

Diane Richer, Team Leader - Ocean Services, Retiring



After 43-plus years with Universal Logistics, Diane Richer decided to retire on Wednesday, May 20th – her special milestone Birthday! We had a pizza and cake lunch at Head Office to celebrate Diane's retirement on that day, and Diane's colleagues, many of whom have become her close friends over all these years, had the opportunity to congratulate her and extend best wishes for a happy, healthy and very well-earned retirement. Michael Glionna gave a speech and presented Diane with a special gift from the company. Following is a reproduction of Michael's speech:

Today is a very special day at Universal Logistics for 2 reasons. First of all, it is May the 20th which means it is Diane Richer's birthday! Happy Birthday Diane!! And second, since Diane had always said she would like to retire on her birthday, today is also Diane's last day with Universal... because... after an incredible 43-and-a-half years with the company, she is officially retiring... in exactly 3 hours and 23 minutes!

Now why, you ask, would Diane choose this particular birthday to retire? Well, for those of you who have been in the Canadian workforce for a while, you will know it used to be that in the province of Ontario, it was mandatory for a worker to retire at a particular milestone age (an age I will not mention at this time). Labour Laws changed in 2006 however, and it was then no longer mandatory to retire at that designated age. Well, as we all know, Diane is a real stickler for details, rules and regulations. She's an "old school" type who likes to plan, adhere to a strict schedule and follow through with 100% reliability and consistency. So, regardless of this change to the Canadian Labour Laws, Diane committed herself to retiring exactly to the minute of reaching what used to be the mandatory age for retiring... again, a special milestone age which I am carefully choosing not to identify for reasons of Diane's privacy.

On this special day, I'd like to share with everyone a few highlights and memories of Diane's amazing 43+ year career at Universal.

Diane started with Universal back on January 24th, 1983 as an "Import Clerk" in what was then known as our Transportation Department. To accentuate for everyone that this was indeed a long time ago, Diane's starting annual salary, according to company records, was a whopping \$11,500. Apparently, that was a pretty decent salary back in 1983.

Diane worked on the Freight side of the business, learning everything there was to know about ocean imports and exports, working together with our overseas partners all over the world. She truly became our resident expert in handling ocean imports, having encountered and mastered every possible shipment situation that one could imagine. In May of 2011, Diane was promoted to Team Leader – Ocean Services, an important leadership role she excelled at right up until... 1:45 pm today!

Over these many years at Universal, Diane can lay claim to a very unique fact... She has worked with 4 generations of our family. In more recent years, when they were working in the summers between school years, representatives from Generation 4 – my sons, Jason and Matthew, and my nephews, Christopher, Thomas and Paul, all had the opportunity to work with Diane in one capacity or another. This was clearly her favourite Generation of Glionnas, because when Diane had the opportunity to bring her partner, Sandy, as her guest to our Christmas Dinner a few years ago when we celebrated Diane's 40th anniversary with the company, she quickly ditched Sandy, who she claimed was too old having just turned 60, and traded him in for Jason, Matthew and Christopher as her special guests. She actually asked for all 5 of the young gentlemen, including Thomas and Paul, but they were away at school writing exams and could not attend.

There is no question that Diane had her fill of Generation 3, with myself, Dave, Mark and Paul, all working side by side with her since our early 20s. Together, we all grew up in the business. And, Diane was also a favourite of our Dad, Frank Jr. (Generation 2), who was leading the company when she started in 1983, enjoying over 10 years of Diane's excellent performance.

What makes Diane's connection to our family so unique however, is the fact that she also had the opportunity to work with our grandfather, Al Foley. Now this was not our Dad's father, Frank Sr., who started the business. This was our Dad's father-in-law, our Mom's father who worked with Universal many, many years ago as our Collections Manager. Let's just say that Grandad was a fierce collector of funds, often somewhat cranky in his approach as he moved through the office asking our young, fearful employees why they released shipments without collecting all funds in advance. Sound familiar?? But Diane was a tough cookie herself, not one to be easily intimidated by an older gentleman with a serious and stern demeanor. She had a true soft spot for Grandad Al, knowing that his bark was much worse than his bite...She says that my brother Dave reminds her exactly of him.

