

# The PACKARD PRESS

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

## The Sibling Squad

### LESSONS LEARNED FROM BEING ONE OF 13

I am a member of the Four Little Ones. Growing up, that's what everyone in my family called the youngest group of my 13 siblings. My dad had this ongoing joke that his large family came in batches: the first 5 "The Boys," the next 4 "The Girls," and the last 4 "The Four Little Ones." It seems pretty crazy, but there were no twins, and we all have the same parents. As number 11, I am extremely grateful that my mother didn't stop at 10! With a family of this size, I have learned so much from all my siblings and consider myself blessed to have such strong relationships with my sisters and brothers.

April is National Siblings Day, and I have quite a bit of experience when it comes to the subject. Because my family is so important to me, and there are so many of us, this is a beautiful chance to share some of my favorite memories and lessons learned from my siblings.

Samuel and I have lived within a mile of each other for most of our adult lives, and we still spend a ton of time together, even outside of work. Growing up, people always mistook us for twins. We did everything together. We shared the same room and had a bunkbed. We shared clothes, ran track together and played football together. I remember we would get in trouble for staying awake after bedtime, talking late into the night. So, we invented a contraption involving a funnel and a water hose that we thought would help us to talk more quietly.

Years later, we are still building something together, but instead of a communication device, it's a law firm. Samuel and I co-founded this firm in 2011. Back then, we were both living in Southeast Texas, and we wanted to figure out how we could work together. Thus began our exciting journey that brought us to San Antonio. In those early days, we worked out of my son's nursery, using a folding table and cell phones (at least until nap time). It has been a lot of hard work, and it has been incredibly rewarding. I'm lucky to have such an awesome brother to share this experience with.

As it turned out, moving to San Antonio and starting a law firm was a pivotal event for the Packard Family. After Samuel and I moved here, my younger sisters Esther and Sabrina followed. The Four



Little Ones were reunited again! But it didn't stop there. David moved here, then Dan and Marshall. And then Stan and Steve! It has taken over a decade, but 9 of the 13 are here in San Antonio. It's lovely having so much family nearby. (And as you can probably imagine, our get-togethers are pretty epic!) We all have our own family responsibilities, but we connect over a family Zoom call every other month to stay connected with everyone. It's a time for us to share stories, uplifting messages, and advice on navigating life.

As number 11 in the family, I was basically raised by my siblings. They taught me everything from how to flirt to how to study. I learned from them how to register for classes in college, how to treat my wife right, how to manage finances, and even how to sing. My brothers helped me navigate buying my first car in college, and my sisters have helped me become a better husband, father, and overall person. They've shown me how to be more accepting of myself and that it's OK not to have it all figured out.

There was nothing quite like growing up in the Packard Family, a rambunctious and passionate group of people with incredible morals learned from great parents. Reflecting on our family history today, I couldn't feel more blessed to have my amazing siblings so close to me, both geographically and in my heart. And I am especially grateful to be one of the Four Little Ones.

*—Michael Packard*

# UNUSUAL SLEEP PRACTICES IN THE MIDDLE AGES:

## The 2 Acts of Medieval Slumber

In the Middle Ages, most people didn't sleep for eight uninterrupted hours like we do today. Instead, they had a "biphasic" sleep schedule, which means they had two sleep phases, one in the evening with a brief period of activity in the middle.

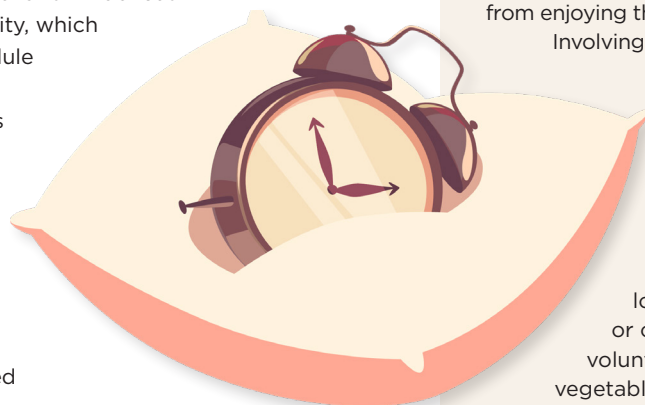
For first sleep, the household typically slept from 9–11 p.m. They slept on one single straw mattress. Everyone — including children, parents, and visitors — huddled on one bed.

