

March 29, 2015

Another wonderful day without articles on the latest disasters from President Bystander.

Walter Issacson's biography of Steve Jobs made a big splash and sold three million copies. Turns out many at Apple were not delighted with the book and they have cooperated with a competing tome. [Times of India](#) reviews the new attempt - "Becoming Steve Jobs."

Steve Jobs prized secrecy from his executives and employees during his tenure at Apple. Now his top lieutenants are speaking out -- to help shape the legacy of Steve Jobs.

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Isaacson's best-seller did a "tremendous disservice" to the Apple chief, Cook said in the new book, written by Brent Schlender and Rick Tetzeli, and excerpted in the April issue of Fast Company.

"It didn't capture the person," Cook said. "The person I read about there is somebody I would never have wanted to work with over all this time."

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Eddy Cue, Apple's chief of software and internet services, endorsed the new book on Jobs in a tweet last week: "Best portrayal is about to be released -- Becoming Steve Jobs (book). Well done and first to get it right." Apple's iBooks account also tweeted last week that "'Becoming Steve Jobs' is the only book about Steve recommended by the people who knew him best." ...

Inquisitr reports on a promising treatment for Alzheimer's.

Researchers in Australia have devised a treatment that effectively reverses the effects of Alzheimer's disease.

A team from the Queensland Brain Institute (QBI) at the University of Queensland has come up with a non-invasive therapy based on ultrasound technology that essentially de-plaques our brain, thereby allowing neurons and their network of connections to work better. The ultrasound based therapy clears the brain of neuro-toxic amyloid plaques. ...

... The team used focused therapeutic ultrasound, which beams sound waves into the brain tissue, without opening by the skull. Essentially, these sound waves oscillate at a very high

frequency, thereby gently opening the blood-brain barrier, which is a layer that protects the brain against bacteria, and stimulate the brain's microglial cells to move in.

Microglial cells are essentially the body's waste-removal cells. Once these cells get past the blood-brain barrier, they're able to scrub out the toxic beta-amyloid clumps before the blood-brain barrier is restored. The ultrasound therapy offers these cells a window of a few hours to do their job, before the barrier has a chance to re-erect.

The results [have been astounding](#). The team claims that 75 percent of the participants had their memory functions fully restored, with zero damage to the surrounding brain tissue. However, these participants were lab-mice. ...

And if you can't wait for the process to be approved for use, [Inquisitr](#) also reports on beer's magical Alzheimer's fighting properties. That's right - BEER!
Scientists have confirmed what men claimed all along – beer is good for your brain.

*A group of Chinese scientists have determined what you always knew deep down in your heart: [Beer is good for the brain](#). The beer draws its superpowers from hops, the female flowers of the hop plant *Humulus lupulus*, which are used primarily as a flavoring and stability agent in beer. However, apart from contributing to the signature taste of the beer, hops releases a chemical — Xanthohumol — that has the potential to fight off neurodegenerative disorders such as Alzheimer's and Parkinson's disease.*

Xanthohumol, commonly referred to as Xn, has successfully fought off cell damage that could have ruined the brain. Though wine [may have been touted](#) as the great protector and healer of cells in the old age, Xn has been previously proven to fend off cancer, viruses, obesity, and inflammation. Its brain-boosting benefits though haven't been seriously studied — until now. ...

[The Wall Street Journal](#) says our demand for healthier food is changing the balance of power in the grocery business.

Orders for organic burritos, Thai stir-fry and other frozen products from Amy's Kitchen Inc. have been growing so quickly that late last year the company bought a second factory—an Idaho plant that H.J. Heinz Co. [had just shut](#) amid shrinking demand for its frozen food.

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“Everyone said when we reached a certain size our growth would slow,” said Andy Berliner, co-founder and chief executive. “We keep waiting for that to happen, but we're still growing so fast.”

Amy's and other smaller companies focused on natural and organic foods are feasting on [shifts in tastes among consumers](#) distrustful of established food giants' products and ingredients. The rise of these smaller companies, helped by growing interest from big retailers, is eating into

demand for brands that for decades were commonplace in American kitchens, like Kraft Foods Group Inc.'s macaroni and cheese and Kellogg Co.'s breakfast cereals. ...

Another other worldly talent of elephants is reported by National Geographic. South Africa—Chishuru, a large African elephant bull with a talent for sniffing out TNT, stood in front of a line of seven white buckets.

Inside one of the buckets on a recent morning was a slight trace of TNT on a piece of paper stapled to the bottom. Chishuru's job was to find out exactly which bucket it was—using his nimble trunk to guide the way.

The elephant ambled between the buckets, snaking his long trunk into each one—there were different, harmless scent traces in each bucket—and taking a big sniff before moving on to the next. At the fifth bucket he paused and raised his right leg, indicating to a research team that this was the one with a trace of TNT inside. Bingo. ...

... Elephants have 2,000 genes for smell, the most of any animal on Earth—more than twice those of the domestic dog and five times more than those of humans, according to a 2014 study in the journal Genome Research.

A previous study in Kenya found that elephants can distinguish which tribe a person belongs to by their smell, and will actively avoid those from tribes that have been hostile toward them.

And in postwar Angola, elephants have been observed avoiding landmine fields, possibly because they can smell the mines underground.

At the Adventures with Elephants ranch, a safari business about 100 miles (160 kilometers) from Pretoria, owner Sean Hensman knows how smart and skillful the giant mammals can be.