So, as everyone can see, Diane successfully endeared herself to 4 generations of our family, making a lasting and positive impression on each one of us along the way.

During her time with Universal, Diane was always a very hard worker, with a fine attention to details, a steel trap memory and a level of conscientiousness that no one could top. She really disliked errors, and therefore made very few of them, if any. She put an incredible amount of personal care into her work, and it showed by how happy our clients were with her performance. Top clients like Penguin Random House and Bsaunas, to name just a few, truly enjoyed working with Diane because of the extra-mile effort she put into ensuring each and every shipment went smoothly. Even when preparing for, and enjoying, her well-earned vacations, Diane worried about the well-being of our clients and their shipments.

As Team Leader, Diane was always very generous in sharing her many years of knowledge and freight forwarding expertise with our newer employees. She was happy to commit her time and patience in training new team members, with a positive, thorough and very detailed approach. The trainees came away feeling like nothing could go wrong if they simply followed Diane's steps. Diane would also go above and beyond to protect our newer employees if she felt that the steamship lines or co-loaders were trying to take advantage of them. With this approach, Diane not only gained the appreciation of her Managers, but she also earned the respect and admiration of our newest team members. As such, Diane became very popular and well-liked amongst her co-workers. She forged strong friendships with many of us, which I know will endure well beyond her time with the company.

Diane's talents and pastimes outside of the office will indeed serve her well in retirement. She is a great baker and cook. We will always remember Diane's delicious banana bread, a huge hit each year at our HHTH fundraiser, and her yummy meatballs at the Christmas Potluck Luncheon, a favourite for all of us. Diane will continue to spoil Sandy and her stepson Alex with maple syrup crepes on special breakfast mornings, and when visiting her Dad in New Brunswick, there will be many scrumptious lobster dinners with drawn butter. After a home-cooked meal, we know Diane will kick back with a glass of Grand Marnier, her favourite sipping liqueur.

We also know that Diane absolutely loves gardening and has a real green thumb. Her backyard is an oasis with numerous plants and beautiful flowers which she tends to with meticulous care. We will sorely miss Diane's first aid care to ailing plants in the office, many of which she has lovingly brought back to life from near death. Just as she shared her freight expertise and talents with fellow employees, Diane also generously shares her green thumb with other households in her neighbourhood. She actively maintains their gardens at "no charge" and now, with spring having sprung and more leisure time on her hands, Diane will surely make her entire street the manicured envy of all others.

Diane also enjoys sports, especially baseball where she was a very talented player starring for the Universal Customs Brokers softball team back in the day. She will root on her Blue Jays, hopefully to another World Series appearance this summer, and may even place the odd wager on their success... because Diane is a star at the sport of gambling too. She loves going to the casino, to bingo, playing the lottery and scratch-and-win. Her skills in this pastime are unquestioned, and on at least one or two occasions, she has made more in one night at bingo and the casino than her entire annual salary from back in 1983. Warning to fellow bingo players... Diane has more free time now so look out!

What Diane is looking forward to most in retirement, is visiting with family, which means travelling throughout Canada. Her older sister, Molly, just retired last year, so the first journey is a week's visit with Molly and her husband at their new home in St. Thomas, Ontario starting as early as tomorrow I believe. In June, Diane is travelling to Quebec, including Montreal and Quebec City, to attend a much-anticipated school reunion with old friends. And, in July, she will be off to New Brunswick for a relaxing 3-week visit with her Dad. As we can see, spending quality leisure time with family and friends will be at the top of Diane's priority list, and it will be really nice for her to have the freedom and peace of mind to travel and visit without any firm commitments limiting her time... not to mention client shipments to worry about!

Diane, we thank you for all these years of loyal and dedicated service to our company, and for your invaluable contributions to our company's success. Thanks for setting a wonderful example to your fellow co-workers with your strong work ethic and your careful attention to detail. You made lifetime friends here thanks to your friendly, caring nature, and we will all miss you. And, as I mentioned, you masterfully survived working with 4 generations of our family so, rest assured, you will always remain a part of the Universal family.

