



# Observations

Study ♦ Activity ♦ Growth ♦ Enrichment ♦ August 2023

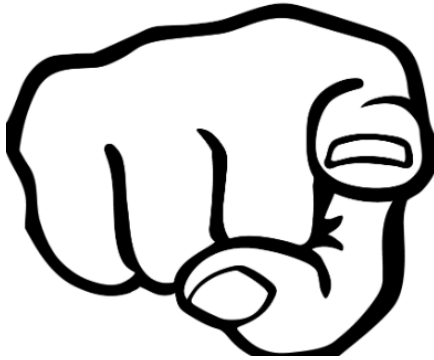




**AND NOW FOR  
SOMETHING NEW  
AND DAZZLING**

# THE SAGE WEB

**HAVE**



**YOU CHECKED IT OUT ???**

**IF NOT, GO**



# HERE'S WHY YOU SHOULD GO

SAGE IS MORE THAN JUST CLASSES—

ON THE SAGE WEB YOU CAN:

- BUILD CONNECTIONS
- LEARN WHAT'S GOING ON
- ENJOY ACTIVITIES TOGETHER
- JOIN GROUPS VIA THE ACTIVITY HUB
- DEVELOP SPECIAL INTERESTS
- KEEP MOVING FORWARD

HERE'S HOW TO GET ON  
THE SAGE WEB





# HERE'S HOW TO LOG IN TO THE SAGE WEB

1. On your Web browser, go to the url: <https://www.sagelearninginretirement.org>  
(USE header tabs at top of page to navigate.)
2. Register as a member (password =email), (phone number)  
Problems getting on, call Marcy or Tirza



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Member login

## THE NAVIGATION TABS WILL TAKE YOU TO THE NAMED SECTIONS OF THE SAGE WEBSITE

3. **AS A MEMBER** you can join interest groups, activities, food related trips and themed excursions. (see **ACTIVITIES** page)
4. **AS A MEMBER** you can see class descriptions and register for classes. (see **CURRENT CLASSES** page)
5. **AS A MEMBER** you can read about and register for upcoming events, plays, Speaker Series, (See **EVENTS** Page)
6. **AS A MEMBER** you can propose new classes and interest groups, (see **ACTIVITIES PAGE**)
7. **AS A MEMBER** you can see videos of great classes, “how to” training videos on giving a presentation, leading a discussion, navigating Zoom, using PowerPoint and find lots of other support and assistance. (see **ABOUT/TAKE A LOOK** page)

# VISIT THE SAGE WEB ACTIVITY HUB



First and foremost we consider ourselves “**a community.**”

In addition to study and discussion groups, we are actively engaged in building that community through shared experiences. These experiences allow us to build friendships and explore our interests and our environment together.

<https://www.sagelearninginretirement.org/activities/>

Our activity groups are created by members as loosely coordinated, self-directed interest groups. On the SAGE Web Activities page you will find a list of existing groups and some in the planning stage (looking for a lead person.)

Using the email function (bottom of the Activities page), you can join an existing or proposed group. If your special interest isn't on the list yet, you can propose a new group. Together we can organize it and identify interested members.

At a group's first meeting, members determines when, where and how frequently to meet, in-person, on Zoom, or off-site.

Take a look at the following partial list (page 6).

**WE HOPE YOU WILL FIND ONE OR MORE GROUPS TO JOIN**

## HERE IS HOW TO SIGN UP FOR AN ACTIVITY, A GROUP, OR TO VOLUNTEER

1. On your Web browser, go to the url: <https://www.sagelearninginretirement.org> (USE header tabs at top of page to navigate.)
2. Register as a member (ID is your email, password. (If you don't remember your assigned password or have problems getting on, please email Marcy at (docuorg@hotmail.com) or Tirza at (tirzaha@gmail.com)
3. Go to the Events Activities Tab at the top of the page. Choose Activities. This page lists all the different groups and activities that are currently being established. At the bottom of the page, (if you have logged in as a member) you will see an email form. Use this email to send us a request to join a group or several groups or to ask questions. Or use it to suggest a new group you would like to form.



4. Volunteering: We are creating a Web page that will list volunteering opportunities. SAGE is manned by our members. We have one part-time employee to help with administrative tasks. But there are many more challenges we face.
  - A. Help with the Open Houses, or the Speaker Series.
  - B. Help design our outreach materials.
  - C. Help create Observations.
  - D. Assist with photography for our Website.
  - E. Volunteer to interview our members for a living history.
  - F. Help with Web technical issues .



## THE FILM CLUB:

Our longest standing group is the Film Club, under the leadership of Phyllis H. They meet once a month to discuss two to three films they have watched prior to the meeting. This always leads to varied and unexpected views, wonderful discussions and a chance to keep up with the latest in entertainment. If you are a movie buff, or just enjoy great discussions join the next Zoom meeting.

## ENCORE PRESENTATIONS

So many great topics, – not enough time. “Encore” is a creative way to make sure that extra special discussions from classes you may have missed, are available. Based on requests from class members, SAGE will be arrange reprise presentations in-person and re-runs of recorded classes. You can take a look at the SAGE website page “**PAST CLASSES**” to see the wide variety of subjects that have been covered. Or if you have heard about a particularly great discussion such as Connie S. on Birds, Jerry R. on Shipwrecks ask about seeing it again.