"We are only scratching the surface of what we know about this animal," says Hensman. ...

The fastest growing metro area in the US is the Villages near Orlando. NewMax has the story.

The latest estimates from the U.S. Census Bureau are in, and the fastest-growing city is not an oil boomtown or a magnet for new immigrants, but a senior living community outside Orlando, Fla., with a reputation for attracting active retirees.

The Villages, a sprawling senior community of 114,000 residents, increased 5.4 percent in the year ended July 2014, making it the country's fastest-growing metro for the second straight year. That's triple the growth rate for the state of Florida and far faster than Myrtle Beach, S.C., the second fastest-growing U.S. city, which expanded 3.2 percent. ...

Times of India

Steve Jobs's story retold, much to Apple's delight

by Brian Chen and Alexandra Alter

Steve Jobs prized secrecy from his executives and employees during his tenure at Apple. Now his top lieutenants are speaking out -- to help shape the legacy of Steve Jobs.

Through interviews and tweets, Apple brass, including the chief executive, Tim Cook, are throwing their weight behind a new unauthorized biography of the Apple co-founder, "Becoming Steve Jobs," which goes on sale on March 24. In the book, executives take aim at another title, "Steve Jobs" by Walter Isaacson, an authorized biography published shortly after Jobs' death in 2011.

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The book-on-book criticism is a rare public cavalcade from Apple executives, who under Jobs kept quiet about the company's activities. It shows the lengths that Apple is going in its effort to reshape the posthumous image of Jobs as a kinder spirit, rather than a one-dimensional mercurial and brash chief.

To that end, Apple gave the authors of "Becoming Steve Jobs" interviews with four executives, including Cook. In another sign of the company's implicit approval of the biography, the writers will discuss the book and field questions about it at the Apple store in Soho in New York.

Apple's co-operation wasn't easily won, Schlender and Tetzeli said in an email interview. When the veteran tech journalists first approached the company about the book in 2012, both were told executives would not give any interviews. Apple changed its mind 18 months later, they said.

"I think our patience and quiet perseverance was what eventually won them over," said Schlender, who covered Jobs for almost 25 years.

He said he wanted to write the book because he felt there was a side of Jobs' personality that

had never been captured by journalists. While the authors fact-checked portions of the book with Apple and other sources and showed the finished volume to the company, Apple wasn't allowed to have "any editorial input whatsoever," Tetzeli said.

"After a long period of reflection following Steve's death, we felt a sense of responsibility to say more about the Steve we knew," Steve Dowling, an Apple spokesman, said. "We decided to participate in Brent and Rick's book because of Brent's long relationship with Steve, which gave him a unique perspective on Steve's life. The book captures Steve better than anything else we've seen, and we are happy we decided to participate."

A handful of influential tech bloggers received early copies of the book, including John Gruber, who wrote on his website Daring Fireball that the book was "smart, accurate, informative, insightful and at times, utterly heartbreaking."

Philip Elmer-DeWitt, a Fortune writer, said in a blog post that Schlender's long relationship with Jobs helped distinguish the new book from past titles about the Apple chief.

"It's through Schlender's stories, freshly told, often from taped interviews, that we get to know Steve Jobs as Schlender knew him," Elmer-DeWitt wrote.

In an interview, Isaacson, chief executive of the Aspen Institute and a former managing editor of Time, said he had tried to take a balanced view of Jobs that did not sugarcoat the Apple co-founder's flaws. He interviewed Jobs more than 40 times and spoke to more than 100 of his friends, relatives, rivals and colleagues, including Cook, Ive and Cue.

In the introduction to "Steve Jobs," Isaacson wrote that Jobs, who had handpicked him as biographer, didn't try to exert any control over the book, except for weighing in on the cover. The biography proved enormously popular, selling more than 3 million copies in the United States alone.

"My book is very favorable and honest, with no anonymous slings," Isaacson said, adding that he was criticized at times for being too soft on his subject.

Isaacson said he was pleased to see more biographies and movies - a documentary on Jobs recently debuted at the South by Southwest festival, and a biopic featuring the actor Michael Fassbender as Jobs is also in the works - that would help the public's understanding of Apple's former leader.

"It's really cool that there are other books coming out by people who knew Steve and where those who really loved him can put forth their views, because that's how history is made," he said.

Apple's active participation in "Becoming Steve Jobs" is also another sign of how Cook has shaped the company into one that is more open and vocal. Over the past six months, Apple executives have been on an extensive media campaign to promote new retail stores, the Apple Watch and Apple Pay, a new mobile payment service.

Cook has not been shy about defending Apple's image, either.

When the author Yukari I. Kane published "Haunted Empire: Apple After Steve Jobs" last year, Cook publicly dismissed the book as "nonsense." Kane said the colorful remarks from Apple

executives about Isaacson's book reflect a looser discipline at the company.

"Jobs was a mastermind at controlling the narrative on Apple, and one of the ways he did that was to make sure that he was the sole spokesperson and that officially, at least, the company stayed above all the fracas," Kane said.

She added that Cook's critical comment ended up being used for the cover of her book by overseas publishers.

"Becoming Steve Jobs" paints him as a caring mentor, as well as a delegator and skillful manager who brought the best out of his team. In the Fast Company excerpt, Cook told a story of what happened after he learned that Jobs needed a liver transplant in 2009. When Cook discovered that he and Jobs shared the same rare blood type, Cook offered a part of his liver to his ailing friend.