On behalf of myself, Dave, Mark and Paul, and the entire Universal team, I extend our sincere congratulations on your successful working career, and we wish you nothing but the very best of health and happiness in your well-earned retirement!

Now, going back a few years to her 40-year celebration, Diane was given an option as to whether she would like the 40-year ruby and diamond ring, or the travel voucher, as her award for reaching 40 years with the company. It was a tough decision at the time, but Diane stated "Daddy comes first!", and so she selected the travel voucher, as she wanted to travel and visit her Dad in New Brunswick as often as possible... which indeed she has done in the 3 years since! But we know that Diane also had a wishful eye on that ruby/diamond ring. And she certainly deserves a special gift commemorating her 40+ year career with Universal. So, Diane, we have for you a certificate at Moshe Fine Jewellery which you can exchange for a custom-designed ruby/diamond ring of your choosing. Tina will be happy to work with you on arranging the design and ordering.

Summer Family Event – Bruce's Mill

This year, Universal Logistics will be returning to Bruce's Mill in Stouffville on **Saturday, July 25th** for an afternoon of fun featuring:

Interactive Inflatables ...



Airbrush Tattoos & Snapshot Photo Booth ...



Delicious Food, Drinks & Ice Cream ...



It's time to get yourselves ready for an exciting day that might leave you with a nice tan, but will surely leave you with the need for a nap!

2026 Summerlicious Days at Universal

Summerlicious Days at Universal are back!

We had our first taste of Summerlicious on **Tuesday, May 26th** with the arrival of the ***Food Truck*** at Head Office, and lunches for our Canadian Branch and US Offices arranged by the Engagement Committee. Check out some of the fun at the bottom of this article!



Universal Logistics is back at it again with delicious perks for everyone to enjoy. Our Head Office will see the return of Food Truck lunches and another round of the Ice Cream Truck. Our Canadian Branch and US Offices are also going to enjoy lunch and treats at their offices, arranged with options specific to their locations.

Courtesy of Universal Logistics!

So, if you haven't already saved the dates, here's your reminder to do so ...

- **Tuesday, June 16th** – Ice Cream Truck
- **Saturday, July 25th** – Food & Ice Cream Truck at the Summer Family Event
- **Tuesday, August 18th** – Ice Cream Truck
- **Tuesday, September 15th** – Food Truck

>>> [Click Here to see what happened at Universal's first Summerlicious event of the year!](#) <<<

Something's Brewing

Contributor: Alice Yan

Summer Food Festivals Guide for Canada & the U.S.

CANADA

1. Taste of Edmonton

- **Date & Time:** Mid-to-late July; 11:00 AM to 11:00 PM
- **Introduction:** Founded in 1984, *Taste of Edmonton* has grown into Western Canada's largest food festival. Held in the heart of the city at *Sir Winston Churchill Square*, it is a passionate celebration of local restaurants, food trucks, and culinary talent.
- **Food & Drink:** International cuisine, local Alberta craft beer, desserts, and street food
- **Other Highlights:** Live concerts, chef showcases, cultural performances, and hundreds of tasting options throughout downtown Edmonton



2. Canada's Largest Ribfest (Burlington, ON)

- **Date & Time:** Labour Day Weekend (September 4th-7th); 11:00 AM to 11:00 PM
- **Introduction:** Organized by the Rotary Club of Burlington-Lakeshore at Spencer Smith Park, this spectacular waterfront event has been running for over three decades.
- **Food & Drink:** BBQ ribs, smoked brisket, pulled pork, grilled chicken, and craft beer
- **Other Highlights:** Rib competitions, live entertainment, family fun zones, and carnival rides



