

ASIA

Reader's

HOURS OF GREAT READING

digest

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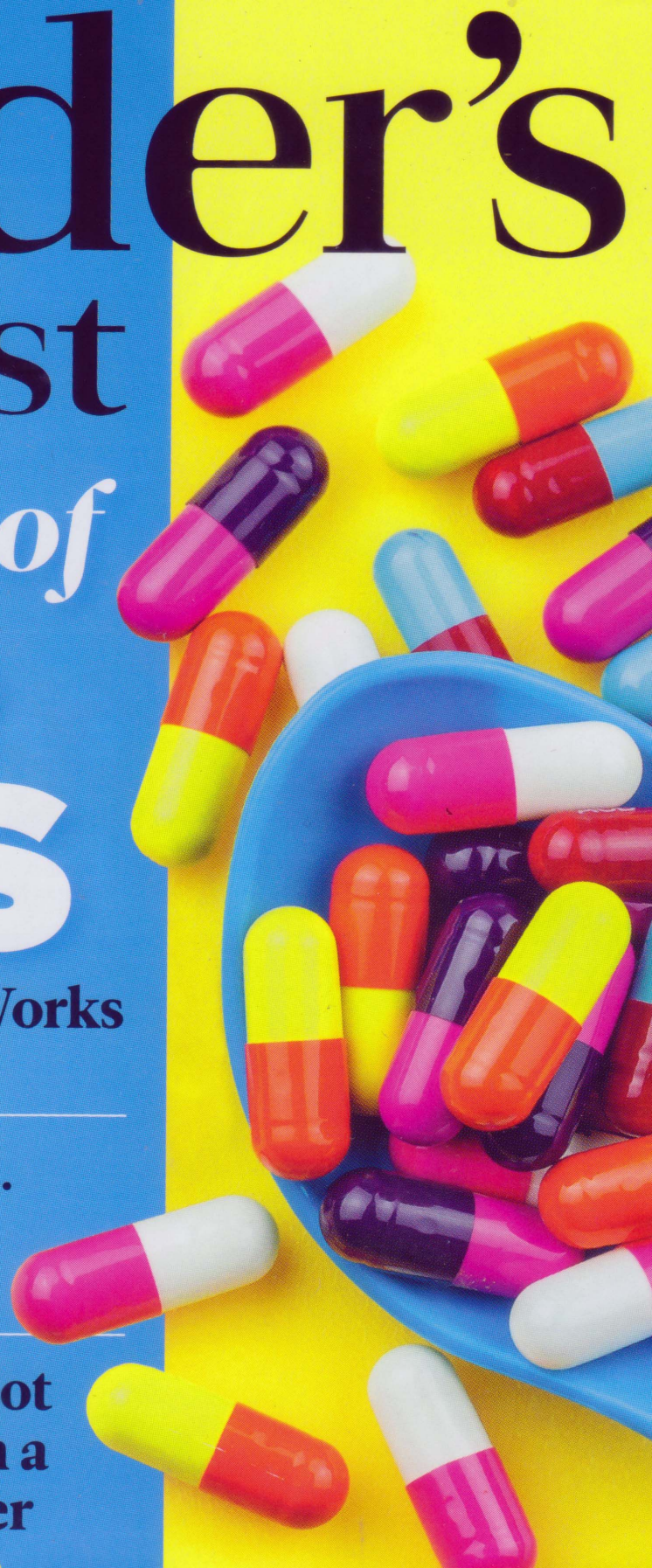
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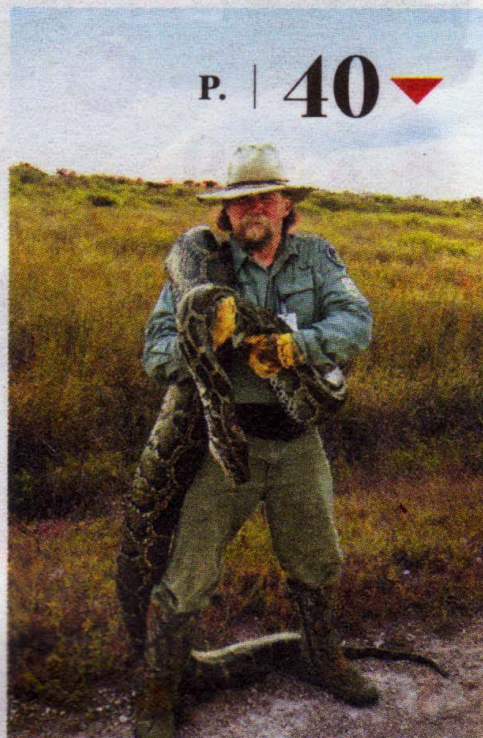
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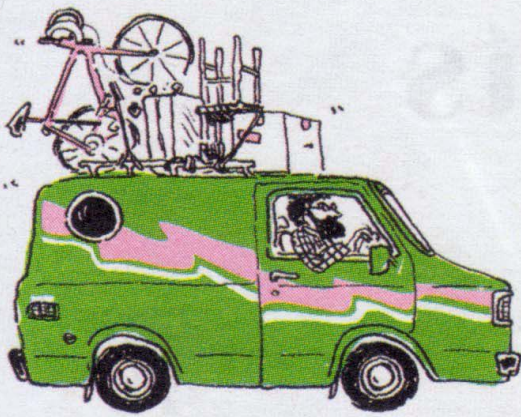
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Ring on Her Finger