"I really wanted him to do it," he said in the book. "He cut me off at the legs, almost before the words were out of my mouth. 'No,' he said. 'I'll never let you do that. I'll never do that!'"

"Somebody that's selfish," Cook continued, "doesn't reply like that."

Later in the excerpt, Cue of Apple noted that in Jobs' final years, the Apple chief did everything he could to have people treat him as if he were not sick.

"You could see it in the meetings; he was taking morphine, and you could see he was in pain, but he was still interested," Cue said.

Cue has become a vocal defender of Jobs' legacy, too, and he took to Twitter recently to criticize the filmmaker Alex Gibney's new documentary about the former Apple chief as "an inaccurate and mean-spirited view of my friend. It's not a reflection of the Steve I knew." Minutes later, Cue praised "Becoming Steve Jobs."

Of course, endorsements from corporate executives hardly ensure that the book will be popular. "Becoming Steve Jobs" is the latest entry to a crowded subgenre of breathless technology books aiming to unravel the mysteries of the late pioneer, works that include "Inside Steve's Brain," "The 66 Secrets of Steve Jobs," "The Innovation Secrets of Steve Jobs," and, for would-be keynote rock stars, "The Presentation Secrets of Steve Jobs."

The publisher of "Becoming Steve Jobs," the Crown Publishing Group, is promoting the book as the first account to get the story right, calling it "the definitive history." Crown has increased the print run to 85,000 copies from a planned first printing of 40,000.

Roger Scholl, the vice president and executive editor of Crown Publishing, said the market for Steve Jobs books was not close to saturated.

"He led such a rich and full life, there's more to be done on him," he said.

Inquisitr

[Cure For Alzheimer's Found? New Ultrasound Therapy Fully Restores Memory Function](#)



Researchers in Australia have devised a treatment that effectively reverses the effects of Alzheimer's disease.

A team from the Queensland Brain Institute (QBI) at the University of Queensland has come up with a [non-invasive therapy](#) based on ultrasound technology that essentially de-plaques our brain, thereby allowing neurons and their network of connections to work better. The ultrasound based therapy clears the brain of neuro-toxic amyloid plaques.

The brain equivalent of the common plaque found in our unclean teeth, are structures that are responsible for memory loss and a decline in cognitive function in Alzheimer's patients. [Alzheimer's disease](#) is a result of a build-up of two types of lesions – amyloid plaques and neurofibrillary tangles.

Amyloid plaques sit between the neurons and end up as dense clusters of beta-amyloid molecules. Simply put, these are a highly sticky forms of protein that easily clump together and form brain-plaque. Neurofibrillary tangles are quite similar, but are found inside the neurons of the brain, and they're caused by defective tau proteins that clump up into a thick, insoluble mass. This mass eventually results in tiny filaments called microtubules to get all twisted. Neurofibrillary tangles disrupt the transportation of essential materials such as nutrients and organelles, thereby depriving the brain and causing it to deteriorate.

Even though Alzheimer's disease affects about 50 million people worldwide, there still hasn't been a [single vaccine](#) that can either arrest or successfully reverse the neurodegenerative disease. However, the team, for the first time, has been able to [develop a technique](#) to tackle at least one of the reasons people suffer from Alzheimer's – by clearing the amyloid plaques.

The team used focused therapeutic ultrasound, which beams sound waves into the brain tissue, without opening by the skull. Essentially, these sound waves oscillate at a very high frequency, thereby gently opening the blood-brain barrier, which is a layer that protects the brain against bacteria, and stimulate the brain's microglial cells to move in.

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The results [have been astounding](#). The team claims that 75 percent of the participants had their memory functions fully restored, with zero damage to the surrounding brain tissue. However, these participants were lab-mice.

With human trials scheduled for 2017, we could soon have a [powerful technique](#) not just to combat, but win over Alzheimer's disease. Or else, [we still have beer!](#)

Inquisitr

[Beer Good For Our Brains: Chemical In Beer Prevents Alzheimer's And Parkinson's](#)



Scientists have confirmed what men claimed all along – beer is good for your brain.

A group of Chinese scientists have determined what you always knew deep down in your heart: [Beer is good for the brain](#). The beer draws its superpowers from hops, the female flowers of the

hop plant *Humulus lupulus*, which are used primarily as a flavoring and stability agent in beer. However, apart from contributing to the signature taste of the beer, hops releases a chemical — Xanthohumol — that has the potential to fight off neurodegenerative disorders such as Alzheimer's and Parkinson's disease.

Xanthohumol, commonly referred to as Xn, has successfully fought off cell damage that could have ruined the brain. Though wine [may have been touted](#) as the great protector and healer of cells in the old age, Xn has been previously proven to fend off cancer, viruses, obesity, and inflammation. Its brain-boosting benefits though haven't been seriously studied — until now.

Five scientists (Juan Yao, Baoxin Zhang, Chunpo Ge, Shoujiao Peng, and Jianguo Feng) isolated the compound and tested its effects on cells from rats. They observed a “previously unrecognized mechanism underlying the biological action of Xn,” which suggests that Xanthohumol “might be a potential candidate for the prevention of neurodegenerative disorders.”