3. Richmond Night Market

- **Date & Time:** Weekends (Friday, Saturday, Sunday) and Holiday Mondays throughout the entire summer; 7:00 PM to 12:00 AM or 11:00 PM (Sundays)
- **Introduction:** Established in 2000 in Metro Vancouver, the Richmond Night Market is internationally recognized as the largest night market in North America.
- **Food & Drink:** Cutting-edge, viral street food dominated by Asian flavors, like seafood skewers, takoyaki, fried snacks, desserts, and bubble tea
- **Other Highlights:** neon-lit photo backdrops, live cultural dance and music performances



4. Shediac Lobster Festival

- **Date & Time:** Early July; event schedules vary daily from 12:00 PM to 11:00 PM
- **Introduction:** Founded in 1949 in Shediac, New Brunswick – the officially designated “Lobster Capital of the World”
- **Food & Drink:** Fresh lobster, seafood chowder, oysters, mussels, and local beer
- **Other Highlights:** seafood cooking demonstrations, live music, and parades

5. Shediac Lobster Festival

- **Date & Time:** Mid-to-late August; 12:00 PM to 11:00 PM
- **Introduction:** Held at the Old Port of Montreal, this festival celebrates the dynamic evolution of Montreal’s world-renowned street food scene.
- **Food & Drink:** Gourmet street food, poutine, tacos, desserts, and cocktails
- **Other Highlights:** Outdoor dining experiences, live DJs, food truck showcases

6. Ontario’s Best Butter Tart Festival

- **Date & Time:** Second Saturday in June; 9:00 AM to 5:00 PM
- **Introduction:** Canada’s largest butter tart festival is in Paris, Ontario, at the Paris Fairgrounds, attracting over 60,000 visitors in a single day.
- **Food & Drink:** Classic butter tarts, gourmet dessert variations, pastries, and coffee
- **Other Highlights:** Baking competitions, artisan vendors, and sweet treat tastings



U.S.A.

1. Taste of Chicago

- **Date & Time:** Late summer (traditionally July or September); 11:00 AM to 9:00 PM
- **Introduction:** Launched in 1980, Taste of Chicago in Grant Park is one of the world's largest outdoor food festivals.
- **Food & Drink:** A comprehensive showcase of Chicago's food staples such as the legendary deep-dish pizza, and classic Chicago-style hot dogs (no ketchup!)
- **Other Highlights:** A comprehensive showcase of Chicago's food staples such as the legendary deep-dish pizza, and classic Chicago-style hot dogs (no ketchup!)



2. Aspen Food & Wine Classic

- **Date & Time:** Mid-June, Friday through Sunday; scheduled seminars and Grand Tastings run from 10:00 AM to 6:00 PM
- **Introduction:** A world-renowned luxury culinary event in Aspen, Colorado, attracting celebrity chefs, sommeliers, and food enthusiasts for 40 years
- **Food & Drink:** Small plates prepared by Michelin-starred and James Beard award-winning chefs, paired with rare vintage wines, artisanal spirits, and luxury champagnes from international vineyards
- **Other Highlights:** Cooking seminars, wine tastings, celebrity chef appearances, evening gala events



3. Picklesburgh

- **Date & Time:** Mid-to-late July; Friday through Sunday from 12:00 PM to 10:00 PM
- **Introduction:** One of America's most unique food festivals dedicated entirely to pickles.
- **Food & Drink:** Everything dill and fermented, alongside classic Pittsburgh pierogies and street foods
- **Other Highlights:** Giant pickle balloon displays, pickle juice drinking contests, and live music

4. Maine Lobster Festival

- **Date & Time:** First weekend in August; hours vary from 9:00 AM to 10:00 PM
- **Introduction:** Established in 1947, this festival in Rockland, Maine, is one of America's most famous seafood celebrations.
- **Food & Drink:** Tens of thousands of pounds of fresh Maine lobster are prepared in the world's largest lobster cooker
- **Other Highlights:** Lobster cooking contests, harbor activities, and live music



5. National Buffalo Wing Festival

- **Date & Time:** Labor Day Weekend; 12:00 PM to 9:00 PM (Saturday) or 7:00 PM (Sunday)
- **Introduction:** Inspired by the movie *Osmosis Jones* and founded by “*Wing King*” *Drew Cerza*. It is a famous festival dedicated to Buffalo's legendary chicken wings and sauce culture.
- **Food & Drink:** Chicken wings, BBQ foods, hot sauces, fried foods, and beer lobster are prepared in the world's largest lobster cooker
- **Other Highlights:** Wing-eating contests, celebrity appearances, and live entertainment



Question: Some incredible records have been set at hundreds of food festivals around the world. What world record did over 800 cooks team up to beat at the 13th annual Avocado Festival (Feria del Aguacate) in Tancítaro, Mexico?

