
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Do you think surgeons worry about this?

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Ever Wonder How mRNA Vaccines Work? Here's How



COVID-19 mRNA vaccines deliver directions to make a protein that educates our immune system, so it will neutralize the virus in future encounters. The mRNA-containing lipid particles are taken up by specialized immune system cells.

<https://youtu.be/8nD6Q9X0SFw?t=1>

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Michael Jackson Reborn as a Duck!!



The Church of Scientology, which Michael Jackson held in high regard, has recently proclaimed that Michael Jackson was reborn as a duck. It further claims that he is now residing near a pond on the 12th hole at Royal Melbourne Golf Course.

Video Proof of this transfiguration is attached.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pSwcQydnulA>

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Arvo Pärt



estonianworld

The Estonian composer of classical and religious music has worked in a minimalist style that employs his self-invented compositional technique, tintinnabuli. Pärt's music is in part inspired by Gregorian chant. His most performed works include *Fratres* (1977), *Spiegel im Spiegel* (1978), and *Für Alina* (1976). From 2011 to 2018, Pärt was the most performed living composer in the world, and the second most performed in 2019.

Spiegel im Spiegel <https://youtu.be/FZe3mXlnfNc>

The Deer's Cry <https://youtu.be/Ir3htl3UIBk>

Cantus In Memorium Benjamin Britten <https://youtu.be/82-xbhfNR2g>

Da Pacem Domine <https://youtu.be/vA79jI9cCBE>

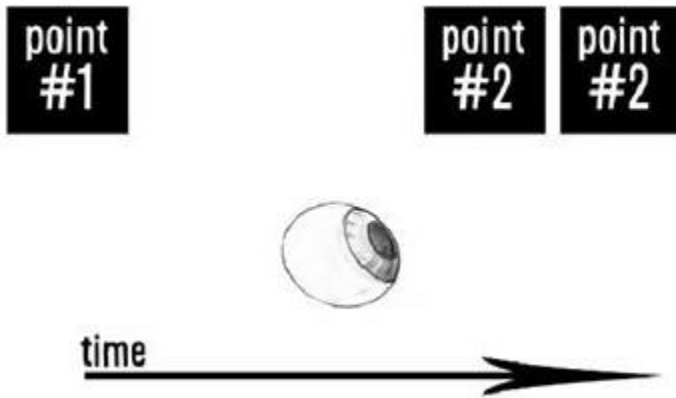
Trisagion <https://youtu.be/0XZ4D24P7ow>

As happens often, Bill Warner tipped me to Arvo Pärt, causing me to wonder why he isn't doing the Odes instead of me. No matter, just listen to each of these hypnotic pieces, and thank Bill, who claims headphones give them a special life.

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The Mystery of the Stopped Clock Illusion

By Tom Stafford



Have you ever stared at a second hand on a clock and thought that time seemed to stand still for a moment? It's not just you.

Sometimes, when I look at a clock time seems to stand still. Maybe you've noticed this to your bemusement or horror as well. You'll be in the middle of something and flick your eyes up to an analogue clock on the wall to see what the time is. The second hand of the clock seems to hang in space, as if you've just caught the clock in a moment of laziness. After this pause, time seems to restart and the clock ticks on as normal.

It gives us the disconcerting idea that even something as undeniable as time can be a bit less reliable than we think.

This happened to me for years, but I never spoke about it. Secretly I thought it was either evidence of my special insight to reality, or final proof that I was a little unhinged (or both). But then I found out that it's a normal experience. Psychologists even have a name for it - they call it the "stopped clock illusion". Thanks psychologists, you really nailed that one.

An ingenious experiment from a team at University College London recreated the experience in the lab and managed to connect the experience of the stopped clock to the action of the person experiencing it. They asked volunteers to look away and then suddenly shift their gaze to a digital counter. When the subjects tried to judge how long they had been looking at the digit that first appeared, they systematically assumed it had been on for longer than it had.

Filling gaps

Moving our eyes from one point to another is so quick and automatic that most of us probably don't even think about what we are doing. But when you move your eyes rapidly there is a momentary break in visual experience. You can get a feel for this now by stretching your arms out and moving your eyes between your two index fingers. (If you are reading this in a public place, feel free to pretend you are having a good stretch.) As you flick your eyes from left to right you should be able to detect an almost imperceptibly brief "flash" of darkness as input from your eyes is cut off.

