

#AROUND-D-WORLD

A Passport Unlike Any Other

Next time, you come across a Latvian passport, try viewing it under UV light. You won't just see a passport, you'll witness a nation's identity glowing beneath the surface.



These days, everything is getting more digitized, more electrified, or more creative. Smartphones are no longer just communication devices, they are AI-powered assistants. Cars are evolving into self-driving electric marvels, and even clothing is embracing wearable technology. But why stop there? Even something as traditional as a passport is undergoing a transformation, becoming more secure, more artistic, and more innovative than ever before.

When it comes to passports, people are getting more creative, but it's not just individuals pushing boundaries. Governments, too, are embracing innovation, embedding hidden security features that make forgery nearly impossible while turning travel documents into stunning works of art. One of the most fascinating examples of this creativity is the Latvian passport.

Designed with security and national identity in mind, Latvia has created a masterpiece. At first glance, it appears to be a sleek, standard travel document. But under UV light, it transforms, revealing an intricate world of glowing landscapes, hidden symbols, and cutting-edge security features.

A Secret World Unveiled

Passports worldwide incorporate UV-reactive elements to prevent counterfeiting, but Latvia has gone beyond mere security. The new Latvian passport, introduced in February 2024, is a fusion of technology and design. It doesn't just protect its holder's identity, it tells the story of Latvia itself.

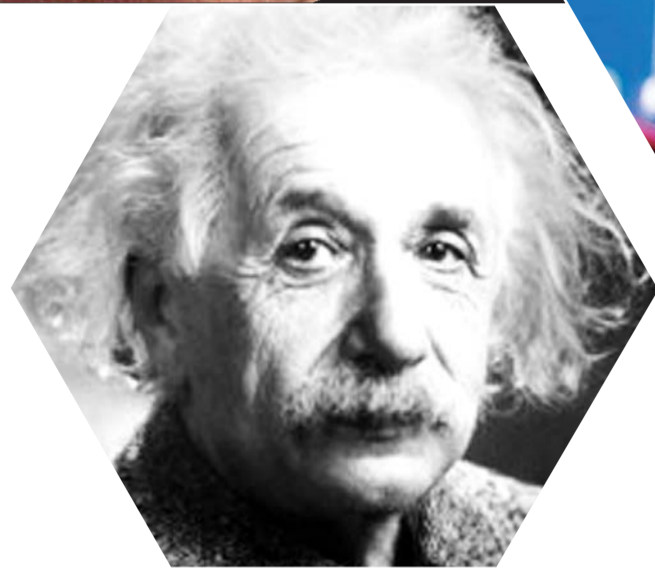
Under UV light, the passport pages illuminate with stunning imagery inspired by Latvia's natural beauty. These aren't random security patterns but carefully curated representations of the country's forests, rivers, and

Where Art Meets Cutting-Edge Security

Beyond its artistic beauty, the Latvian passport is built to be virtually impossible to forge. Every detail has been designed with security in mind. The passport holder's personal information, including their photograph, name, and serial number, is printed with UV-sensitive ink, meaning it only becomes visible under specialized scanning. Micro-engraved security patterns unique to each passport ensure that no

