

# The PACKARD PRESS

A collection of thoughts and stories to educate, entertain, and inspire.

## MY BIG BIRTHDAY REALIZATION

*At Age 7, This Insight Changed My Life!*

On my 7th birthday, I discovered something that changed the way I looked at the world forever. I don't remember exactly how it happened — maybe I saw the date written down on the calendar or started counting up my new age on my fingers. Or maybe one of my siblings said it out loud: "Hey Michael, you're turning 7 in 1987!"

My eyes went wide. "Not just that!" I said, doing some quick calculations in my head. "My birthday is on July 7th. And July is the seventh month of the year. And I'm the seventh son in the family. I'm the chosen one!"

All of the sevens in my life lit up like stars. My first name, "Michael," has seven letters. So does my last name, "Packard." It felt like my lucky number had manifested and fallen into my lap. What a birthday present! I was practically Lucky Seven Sampson from "Schoolhouse Rock." I've loved sevens ever since, and I celebrate them wherever I find them.

In '97, I turned 17. In 2007, I was 27, and so on and so forth. Every 10 years, I get a special seven-flavored birthday. When I dug deeper into my family history, I learned that my dad (who came from a very large family) was the seventh of seven boys born in a row among his siblings. As of now, I have six kids, but I'm secretly hoping for an accidental seventh! (My wife doesn't think that this is as funny a joke as I do ...)

I'm not the only one who thinks the number seven is lucky (you can read more about that on Page 2), but I like to think I have a special claim on that luck because of all of the sevens in my life. Over the years, there have been a few outliers — like my high school football jersey, No. 50 — but usually, the sevens follow me everywhere.



This year, I'm looking forward to celebrating my 43rd birthday on lucky July 7th. Every birthday in my family feels like being wrapped in a big, warm blanket of traditions. The day starts with a giant sheet of butcher paper. We spread it out on the table and write "Happy Birthday" in the middle. Then, everyone who isn't having a birthday that day decorates the paper with love notes and doodles.

I swear, the kids get more creative every year. They turn the edges of the letters into funny little scenes, like a water park slide for their stick figures. They draw in a pool at the base of the slide and include water, sharks, and stick swimmers. They transform the dot over the "i" in "Birthday" into a glaring Eye of Sauron from "Lord of the Rings." They are quite witty! Once the sign is finished, we hang it in the dining room so that it flutters over the head of the table (the official birthday seat).

Then, the celebration really gets going with a birthday breakfast of all the sugary cereal the birthday boy or girl can eat. I like to munch on Lucky Charms (because I'm lucky, remember?) and Cinnamon Toast Crunch — one bowl of each. I then combine the two for my third bowl. If you've never had cinnamon Lucky Charms, I highly recommend it! We have a special red plate, bowl, and goblet we use specifically for birthdays, because they're "red letter days" in our family.

We have other birthday traditions as a family, but for me, I have one more. Once, when I was little, my super laid-back mom had to scramble for a cake on my birthday. So she cut a watermelon in half, stuck some candles in it, and called it my birthday cake! Years later, I told the story to my friends in college and they resurrected the celebration for me. I've had a birthday watermelon ever since!

So, Happy Birthday to me this month! And I wish you all of the lucky sevens,

*—Michael Packard*



## WE WON A COLLEGE FUND FOR AN ORPHANED CHILD

### A Sad Story With a Happy Ending

Picture this: A man named Bill\* is walking down the shoulder of a dark, rural Texas highway. It's around 11 p.m., and the stars are bright pinpricks in a blanket of sky overhead. Bill picks up his phone and sends a message to a friend — he had car trouble, but he's on his way.

Then, from around a bend in the highway, headlights appear in the darkness behind him. BAM! The first vehicle knocks James into the road; the next one ends his life.

Our firm recently represented Bill's family in a heartbreaking legal fight. They came to us because Bill was a single father with a young child at home, plans for the night, and plenty to live for — but the first driver who hit him claimed that Bill had jumped into oncoming traffic. The police put into the report that suicide was the cause of death.