It is this interruption in consciousness that leads to the illusion of the stopped clock. The theory is that our brains attempt to build a seamless story about the world from the ongoing input of our senses. Rapid eye movements create a break in information, which needs to be covered up. Always keen to hide its tracks, the brain fills in this gap with whatever comes after the break.

Normally this subterfuge is undetectable, but if you happen to move your eyes to something that is moving with precise regularity – like a clock – you will spot this pause in the form of an extra-long “second”. Fitting with this theory, the UCL team also showed that longer eye-movements lead to longer pauses in the stopped clock.

It doesn't have to be an eye movement that generates the stopped clock – all that appears to be important is that you shift your attention. (Although moving our eyes is the most obvious way we shift our attention, I'm guessing that the “inner eye” has gaps in processing in the same way our outer eyes do, and these are what cause the stopped clock illusion.) This accounts for a sister illusion we experience with our hearing – the so-called “dead phone illusion”, which is when you pick up an old-fashioned phone and catch an initial pause between the dial tone that seems to last longer than the others.

These, and other illusions show that something as basic as the experience of time passing is constructed by our brains – and that this is based on what we experience and what seems the most likely explanation for those experiences, rather than some reliable internal signal. Like with everything else, what we experience is our brain's best guess about the world. We don't ever get to know time directly. In this sense we are all time travelers.

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Transeurasian Languages Tied to Agriculture

by Max Planck Society



Credit: Pixabay/CC0 Public Domain

The origin and early dispersal of Transeurasian languages, including, among others, Japanese, Korean, Tungusic, Mongolic and Turkic, is among the most disputed issues of Asian prehistory. Although many of the commonalities between these languages are due to borrowing, recent studies have shown a reliable core of evidence supporting the classification of Transeurasian as a genealogical group, or a group of languages that emerged from a common ancestor. Accepting the ancestral relatedness of these languages and cultures, however, raises questions about when and where the earliest speakers lived, how the descendant cultures sustained themselves and interacted with one another, and the routes of their dispersals throughout the millennia.

A new paper published in the journal *Nature* by an international team that includes researchers from Asia, Europe, New Zealand, Russia and the United States provides interdisciplinary support for the "farming hypothesis" of language dispersal, tracing the Transeurasian languages back to the first farmers moving across Northeast Asia beginning in the Early Neolithic. Using newly sequenced genomes, an extensive archaeological database, and a new dataset of vocabulary concepts for 98 languages, they triangulate the time-depth, location and dispersal routes of ancestral Transeurasian speech communities.

The evidence from linguistic, archeological and genetic sources indicates that the origins of the Transeurasian languages can be traced back to the beginning of millet cultivation and the early Amur gene pool in the region of the West Liao River. During the Late Neolithic, millet farmers with Amur-related genes spread into contiguous regions across Northeast Asia. In the millennia that followed, speakers of the daughter branches of Proto-Transeurasian admixed with Yellow River, western Eurasian and

Jomon populations, adding rice agriculture, western Eurasian crops and pastoralist lifeways to the Transeurasian package.

"Taken by itself, a single discipline alone cannot conclusively resolve the big questions surrounding language dispersal but taken together the three disciplines increase the credibility and validity of this scenario," says Martine Robbeets, lead author of the study and leader of the Archaeolinguistic Research Group at the Max Planck Institute for the Science of Human History. "By aligning the evidence offered by the three disciplines, we gained a more balanced and richer understanding of Transeurasian migration than each of the three disciplines could provide us with individually."

The linguistic evidence used to triangulate came from a new dataset of more than 3,000 cognate sets representing over 250 concepts in nearly 100 Transeurasian languages. From this, researchers were able to construct a phylogenetic tree which shows the roots of the Proto-Transeurasian family reaching back 9,181 years before the present to millet farmers living in the region of the West Liao River. A small core of inherited words related to land cultivation, millets and millet agriculture and other signs of a sedentary lifestyle further support the farming hypothesis.