TA-DAAAA

## THE WEEK THAT WAS

**Casual conversations over tea and coffee.** Remember that class that generated such a great discussion it ran overtime. Well, here is a chance to have wide ranging discussions about what has happened in our world in the previous weeks. Participants can discuss information or late-breaking news to inform and interest all. just information and an overview of related events. In-person with coffee, tea, and Danish. To join, use the Activities Hub two ways – email at

activities.sagelr@gmail.com



or use the email form on SAGE Web page (Events and Activities.)

**The first TWTW will happen on August 11 at the church, 11 AM.**

Details to follow. Our goal is to exchange information in a congenial environment while respecting all viewpoints presented.

## **THE BIRDING GROUP\***

Bird watching is not only fascinating, but it also provides the benefits of leisurely paced exercise, lovely trees, plants, and flowers, delightful sounds, fresh air, and fine scenery. And did we mention fresh air. Our lead, Connie S. also shares a wealth of avian knowledge on what to look for.



## **THE RESTAURANT EXPERIENCE**

How great is it to get together with friends to explore a new cuisine. As we are joining forces to explore new experiences, our thoughts naturally turn to food. Join us in selecting and enjoying something new. Rosalie L will be leading us to more great adventures.

## **THE MUSEUM GROUP**



The Museum Group grew out of a series of delightful class discussions on Southern and Northern Renaissance Art. This led to an eagerness to explore the great art that can be found in our own back yard. There are many museums and exhibits to see. Combining trips with the enjoyment of each other's company, has proved to be a successful venture. We hope you will give it a try.

\*For more on birding see Page 12



**Fall 2023 Term**  
**(Tuesday, September 19 - Thursday, November 9)**  
**CLASS DESCRIPTIONS - SEE THE SAGE WEB for full descriptions**

		Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday
AM 9:30 -11:30	IN- PERSON	Supreme Court: The Good, the Bad and the Ugly (Rose C)		Cult of the Leader Around the World (Richard B)
				Nineteenth Century American Art (Lila G.)
	IN- PERSON HYBRID		One Hundred Years Ago - 1923 (Judy D)	
	ZOOM	<i>Nuking the Moon</i> by Vince Houghton (Andrew J)	The 1619 Project (Michael W)	
PM 1:30 -3:30	IN- PERSON	Movies Made from Books (Rosalie L)	Let's Travel to Great Britain (Ann R)	
		Extreme Weather - What We Should Know (Wilma H)		
	IN- PERSON HYBRID			The Women of Rock, Pop and Soul (John C.)
	ZOOM		The Wonderful World of Fungi (Connie S)	<i>A Tale of Two Cities</i> by Charles Dickens (Frank D.)



## BITS AND PIECES

### DUES NEWS

This is your reminder that our annual member dues were payable as of July 28. If you haven't sent your dues in yet, please do so now. If you need a new copy of your member info page and payment instructions, contact Cynthia W. and let her know. She will email it to you. If you do not plan to renew, also contact Cynthia W. and let her know so she doesn't keep "reminding" you.

DUES: \$250 individuals. \$450 couples

TO PAY: Please make checks payable to SAGE Learning in Retirement

OR SAGE LR Inc.

Mail payments to Cynthia Washburn 22138 Lassen St., Chatsworth, CA 91311

OPTIONAL PAY METHOD: You can pay via Zelle to [paysage@sagelr.org](mailto:paysage@sagelr.org)

### FOOD PANTRY REMINDER

A note about donations to the church pantry to help those in need...

A message from our president, Ed Goldstein.

If you are using the bin in the closet of our main classroom to deposit canned goods or other food products for the church pantry, please be sure that all your items are well within the expiration date limits shown on the cans/packages. I have been told that when goods were recently collected by a SAGE member and a person from the pantry, they found cans that were far past their expiration dates. (in a few cases, years past). Some had even swelled and leaked spoiled contents into the bin, in a scene that was described by the SAGE member as "really gross." Clearly this is not a way to help already-struggling people in need. Nor is it a way to maintain our reputation and excellent relationship with the church. I know we all share values inconsistent with this episode.

Please continue to support the good work of the church pantry. Remember to remember our less fortunate neighbors who depend on the St. Charles and St. Andrew Food Pantry for assistance. There is so much food insecurity around the world that we cannot control but we can reach those nearby by donating cans of food, ready to eat meat, fruit and vegetables.

If you can, please make a donation to the food pantry with a check made out to

The Episcopal Church of St. Andrew and St. Charles Episcopal Church

Note "food pantry" in the memo line.

Address: 16651 Rinaldi St., Granada Hills, CA 91344.

## MEMBERSHIP NEWS

A very warm welcome to our new members, and a huge thank you to members for expanding our membership with new SAGERs.

Despite the heat, whatever the weather, it's always time to think about who you know that you might entice with SAGE membership or, perhaps, just a trial membership. I invite members to reach out to people you know to attend our speaker series. No fee for being there in person or on Zoom.

Here are some membership outreach tips.

If you want to share information about SAGE with non-SAGE people, please refer them to our updated website. Our web address is:

<https://sagelearninginretirement.org>

They can also email us at

[membership@sagelr.org](mailto:membership@sagelr.org)

They can call the SAGE membership line at 818-831-5064 and leave a message.

When you are out and about in book clubs, gyms, walking with buddies or visiting your family, please tell people you meet about SAGE.

Or add this to your emails:

SAGE LR provides a rich active learning and social experience. No matter where you live, you can sit in on a virtual class of your choice.

