

PARENTS TALK BACK

The common reading-aloud mistake parents make most

Raising good readers seems pretty straightforward. Much of the research on it sounds like common sense: Let children pick what they want to read, even if it’s comic books or magazines; let them see you read; talk about books to them; make reading material available in your home; and above all else, read to them.

In the same way our children see us watching television, surfing the Internet and listening to music for entertainment, they should see us read for fun. If a parent loves to read, odds are good the child will learn to find joy in words, too.

So, I was surprised when a finding from the latest Scholastic Kids and Family Reading Report caught my eye, because it brought to light a common mistake most parents don’t realize they are making.

Most of us stop reading to our children too early.

The survey found that, predictably, the number of children being read aloud to dips dramatically as a child grows up. More than half of children under the age of 5 are read aloud to almost every day. This drops to 1 in 3 children ages 6 to 8, and just 1 in 6 children ages 9 to 11. More telling than those numbers is how the children said they felt about it: 40 percent of children who are no longer read to say they wish their parents had continued.

Their No. 1 reason was because “it was a special time with my parents.”

Maggie McGuire, vice president of Scholastic Kids and Parents Channels, says parents and caregivers are a child’s first touch point with stories. Reading together is a chance for a child to be exposed to new words, plus a time to relax and bond. All of these positive associations establish reading as a pleasurable and entertaining activity for a child, creating a lifelong connection to it.

“It spoke so loudly (in the survey): Keep it going as long as you can,” she said.

I had stopped reading to my children when they became fairly strong independent readers, probably around first grade, and I was skeptical that my now-fourth-grader would still be interested. But I took note of another statistic in the study: The percentage of kids who said they read a book for fun between 5 to 7 days a week is much smaller among boys. About a quarter of boys said they read this frequently for fun, and that number has dropped from 32 percent in 2010. Reading frequency has also declined since then in children over the age of 8. The steepest decline has been in children ages 15 to 17, of whom just 14 percent said they frequently read a book for fun.

These trend lines worry me, especially as the data show children spending ever-increasing amounts of time in front of screens.

That night, I raised the subject with my son.

“Remember when you were younger, and I used to read to you at night all the time?”

“Yes. Where is this going?” he asked. Why are children so suspicious? “Are you writing a column about this?”

“Fine, yes, I am.” I told the little cynic. I suggested that we could read together for 15 minutes at night, from whichever book he chose.

He was lukewarm to the idea. It sounded a little babyish, not so cool for a 9-year-old. But with a little convincing, he agreed to give it a try again.

There were some specific instructions the first night: Don’t read in a bored voice. But don’t read as if it’s a baby book, he said.

I can take direction. Plus, let’s just say I’ve always thought I could have had a shot as an audiobook reader. I should definitely get some style points on my read-aloud technique. In my humble opinion, of course.

I kept an eye on the clock and after exactly 15 minutes, I closed the book.

“Five more minutes,” he said.

Ah, victory. I couldn’t help gloating a little.

“I thought you didn’t want to read with me anymore?”

Well, this is a funny book, and it’s cozy here, he told me.

Fair enough. Maybe it’s not my dramatic flair for reading prose, but I’ll take it.

In the course of the week, we have nearly finished the book, and he’s even read ahead several chapters on his own.

I couldn’t help but smile when I saw him bring a book to me recently before going to bed.

“Can you read to me tonight?”

For a book lover, there are few sweeter words.



AISHA SULTAN
Parents talk back

Treasure hunter who found a fortune in gold is captured

By AMANDA LEE MYERS and ANDREW WELSH-HUGGINS
Associated Press

COLUMBUS, Ohio — A treasure hunter accused of cheating his investors out of their share of one of the richest hauls in U.S. history — \$50 million in gold bars and coins from a 19th-century shipwreck — was captured at an upscale Florida hotel after more than two years on the lam.