The team's archaeological results also highlight the West Liao River basin, where communities started farming broomcorn millet roughly 9,000 years ago. Bayesian analysis of an archaeological database of 255 Neolithic and Bronze Age sites, including 269 directly carbon-dated cereals, showed a cluster of related Neolithic cultures in the West Liao basin, from which two branches of millet-farming cultures separate: a Korean Chulmun branch and a branch of cultures covering the Amur, Primorye and Liadong.

Analysis further paired sites in the West Liao area with Mumun sites in Korea and Yayoi sites in Japan, showing the addition of rice and wheat to the agricultural package in Liadong and Shangdong and their further transmission to the Korean Peninsula in the Early Bronze Age and from there to Japan around 3,000 years ago.

The new study also reports the first collection of ancient genomes from Korea, the Ryukyu Islands and early cereal farmers in Japan. Combining their results with previously published genomes from East Asia, the team identified a common genetic component called "Amur-like ancestry" among all speakers of Transeurasian languages. They were also able to confirm that the Bronze Age Yayoi period in Japan saw a massive migration from the continent at the same time as the arrival of farming.

Taken together, the study's results show that, although masked by millennia of extensive cultural interaction, Transeurasian languages share a common ancestry and that the early spread of Transeurasian speakers was driven by agriculture.

"Accepting that the roots of one's language—and to an extent one's culture—lie beyond present national boundaries can require a kind of reorientation of identity, and this is not always an easy step for people to take," says Robbeets. "But the science of human history shows us that the history of all languages, cultures, and peoples is one of extended interaction and mixture."

The current study shows how the triangulation of linguistic, archaeological and genetic methods can increase the credibility and validity of a hypothesis, but the authors are quick to recognize the need for further research. More ancient DNA, more etymological research and more archaeobotanical research will further deepen our understanding of human migrations in Neolithic Northeast Asia and untangle the influence of later population movements, of which many were pastoralist in nature.

"There was far more to the creation of the Transeurasian language family, as an ultimate whole, than just one primary Neolithic pulse of migration," says Mark Hudson, an archaeologist in the Archaeolinguistic Research Group.

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I couldn't resist. 😊



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Gentle Transformations



This was sent to me last week by a friend, written by a man nearing 80 about changes he is feeling in himself:

- 1 After loving my parents, my siblings, my spouse, my children and my friends, I have now started loving myself.
- 2 I have realized that I am not "Atlas". The world does not rest on my shoulders.
- 3 I have stopped bargaining with vegetable & fruit vendors. A few pennies more is not going to break me, but it might help the poor fellow save for his daughter's school fees.
- 4 I leave my waitress a big tip. The extra money might bring a smile to her face. She is toiling much harder for a living than I am.
- 5 I stopped telling the elderly that they've already told that story many times. The story makes them walk down memory lane & relive their past.
- 6 I have learned not to correct people even when I know they are wrong. The onus of making everyone perfect is not on me. Peace is more precious than perfection.
- 7 I give compliments freely & generously. Compliments are a mood enhancer not only for the recipient, but also for me. And a small tip for the recipient of a compliment, never, NEVER turn it down, just say "Thank You."
- 8 I have learned not to bother about a crease or a spot on my shirt. Personality speaks louder than appearances.
- 9 I walk away from people who don't value me. They might not know my worth, but I do.
- 10 I remain cool when someone plays dirty to outrun me in the rat race. I am not a rat & neither am I in any race.

- 11 I am learning not to be embarrassed by my emotions. It's my emotions that make me human.
- 12 I have learned that it's better to drop the ego than to break a relationship. My ego will keep me aloof, whereas with relationships, I will never be alone.
- 13 I have learned to live each day as if it's the last. After all, it might be the last.
- 14 I am doing what makes me happy. I am responsible for my happiness, and I owe it to myself. Happiness is a choice. You can be happy at any time, just choose to be!

She asks, "Why can't we practice this at any stage and age?"

I suspect it has to do with experience...that which remains after we've exhausted the catalog of experiments that haven't worked all that well.

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Herman: Doing Nothing



<https://youtu.be/B1U97nGbTaU>

This German cartoon details the blessings in difference.

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Canepa Shop Walk; November 19th, 2021



<https://youtu.be/xuNBJaPYYGM?t=2>

More for those of us who love art on the hoof.