For a free trial call: [818-831-5064](tel:818-831-5064)

or email: <https://www.sagelearninginretirement.org/about-us/>

Glad you all are members of SAGE.

Judy Davidson,  
Membership Chair

## Go Birding With The Times

### The New York Times Birding Project



Christian Cooper and Amy Tan came to birding from very different paths. Cooper had found refuge in birding as a child, long before the Central Park incident that brought him to national attention. For Tan, birding was a more recent discovery, prompted by a need for an outlet away from political events.

For both, birding has been a powerful source of solace and community. Cooper, the author of the new book “Better Living Through Birding,” and Tan, author of the forthcoming book “The Backyard Bird Chronicles,” write about the transcendent power of birding and the challenges and the rewards . . .

More on Birds

**Birding Project:** The New York Times is working with the Cornell Lab of Ornithology to gather observations from readers about the birds around us.

**Birds Making Music:** Birdsong has inspired musicians from Bob Marley to Mozart. A growing body of research shows that the affinity between music and birding has a strong scientific basis.

**A Vanishing Falcon:** The number of American kestrels has dropped sharply. That goes against the trend for birds of prey, broadly seen as a conservation bright spot.

**An Escalating Problem:** In Argentina, kelp gulls are attacking the backs of southern right whales, imperiling the recovery of an endangered species.

## The Birds Are Singing But Not For Me



By David George Haskell

Dr. Haskell is a biologist and the author, most recently, of “Sounds Wild and Broken: Sonic Marvels, Evolution’s Creativity, and the Crisis of Sensory Extinction.” *New York Times*, July 22, 2023.

Animal sounds are my connection to the changing seasons. Every week, a new voice appears or fades. Early winter arrives with the chip of juncos. The chitter of nestling bluebirds signals the onset of summer, closely followed by the first cicadas. This year, though, the yearly cycle was missing a voice. In that absence, I learned something about my creeping deafness and, beyond, the Faustian bargains that our ancestors struck with evolution.

Where I live in the Southeast, late spring is marked by the songs of blackpoll warblers, tiny black-and-white birds migrating from South America to the boreal forests of Canada where they breed. They’re here for a week just as the school year ends and tomato-planting season begins, a joyful time. This year, I heard none. My partner, though, could hear their high-pitched song and pointed the birds out as they flitted in the treetops.

The sonic erasure felt deeply unsettling. I could hear other everyday sounds — passing cars, cardinals whistling, neighborhood kids at play — but the blackpoll’s song was gone. Graphs from my audiologist show hearing loss across all sound frequencies, but especially for high sounds, so I was expecting this moment. Still, the loss of blackpoll warblers hit me hard. I had looked forward all winter to hearing them and then ... nothing. Now, in summer, I notice other gaps in the soundscape, especially the high, raspy thrumming of the meadow katydids. This is a strange grief: The songs are there, but not for me. I miss them.

As a biologist fascinated with sound, I’ve tried to protect my ears, using earplugs around power tools and at loud concerts. Yet my hearing loss is now worse than most of my cohort of friends in their mid-50s, a quirk of my genes. I’m not alone. The National Institutes of Health [reports](#) that approximately 15 percent of Americans over the age of 18 report some trouble hearing. Among those older than 75, nearly half do.

We can lose hearing in many ways. Eardrums, middle ear bones and nerves can falter, as can auditory processing in the brain. For many people, loss of function in hair cells in the inner ear are to blame. These cells amplify the motions of sound waves in the inner ear, and then turn the motion into nerve impulses.

The hair cells in our ears are descendants of the wiggly cilia hairs that animate single-celled creatures swimming around in ponds and ocean water. These cilia enable hearing throughout the animal kingdom, from vibration-sensitive organs in the skin of fish to sound detectors in the legs of insects. Sudden shocks like gun blasts kill inner-ear hair cells. Other losses take time, like prolonged exposure to loud noise. Some pharmaceutical drugs can kill hair cells. But much of the loss has little to do with assaults from the outside. Instead, aging undermines hair cells. Even a life spent drug-free in quiet surrounds would not protect our ears from the erosive power of passing years. Once gone, the cells never grow back or heal. Just by being alive, we're locked into a process of sensory decline. Why?

Every sensory experience is mediated by cells. Cells accumulate defects over time, eventually slowing or ceasing their work. And so, to experience the passage of time in an animal body is to experience sensory diminishment. The only animals known to have broken this deal with time are relatives of jellyfish called hydra. Their bodies are sacs topped by tentacles. Their nerves are woven into a net, with no brain or complex sense organs. This simple body lets hydra regularly purge and replace defective cells. These eternally youthful inverted jellyfish live seemingly without aging, at the cost of having rudimentary senses.

Evolution struck a different deal for our ancestors: We live in richly sensual bodies, but are too complex to be ageless.

We can, though, partly break the deal. Sensory experience is about attention as much as it is about the physiology of cells. The undergraduate students in my field biology class generally have ears that can pick up more frequencies than mine. Yet when we go outside, I hear more. At least at first. I invite students, regardless of hearing "ability," into what the philosopher Simone Weil [called](#) the "rarest and purest form of generosity": attention.

We listen through our chests for low hums and percussive beats. We rest fingertips on twigs to perceive how wind converses with wood. We send our bodily attention outward, using ears, palms, soles, guts and muscles.