Federal marshals tracked Tommy Thompson to a Hilton in West Boca Raton and arrested him Tuesday. A warrant had been issued for him in 2012 in Columbus after he failed to show up for a hearing on a lawsuit brought by some of his backers.

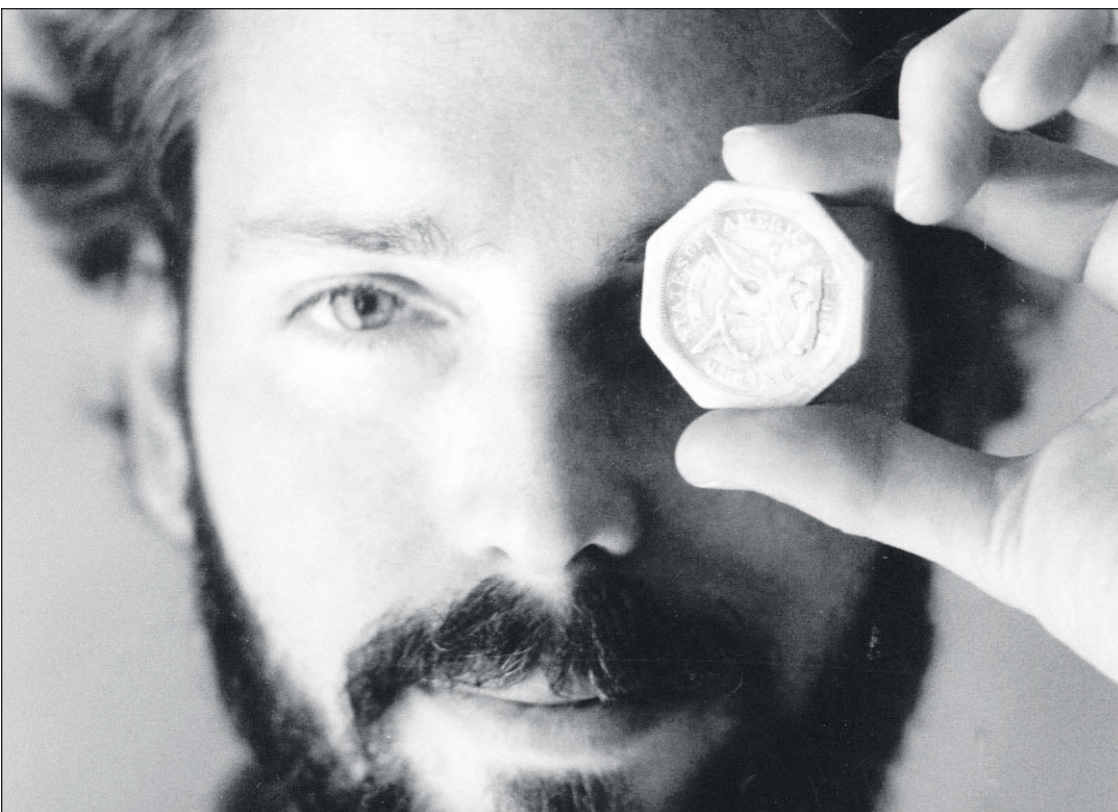
The U.S. Marshals Service called him “one of the most intelligent fugitives ever sought” by the agency and said he relied on cash and employed other means to stay under the radar. Authorities gave no details on how they found him.

Thompson, 62, made history in 1988 when he discovered the sunken SS Central America, also known as the Ship of Gold.

The sidewheel steamer went down in a hurricane about 200 miles off South Carolina in 1857; 425 people drowned and tons of gold from the California Gold Rush was lost, contributing to an economic panic.

In a modern-day technological feat, Thompson and his crew brought up thousands of bars and coins, much of them later sold to a gold marketing group in 2000 for about \$50 million.