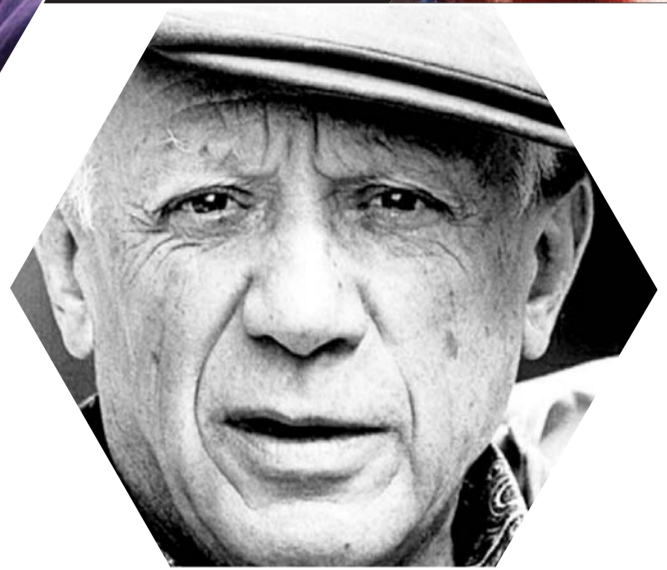
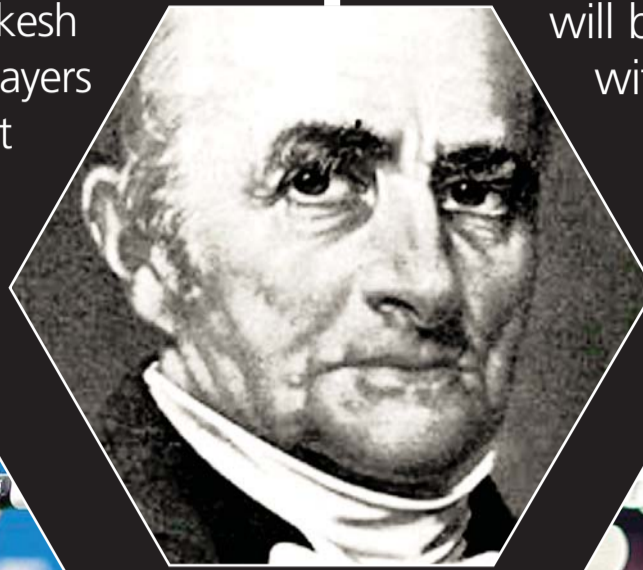
The Future of Passport Design

Latvia's approach signals a global shift in passport technology. With increasing threats of passport fraud and identity theft, countries are responding by adopting biometric encryption, AI-driven verification, and layered security features. However, Latvia stands out by proving that security doesn't have to be purely functional, it can also be a form of national storytelling.



Dr. Goutam Sen
CTVS Surgeon
Traveller
Storyteller

Many prominent players like Fabiano Caruana (USA), Hikaru Nakamura (USA), Nodirbek Abdusattarov (UZB), Alireza Firouzja (FRA) and new World Champion Gukesh Dommaraju are some of the players participating in this tournament beginning in February, 2025.



Mavericks Make The World

#RULE SHIFT



Internationale des Echecs (acronym is FIDE- International Chess Federation). Magnus, like any high level player, does not appreciate restricting and often suffocating rules and regulations of the Chess organization. Chess has actually got too many rules! It tries to control the minutely. It even dictates the size of the chess board and its pieces, besides the height of the table and choice of chairs. (This is under the premise of creating an equal playing field.) They have recently even created a glass soundproofed room in which high level matches are played! Besides all these, I am sure there are many small directives to keep the players in line, which mavericks like Bobby Fischer in the earlier days and Magnus Carlsen now, do not relish. Magnus is particularly annoyed with FIDE for insisting on total control of all the tournaments in Chess. According to Magnus, the FIDE pays very little attention to lower level chess players, making the participation for them a difficult task with money being always short. He has therefore proposed a Free Style Grand Slam Chess Tour. Many prominent players like Fabiano Caruana (USA), Hikaru Nakamura (USA), Nodirbek Abdusattarov (UZB), Alireza Firouzja (FRA) and new World Champion Gukesh Dommaraju are some of the players participating in this tournament beginning in February, 2025.

Such a meeting is expected to draw large crowds and hence good money! This has gone against the grain of FIDE as it will be an independent tournament with no revenue for it. They have started pressuring the players to desist from participating.

change or else... Finally, a compromise has been made and now Magnus is playing in his grubby blue jeans.

People, at the peak of their careers or sports, often exhibit maverick behaviour for several reasons. Success breeds confidence and those at the top often believe they have a unique perspective or approach that others may not appreciate. This can lead to unconventional thinking and behaviour. Mavericks often challenge the status quo and seek to innovate. This can be seen in athletes who experiment with new training techniques or artists, who push the boundaries of their medium. In a competitive world, standing out can be crucial. Some individuals may use eccentric behaviour to attract attention and maintain their status. A high level can be overwhelming. Some individuals may rebel against these expectations by behaving in ways that defy norms.