What we find differs among us in its tones and textures. We connect to stories of the world around us, carried in sound's many pulsations. We share these stories, listening through one another's perceptions. We name bird, insect and frog species, and hear the diversity of human voices. We study the energies of traffic and buildings. We follow vibrations back to their sources, some beautiful and life-affirming, like the music of other species, and others broken, such as excessive and unjust noise.

Opening our senses to the living world does not erase the sorrows of aging. But paying attention in community can bring delight in the moment, and is a defiant and joyful answer to evolution's bequest.

## **WORDS, WORDS, WORDS**

**gravamen** *noun* | **gruh-VAY-mu**

Gravamen is a formal word that refers to the significant part of a complaint or grievance.

The *gravamen* of Walter's letter to the editor was that the newspaper frequently reports on school system failures but rarely covers its successes and improvements.

**plangent** *adjective* | **plăn'jɔn**

expressing or suggesting sadness, plaintive  
loud and resounding, beating as in a waves.

**saturnine** *adjective* | **SAT-er-nyne**

*Saturnine* is a literary word that typically describes people who are glum and grumpy, or things that suggest or express gloom. It can also mean "slow to act or change." A walk in the sunshine can improve your mood significantly, raising the spirits of even the most *saturnine* among us.

**alembic** *noun* | **ɔ-lěm'bĭk**

An alembic is an alchemical still consisting of two vessels connected by a tube, used for distillation of liquids.

**kludge** *noun* | **KLOOJ**

kludge is a haphazard or makeshift solution to a problem and especially to a computer or programming problem .

**penumbra** *noun* | **pĭ-nŭm'brɔ**

A partial shadow, as in an eclipse, between regions of complete shadow and complete illumination.

An area in which something exists to a lesser or uncertain degree.

**perquisite** *noun* | **PER-kwuh-zut**

*perquisite* refers to something extra that someone receives in addition to regular pay for doing a job. *Perks*, as in "job perks" is short for *perquisite*







## YES I'M DEFINITELY GETTING OLD OR WAIT, MAYBE TRAVELLING IS JUST MORE DIFFICULT NOW

I knew the first day would be difficult but even I couldn't have imagined how difficult it would be. I arrived at the airport well within the recommended three hours prior to take off, stayed awake (unfortunately) for the entire eleven hour flight, arrived in London, met my grandson Michael, caught a commuter train to Kings Cross Station where we met Ann Radow, and took a five-hour train ride to Edinburgh Scotland. It sounds exhausting and it was. But wait, we now had to walk two blocks straight uphill to our rented apartment. I stayed with the luggage and they tried to find the lock box with the key. Twenty minutes later they arrived with the key and we then discovered our flat was on the fifth floor. You guessed it, no elevator. I'm not sure I ever recovered during the entire trip. But wait, there is more to come.

Three days later we arrived at Enterprise Auto Rental only to find that the only automatic car they had was a huge SUV. If you know how narrow the roads are in Scotland you know this is not the car you want to rent. Two hours later they found the only other available automatic transmission car and off we went with pigeon poop all over the car, at no extra cost.

We arrived in Glasgow one hour later and went directly to the gorgeous apartment I had rented in the best section of Glasgow. Unfortunately the owner had not given Air B&B permission to rent the place and she was living there. She apologized for any inconvenience, invited us for coffee and cake, suggested wonderful restaurants, but, we now found out we had nowhere to stay for the next three nights. She did however call her agent and he was able to find a nice apartment but in a rather seedy part of town. Oh well, at least the beds were comfortable.

As you can read, it wasn't the smoothest trip I've ever been on but now let's get to the interesting parts. Edinburgh is as gorgeous as everyone told me it was and also as damp and rainy. Not to be intimidated by it, Michael and I set out to see what it had to offer. Ann stayed in bed with a bad cold she caught sleeping in the street waiting for Charles' coronation. During our walk we came upon the courthouse and I immediately stopped and talked Michael into seeing if there was a trial in progress. We talked security into allowing us in the building and sure enough found a trial. Yes, the judge wore a funny white wig and the barristers wore black robes. Seems a poor guy was being held for mismarking produce at the market and not paying enough. Gosh in L.A. they would be delighted if they paid anything at all. It was fun and I introduced Michael to a sport I've always enjoyed in other countries. The best, though, is Old Bailey in London but this was fun too.

Aside from the usual tourist attractions like walking the Royal Mile through Old Town, we drove to the royal yacht Britannia. Did you know that the queen brought her Rolls Royce onboard? They had to remove the bumpers to be able to lift it on the yacht. Now, why I find that so interesting I'll never know!

We found the food in Edinburgh quite good and I was astounded when Michael and I went to the most beautiful restaurant I've ever been in and, yes, I've been in many. It was called The Dome and aptly name because when entering you looked up to find the most gorgeous domed ceiling and a circular bar bigger than any I've ever seen. On either side of the bar were two huge floral arrangements with my favorite flowers, peonies. I later learned the restaurant had originally been a bank. If you're wondering, the food was excellent but not the best I've ever had.

I expected Edinburgh to be lovely but was surprised to find Glasgow equally nice. I had always heard it was an industrial town and expected it to be more like Pittsburgh. Not so. It is really quite clean with lots to see but mainly on the outskirts of town. I was



shocked at how fabulous the university is. I don't think I've ever seen a more beautiful campus. The buildings are old but architecturally gorgeous as were the gardens. We, of course, had to see Loch Lomond and spent the rest of the trip humming "On the Banks of Loch Lomond".