- A. The world's largest taco
- B. The fastest time to slice 1,000 avocados
- C. The largest serving of guacamole
- D. The tallest tower of avocado toast

Click on the question above, submit your answer to Sharon, and you're eligible to win!

Submission deadline

Friday, June 5th (Noon)

Prize

\$25 Tim Hortons, Starbucks or Amazon gift card for the 2 winners

(If more than two contestants have the right answer, we will pick the winning names out of a hat)



Kudos (Noun) – Praise & honour received for an achievement

Kudos Corner is a forum where Universal employees can recognize the efforts of their co-workers. Bring forward candidates for Kudos Corner at your next Team Meeting or simply drop your Manager a line whenever you feel someone's efforts should be recognized in Universal & You.

Submitted by John Leis of our Client Relations team:

*"In January 2026, **Naara Garcia of our Canadian Customs Operations team at Head Office** alerted our Client Relations team to some recent challenges she'd had in terms of managing the Import Permit Process for our client, Fromm Packaging Systems Canada Inc. (Canadian Account #3567000; US Account #1246).*

It was clear that the work Naara was doing to ensure that Fromm's permits were being managed efficiently far exceeded anything our Operations team members would normally face. Recognizing the time-consuming nature of the client's expectations, Naara felt it was important to SpeakUP and determine if an adjustment to our pricing was warranted. By bringing this to the attention of our CR team, through the SpeakUP program, we were able to discuss these challenges with the client, ascertain the timing of our request for a fee increase, and ultimately gained their approval for the change in our pricing.

This an excellent example of an Operations team member looking for ways each day to improve efficiencies and increase revenue. Kudos to Naara for embracing both our SpeakUP program and our company-wide Business Development objectives!"

Submitted by Audrey Keser of our US Customs Operations team:

*"**Claudia Charette of our US Customs Operations team at the Buffalo Office** has consistently demonstrated a strong work ethic during her time at Universal. Throughout the recent system transition to CargoWise, both before and after the implementation, she has gone above and beyond in clearing shipments. Despite the loss of one of the other night shift team members prior to the transition, Claudia took on the extra workload, keying more than 70 shipments and working late to ensure nothing was left behind in the folder for the day shift.*

As she became more familiar with the new system in the weeks following, Claudia quickly returned to processing a tremendous volume of shipments. While continuing to adapt to the system and its ongoing challenges, she has approached every obstacle with resilience, never losing focus or giving up.”

Submitted by Vincent Kwong of our Ocean Services team:

*“**Bowen Zhu of our Ocean Services team at Head Office** has been handling a very heavy workload lately and has gone above and beyond during recent team transitions and onboarding. Bowen always steps in to help manage cargo when team members are changing or on holiday, and helps with the training of new hires.*

Over the past few months, he’s even been coming into the office on his work-from-home days just to work more closely with the team and help make sure everything transitioned smoothly. Even with all the extra responsibilities and backlog that created, he still stayed late to keep up with his own work.

What really stands out, is not just how much work he took on, but his attitude and willingness to do extra for both the team and the company.”