A wonderful story of loss, love and family ties

BY GABRIELLE CAVANAGH WITH HEATHER ASKIN

Gabrielle Cavanagh has nine adult children and lives on a farm in Coolabunia, Queensland. She is a keen writer and reader and loves the outdoors.

MUCH TO MY ANNOYANCE, our fox terrier dog, Lucy, was forever digging holes in our yard. The holes were deep enough to cause a nasty fall if you stepped in one. Just on dusk, one July evening in 2008, I went outside to fetch her in for the night only to find she had dug a hole about 30 centimetres deep. "What!" I exclaimed. "This looks like you're digging your own grave." I began to scrape the soil back into the hole with my boot when I noticed a small round object lying in the soil. Not thinking much of it, I picked it up and slipped it into my pocket.

It was not until bedtime that I remembered the object. Wiping the soil off, I discovered it was an extremely dirty and dull-looking little gold ring. After I cleaned it,

I marvelled at how very pretty it was, with a green stone daintily set at its centre. "I wonder who owns it?" I mused, giving it to my husband Bob to examine.

"Probably one of the girls," he said dismissively. "It can't be valuable or we would have heard about the loss." We have five adult daughters and four sons, so it could have belonged to any one of them or their girlfriends.

I attached a note to it which read, 'Does anyone recognise this ring?' and hung it on the noticeboard in our kitchen. Over the next six to eight months all of our children visited at some time. However, they all made similar comments when shown the piece of jewellery. "It's not mine," or "If one of my friends lost a ring like that, I'm sure they would have let me know."

Determined to find its owner, I took the ring from the noticeboard and polished it. It looked so beautiful. Next, I tried Mary, the lady from whom we had bought the property some 30 years ago. I hoped that she would know something about it, although my husband, who thought it highly unlikely, scoffed at the idea.

"I have something to show you," I began as I held out the ring in the palm of my hand. With a look of astonishment, Mary's hands flew to her face as she exclaimed, "I bet that's Heather's ring!" I was amazed. Had I found the owner at last?

Heather's story

"Col, Mary's son, gave me the ring in January 1972 when he was trying to win my heart. I had never owned such a beautiful piece of jewellery and I was very proud of it. I remember that time well.