Next was our trip to The Isle of Skye. Found a nice place to stay and found it exactly as I had envisioned. Windswept and rather barren and nothing like Southern California. I just had to experience the Scottish Isles and of course fish and chips for dinner. Good, but not worth the hour in line for a table. Are chips supposed to be soggy? Since the restaurant was in a lovely small fishing port I knew the fish was quite fresh.

Not far from Glasgow is the charming town of Sterling with its famous castle but, the best part of the day was at Falkirk, a nearby town. A friend told me to be sure to see the Kelpies in Falkirk. Not only had I never heard of Falkirk, I had no idea of what a Kelpie was. I now know that a Kelpie is a magical waterborne sprite of Scottish lore who spirited young children into the sea never to be seen again (who knew). They are over one hundred feet high and stand in pools of water on an old canal and resemble Clydesdale horses. But even better in the same small town is the Falkirk Wheel. It's a slow motion contraption that spins like a Ferris wheel and can shuttle ships between canals and is 115 feet tall, opened in 2002 and can shuttle a ship between two canals that are 80 feet apart. Wow!

We left Skye the following morning and set out for Inverness. It's another small city and another castle. I think after Scotland I may have to put castles in the same category as churches, ruins and walled cities. Seen enough for one lifetime!



I'm sure Ann and Michael would say the highlight of Inverness was visiting the Malt Room. They had over 300 different whiskies ranging from \$4 to \$195. They also offered a whiskey and chocolate flight for only \$27. Both Ann and Michael ordered a flight with 3 different whiskies and I settled for a lovely cocktail that tasted like a chocolate malt. Inverness' claim to fame is being located near Loch Ness. We of course had to see it and, not surprisingly, did not spot Nessie the monster.

That night I had reserved two rooms at a lovely inn in Glenclova, Kirriemuir. No one in Scotland seemed to know of Glenclova. I now know why. We started on a four lane highway, then two lanes and lastly many miles on a one lane road. We saw millions of sheep, newly born lambs cavorting and lots of grass, but nothing else. That is, until a lovely white inn appeared around a bend in the road. We wondered why it was built there but apparently the owner of the land needed money and converted the place into a destination wedding venue. Dinner was good and our rooms lovely so I shan't complain.

Then it was off to St. Andrews. There was no way I was going to Scotland and not visit St. Andrews golf course. No, I didn't play a round of golf since it cost \$320 and you need to have a low handicap. I don't think I even have one and even if I did I know it would be too high. We were only able to view the 18<sup>th</sup> hole and it really didn't look that difficult. I'm sure looks can be deceiving and we weren't able to see the incredibly difficult sand traps either. I loved the golf museum and the exhibit of golf wear worn in the past. It was now time to say goodbye to Scotland and the next morning we left Edinburgh.



# SUMMER TIPS

## HOW TO PICK THE BEST WATERMELON

You've likely seen the viral tip circulating over the internet each summer. In short, it states that a perfectly ripe watermelon should have green stripes that are around the width of two fingers. Color me surprised, because these farmers and Facebook posters just might be on to something.

After sifting my way through a bin of expectant watermelons (only a few ready with their stripes out), I found my prospect: a big ol' beast of a melon just about begging me to [sprinkle tajín on it](#). I did my cursory check: Two fingers width? Check. Heavy? You bet. A satisfying thud after knocking on it (just for fun)? The thud was beautiful.



## HOW TO TELL IF YOUR PEACHES ARE RIPE

There are a few different tricks you can use to make sure you're getting your hands on the freshest, juiciest, most flavorful peaches to bake up into this peach crisp:

- **Smell:** This is my favorite way to tell if peaches are ripe. Give your peach a good sniff and see if it smells sweet and...well, peachy! If it has that fragrant, peachy aroma it's probably ripe!
- **Softness:** A ripe peach has a little give when you gently prod it. An underripe peach will be pretty firm, and an overripe peach will feel mushy.
- **Color:** Ripe peaches are usually an orange-y red color all over. If you see a lot of green or yellow coloring the outside of your peaches they might not be ripe!

## REVERSE YOUR CEILING FANS

When it's the middle of winter and freezing outside, it's probably safe to say that most of us aren't thinking about our ceiling fans. Running fans in the colder months can actually *save* up to 10% on heating costs and is as simple as flipping a switch.

In the summer months, the slightly angled blades of a ceiling fan turn counterclockwise to move air down, making people feel cooler due to a concept known as the wind chill effect. During winter, the warm air generated by your heating system

naturally rises to the ceiling while cooler air sinks. By switching the direction that your fan blades turn, that cooler air is drawn upwards, which forces the warmer air near the ceiling back down into the space. How does this save energy? Since thermostats are typically located at human level, keeping the warm air low where it's needed means you can turn the temperature down a few notches and still stay warm.

On most fan models, there is generally a small switch on the fan to reverse the direction. Additionally, running the fan at the lowest speed will circulate air while reducing the feeling of actual air movement in the room. While this technique should work in standard size rooms, it works especially well in vaulted or tall ceiling spaces where the people occupying the space are further separated from the warm air collecting at the ceiling. Furthermore, even though running a fan uses a small amount of electricity, there is generally still a net savings in energy use.

**Just remember, clockwise in winter, counterclockwise in summer.**

**HOW TO REPEL MOSQUITOS:** Nothing ruins an outdoor adventure faster than ravenous mosquitoes. Here are some strategies to try.