There are many instances of maverick behaviour. Entrepreneurs like Elon Musk and Steve Jobs are known for their unconventional leadership styles with constant risk-taking and willingness to challenge industry standards. Artists like Picasso, Salvador Dali and Andy Warhol pushed the boundaries of their respective fields with their experimental and often controversial work. Even impressionists like Vincent Van Gogh are renowned because of their individualist techniques. Actors like Johnny Depp, Naseeruddin Shah and musicians like David Bowie have often defied conventional norms with their eccentric fashion choices, public statements and artistic expressions. The acceptance of

and often unorthodox approach to the game, combined with his intense focus and preparation, made him one of the greatest 'maverick' chess players of all time. Magnus Carlsen is not as flamboyant as Fischer. Carlsen has a unique approach to chess. He often plays intuitively, relying on his exceptional pattern recognition and positional understanding. His willingness to deviate from established theory and experiment with new ideas has made him a dominant force in the chess world. His recent objection to the dress code by wearing jeans is a typical example of maverick behaviour. Teimour Radjabov is known for his outspoken nature and his willingness to challenge the status quo of the chess world. He has boycotted events and tournaments to protest issues like prize funds and player rights.

These individuals, among many others, have demonstrated maverick behaviour by challenging traditional ideas and advocating for their beliefs, even in the face of opposition. Their contributions have significantly advanced their respective fields and inspired future generations of scholars.

Sports have always been full of mavericks. The abounding talent often questioned the norms of the game! Roger Federer has been often hailed as the greatest tennis player of all time (G O A T). Federer's elegant and unorthodox playing style set him apart. His fluid movement, precise shots and artistic flair revolutionised the sport. His skill and his excellent ground strokes identified him as a maverick, extending his game beyond the normal. John McEnroe was another example of a hugely talented player who refused to follow the norms. His excellent performance on court contrasted with his off court maverick behaviour. Lionel Messi was

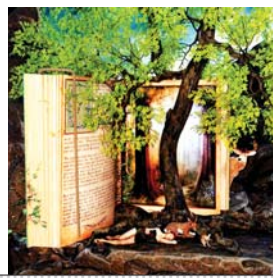
recognised for his dribbling wizardry and uncanny ability to score goals from impossible angles. Messi defied conventional football tactics. His maverick style has led to numerous records and titles. Usain Bolt was the fastest man on Earth. Bolt's unique running style, characterized by long strides and effortless speed, redefined sprinting. His contravention of normal racing practices and on-track behaviour put him in the maverick category. His dominance in the sport was unparalleled.

These individuals, among many others, exemplify the power of maverick behaviour. By challenging the status quo and thinking outside the box, they have made significant contributions to their respective fields and left an enduring legacy.

In today's world of politics, Donald Trump is a classic maverick in making tall claims of taking over Canada and Greenland. His political actions are often beyond comprehension. It is yet to be seen whether his maverick behaviour will lead to doom or redemption.

Perhaps, Jesus was history's greatest maverick. The Pharisees considered him a maverick because he would not conform to the traditions of the elders. The Sadducees considered him a maverick because he would not acknowledge their authority. Pilate considered him a maverick because he would not defend himself. Let me make it clear that I am not blaspheming. He was so amazing that he was perceived as different in behaviour by the people of that era. There was even a suspicion that he may have been an alien! Mavericks may be hard to understand but it is possible that they speed up the development of the world in their quirky behaviour.

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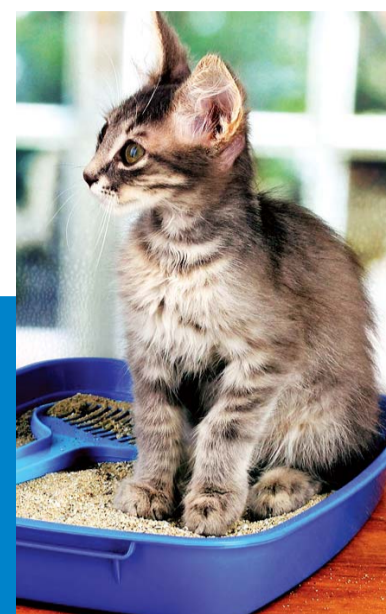
World Folktales & Fables Week

World Folktales and Fables Week celebrates the timeless magic of storytelling. This week invites everyone to immerse themselves in tales that have travelled across generations and countries, from clever tricksters to brave heroes and magical creatures. These stories are so amazing! They capture universal ideas, love, courage, cleverness, in a way that connects us all. When we read or share these folktales, we step into worlds filled with the most amazing talking animals, cunning underdogs, and unexpected victories. And best of all, these folktales and fables also share lessons that feel close to home, no matter where we're from.