The 161 investors who paid Thompson \$12.7 million to find the ship never saw the proceeds. Two sued — a now-deceased in-



In this 1989 file photo, Tommy Thompson holds a \$50 pioneer gold piece retrieved earlier in 1989 from the wreck of the gold ship Central America. According to the US Marshals Service, Thompson, a fugitive treasure hunter wanted for more than 2 years was arrested in Florida.

vestment firm president and the company that publishes *The Columbus Dispatch* newspaper had invested about \$1 million.

The dispute is a civil action. No criminal charges have been filed against Thompson over the gold.

Columbus attorney Rick Robol, who at one time defended Thompson’s company, has said there is no proof Thompson stole anything. He said Wednesday that he has been concerned about Thompson’s health, calling the arrest “the best thing that can happen for everybody.”

Thompson was arrested along with his longtime companion,

Alison Antekeier. The pair had been paying cash for the hotel room, rented under a fake name used by Antekeier, marshals said. The hotel is in an upscale suburban area surrounded by golf courses, country clubs and gated communities.

Federal marshals said that the pair had no vehicles registered in their names and that Antekeier used buses and taxis to get around.

After the arrest warrant was issued, Thompson vanished from his Vero Beach, Florida, mansion, where a search found prepaid disposable cellphones and bank wraps for \$10,000 in

cash, along with a book titled “How to Live Your Life Invisible,” according to court records. One marked page was titled: “Live your life on a cash-only basis.”

The couple made initial court appearances Wednesday in West Palm Beach. Authorities will seek to return Thompson to Ohio.

Gil Kirk, former director of one of Thompson’s companies, told The Associated Press last year that Thompson never cheated anyone. Kirk said proceeds from the sale of the gold all went to legal fees and bank loans.

OUT OF THE VAULT

Idaho house sets speed building record

In July of 1982, a construction crew of 250 built a three-bedroom house in Post Falls, Idaho, in just under 7 hours. More than 3,000 people, a crew from the “That’s Incredible” TV show and mobs of newspaper, radio and television journalists watched the record-setting build. The home’s owners, Richard and Mindy Galbraith, spent a much longer time moving in that it took for the home to be assembled. But that was just the beginning of the race for the fastest-built house.

Habitat For Humanity, an international organization that builds affordable homes for families that wouldn’t otherwise be able to own one, took up the gauntlet in 1990. An affiliate in Nashville, Tennessee, established a speedbuild record when they built a home in 6 hours flat. A Pensacola, Florida affiliate shaved a few minutes off that time when they built a house



RENEE STRUTHERS
Out of the vault

reclaimed the speedbuild title in a dramatic fashion when they built a three-bedroom house in 4 hours, 39 minutes. The New Zealanders doubled down, renamed their project “Sub4” and claimed the title in March 1999 when they built a four-bedroom, 1,000-square-foot home in 3 hours, 44 minutes, 59 seconds with just 120 in the crew.

The reigning champion, however, is the Shelby County, Alabama, Habitat affiliate. In

5 hours, 57 minutes.

New Zealand Habitat affiliate Maukau in Auckland began plans in 1998 for the “Sub6” project. However, on June 12 the Nashville affiliate

December of 2002 the build was complete in 3 hours, 26 minutes, 34 seconds — including all interior and exterior finishing and preliminary landscaping work. A YouTube video documents the build.

How did they do it, you ask? Modular building. The exterior walls and the roof were pre-built prior to the final assembly on the homesite. Wiring and plumbing were already in place when the walls went up, and the roof was lowered onto the walls in one piece by crane. Modular homes, as opposed to mobile homes that are built on a mobile steel frame, are constructed to the same standards as site-built homes and are placed on a permanent foundation.

Habitat For Humanity has helped build or repair more than 800,000 houses and served more than 4 million people around the world since its founding in 1976 by Millard and Linda Fuller.

Recipients of Habitat houses must meet a set of criteria to qualify: The family must be legal residents, have a reliable income that falls within certain limits, good credit and the ability to maintain a savings account, and must invest sweat-equity hours in building their own home and/or others. Mortgage payments are very affordable and the no-interest loan is paid back into a fund that is used to build future Habitat homes.