**1. Bathe** with coconut scented soap and shampoo. Recent studies indicate that coconut-scented products might even be more effective than mosquito repellents containing the active ingredient known as DEET. The takeaway: To discourage mosquitoes, lather up with coconut-scented soap and slather on coconut-scented sunscreen before heading out.

**2. Spray** the bottoms of walls. Did you know that by spraying just 12 percent of a room with insecticide you can kill 85 percent of mosquitos? A new study by researchers in Brazil found that significantly more mosquitoes (both male and female) frequently visited the bases of walls rather than the upper portions. That allows you to use less spray overall to kill more mosquitoes. Make sure to choose an insecticide that is generally safe for children and pets.

**3. Wear** permethrin-treated clothing . Permethrin “should never be applied to skin; you treat your clothes with it,” she says. “It is harmful to pets, so it should be applied to clothing outdoors where animals will not come into contact with it.”

**4. Switch up** your wardrobe. Mosquitoes appear to use specific wavelengths on the visual spectrum to locate a target. Their preferred colors: red, orange, black and cyan (a greenish-blue), according to a study published by researchers at the University of Washington in the journal Nature Communications. Opting for an outfit that is green, purple, blue or white – colors that mosquitoes avoid – could leave you with fewer bites during outdoor adventures.

**5. Use insect repellent.** Stick with the basics. Insect repellents that contain DEET are considered the gold standard when it comes to reducing bug bites and preventing mosquito-borne diseases. The chemical signature in the insecticide interferes with the mosquito's scent receptors, causing the insect to get confused and keep moving, and DEET-based products provide longer-lasting protection than insect repellents with other active ingredients.

**DON'T USE:** Citronella candles and plants, coffee grounds or spatial repellents—like burning coils or bug zappers

## Quiz for Bright People

There are only nine questions.

This is a quiz for people who know everything!

I found out in a hurry that I didn't. These are not trick questions.

They are straight questions with straight answers..

1. Name the one sport in which neither the spectators nor the participants know the score or the leader until the contest ends.
2. What famous North American landmark is constantly moving backward?
3. Of all vegetables, only two can live to produce on their own for several growing seasons. All other vegetables must be replanted every year. What are the only two perennial vegetables?
4. What fruit has its seeds on the outside?
5. In many liquor stores you can buy pear brandy, with a real pear inside the bottle. The pear is whole and ripe, and the bottle is genuine; it hasn't been cut in any way. How did the pear get inside the bottle?
6. Only three words in standard English begin with the letters "dw" and they are all common words. Name two of them.
7. There are 14 punctuation marks in English grammar. Can you name at least half of them?
8. Name the only vegetable or fruit that is never sold frozen, canned, processed, cooked, or in any other form except fresh.
9. Name 6 or more things that you can wear on your feet beginning with the letter 'S.'

See page 24 for answers.





## HOW TO CLEAR YOUR HOME OF WILDFIRE SMOKE

With smoke from Canada wildfires affecting much of the Northeast, many people found themselves dealing with such air pollution for the first time.

First, **consider a true-HEPA air purifier.** Wildfire smoke predominantly consists of particles that are smaller than 10 microns, and true-HEPA air filters are exceptionally good at removing particles of that size from the air. Wirecutter's top picks from Coway are well-priced, effective and reliable.

If you have central air and heating and want a cheaper option, consider upgrading to one of the furnace and air-conditioning filters Wirecutter recommends. **Go for versions with as high a MERV rating** ("minimum efficiency reporting value," a measure of how well a central-air filter removes particulates from the air) as your system fan and filter slot can accommodate.

It may seem obvious, but **close your windows.** Most of the time, outside air contains fewer particulates than indoor air, so open windows are a good idea. But in wildfire conditions, that isn't the case. Closing your windows will help keep smoke from entering your home in the first place. Minimize entrances and exits through exterior doors as well.

Even fine smoke particles eventually drop out of the air and settle on surfaces, including floors. **Damp-mop your floors to pick them up rather than vacuuming,** which can simply blow them back up into the air. Wirecutter picks for dust mop and wet mop do a great job and are inexpensive, durable, ergonomic and washable.

**Wearing a respirator mask can help you protect yourself** while these longer term fixes are underway. Wirecutter found specific models of N95 respirators that are versatile in fit, reliable in performance and widely available once the initial wave of shortages early in the Covid pandemic passed.

Smoke particles also settle on your clothes, skin and bed. If you've spent time outdoors in the smoke, change into clean clothes when you get home. **Wash your sheets more often than normal, too.** Take a quick shower before you go to bed. And after the smoke clears and the fires subside, clean everything.

# “Produced In USA” Label for Meat Doesn’t Mean What You Think

Experts in the industry shed light on the labels  
By Lauren David  
*The Spruce*, 05/5/23

Head to the meat counter at the grocery store or your local butcher and you’ll come across a couple of labels that seem to distinguish between meat raised in the United States and imported meat. The sticker “Product of USA” or “Made in the USA” is often applied to different cuts of meat, such as beef, pork, lamb, and poultry. So if you’re wanting American-raised meat, it seems straightforward enough. Unfortunately, it’s not that simple.

## What The Label Means and Who Can Use It

The label is voluntary and there are loopholes. The voluntary system means shoppers have to depend on a label that is often used as a marketing ploy. “Unfortunately, beef is one of a few items for which the labeling is voluntary and that leaves it up to marketers to decide how to describe the product,” explains [SunFed Ranch](#) Founding Rancher, Matt Byrne.