The study, recently [published](#) in the American Chemical Society's *Journal of Agricultural and Food Chemistry*, indicates Xn can not only fight free radicals but also jump-start signaling and protect cells from neurotoxicity. In simpler terms, it helps maintain the spark in the brain. These “sparks” are the signals that are fired by the brain cells in between various sections of the cerebrum.

So how much beer is good for you? That's the all-important question, the scientists explain. As with everything in nature, moderation is the key, they caution. Drink traditionally-made organic beer with no artificially added alcohol. These naturally alcoholic beers have the optimum amount of Xn that is beneficial to the brain.

Hops have been used in Chinese medicine for centuries. However, its efficacy to prevent Alzheimer's and Parkinson's was discovered only recently. Neuronal cells — which are in the brain, spine, and nerves — are in limited supply over one's lifetime. These cells are especially susceptible to stress. This stress is thought to be one of the ways brain-related disorders such as Alzheimer's and Parkinson's begin.

As all men know, beer is known to relieve stress. Though that is not how the beverage fends off the diseases of the brain, this study helps justify raising that pint more often.

WSJ

Balance of Power Shifts in Groceries

Natural, organic foods from small producers muscle in on big names

by Leslie Joseph and Annie Gasparro



A White City, Ore, facility of Amy's Kitchen, which is growing rapidly

Orders for organic burritos, Thai stir-fry and other frozen products from Amy's Kitchen Inc. have been growing so quickly that late last year the company bought a second factory—an Idaho plant that H.J. Heinz Co. [had just shut](#) amid shrinking demand for its frozen food.

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Amy's and other smaller companies focused on natural and organic foods are feasting on [shifts in tastes among consumers](#) distrustful of established food giants' products and ingredients. The rise of these smaller companies, helped by growing interest from big retailers, is eating into demand for brands that for decades were commonplace in American kitchens, like [Kraft Foods Group](#) Inc.'s macaroni and cheese and [Kellogg](#) Co.'s breakfast cereals.

The latest illustration of the tumult came Wednesday with the announcement that Heinz, two years after being taken over by Brazilian private-equity firm 3G Capital Partners LP, [will acquire Kraft](#) in a deal valued at around \$49 billion. The hope is that the pair's many well-known brands, under 3G's penny-pinching management, will be able to revive growth.

The 25 biggest U.S. food and beverage companies collectively had 45.1% of the industry's \$418 billion in 2014 sales, down 4.3 percentage points from five years earlier, according to Credit Suisse analyst Robert Moskow. Smaller brands' share rose to 35.3% from 32.1% in the period, with the rest going to companies that produce store-brands for big grocers.

Other small food companies have grown even faster than Amy's. Granola bar maker Kind LLC, started in 2004, has gone from less than 0.5% share of the snack-bar market in 2011 to nearly 6% today, according to Bernstein Research. Chobani Inc., whose Greek-style yogurt [revolutionized that sector](#), reached \$1 billion in sales its first five years of sales.

One big reason for these companies' success is retailers that long worked hand-in-glove with giant national brands—who spent big on advertising and paid for prime shelf space—have started seeking out upstarts to spice up their aisles.

[Kroger](#) Co., the biggest conventional grocery chain, with over \$100 billion in sales last year, in 2013 started selling FlapJacked pancake mix from a small Colorado company, in its King Soopers chain there. After helping them develop a new package size, marketing strategy and additional flavors, Kroger now sells FlapJacked foods in more than 500 stores across the country.

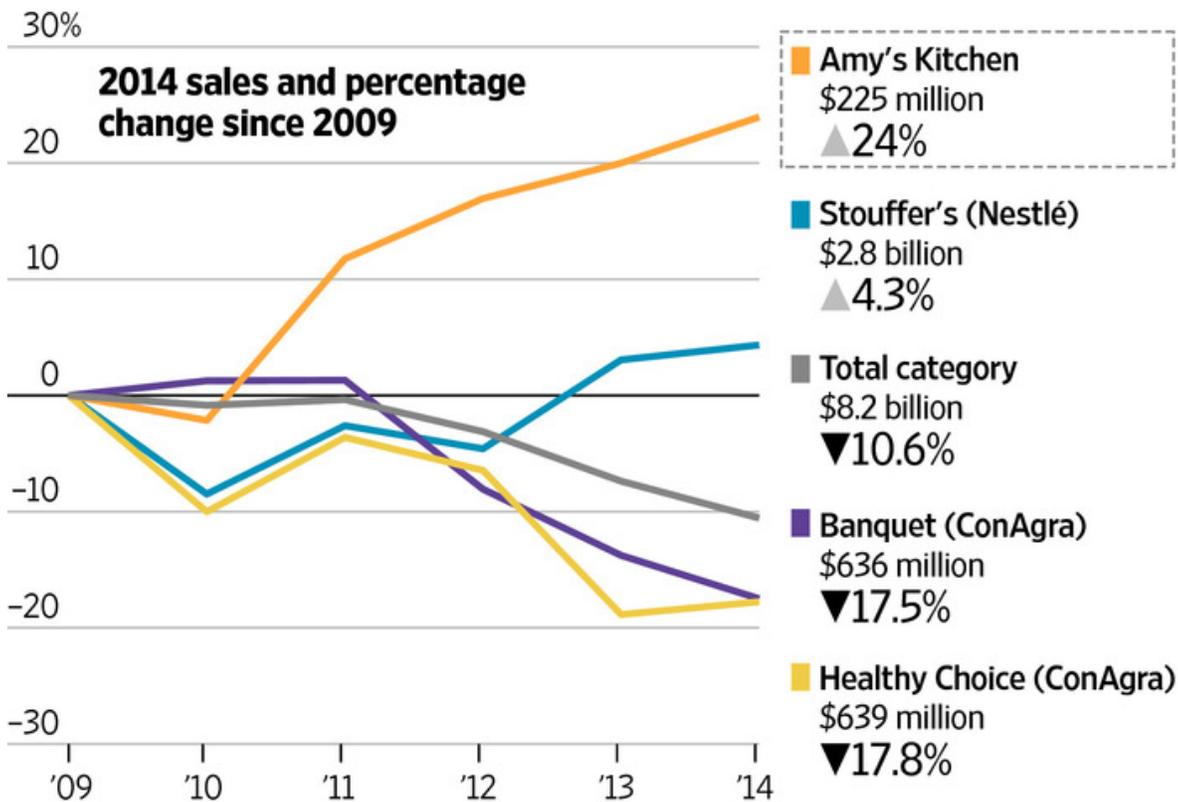
“Our customers are increasingly telling us that buying local or buying from boutique producers is something they want, and we are working even harder to provide it,” a Kroger spokesman said.