Growing again



Name: Rachel Chan

Team: Ocean Services

Start date: April 21, 2026



Name: Elizabeth Gomez

Team: Truck Services

Start date: May 4, 2026



Name: Rafia Olass

Team: Customs Consulting Services

Start date: May 4, 2026

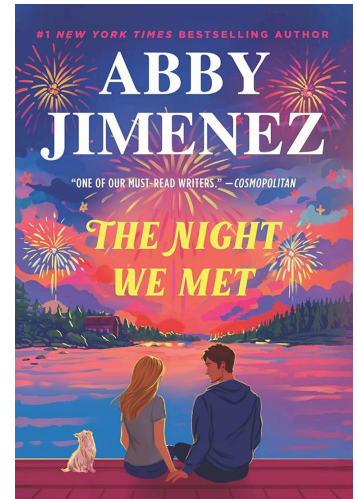
Book Buzz

Contributor: Barbara Mulatinho

The Night We Met

An emotional friends-to-lovers romance about a single split-second decision that changes everything. After choosing to ride home with the charming Mike instead of his quieter best friend Chris, Larissa slowly realizes she may have picked the wrong man.

As she and Chris grow closer through shared responsibilities, lingering feelings, and impossible timing, they're forced to confront whether doing the right thing means denying the person who feels most like home.



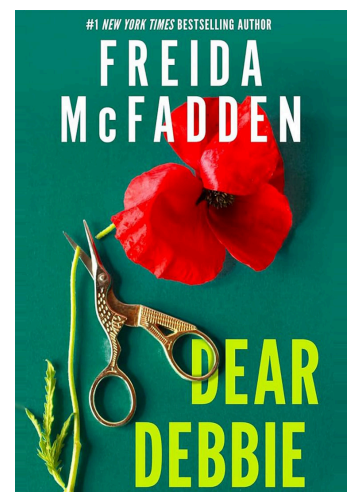
The Night We Met by Abby Jimenez

Barbara's Bit: 5/5 ★ I absolutely loved this book. The premise is so engaging right from the start, and it kept pulling me in more and more as the story unfolded. It's the kind of idea that makes you keep turning the pages because you're genuinely curious (and a little anxious) to see how everything is going to come together. I was especially invested in how the author would handle the main conflict, and it really paid off.

The characters feel incredibly real and well developed, and what I loved most is how their relationship evolves — it's gradual, believable, and never feels forced. You can really feel the emotional growth along the way. By the end, everything wraps up in such a satisfying way. It's one of those books that leaves you with that warm, cozy feeling, like you've just experienced something comforting but still meaningful.

Dear Debbie

Advice columnist Debbie Mullen's carefully controlled life begins to unravel — her job is gone, her daughters are acting strangely, and her husband is hiding secrets. Tired of being the “reasonable” one, Debbie decides that it's finally time to take her own advice and stop letting people get away with hurting her. Packed with revenge, dark humor, and twist after twist, this psychological thriller leans fully into the chaos of a woman pushed past her breaking point.



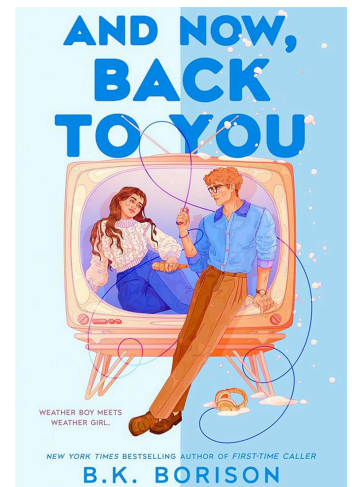
Dear Debbie by Freida McFadden

Barbara's Bit: 4/5 ★ I picked up *Dear Debbie* after Tina and Sharon recommended it as a fun, completely off-the-rails mystery. I went in with basic knowledge about the plot which turned out to be the perfect approach. I'm not the type of reader who tries to solve the mystery while reading, I prefer to just follow the story wherever the author takes me. Freida's books, can go either way for me, but this one really worked.

The story caught me off guard in the best possible way. I had no idea where it was heading, but I enjoyed every moment of the journey. The draft advice entries were genuinely hilarious, and the situations kept escalating in a way that made it impossible to stop reading. I ended up finishing it in about two days. If you like mysteries and are open to something different, surprising, and a bit unconventional, this book is definitely for you.