With the current law, a cow can be raised in another country, then brought over to the USA to be slaughtered or simply packaged, and be labeled “Made in the USA.” “It is a fairly hollow claim, given internationally raised and slaughtered animals can be deemed a product of the US, because they’re packaged here,” says Kristen Kilfoyle Boffo, Director of Strategic Partnerships at Walden Local Meat Co.

## How This Label Affects American Ranchers.

It’s not just consumers who are affected by not truly knowing what they are purchasing, ranchers are also negatively impacted since they are competing with imported meat sold at lower prices and still labeled “Made in the USA.” “Corporations sell imported beef at lower prices which makes it more difficult for domestic farmers to compete, particularly [if they are selling] grass-fed products,” says Julia Johnson, [Compassion in World Farming](#), U.S. Head of Food Business. [How To Know What You’re Buying](#)

“I believe the majority of today’s consumers are unaware that much of the meat they are purchasing from the grocery store comes from other countries, sometimes even from across the globe,” says Boffo. If you’re a conscientious consumer and rely on labels to provide insight into what you’re buying, you’ll want to rethink your strategy if you want to eat American-produced meat. “Right now, [the label] is based on assumptions and there is no way for a consumer to know for sure if the meat carrying this label is truly Made in the USA,” says Byrne.



“Produced In USA” continued.

## New Proposed Legislation

There is proposed legislation to change the requirements so only meat, poultry, and eggs produced on American soil can use “Made in the USA” or “Product of USA” label.

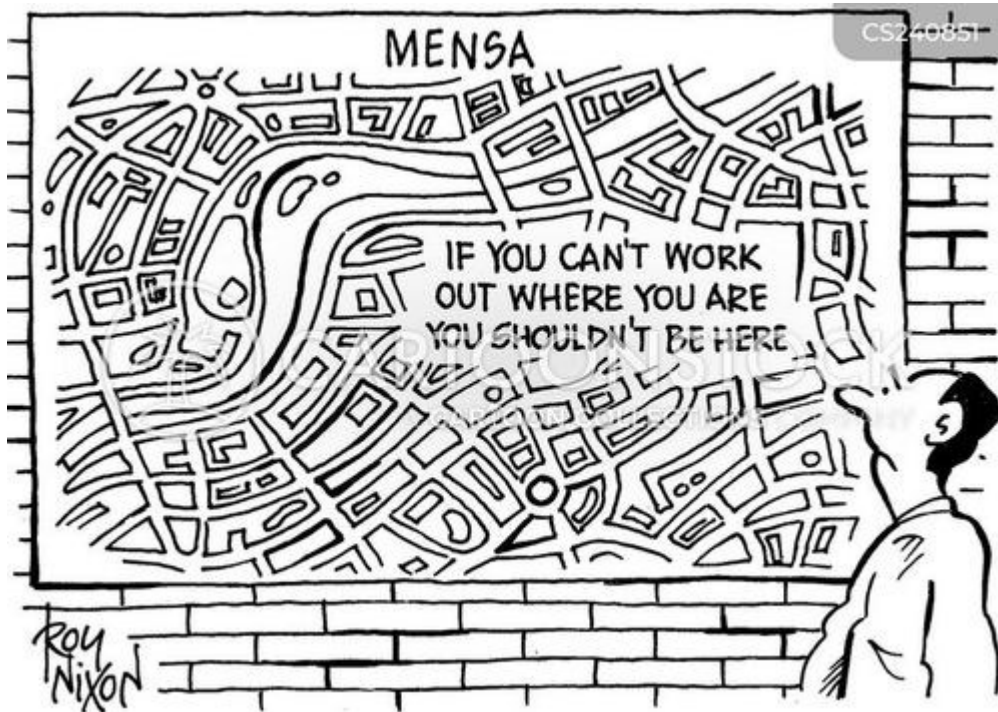
In March 2023, the [USDA proposed new rules](#) for the voluntary label, which if approved, would require that only animals born and raised in the United States as well as slaughtered and processed here, can use the label. Documents supporting the claim would need to be on file and available if USDA personnel decided to inspect a facility. Meat companies and ranchers would need to provide descriptions on the packaging about the processing which took place in the United States.

## Answers To Quiz:

1. The one sport in which neither the spectators nor the participants know the score or the leader until the contest ends: Boxing.
2. North American landmark constantly moving backward: Niagara Falls . The rim is worn down about two and a half feet each year because of the millions of gallons of water that rush over it every minute.
3. Only two vegetables that can live to produce on their own for several growing seasons: Asparagus and rhubarb.
4. The fruit with its seeds on the outside: Strawberry.
5. How did the pear get inside the brandy bottle? It grew inside the bottle. The bottles are placed over pear buds when they are small, and are wired in place on the tree. The bottle is left in place for the entire growing season. When the pears are ripe, they are snipped off at the stems.
6. Three English words beginning with dw: Dwarf, dwell and dwindle...
7. Fourteen punctuation marks in English grammar: Period, comma, colon, semicolon, dash, hyphen, apostrophe, question mark, exclamation point, quotation mark, brackets, parenthesis, braces, and ellipses.
8. The only vegetable or fruit never sold frozen, canned, processed, cooked, or in any other form but fresh: Lettuce.
9. Six or more things you can wear on your feet beginning with 'S': Shoes, socks, sandals, sneakers, slippers, skis, skates, snowshoes, stockings, stilts, swim shoes.