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Goodwood Revival 2021



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=j3YIxJDHApM>

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J. S. Bach - Lute Suite in E Major BWV 1006a



<https://youtu.be/ZLjprbeWMxQ?t=2>

Evangelina Mascardi, Baroque Lute

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The Shifting Tides of US Population



Maybe as the center moves to the southwest, Hartville, MO will straighten up again
saltern,cz

<https://youtu.be/D9XelnGyggI>

Do you expect it will ever move back toward the Northeast?

Neither do I.

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Cancer Deaths in U.S. Fall Overall by 27% Over Last 50 Years

By Brian P. Dunleavy



Many types of cancer deaths in the United States have fallen significantly over the last 50 years, according to a new analysis.

File photo by Photographee.eu/Shutterstock

Nov. 11 (UPI) -- Fewer people are dying from cancer in the United States, thanks to improved diagnosis and treatment and better understanding of prevention, an analysis published Thursday by JAMA Oncology found.

More deaths could have been prevented over that period, however, had more progress been made in persuading people to quit smoking and better manage their body weight, the researchers said.

In addition, ensuring that more people across the country had health insurance to enable access to affordable cancer screening and treatment services also may have reduced deaths from the disease, they said.

Still, a 27% reduction in deaths from all cancers since 1971 shows that "we are making progress," study co-author Ahmedin Jemal told UPI in a phone interview.

"In 1971, a diagnosis of cancer was a death sentence. Not anymore," said Jemal, senior vice president for surveillance and health equity science at the American Cancer Society.

About 600,000 people in the United States die from cancer annually, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

For this analysis, Jemal and his colleagues reviewed data on cancer deaths from across the country reported to the CDC's National Center for Health Statistics between 1971 and 2019, the most recent year with figures available.

They focused on figures for the 15 most common forms of the disease in the United States, including lung, breast, colon, prostate, pancreas, ovarian and stomach cancers.

The first year of the study period is significant because it marks Congress' passing of the National Cancer Act, which made defeating cancer a national priority and allocated additional funding to the National Cancer Institute for research.

Since the law's passage, the institute's annual budget increased 25-fold, helping to fund research into more accurate diagnostics, more effective treatments and enhanced disease prevention strategies, according to Jemal and his colleagues.

In 1971, 199 cancer deaths were recorded for every 100,000 people in the U.S. population, the data showed.

After peaking at 215 per 100,000 people in 1991, this figure fell to 146 per 100,000 in 2019, a 27% decline, the researchers said.

Cancers that saw the biggest reductions in deaths included colon and rectum cancers, at 16%, and prostate and female breast cancers, both at 12%.

Over the 50-year period, deaths from stomach cancer fell by 7%, while those from lung and cervical cancer dropped by 5%, researchers said.

Only cancers of the pancreas, brain and esophagus saw slight increases in deaths during the period, all well under 1%.

As positive as these figures are, they could and should be better, Jemal told UPI.

More than 40 million people in the United States are smokers, according to the CDC, and the habit contributes to about one-third of all cancers diagnosed nationally, Jemal said.

In addition, about two-thirds of adults nationally are overweight or obese, which increases their risk for 30 types of cancer, he said.

Some 30 million people across the country lack health insurance, the Department of Health and Human Services estimates, which limits their access to cancer screening and treatment, Jemal added.

"Access to care is vital, of course, so we need to do better to ensure these services are available for everyone, people of all races and income levels, across all regions of the country," he said.

"We know how to prevent cancer deaths because we know the risk factors -- we just need to do a better job of instituting policies at the local, state and national levels that will help us do that."

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The Rolling Stones



Active for almost six decades, they are one of the most popular and enduring bands of the rock era. Diverging from the pop rock of the early 1960s, the Rolling Stones pioneered the gritty, heavier-driven sound that came to define hard rock.

Rooted in blues and early rock and roll, the Rolling Stones started out playing covers and were at the forefront of the British Invasion in 1964, also being identified with the youthful and rebellious counterculture of the 1960s.

Start Me Up <https://youtu.be/SGyOaCXr8Lw>

Spot Me Up https://youtu.be/XnZH4izf_rI

I Can't Get No Satisfaction <https://youtu.be/1ANhU4Ack04>

Jumpin' Jack Flash https://youtu.be/ruTMp4_sy1E

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A Primer on Buying an Electric Car

Petrol and diesel are coming to an end – so when should you upgrade to an electric car? From range anxiety to tax breaks, this is how to make the right choice for you



tesla / wired

The government is currently on course to ban the sale of new cars and vans powered entirely by petrol and diesel by 2030, and to ban the sale of new hybrid vehicles by 2035. From then onwards, new cars and vans sold in the UK must be fully electric.