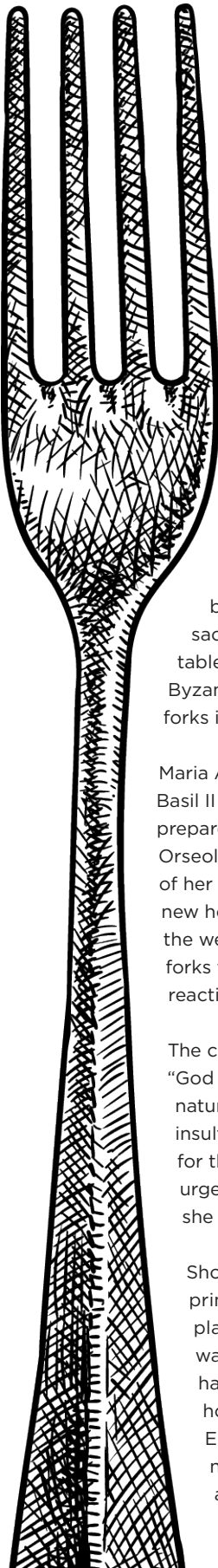
Bill's family knew that he didn't commit suicide. They wanted to clear his name and to also see if there was anything from the insurance company that could help support Bill's orphaned child. (The child's mother had passed away a year earlier.) As soon as Michael heard Bill's story, he knew we had to do everything we could to learn the truth.

We started digging, and the more Michael learned, the more he suspected the first driver (a woman in a pickup with her kids in the cab) had either misled the police or had been misunderstood as she spoke Spanish to the English-speaking officer. Something didn't add up! Eventually, Michael sat down with her, a court reporter, a couple of lawyers from the insurance companies, and a translator — and the truth finally came out.

"Did Bill walk into traffic? Michael asked. "No," she said. He asked again, phrasing things a little differently. "Did he ever step off the shoulder and walk into your lane?" Her answer settled it: "No, he only walked in the shoulder area." Michael speaks fluent Spanish and was able to make sure the questions were translated accurately. It was clear, Bill didn't commit suicide. His death was an accident, and the insurance companies were on the hook! We secured for Bill's child a good settlement from the insurance policy. As we write this, it's waiting in a trust fund for when the little one heads to college.

Walking Texas's roads can be dangerous, whether it's 11 p.m. or in broad daylight. If someone you know has been hurt in a pedestrian accident or lost a family member like Bill, please share our firm's website and phone number. We'll help in every way we can.

\*We've changed this name to protect the client's privacy.



### *How Europe Eventually Stopped Eating With Their Hands*

If you attend a dinner party, go on a date at a restaurant, or eat a plate of pasta, you'll use a fork without thinking twice. This is proper etiquette — and the cleanest and most efficient way to eat a meal! Could you imagine trying to eat a plate of spaghetti and meatballs without one?

Wealthy people in other parts of the world, such as the Byzantine Empire and the Middle East, have been using forks since the 17th century. However, before that, forks were considered to be sacrilegious and rude to use at the dinner table in Europe! In fact, in the 11th century, a Byzantine princess was ridiculed for bringing forks into her new husband's home.

Maria Argyropoulina, the Greek niece of Emperor Basil II of Byzantium, arrived in Venice, Italy, prepared to marry Giovanni, the son of Pietro Orseolo II, the Doge of Venice. She brought all of her belongings with her to move into her new house, including a case of golden forks. At the wedding, she pulled out one of her golden forks to partake in her wedding feast, and the reaction she got took her by surprise.

The clergy lambasted her, saying things like, "God in his wisdom has provided man with natural forks — his fingers. Therefore, it is an insult to him to substitute artificial metal forks for them when eating." However, this didn't urge the princess to eat with her hands, and she stuck with her forks.

Shortly after the marriage, the Byzantine princess, unfortunately, contracted the plague and passed away. Many believed this was "karma" for refusing to eat with her hands and bringing a fork to her husband's home. But thanks to Maria Argyropoulina, Europe was introduced to the fork and never had to worry about eating spaghetti and meatballs — or any other dish — with their hands again.