Well, my job's done!

Just don't send it back to me. I've already flunked it once!



## OPINION

## GUEST ESSAY

**Stop Multitasking. No, Really — Just Stop It.**

By Oliver Burkeman

*New York Times*, July 29, 2023

A few months ago, I was teetering on the brink of feeling overwhelmed by life’s responsibilities, afflicted by the ambient anxiety that seems to be an intrinsic part of life in the 2020s. In an effort to maintain — or maybe restore — my sanity, I embarked on a personal endurance challenge.

Other people, at similar moments, begin competing in grueling triathlons, or head off on intensive meditation retreats. Me? I decided to give up listening to podcasts or music while running, or driving, or loading the dishwasher, or doing almost anything else. To just focus, in other words, on what it was I was actually doing, one activity at a time.

It was surprisingly hard. Once you’ve finished mocking me for treating such a trifling alteration to my habits like a grand existential struggle, I have one request: Try it. Identify the small tricks you use to avoid being fully present with whatever you’re doing, and put them aside for a week or two.

You may discover, as I did, that you were unwittingly addicted to *not* doing one thing at a time. You might even come to agree with me that restoring our capacity to live sequentially — that is, focusing on one thing after another, in turn, and enduring the confrontation with our human limitations that this inherently entails — may be among the most crucial skills for thriving in the uncertain, crisis-prone future we all face.

It’s not that the urge to multitask is anything new. “One thinks with a watch in one’s hand,” Nietzsche [complained](#) as early as [1887](#), “even as one eats one’s midday meal while reading the latest news of the stock market.” We’ve also long known that multitasking doesn’t really work. You’ve probably read — perhaps while half-watching TV — articles explaining the [research findings](#) that multitasking isn’t really even possible; mainly, we’re just switching our attention rapidly between different foci without realizing it, incurring cognitive costs each time we do so. [One study](#) of drivers found only 2.5 percent of people showed no performance decrease when attempting two tasks at once. The rest of us just end up doing everything worse.

Yet the pressure to multitask can still often seem like something imposed on us from outside. Burdened by so many demands at work, you can feel as though you've no choice but to split your attention among them. Meanwhile, should you feel some responsibility to address the troubles of the wider world as well, then the causes for alarm – the climate, the fate of democracy, the threats from artificial intelligence and the risk of nuclear war, to name just a few – are so numerous as to make multitasking look like every citizen's duty.

Technological advances turn the screw further. Those of us not raised as “digital natives” can remember a time when we didn't have the option of using social media to distract ourselves from unpleasant tasks, and when the limits imposed by our tools – the speed of snail mail, for example, or the time it took to visit a library to conduct research – meant we felt less pressure from bosses or customers to somehow transcend the limits imposed by our finite attention spans.

But philosophers and spiritual teachers have long understood that the urge to avoid giving ourselves fully to any single activity goes deeper, to the core of our struggles as finite human beings.

The Hindu mystic Patanjali, for example, saw doing one thing at a time as [a core yogic discipline](#), suggesting that it didn't come easily to people 2,000 years ago, either. We rail against what the Christian productivity writer Jordan Raynor calls our “[unipresence](#)” – our inability to be in more than one place at a time, in contrast to the omnipresence attributed to God – and against the shortness of our time on earth, which averages little more than four thousand weeks. All this finitude feels unpleasantly constraining, because it means there will always be many more things we *could* do than we ever *will* do – and that the choice to spend a portion of our time on any one thing automatically entails the sacrifice of countless other things we might have done with it.

This explains the attraction of multitasking: It offers the false promise that we might somehow slip the bonds of our finitude. We tell ourselves that with sufficient self-discipline, plus the right time-management tricks, we might finally “get on top of everything” and feel good about ourselves at last. This utopia never arrives, of course, though it often feels as if it might be just around the corner.

The uncomfortable truth is that the only way to find sanity in an overwhelming world – and to have any concrete effect on that world – is to surrender such efforts to escape the human condition, and drop back down into the reality of our limitations. Distracting yourself from challenging tasks by, say, listening to podcasts doesn't actually make them more bearable over the long term; instead, it makes them *less* enjoyable, by reinforcing your belief that they're the sort of activities you can tolerate only by distracting yourself – while at the same time all but ensuring that you'll neither accomplish the task in question nor digest the contents of the podcast as well as you otherwise might.

At work, the way to get more tasks done is to learn to let most of them wait while you focus on one. “This is the ‘secret’ of those people who ‘do so many things’ and apparently so many difficult things,” [wrote](#) the management guru Peter Drucker in his book “The Effective Executive.” “They do only one at a time.” Making a difference in one domain requires giving yourself permission *not* to care equally about all the others. There will always be too much to do, no matter what you do. But the ironic upside of this seemingly dispiriting fact is that you needn’t beat yourself up for failing to do it all, nor keep pressuring yourself to find ways to get on top of it all by means of increasingly extreme multitasking.

Instead, you can pour your finite time, energy and attention into a handful of things that truly count. You’ll enjoy things more, in the bargain. My gratifying new ability to “be here now” while running or driving or cooking dinner isn’t the result of having developed any great spiritual prowess. Rather, it’s a matter of realizing I could only ever be here now anyway – so I might as well give up the stressful struggle to pretend otherwise.



**SHADOW IS WATCHING**