There are currently no plans to curb the sale of second-hand petrol and diesel vehicles, which will remain on the roads for many years, even decades, to come. However, the drivers of these vehicles are likely to see increased taxation in a bid to encourage the uptake of electric cars.

Despite not being included in the 2030 ban, the situation for new hybrid vehicles sold after that date isn't yet clear.

The government has said hybrids that offer "significant" zero-emission range can remain on sale until 2035, but hasn't clarified what that range is, or if there will be different rules for the various types of hybrid vehicle, such as mild, plug-in and full hybrids. How this eventually works will be "defined through consultation," the government says.

The UK motor industry had previously described the government's proposed blanket ban of hybrid cars as an "extremely concerning" move of the goalposts. But, despite admitting an "immense challenge" has been laid down, the SMMT industry body now welcomes the government's acceptance of the importance of hybrids, which act as a steppingstone from petrol to electric for many buyers.

Edmund King, president of the AA, described the 2030 target as "incredibly ambitious," but welcomed the switch to electric vehicles. King added that "considerable investment" will be required to lift the current EV pain points of initial cost, perceived range anxiety and charging infrastructure.

Electric car sales still represent a small proportion of new vehicle sales each month, but growth in this sector continues to accelerate. In August 2021, battery electric vehicles (BEVs) had a 10.9 per cent share of the UK market, with plug-in hybrids at 7.4 per cent, diesel at 7.5 per cent – a 65 per cent fall on the previous year – and petrol at 43.3 per cent. Hybrid vehicles, including mild, plug-in and full hybrids, accounted for a combined 38.4 per cent.

In the first eight months of 2021, fully electric vehicles accounted for 8.4 per cent of new sales in the UK, a gain of 106.7 per cent on the same period of 2020.

This certainly puts electric cars on a positive trajectory, and more options are available than ever before. But buying an EV in the UK in 2021 is still more complex than stumping up the cash and plugging it in. Range, charging, tax breaks, location, your driving habits and even the weather all come into play. And with the 2030 ban looming, it's time to help make sense of it all.

Should you buy an electric car now? Environmentally, 100 per cent yes. But, if other concerns are important, it becomes complicated.

The UK ban on new petrol cars is less than a decade away. Here are the 24 most exciting electric cars coming in 2021.

When are you buying your next car?

If you're in the market now and considering the switch to electric, you have more choice than ever. You could pick up a second-hand Renault Zoe for around £5,000 (plus £49 per month for Renault's battery leasing scheme) if all you need is a small city car with a range of about 100 miles.

But if you're shopping for new wheels, you'll need to budget £19,995 for the 115-mile Fiat 500e (after the £2,500 government grant, more on which later), or £27,595 for a 245-mile Renault Zoe. The Tesla Model 3 starts at £40,990 and has a WLTP range of 278 miles.

At the other end of the market, well-healed drivers can opt for the 188-mile Porsche Taycan 4S from £84,030, or if you've a couple of million burning a crater in your pocket, there's the Lotus Evija and Pininfarina Battista, both members of the freshly minted 2,000 horsepower club. Yours for £2 million.

There's plenty of choice out there, but with the market likely to evolve throughout the decade, savvy buyers looking for the best cost-to-value ratio could find themselves stuck in the same paradox as those who endlessly wait for the next iPhone.

And if you do decide to buy this year or next, will your sub-150-mile Fiat, Mini or Honda e hold its value when range stats edge ever upwards over the coming years? This is largely unknown for now, but with cash buyers increasingly switching to personal contract purchase finance deals, residual value is less of a concern as long as you are comfortable with the deposit and monthly payments and understand how the balloon payment works.

More pressing, however, is this: does an electric car fit into your lifestyle, and will it cater for your driving habits today? Let's answer some questions.

How often do you drive?

If you rack up a lot of short journeys across town an electric car should suit you well, providing you put some initial groundwork into learning where your local public chargers are, and what charging speeds they offer.