Last year, Bi-Lo Holdings LLC, a Southeastern grocery-store operator with about 800 stores, including the Winn-Dixie chain, launched two Shark Tank-like programs to offer local food makers a chance to pitch their products for space on its shelves.

“The food industry is changing at such a rapid pace, and we want to make sure we're not just keeping up with it but also driving it,” said Nicole Hatfield, a senior manager at Bi-Lo Holdings.

Gaining Steam

Smaller food brands are gaining on bigger, established ones. Amy's Kitchen frozen meal sales in the U.S. are growing at a fast clip versus other brands.



Source: Euromonitor International

THE WALL STREET JOURNAL.

More than a decade ago, Bonny Shuptrine and her husband began packaging her homemade spiced relish when patrons of their art gallery bought artwork. The reception was good enough that they founded Shuptrine's Twisted Products. Last year, Ms. Shuptrine presented samples to Bi-Lo executives at a supermarket in Chattanooga, Tenn. The chain put it in 23 stores, and Ms. Shuptrine has moved her production into an industrial kitchen.

Being big used to be an advantage, with a bigger marketing budget and buying supplies in bulk. Now it's a hurdle. Big companies are responding by acquiring the upstarts, or rolling out new products to try to compete with them. Kellogg recently came out with Origins cereal and granola, described as "real food prepared simply," while Campbell's [launched a line of organic soups](#).

"We are well aware of the mounting distrust of Big Food," [Campbell Soup](#) Co. CEO Denise Morrison said last month.

Winning back consumer trust is proving hard for the incumbents. "The biggest challenge is that they are prisoners of their own heritage," said Mr. Moskow of Credit Suisse. "Organic Velveeta' is a contradiction in terms, for example."

Smaller companies make up for their lack of financial resources with greater agility and a lack of historical baggage.

“New brands have a blank sheet of paper for telling their story. Established brands have to work against negative perceptions,” said David Garfield, a consultant with AlixPartners.

Growth brings its own challenges for newcomers.

Alison Bailey Vercruysse, founder and chief executive of 18 Rabbits, a San Francisco-based maker of granola and granola bars, in 2011 tapped an outside food manufacturer to help her ramp up production. But the facility repeatedly failed to deliver her order, she said. She said her products had been in 80% of [Whole Foods](#) stores around the country, but the stumble knocked her down to 10%.

“Since we didn’t have our own production capabilities, that almost killed us as a company,” she said.

Now using a different producer, Ms. Vercruysse recently struck a deal with [Target](#) Corp. to sell an 18 Rabbits Jr. granola line targeted at children. “It took two years to bounce back” from the outsourcing stumble, she said. “2016 will be break-even.”

Amy’s, too, has had its headaches. This week it voluntarily recalled about 74,000 cases of lasagna, enchiladas and other meals with spinach due to listeria concerns with its supplier.

Amy’s, based in Petaluma, Calif., now has about 2,000 employees who churn out more than 700,000 meals a day. Nevertheless, it boasts that its workers still stretch pizza dough by hand and don’t use dehydrated vegetables. “Other companies manufacture food. We cook it,” said Mr. Berliner, who runs it with his wife, Rachel.

The founders fight hard to keep that reputation. In September, when natural-foods peer [Annie’s Homegrown](#) sold to [General Mills](#) Inc., Amy’s got phone calls from concerned customers, prompting it to issue a news release headlined, “Which Mac & Cheese Brand Just Got Sold? It Wasn’t Amy’s!”

“If we were to sell to a big food company, our product would change, because they would want to improve profits,” Ms. Berliner added.

National Geographic

Can Elephants' Amazing Sense of Smell Help Sniff Out Bombs?

The U.S. military’s push for better bomb detectors involves taking cues from elephants’ ability to locate TNT.

by Paul Steyn

BELA BELA, South Africa—Chishuru, a large [African elephant](#) bull with a talent for sniffing out TNT, stood in front of a line of seven white buckets.

Inside one of the buckets on a recent morning was a slight trace of TNT on a piece of paper stapled to the bottom. Chishuru's job was to find out exactly which bucket it was—using his nimble trunk to guide the way.