#PET-LIFE

How To Train Your Cat

Cats have never been selectively bred to enhance their ability to cooperate and communicate with us, or perform working roles such as herding, hunting or guarding.



Compared to dogs, cats share different historic relationships with humans. Cats have never been selectively bred to enhance their ability to cooperate and communicate with us. But research shows they can recognise and respond to our subtle cues and be trained to perform similar tasks to dogs.

Just like dogs, cats need support to adjust to living alongside us. Simple forms of training can be good for their wellbeing. At home, we can use simple techniques to help cats with things like feeling comfortable in a cat carrier, getting used to car journeys, as well as tolerating being groomed and receiving basic health examinations and treatments. Such training can also help cats cope better with visits to the vet.



What Works!

Cats are not born with an innate affinity towards humans and must be exposed to gentle, warm handling from two weeks old so that they can learn we are friend rather than foe. There is limited evidence that younger cats are more attentive to our social cues, which could mean they are more amenable to training. Kittens should also be played with using cat wands or fishing rod toys so that they learn not to attack our hands or feet.

Punishments such as shouting, rough handling or using a water spray can induce stress and compromise the quality of owner-cat relationships. Always use positive reinforcement (such as treats and praise). This is not only the most effective way to train pets, but it's also better for their wellbeing. Reward-based techniques can be an excellent way to teach a cat

to enter a carrier on their own or sit calmly whilst we deliver their flea treatment. Some very friendly food motivated cats may enjoy being taught to give a high five, or to sit or spin. But cats are often less motivated than dogs to pay attention to us, or do what we are asking, especially in situations where they don't feel comfortable.

It's important that we make sure that the cat is somewhere they feel at ease when we undertake any training with them. Always ensure the cat has the option to walk away or end the session when they want, and try to give them a break, if they seem uncomfortable. Signs to look for include the cat turning their head away, nose licking, head shaking, a raised paw, sudden bouts of self-grooming, looking hunched or tense, a twitching or thumping tail and rotated or flattened ears.

HERE'S HOW TO TEACH YOUR CAT ENTER A CARRIER AND SETTLE IN FIVE EASY STEPS!



1. Lure them onto a blanket

In a place where your cat already feels safe, teach him or her to settle on a blanket. Do this by luring the cat onto the blanket using food. Reward the cat for staying on the blanket with more treats, petting or verbal praise,

depending on what your cat likes most. Feed treats at nose height to encourage them into a sit position, then, feed treats at ground level to encourage the cat to crouch and then eventually lay on the blanket.



2. Introduce the carrier

Once your cat has mastered step one, place the blanket on the bottom of a carrier with the lid removed. Repeat the same luring and rewarding steps.

3. Take it slowly

When your cat is happily resting on the blanket in the carrier, place the lid on top of the carrier (without attaching the door) and repeat the luring and rewarding process.