# WHY IS 7 THE WORLD'S LUCKY NUMBER?

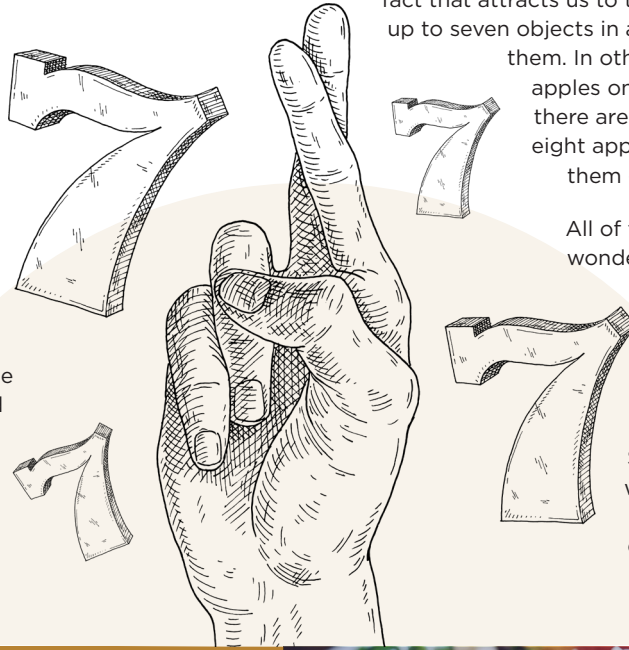
## It Comes Down to Math, Psychology, and More

Seven isn't just Michael's lucky number — it's a lucky number for millions of people around the globe. According to The Guardian, a survey of more than 44,000 people found that seven is "the world's favorite number." But why do we all love seven so much? Mathematicians and psychologists have theorized dozens of different answers. Here are just a few of them.

### The Mathematical Answer

First, seven is a prime number — a relatively rare phenomenon. There are only 25 prime numbers between 1 and 100, so this status starts to set seven apart. Second, seven is a mathematical challenge: It's the only number between two and 10 that can't be divided or multiplied by another number in that range. That might sound complicated, but Reader's Digest explains it simply.

"One, two, three, four, and five can each be doubled to reach two, four, six, eight, and ten. Nine is divisible by three. Seven, then, is the only number between two and ten that is neither a multiple nor a factor of the others," RD reports. "In this way, 'lucky number seven' stands alone — and we grasp this implicitly."



### The Psychological Answer

Because of seven's interesting mathematical properties, some experts theorize we personify it as a cool, unique, and independent number. And because we want to feel unique, too, we choose seven as our favorite!

Stanford Professor Keith Devlin told NPR about another fun seven fact that attracts us to the number: We can immediately identify up to seven objects in a group without intentionally counting them. In other words, if you see a table with seven apples on it, your brain will know right away that there are seven of them. If you see a table with eight apples, your brain will force you to count them — just in case.

All of these facts make seven feel "lucky." It's no wonder the number has worldwide mystique!

In Japanese culture, there are Seven Gods of Fortune, and the "way of the warrior" includes seven virtues. In Ireland, seventh sons of seventh sons are said to be born with magic.

Sevens are all around us, from the seven wonders of the world to the seven deadly sins. Start looking, and you'll see them everywhere — just like Michael did.

## TAKE A BREAK

Q	U	V	Q	W	I	D	P	W	E	X	I	G	D	P
K	E	V	R	T	T	K	R	A	P	F	N	E	K	F
A	I	G	F	M	R	K	J	S	G	I	D	D	F	N
E	N	N	N	P	E	A	B	M	H	F	E	A	V	R
C	U	K	Z	X	C	Z	V	S	X	L	P	H	V	Q
E	W	C	X	N	N	S	I	E	A	G	E	S	A	Q
J	H	F	E	D	O	F	G	R	L	K	N	M	C	L
B	P	E	Y	B	C	T	K	O	J	U	D	K	A	C
T	O	F	X	T	R	S	L	S	J	H	E	C	T	T
I	F	V	Y	K	P	A	Z	O	D	Z	N	U	I	L
P	X	X	Z	U	C	H	B	P	O	N	C	K	O	P
S	T	A	R	G	A	Z	I	N	G	P	E	V	N	U
F	O	U	R	T	H	Q	B	H	Z	L	J	R	G	W
F	Z	R	O	N	O	C	P	I	Q	X	Y	K	G	A
O	M	K	A	H	J	F	W	X	T	T	K	W	B	K