Despite the lack of space, they tried to make it as comfortable as possible with complex sleeping arrangements. Touching, kicking, or any other restless activity was considered rude. Meanwhile, girls slept closest to the wall, followed by boys, guests, and parents.

While they didn't have alarm clocks back then, they had an internal clock that woke them up around midnight. Once they woke, they had plenty to do. They refueled the fire, did farmwork, and prayed. Often, people socialized with each other, but the busy schedules of farming families cut down on chatting time. After they went to bed for a second sleep, they'd wake up at dawn.

Not everyone kept to the schedule. Young children slept all night unless they woke up to the commotion. Benedictine monks dozed at 7 p.m. and woke at 2 a.m. for prayer, staying awake until an afternoon nap. Still, most people followed the two-part sleep schedule, and medieval medicine even discussed how to do it properly. For example, medical texts recommended that they lie on their right side during the first sleep and switch to the left on the second sleep.

It's really not that weird — research suggests that biphasic sleep is quite natural and influenced more by lifestyle compatibility, which means the eight-hour schedule likely evolved as cultures industrialized. Our emphasis on uninterrupted slumber also coalesces with our invention of modern mattresses, and this may not be a coincidence. Sleeping is much more enjoyable if you lie down on a soft mattress than a bed of prickly straw.



## Get Your Green On

### EMBRACE THE BEAUTY OF NATURE THIS EARTH DAY

"The best time to plant a tree was 20 years ago, and the second best time is today." –Confucius

I have always treasured spending time outdoors, and seeing that Earth Day is in April, I can't help but think of one of my favorite quotes. There are many fond memories from my childhood of playing out in the woods or getting my hands dirty while gardening. As an added reason to celebrate Earth Day, my wife shares a birthday with the nature-centric holiday.

One of the best ways to spend Earth Day is simply by immersing yourself in nature. Not only are the beauties of the planet a lovely sight to take in, but there are numerous physical and emotional benefits to spending time outdoors. So, here are some of my favorite ways to build a deeper connection with the natural world.

#### Take a Walk

Go outside for a walk and focus on being present in the moment, enjoying the fresh air and different elements of nature as you stroll. Your body needs sunlight to help create vitamin D, essential for healthy bones, blood cells, and the immune system. Being outdoors in the sun can also keep your serotonin and energy levels high. Walking in nature can even improve your sleep cycle by triggering your body's internal clock. If you walk in the grass barefoot, there are even more benefits, and it's a method to feel genuinely connected to the planet.

#### Clean Up

You can enjoy the outdoors while giving back to the Earth by picking up litter at a local park or another outdoor space with your family. Garbage is often dangerous for plants and animals and deters visitors from enjoying the wonderful nature right in their own communities.

Involving your children instills the importance of environmental stewardship early and encourages them to continue caring for nature throughout their lives.

#### Plant a Tree

If you are able, plant a tree. A special kind of magic happens when we get our hands in the dirt to grow something. Trees absorb carbon dioxide, produce oxygen, clean the air, and sustain local wildlife. You can plant a tree in your yard or contact local organizations to see if they seek volunteers to plant trees. Alternatively, you can grow a vegetable garden or a new flower bed.

# READY, SET, RIDDLE

## WIN FREE MOVIE TICKETS IN OUR APRIL FOOLS' DAY CONTEST

This April, we are feeling riddled with generosity; if you can solve our riddles, that is!