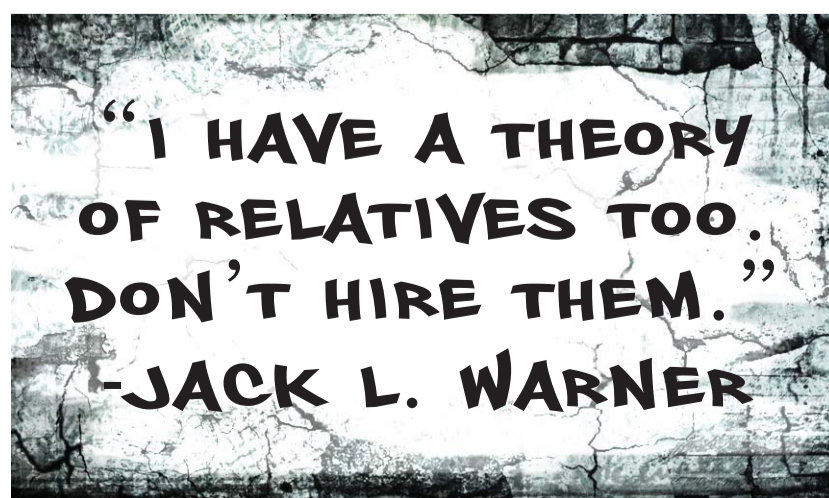
4. Let your cat set the pace

After your cat has happily entered the carrier and settled inside, place the door on the carrier but keep it open to start with, so that he or she doesn't suddenly feel trapped inside. Allow them to exit the carrier when they want and use treats to encourage them back in. In small movements, start to close the door slightly, then, open it again, each time giving the cat a treat. Build this up slowly until the door can be fully closed for only a few seconds at first while the cat is still comfortable. Feed the cat treats through the closed door.

5. Almost there

Work towards the cat being in the carrier with the door closed for longer periods, adding a few extra seconds each time. Keep rewarding the cat by popping treats through the sides or door of the carrier, gradually increasing the time between each treat delivery. Each training session should last no more than a few minutes in total, and some cats may prefer only one session a day. It might take lots of sessions and many days or weeks before this final step is complete.

THE WALL

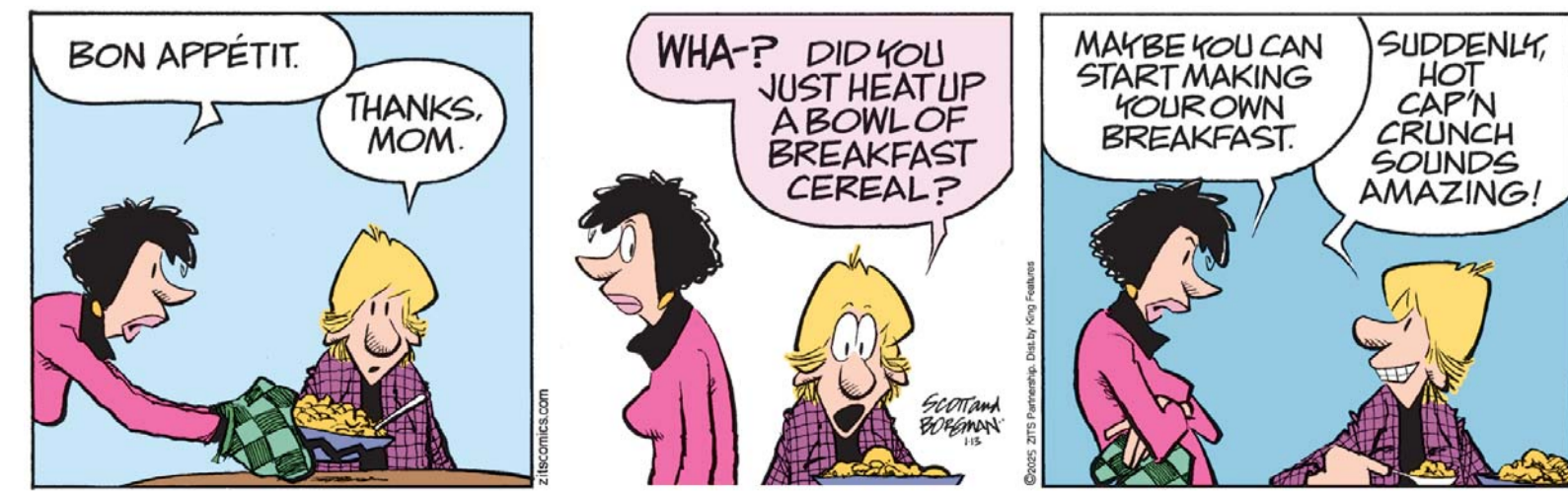


BABY BLUES



By Rick Kirkman & Jerry Scott

ZITS



By Jerry Scott & Jim Borgman