Soon you'll be an EV native, topping up the battery while doing the weekly supermarket shop, or from outside your favorite cafe. And don't forget, the silent simplicity of driving an EV also makes them excellent city cars.

If your daily commute is a few dozen miles, you might get away with only charging at work. This is possible in some places now, as business parks begin installing chargers in their parking bays. For example, Fraser Properties is fitting rapid 50kW chargers at its business parks in the southeast of England, allowing staff to top up their batteries with the tap of a contactless credit or debit card. If your EV is purely for commuting, this could be all the charge you need.

What about longer journeys?

Again, an element of planning is required. Electric cars have charging stations plumbed into their navigation systems, so it's relatively straightforward to include charge stops on longer journeys. Some systems, as in a Tesla, tell you exactly how many minutes to charge for at each station, and how much range you'll have left when you arrive at your destination. They also show how many chargers are offered, and how many are currently available or occupied.

Some systems aren't as sophisticated. That navigation of the Fiat 500e shows local chargers but doesn't state how fast they are. With a massive difference between the slowest and quickest public chargers, this is a serious omission.

Today's longest-range cars are still all Teslas, with the flagship Long Range version of the new Model S giving you an estimated 405 miles using the WLTP test cycle. This will likely equate to around 350 miles in the real world, but as with all EVs this can reduce in cold weather and also depends on traffic, elevation change and driving style.

While die-hards will invariably scoff at an EV's inability to romp across entire continents on a charge, the vast majority of drivers will want to take a break after 200 miles of driving, so having to plug in for half an hour shouldn't really be seen as an inconvenience. And by 2030, you should expect those charge times to be considerably shorter.

But all that said, if you plan to rely on a smaller capacity EV as your only car, and occasionally have to cover long distances, you might want to hold off or even buy a hybrid for now, although we would wait for clarification on the government's plans for hybrids from 2030 first.

What electric car tax breaks are available, and will they last?

The government has a system for helping motorists buy electric and hybrid vehicles. But the size of the various grants available has decreased several times in recent years and will likely be phased out completely before the first wave of the internal combustion ban arrives in 2030.

As of September 2021, a government grant of up to £2,500 is applied to the price of a brand new low-emissions vehicle. More specifically, the grant will pay for 20 per cent of the purchase price of the vehicle, up to a maximum of £2,500.

The grant fell from £4,500 in early 2019 and was due to end shortly after. It was instead extended, but reduced first to £3,500, then to £3,000 in March 2020, and now sits at £2,500.

The discount is applied by the dealer, meaning the buyer needn't do anything to secure the reduced price, and EVs are often advertised with the discount already in place.

Only cars with a list price under £35,000 and approved by the government are eligible for the grant, and to be considered for the full £2,500 they must be able to drive at least 70 miles on pure electric power. The grant used to apply to cars costing under £50,000 but has since been reduced to the current £35,000 level. You can view a list of all eligible vehicles [here](#).

A grant of 20 per cent up to a value of £1,500 is applied to electric motorcycles capable of traveling at least 31 miles on a charge, and to mopeds with a range of at least 19 miles.

Small hybrid and electric vans capable of at least 60 miles of electric range, and which produce CO2 emissions of less than 50g/km, receive a grant of 35 percent of the purchase price, up to £3,000. For taxis the grant is up to £7,500 so long as they have a range of at least 70 miles and CO2 emissions of less than 50g/km.

You can also receive £350 off the cost of a home charger (now reduced from its previous level of £500) and, separately, electric cars are exempt from company car tax. This increased to one per cent in April 2021, then will climb to two per cent in April 2022. It is hoped this will encourage the use of EVs among company car fleets.

Despite the downward trajectory of these grants, this situation could change. When announcing the proposed 2030 ban on internal combustion, the government said it will set aside £582 million for grants to help drivers switch to electric.

Can you rely on today's electric car charging network?

This is surely the most important question when it comes to electric car ownership today. Tesla has its own Supercharger network, which covers much of the UK and Europe and is steadily growing with stations located at motorway services, as well as hotels, business parks and shopping centers.

Tesla believes 99 per cent of the European population is covered by its Supercharger network, meaning at least one station is within the reach of a Tesla car from all but one per cent of households. Its latest third-generation Supercharger can fill the battery of a Model 3 at 250kW, which adds range at a rate of up to 1,000 miles per hour. However, don't believe the hype – the lithium batteries of electric cars charge more quickly when empty, then slow down as they fill up.