And Now, Back To You

A cozy opposites-attract romance following rival meteorologists Jackson Clark and Delilah Stewart, whose constant clashes turn into unexpected chemistry when they're forced to cover a historic snowstorm together. As Delilah pushes buttoned-up Jackson out of his comfort zone, the two slowly build a friendship that starts to feel like something much deeper. Full of banter, forced proximity, and wintery charm, this romance blends emotional vulnerability with classic rom-com energy.



And Now, Back To You by B.K. Borison

Barbara's Bit: 4/5 ★ A radio host and a TV presenter are suddenly forced to work together to cover a historic snowstorm. Sounds kind of dull at first, right? But it's actually anything but. The story quickly pulls you in, not just because of the high-stakes setting, but because of how well the characters are written. I really appreciated how their individual backgrounds are explored in a meaningful way, giving depth to their personalities, helping us understand why they clash, and why they ultimately work so well together.

I'm always a fan of the enemies-to-lovers trope, and this book absolutely delivers. The early banter and bickering feel natural and genuinely fun, especially because both characters are so charismatic in their own ways. As the story progresses, their relationship develops at a really satisfying pace, never feeling rushed or forced. Add the cozy, snowed-in atmosphere, and it creates such a warm, immersive reading experience. It's one of those stories that feels both comforting and engaging, making it really hard to put down.

Culture and Entertainment

Contributor: Barbara Mulatinho

The Devil Wears Prada 2

The Devil Wears Prada 2 reunites Miranda Priestly and Emily Charlton years after the original film as they navigate the decline of traditional magazine publishing and a shifting fashion industry.

With magazine, Runway, struggling to stay relevant, old rivalries and power dynamics resurface in a world dominated by digital media and luxury branding.



Barbara's Bit: 4.5/5 ★ It's really hard to make sequels that people genuinely love. For a sequel to work, it needs to have something meaningful to say – in my opinion, this movie has plenty of that.

It was great seeing the original characters again and finding out where life has taken them. The character development was one of the best parts of the movie for me. The performances are perfection. Meryl Streep is even more fantastic in this movie, bringing something new to Miranda, especially considering where we are in the world right now in relation to magazines, social media, and work culture. Anne Hathaway and Emily Blunt are amazing, and their banter puts a smile on my face every time. Overall, it was a truly entertaining experience, that I recommend to all.

Michael

Michael follows the rise of Michael Jackson from his childhood, performing with the *Jackson 5* to becoming one of the biggest pop stars in the world during the *Thriller* and *Bad* eras. The film focuses on his talent, fame, artistic ambition, and complicated relationship with his father as he struggles with the pressures of superstardom.

Barbara's Bit: 3.5/5 ★ The biopic stops short of Michael Jackson's heavier controversies, which was very much intentional. It's not about ignoring them or separating the art from the artist; instead it's inviting us

to look at his work again with a bit more lightness, without all that baggage weighing it down. Still, it often feels like the biographical elements are just there to stitch the performance scenes together. Key moments, like his impact on MTV or music videos come across almost like items on a checklist. But then you get scenes like “*Billie Jean*” on stage or “*Thriller*” coming to life, and suddenly... you start to forgive all those issues. It leaves you with the sense that there's still a film waiting to be made, one that does justice not just to the legendary artist, but also dives deeper into the complexity of the man. This just isn't that film yet.



If I could suggest my favorite biopic movie, go check out *Rocketman* which tells the story of Elton John. That one gets my 5 stars.

The Mandalorian and Grogu

The Mandalorian and Grogu follows Din Djarin and Grogu as they leave bounty hunting behind and get pulled into a new galaxy-spanning adventure involving the New Republic and lingering Imperial threats. Expanding the story from the *Disney+* series, the film brings the duo's father-son bond to the big screen with bigger stakes and action.

Barbara's Bit: 2/5 ★ I'm not the craziest *Star Wars* fan. I don't watch every single thing they release, but I still mostly enjoy what I choose to watch. When they released *The Mandalorian* on *Disney+*, and revealed



Baby Yoda (**I refuse to call him by any other name**) at the end of episode 1, I was hooked! I didn't care much for the story, but it was entertaining enough to keep me going. I enjoyed following the journey of Mando and his kid, how their relationship was built, and the development of Baby Yoda's powers. So, when the movie was announced, I was totally up for it.