I was 18 years old and an entrant in the Innisfail Sugar Queen Competition. It was a charity event and all monies raised went to help people with cerebral palsy. A large fair was held at the showgrounds on judging day with entrants judged on deportment, grooming and knowledge of the sugar industry in North Queensland. I wore the ring then and was thrilled when I was crowned 'queen'.

Col and I became engaged that May, and the following January I visited his family at their Coolabunia farm for his brother Brian's 21st birthday. We had a wonderful time. The warm summer evening was filled with lots of laughter, fun and games. One game involved throwing and catching a raw egg. In teams of two, one person would toss a raw egg to their teammate. If the egg was caught successfully, both would take a step back and continue throwing until only one uncracked egg remained.

The guests were having fun and most got into the game. Some of us took off our rings, placing them on an outdoor chair, in case they caused an egg shell to crack. One couple, who didn't take part, were unknown to >>

Smart Animals

Even animals need a helping hand and a friendly face sometimes

Butting His Way In

ROLLAND MCKELLAR

Early one Sunday morning last year, I heard a rattling sound at the back door. Upon investigation I got quite a shock. The head of a young black and white goat was protruding through the cat flap. It was thrusting its head vigorously through the cat flap, clearly very determined to gain entrance to the house. I quickly shut the flap, but the small goat butted it and continued to noisily push for entry. It was as if this was its home.

I opened the back door and the goat quickly decided this was another entrance option. I only just managed to keep the mystery goat out.

So, I headed out the front door and went round to where our persistent visitor was seeking entrance. After taking a photo, I led the goat by its



trailing chain to the garage area to try and find it shelter as it was raining quite heavily.

Up to now this mystery goat had seemed quite friendly, but suddenly its focus was butting me with its sharp-looking horns. As I was still

wearing pyjamas, and feeling more than a little nervous, I hot-tailed it down the driveway, hoping to escape and find safety behind a nearby gate.

The goat chased after me and as I reached the gate it was right behind me. Shouting in the hope of dissuading it from butting me, I managed to tie its chain to the fence.

Relieved, now my question was, whose goat was this? Eureka! The visiting goat was returned to the

You could earn cash by telling us about the antics of unique pets or wildlife. Turn to page 14 for details on how to contribute.

house just 100 metres away. The owners were mildly surprised to hear about their missing goat's adventures and so concluded one of the funniest things I have ever witnessed.

Balancing Act

JULIE K. HALPIN

I adopted my pure white, domestic shorthair cat in March 2009. Money was tight so, instead of buying a scratching post, I asked my brother, who was a handyman, to make me one. He anchored a metre length of timber into a heavy base and covered it with rope and hessian. Mr Crusty Baker loved it.

A few days later he'd managed to jump up and balance himself on the few square centimetres at the top.

I was charmed and impressed, called him a clever boy and gave him some treats. After that, Mr Baker would often jump up and balance whenever he wanted some treats. If he'd recently had some, I'd ignore him until he finally gave up.

He'd often jump up, every half hour until I would finally give in. One day, I'd had enough. I was busy preparing lunch for a friend who was due to arrive within the hour so I said, "You can't have any more until Chris

arrives, so don't think you can!"

Mr Baker obediently jumped down from the post and went to snooze in his favourite spot in the study. When my friend arrived, she had hardly walked in the door when Mr Baker came out from the study and jumped up onto the top of his scratching post. He hadn't forgotten and, of course, he received his treat.

Quenching a Thirst

DOREEN FOY

In February 2017 there was a heatwave of more than 40°C. Sitting in my lounge room with the air conditioning on, I heard an unusual tapping at my front door.

I found a poor pigeon panting on my front doormat and clearly suffering from heatstroke.

I immediately picked up the frail bird, worried that it would die in my hands, and put it in a bath of cold

water. Then I gave it some water to drink and brought it outside to rest under the shade of a tree in my backyard.

Twenty minutes later, I went to check on it and it had flown away. It made my day to think that I was able to save the bird from the heat with such a simple gesture.