Northeast Oregon is served by two affiliates, Oregon Trail Habitat For Humanity in Hermiston and Grande Ronde Valley Habitat For Humanity in La Grande. For more information on how you can get involved, or to apply for a Habitat home, visit www.habitat.org.

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ODDS & ENDS

Man hid cocaine inside prosthetic leg in his car, police say

DOVER, Del. (AP) — Police say a Delaware drug suspect went out on a limb to transport a stash of cocaine, but he was busted when officers discovered the drug hidden inside his prosthetic leg.

Dover Police say 39-year-old Marlow Holmes was arrested Monday afternoon during a traffic stop. They said police dogs alerted officers to the presence of narcotics inside the car Holmes had been riding in. During a search of the car officers said they discovered more than 28 grams of cocaine stuffed into the prosthetic leg that Holmes was wearing, and arrested him.

Police say Holmes faces charges of possession with intent to deliver cocaine and possession of drug paraphernalia. He was jailed, with bond set at \$81,000.

Police say they kept the drugs as evidence but returned Holmes’ leg.

Naked violinist sues over arrest in Portland last year

PORTLAND, Ore. (AP) — A Hillsboro, Oregon, man arrested after playing a violin

while naked outside the federal courthouse in Portland last year is suing police.

The Oregonian reports that 25-year-old Matthew T. Mglej claims authorities used excessive force and violated his First Amendment rights. He named the Multnomah County Sheriff’s Office and Portland Police Bureau as defendants in a lawsuit filed last week, and he’s seeking \$1.1 million in damages.

Police showed up after receiving complaints about the demonstration, during which the man played violin, meditated and quoted former Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad. They said they arrested him for indecent exposure and carried him to a patrol car when he refused to walk.

Mglej claims jail deputies cut his wrists by jerking on his handcuffs and called him names when he cried from the pain and for his service dog.

He has a hearing on the indecent exposure charge next month.

Woman gets bag full of cash at Burger King drive-thru

ROCHESTER, N.H. (AP) — A New Hampshire woman got a surprise at a Burger King drive-thru: a bag full of cash instead of food.

Janelle Jones says she discovered on the way home that the bag did not contain the sweet tea and junior spicy chicken sandwich that she had ordered Friday at the Rochester fast-food restaurant.

Foster’s Daily Democrat reports that Jones called her husband and they decided to return the \$2,631, which was a Burger King bank deposit.

Matthew Jones says the couple briefly considered keeping the money, which they certainly could have used. But he says he and his wife are Jehovah’s Witnesses, and that “Jehovah sees everything.”

The newspaper reports that the restaurant confirmed the couple’s account but had no comment on it.

Suspected burglar falls through ceiling, lands near police

HOUSTON (AP) — Authorities say a man’s plans to break into a Houston store fell through, after he crashed through the ceiling and landed in front of police.

Houston police say the man climbed a tree and onto the roof of a Family Dollar store early Sunday morning, then managed to break a hole in the roof and enter the building.

But after making his way into

the store, the man fell through the ceiling just as a police officer arrived in response to a call about a potential burglary.

KHOU-TV reports that the officer ordered the unidentified man to stay on the floor. The man was later arrested.

Authorities believe the man was trying to steal cigarettes.

Police: Drunk driver hits squad car during DWI arrest

GRAND PRAIRIE, Texas (AP) — Police in a Dallas suburb say a drunken driver crashed into an empty squad car while officers were busy dealing with another drunken driver they had pulled over.

Grand Prairie police say a third driver then crashed into another empty squad car, but this driver wasn’t drunk or high.

The Dallas Morning News reports that officers pulled over the first driver at around 3 a.m. Sunday and ended up arresting that person for driving while intoxicated.

Department spokesman Lyle Gensler says the driver of the first vehicle to hit a squad car was also arrested on a DWI charge, but the third driver was only ticketed.

The only person hurt was the second driver, who suffered minor injuries.

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