Get ready to laugh because we have a hilarious giveaway up our sleeve for you this month. We want to give you and a jokester of your choice the chance to catch one of the latest laugh-out-loud movies on the big screen. To celebrate our passion for comedy, we're giving away free movie tickets to the person who can answer our riddles correctly.

### How it Works

If you think you have the wits to crack this comedic case, here's how to enter. Figure out the answer to one of our three silly riddles and text your answer to us at 210-756-5399 or email us at [giveaway@packardfirm.com](mailto:giveaway@packardfirm.com) by Wednesday, May 15. After receiving all the submissions, we will draw three winners from the hat, and each will win a pair of free movie tickets.

### Riddles

Ready for the brain teasers? Here are our fun riddles, sourced from the internet, so don't go

peeking for the answers on Google. We want you to flex your silly skills here! Remember, you only need to answer one of these correctly to enter the raffle.

- *The more you take, the more you leave behind. What am I?*
- *What can you catch but not throw?*
- *What kind of room has no doors or windows?*

### How to Win

Ready to head to the theater? If you have figured out the answers to one or more of these riddles, submit your answers to us by May 15. We will notify the winners shortly after the final submission day.

Good luck, and happy riddling!

*—Michael Packard*



## TAKE A BREAK



## Grilled Steak With Chimichurri Sauce

### Ingredients

- 2 lbs steak (flank, sirloin, or skirt steak)
  - 2 tbsp olive oil
  - Salt and pepper, to taste
- For the chimichurri sauce:*
- 1 cup fresh parsley, chopped
  - 2 cloves garlic, minced
  - Juice of 1 lemon
  - 2 tbsp olive oil
  - 1 tsp red pepper flakes
  - Salt and pepper, to taste

### Directions

1. Preheat grill to medium-high heat.
2. Rub the steak with the olive oil, salt, and pepper.
3. Grill the steak for 4-5 minutes per side or until it reaches desired doneness.
4. Meanwhile, make the chimichurri sauce: In a small bowl, mix together the parsley, garlic, lemon juice, olive oil, red pepper flakes, and salt and pepper.
5. Let the steak rest for 5 minutes before slicing.
6. Serve the steak with the chimichurri sauce and enjoy!

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|----------|-------------|---------|
| ARBOR    | CHOCOLATE   | GARDEN  |
| ARIES    | DAISY       | KITE    |
| BASEBALL | DIAMOND     | RAINBOW |
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# JOKE'S ON YOU!

## THE HISTORY OF APRIL FOOLS' DAY

Have you ever wondered why we celebrate April Fools' Day every April 1 with silly pranks and whimsical tricks? April Fools' originated in France during the 16th century when the country switched from the Julian calendar to the Gregorian calendar. The change moved the new year from the end of March to Jan. 1.

The shocking part is that not everyone was aware of the change. Those who continued celebrating New Year's Day on April 1 were mocked, labeled as "April Fools," and subjected to pranks.

These pranks included having paper fish placed on their backs and being referred to as "poisson d'avril" (April fish), said to symbolize a young, easily caught fish or a gullible person. Historians have also linked April Fools' Day to festivals such as Hilaria

(Latin for joyful), which was celebrated in ancient Rome at the end of March by followers of the cult of Cybele.

It involved people dressing up in disguises and mocking fellow citizens and magistrates and was said to be inspired by the Egyptian legend of Isis, Osiris, and Seth. There's also speculation that April Fools' Day was tied to the vernal equinox, or the first day of spring in the Northern Hemisphere, when Mother Nature fooled people with changing, unpredictable weather.

Regardless of its origin, April Fools' Day has become a worldwide tradition with links from the past. Today, April Fools' Day means playing pranks and tricks on friends and family. People have gone to great lengths to create elaborate April Fools' Day hoaxes. Newspapers, radio and TV stations, and websites have participated in the April 1 tradition of reporting outrageous fictional claims to fool their audiences.

So, when someone pulls a nasty prank on you on April Fools' Day, remember why and where it came from!