The elephant ambled between the buckets, snaking his long trunk into each one—there were different, harmless scent traces in each bucket—and taking a big sniff before moving on to the next. At the fifth bucket he paused and raised his right leg, indicating to a research team that this was the one with a trace of TNT inside. Bingo.

The pachyderm is among a group of tame African elephants helping the U.S. military develop an artificial "nose" that could safely and effectively detect bombs and other explosive devices, officials say.

The [U.S. Army Research Office](#) experiments, which take place at the [Adventures with Elephants ranch](#) here, are part of an effort to better understand—and eventually reproduce—elephants' stellar sense of smell.

The objective, says Stephen Lee of the U.S. Army Research Office, is not to put elephants in the field of combat or use them for mine detection.

"We are trying to understand how elephants smell with their trunk," Lee says, "and how sensitive they are to specific odors."

Elephants have a keener sense of smell than dogs do, Lee says, and he and his teams are working to determine how much sharper their sniffer is when it comes to locating TNT. Currently, military working dogs are used for either explosives or narcotics detection, primarily by military police.

"The data show that elephants have an amazing capacity for TNT detection," says [Ashadee Kay Miller](#), a scientist at South Africa's University of Witwatersrand who works with the ranch. She emphasizes that the military will not put elephants into combat or use them to directly detect explosives.

During the two-year Army project, "they've never missed a sample in the second phase of testing, which is an improvement on the TNT-detection dogs working under similar conditions," says Miller, who is writing a scientific paper about the elephants' ability to detect TNT using smell, and how their abilities compare to those of dogs.

Technology inspired by the elephant's sense of smell could be a vast improvement over the military's current handheld electronic sensors that detect explosives, Lee says.

Using a handheld sensor can be dangerous, because it has to be placed very close to the explosive's odor to work effectively.

Elephants, on the other hand, can detect odors from a distance—an ability that could help lead to a much safer technology. The research teams are trying to determine how close an elephant needs to be to pick up the scent of TNT, but wild elephants have been known to smell people, depending on the wind direction, from more than a kilometer (0.6 mile) away.

Their sense of smell is targeted, and research has shown that they don't need to go to different locations to home in on an odor, as would a domestic dog.

Beyond developing better electronic sensors, the military could also collect soil or air samples by flying drones over suspected minefields and send the samples to trained elephants for testing.

"For relying on biodetectors to find potential lethal weapons like bombs," Miller said, "my money is on the elephant."

The Ultimate Sniffers

[Elephants have 2,000 genes for smell](#), the most of any animal on Earth—more than twice those of the [domestic dog](#) and five times more than those of humans, according to a [2014 study in the journal *Genome Research*](#).

A previous study in Kenya found that [elephants can distinguish which tribe a person belongs to by their smell](#), and will actively avoid those from tribes that have been hostile toward them.

And in postwar Angola, elephants have been [observed avoiding landmine fields](#), possibly because they can smell the mines underground.

At the Adventures with Elephants ranch, a safari business about 100 miles (160 kilometers) from Pretoria, owner Sean Hensman knows how smart and skillful the giant mammals can be.

"We are only scratching the surface of what we know about this animal," says Hensman.

"Their intelligence, scent, and communication abilities—it's really exciting." (See [National Geographic's elephant pictures](#).)

Hensman's family began working with elephants in Zimbabwe in 1988, when Sean Hensman's father, Rory Hensman, acquired a group of elephants that had been earmarked for culling, relocated them to his farm, and later started up the first elephant-back safari business in Zimbabwe. In 2002, during the Zimbabwean land reforms—an effort to redistribute land among black farmers—the Hensmans were forcibly removed from their farm.

In 2014, the family established the [Rory Hensman Elephant Research Institute](#), which works with scientists on issues such as acoustic communication, scent recognition, and population management to better understand the species and to assist with resolving human-elephant conflict across Africa.

Ethical Questions

Though the TNT-sniffing elephants won't be put on the front lines, Joyce Poole, an expert in elephant behavior and co-founder of the conservation group [ElephantVoices](#), is wary of any research that involves captive elephants.

"Elephants *do* have an amazing sense of smell, and it is possible that orphan elephants raised with kindness might be able to do some extraordinary work for humans," says Poole, [a National Geographic explorer](#). (Also see "[Ringling Bros. to Retire Its Circus Elephants](#).")

But, she cautions, people working with the animals need to be careful not to unknowingly harm them.

Hensman insists that his elephants—all of which were either earmarked for culling or were going to be shot as "problem animals"—are happy at his farm, where they spend their days roaming a 7,400-acre (3,000-hectare) area, interacting with tourists and working with researchers who visit the farm.

And the U.S. Army's Lee argues that using elephants for research could actually help their wild brethren.

A better understanding of elephants can help alleviate conflict in areas where there is human pressure on the animals," he says.

In highly populated areas, elephants can be dangerous, and encounters between the animals and people have increased as more people move into elephant habitat.

More than 200 people were killed by elephants in Kenya over the past seven years, [according to the conservation group WWF](#), and sometimes people will kill the animals in retaliation.

Instead of clashing with people, Chishuru, the star sniffer bull, now represents the enormous potential of what we can learn from elephants. And he may inspire the next generation of artificial noses that could save lives—on the battlefield and beyond.