So that maximum rate is only possible for a few minutes. This is true of all electric cars sold today.

As for everyone else (and Tesla owners plugged into something other than a Supercharger), there is a degree of confusion to overcome. Firstly, a number of different companies run car-charging networks in the UK. But unlike competing BP and Shell petrol stations, they don't offer an identical means of refueling or paying.

The first thing to understand is charge rate, most commonly expressed in kilowatts. Tesla Superchargers pump out electrons at up to 250kW, while other chargers are as slow as 3kW, although these are (mercifully) rare. Other charge rates are branded Fast (7kW or 22kW) and Rapid (25kW, 43kW, 50kW, 100kW, 120kW, 150kW and industry-leading 350kW, plus several other rates in-between).

Next, you need to be aware of the different types of plugs. These are physically different and include Type 2, Commando, Yazaki, CCS, and CHAdeMO.

Confused yet? No? Good, because next up we have payment methods. A few years ago, paying meant setting up an account with each charging network and carrying a

contactless RFID card or smartphone app for each, which you tap on the charger to pay. Thankfully, the fog is clearing, and charge networks are moving towards contactless payments via debit or credit card, with no need for an account.

Car manufacturers are also helping here. As an example, buyers of the Porsche Taycan receive a Porsche-branded charging account, phone app and RFID card, all of which work with pretty much all compatible chargers. That way, it no longer matters who the charging company is; just tap your Porsche card, plug in and your account will be billed accordingly.

Similarly, Polestar has teamed up with Plug surfing, whose RFID tag works with over 195,000 charging points across Europe.

But these billing systems aren't yet foolproof, and sometimes the contactless payment system of a charger might be broken.

As for cost, this can vary significantly. Some public chargers located in places like supermarkets are free to use for the duration of your stay (but you may need to pay for the parking space like everyone else). Faster chargers, often located at service stations, vary in speed and cost. BP's Chargemaster network is part of Polar Plus, which costs £7.85 per month with free charging at most locations thereafter. For non-members rapid charging starts at 40p per kWh, so roughly £12 to fill a Mini Electric or £30 to fill a Polestar 2.

But there are still challenges to overcome. Even though electric cars represent just 11 per cent of UK vehicle sales, queuing at charging stations can occur. Chargers can also be temperamental, requiring a remote reboot by their operator or simply failing to work, despite their smartphone app marking them as functioning and available. It also isn't uncommon to see non-electric cars parked in the charger's designated parking bay, rendering it inaccessible.

What about charging at home?

While electric car sales still represent a tiny minority, you may luck out and be the sole user of the handful of chargers to have sprung up in your office car park. But, while this is surely a picture of EV driving nirvana for now, it isn't sustainable. Once every desk in every office is the workspace of an electric car driver, you'll have to charge elsewhere.

As an indication of how quickly things could change, EV sales grew by 32.2 per cent in August 2021 compared to the previous year, according to The Society of Motor Manufacturers and Traders. Petrol sales fell 40.4 per cent and diesel tumbled 64.5 per cent.

Home chargers will pick up some of the slack here, and can be bought from around £300 to £1,000, before a government subsidy of up to £350. As with public chargers, home chargers offer different speeds. According to charger manufacturer PodPoint, its 3.6kW home charger will fill a Jaguar I-Pace in "under 25 hours".

This might sound unfit for purpose, but do you brim your petrol tank every evening? For someone who drives 150 miles a week (7,800 miles annually, just below the 2019

UK average), a nightly top-up could be perfectly adequate. If you need more juice, a 7kW charger will fill the I-Pace in under 13 hours. Still not speedy, but again, how often do you arrive home on an empty tank?

With regard to cost, you are best plugging in at night to take advantage of lower electricity rates. PodPoint says charging an EV can cost from 2p per mile, so potentially just £5 for a car with a range of 250 miles.

For now, private chargers are installed at the side of your property, so you're going to need off-street parking. For many cities, and anyone living in an apartment, this isn't possible.

However, progress is being made to install chargers elsewhere. Charging points are being installed in lampposts across some UK cities. Additionally, startups like Urban Electric Networks are developing 7kW chargers that rise out of the pavement like a bollard, then disappear into the ground when not in use.