Barbecue	Independence	Shade
Concert	Larkspur	Stargazing
Fishing	Park	Travel
Fourth	Pool	Vacation



## Grilled Steak Salad With Peaches

Inspired by Delish.com

### Ingredients

- 1 lb skirt steak, fat trimmed
- 1/4 cup balsamic vinegar
- 1 clove garlic, minced
- 1 tbsp light brown sugar
- 1 tbsp vegetable oil
- Kosher salt
- Black pepper
- 1/4 cup extra-virgin olive oil
- 1 large lemon, juiced
- 6 cups baby arugula
- 2 ripe peaches, thinly sliced
- 1/3 cup crumbled blue cheese or feta

### Directions

1. In a large resealable plastic bag or baking dish, combine steak, vinegar, garlic, and brown sugar. Marinate 20 minutes at room temperature.
1. Remove steak from marinade, coat with vegetable oil, and season generously with salt and pepper.
1. On a grill or pan set to high heat, cook steak until desired doneness. Rest 5-10 minutes, then thinly slice against the grain.
1. In a small bowl, whisk olive oil and lemon juice to make dressing. Season with salt and pepper.
1. In a large serving bowl, add arugula, peaches, blue cheese or feta, and steak. Drizzle with dressing and gently toss.



## The Packard Family Is Here to Help Your Family

Personal Injury  
Social Security Disability  
Car Accidents  
Special Needs Planning

1. How Michael Discovered His Lucky Number
2. How a Byzantine Princess Introduced Forks to Europe  
  
Packard Stands Up for an Orphan — And Wins!
3. Why 7 Is the World's Favorite Number  
  
Grilled Steak Salad With Peaches
4. Gwyneth Paltrow Won Her Case and Received ... \$1?

## A BATTLE OF HE SAID, SHE SAID

### *Gwyneth Paltrow vs. Terry Sanderson — When Skiers Collide*

When you read about celebrity court cases, you probably think of music contract disputes, messy divorces, and settlements with ridiculously high dollar amounts. But the trial between Gwyneth Paltrow and Terry Sanderson was unlike any other. It regarded a ski slope collision that occurred seven years ago.

On Feb. 26, 2016, Paltrow and Sanderson were at the Deer Valley Resort in Utah. They both enjoyed the slopes until a tragic accident occurred. The collision caused Sanderson to suffer a concussion, a brain injury, and four broken limbs. In January 2019, Sanderson filed a \$3.1 million lawsuit against Paltrow. In return, Paltrow countersued for \$1 plus attorney fees.

Sanderson argued that Paltrow collided with him from behind while she skied on a beginner's slope with an instructor. He

also mentioned that his injuries prevented him from coping with life. Paltrow argued that Sanderson was the one who struck her from behind. When pictures of the collision appeared in court, it showed Paltrow on top of Sanderson — which could only happen if Paltrow was struck from behind.

Additionally, Paltrow's lawyers argued that Sanderson sued Paltrow to "exploit her celebrity and wealth." Evidence strengthens this point because while Sanderson said he couldn't cope with life, documents showed that he had taken multiple international and domestic trips since the accident. Furthermore, in an email between Sanderson and his children, he stated that he would be famous after the accident made the tabloids.

So, how did the case end? After determining that Paltrow was the downhill skier,



according to the images shown in court, they turned to the sport's rules. According to the rules, the person further down the mountain (the downhill skier) has the right of way. This means that the person closest to the top of the mountain must yield.

The jury found Paltrow not liable and awarded her \$1 and legal fees. To Paltrow, this case was not about the money. She felt like her character and integrity had been threatened and she simply wanted to prove the allegations were false.