News Max

[Fastest-Growing US City Is Senior Community in Florida](#)

The latest estimates from the U.S. Census Bureau are in, and the fastest-growing city is not an oil boomtown or a magnet for new immigrants, but a senior living community outside Orlando, Fla., with a reputation for attracting active retirees.

The Villages, a sprawling senior community of 114,000 residents, increased 5.4 percent in the year ended July 2014, making it the country's fastest-growing metro for the second straight year. That's triple the growth rate for the state of Florida and far faster than Myrtle Beach, S.C., the second fastest-growing U.S. city, which expanded 3.2 percent.

The explanation is partly semantic. The Census considers the Villages a metropolitan area, based on the area's core density. Some smaller areas, known as micros, grew at faster rates than the Villages, with Williston, N.D., topping the list at 8.7 percent. The Villages is lumped in with such cities as Houston and Dallas, which saw the largest increases in absolute terms but grew more slowly on a percentage basis.

Still, it's worth spending a moment marveling at the growth of the Villages, which is all the more impressive considering the demographic trends working against it.

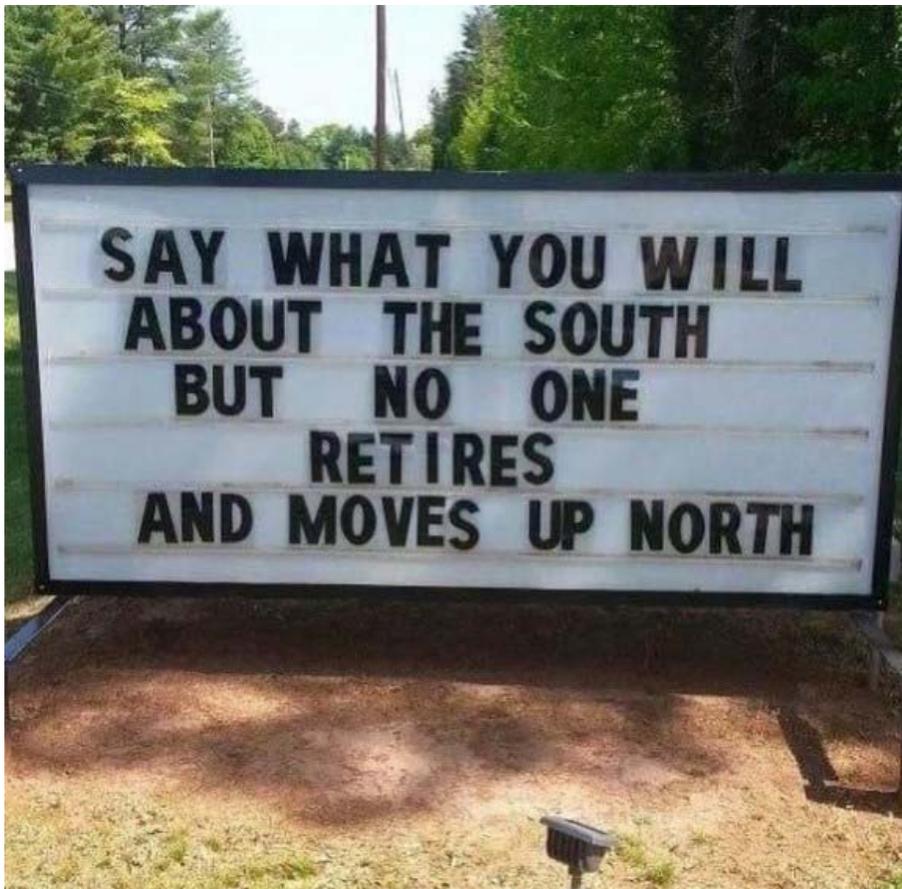
First is attrition. The 2010 Census found that 96 percent of residents were 55 or older. A quirk in the way the Census has defined the Villages means that number might overstate the elderly

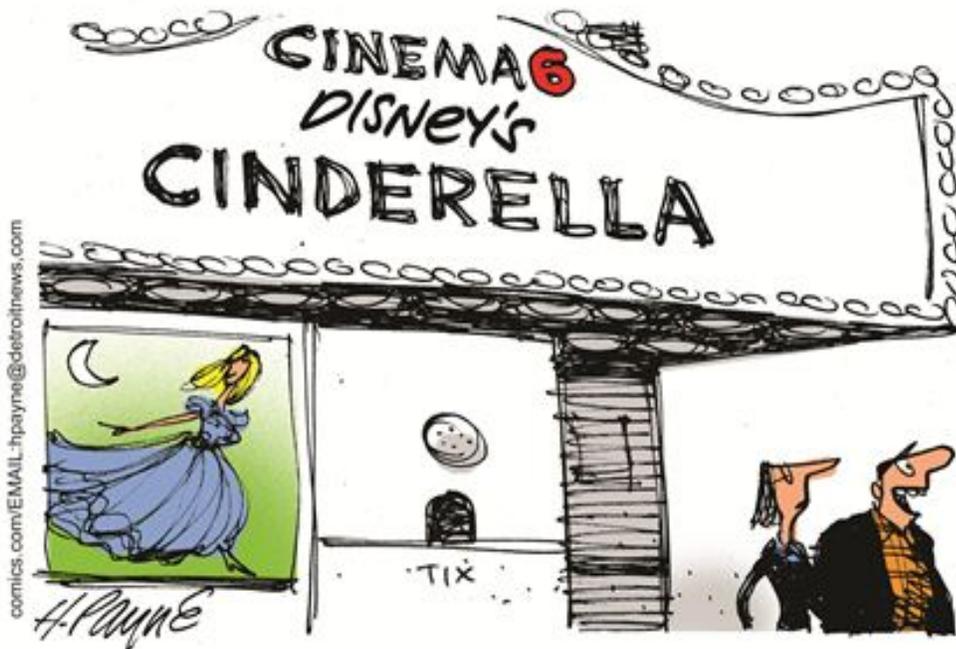
population in the metropolitan area, but it's a fair bet that there are more deaths than births on an annual basis.