The government announced in November 2020 plans to spend £1.2bn on chargers for homes, streets and motorways. Although no extra detail was given, you can expect to see chargers appear wherever cars are parked for long periods of time, such as at supermarkets, shopping centers, restaurants and hotels.

Fitting EV chargers to new-build homes sounds like a no-brainer, and the government plans to outline legislation for this later in 2021. This proposal comes as the Competition and Markets Authority (CMA) said the UK will need ten times more public car chargers than the circa 25,000 it currently has, if the 2030 and 2035 bans on internal combustion sales are to be met.

It's a complex situation and one that is moving quickly as the benefits of EV ownership grow. As we head towards 2022 there will be more affordable EV options than ever, and the charging networks will continue to expand. But important questions remain, from residential off-street parking to the size and longevity of government grants, battery recycling, and what the future for hybrids looks like if the first wave of the petrol and diesel ban arrives on time in 2030.

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My Walking Thoughts

November 28, 2021

Crypto Stuff



ticketor.com

I need help because I am genuinely mystified by what I see happening in the financial world and need to learn what the crypto craze is all about and whether it bodes salvation or destruction.

My problem is that I don't know just what a crypto coin is. Is it really currency we have grown to understand the term, or is it merely something a computer somewhere has dreamed up? Some stores, famous athletes, and political entities are on record accepting them as currency, but at least for the moment the majority of such trend-setters don't. This, however, is not helpful to a geezer trying to understand the panoply of miracles adorning our modern world.

In my lifetime I have read of a pot full of game-changing worders, only a couple of which—nuclear power, and the semi-conductor—have rocked the universe. The vast majority, touted by renown leaders and suede shoe artists alike, have ended up in the trash heap along with many of their adherents.

As I understand it, central banks are poised to issue Central Bank Digital Currencies (CBDCs) to financial institutions (e.g., banks) that would add to the world's fiat money supply. This, in addition to other elements of the crypto market whose value appears to me more a matter of hype than reality, seems to feed into, rather than counter the continuing rise of inflation, a situation that in other times and places has led to where the cardboard box carrying a one's life savings was worth more that the banknotes residing within.

So...back to my dilemma.

Are you into crypto currencies, and if so, what kinds, and what are your expectations of the venture? Do you see them as replacements for our government backed fiat

currencies, a pathway to a more stable economic future, or...what? I would like to know your thoughts.

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Root 66



Benjamin Campbell Hall

I never met my Uncle Campbell. A Naval Commander/aviator, he died in a plane crash while instructing a flight student in 1944, leaving behind a wife, Rose, and daughter, Campbell.



Ensign Campbell Hall and fiancé, Rose Willingham

He was to have graduated from the Naval Academy with the class of 1941, but because the Navy was working feverishly to redress the extreme interwar shortage of officers, his class tossed their hats into the air a year earlier. Subsequently, he found himself aboard the battleship, California, on December 7, 1941.

In the ensuing melee, the then-Ensign Hall was injured (burns primarily), ending in the water as the ship sank at her moorings. He was cited for saving the lives of several sailors and having thus witnessed firsthand the effectiveness of airpower against even the mightiest of ships, he requested and was sent to flight training at Pensacola.

There he made the terrible mistake of excelling as a student, a performance that when he received his 'wings' in 1943, got him immediately reassigned as a flight instructor—a *plowback* as the detailing came to be known--to meet the exploding need for new aviators.

The circumstances surrounding his death remain unclear, not uncommon in the time of hurry and limited oversight of such matters.

When Tom and I arrived in Macon 13 years after Uncle Campbell's death, not much of his past was available to us. His widow, Rose, had distanced herself and her daughter (also Campbell, by then age 15) from the Hall family. When I said I'd like to meet my cousin I was told it would not be possible, but after laying siege to Rose and her parents—apparently, they had been against the marriage—I was granted a short visit...one that lasted barely a quarter of an hour.

I suspect Cousin Campbell's memory of the encounter was no more vivid or satisfying than mine. It was the last I saw or heard of any of them. Uncle Campbell, at one time atop my Pantheon of heroes, disappeared from sight and memory into the mists of bygone age.

It was the only off-key note of the entire Macon visit.

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