Then there are trends in senior living, which include competition from a boom in new senior living construction and research indicating that aging baby boomers would rather grow old in their homes than move to senior developments.

So how has the Villages kept up such fast growth?

A Bloomberg story on the community last year described a veritable senior-living utopia, with low crime, no kids, and lots of golf. (There are more golf carts in the Villages than there are taxis in New York City, according to that story.) There have also been racier tales. The New York Post highlighted the local dating scene and a supposed black market for Viagra—a salacious tale that probably wasn't terrible publicity. To appeal to the widest range of seniors, it helps to offer something for everyone.

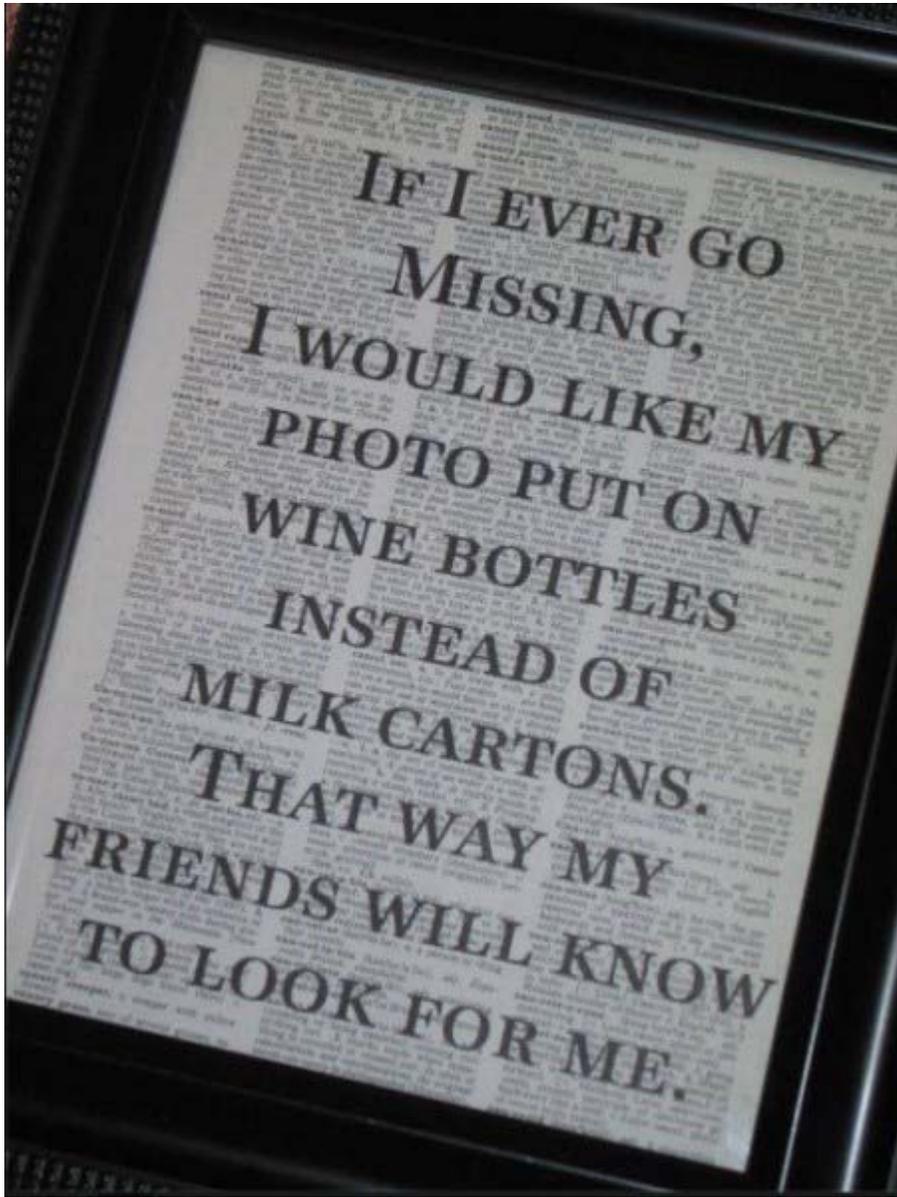




"WOW! DIDN'T SEE THAT ENDING COMING!"

My girlfriend left a note on the fridge, "It's not working. I can't take it anymore. I am going to my Mom's place."

I opened the fridge. The light came on. The beer was cold...
What the hell is she talking about?



IF I EVER GO
MISSING,
I WOULD LIKE MY
PHOTO PUT ON
WINE BOTTLES
INSTEAD OF
MILK CARTONS.
THAT WAY MY
FRIENDS WILL KNOW
TO LOOK FOR ME.