I was sadly disappointed. The movie is uninspiring at best, and boring at worst. The plot is basic, the fight sequences left me yawning in the theater, and worst of all, there was nothing new to explore between the two main characters.

Health and Lifestyle

Contributor: Veena Ramesh

RHR the Heartbeat of Health



The Resting Heart Rate (RHR) is a powerful indicator of your overall fitness and daily stress levels. While a normal RHR is 60-100 bpm, a lower number means a stronger, healthier heart. Thanks to smartwatches, you can track this metric dynamically. You can actively lower your baseline and boost your daily energy by incorporating short walks, staying hydrated, and taking quick breathing breaks at your desk.

Humans have been checking their pulses since ancient times, but it wasn't until the mid-20th century that RHR transitioned into an official health metric. Put simply, your RHR is the number of times your heart beats per minute when you are awake, calm, and completely relaxed. Think of it as your body's baseline efficiency.

A normal RHR sits between 60 and 100 beats per minute (bpm). Generally, a lower number means a stronger heart muscle. If your baseline is consistently over 100 bpm (a condition called *tachycardia*), your heart is working overtime, increasing your long-term cardiovascular risks.

From Clinic Snapshots to Wristwear

Traditionally, doctors only checked your heart rate during quick, isolated annual checkups. These brief snapshots rely on broad population averages and rarely prompt medical action unless your numbers are wildly off.

Today, smartwatches and fitness wearables have



completely changed the game. Instead of a single clinic reading, we can now track our heart rates continuously. A landmark study by Scripps Research proved that RHR is a highly personalized, dynamic vital sign. It acts like an early warning system, fluctuating in real-time in response to daily work stress, impending illness, and overall fitness.

How to Improve Your RHR: Actionable Steps

While genetics play a minor role, your daily habits dictate your RHR. To lower your baseline and make your heart more efficient, try incorporating these strategies into your work week:



- **Incorporate Aerobic Exercise:** Aim for 150 minutes of moderate cardio (like jogging, cycling, or swimming) each week. Even a brisk 20-minute walk after lunch or during a break helps!
- **Try Interval Training:** Short on time? Try high-intensity intervals like the *Norwegian 4x4 method* (4 minutes of hard effort, 3 minutes of recovery, repeated 4 times) to rapidly boost your heart's pumping power.
- **Prioritize Sleep & Hydration:** Skimping on sleep spikes your stress hormones, so aim for 7-9 hours of rest. Additionally, drink plenty of water; dehydration lowers blood volume, forcing your heart to beat faster to compensate.
- **Manage Workplace Stress:** High stress keeps your heart in overdrive. Take 2-minute micro-breaks during the workday for deep breathing, meditation, or light stretching away from your screens.
- **Eliminate Stimulants:** Cut back on afternoon caffeine and energy drinks. It is also wise to limit alcohol and tobacco, as both instantly constrict blood vessels and elevate your heart rate.





IT Corner

The IT Corner now features a rotating mix of practical content across five helpful categories:

- 💡 **Quick Tips & Best Practices** – Simple tricks to make your day smoother
- 🔒 **Cybersecurity Awareness** – Stay safe and secure online
- 🔧 **Tools & Tech Tips** – Get more out of the tools you already use
- 👥 **Working Smarter Together** – Collaborate more effectively
- 🧠 **Learning & Development** – Bite-sized skill builders for continuous learning

Each edition will spotlight a tip or two that you can put into action right away.

💡 **This Month's Quick Tips & Best Practices**

"Email Awareness"

Please take a moment to read emails in **FULL** before responding or taking any action. While some emails may follow a **familiar format**, important details, instructions, or exceptions are often included within the message body.

Taking a few extra seconds to review the complete message helps ensure information is clearly understood and reduces the chance of missing key details.

🧠 **This Month's Learning in Small Steps**

"Keyboard Shortcuts"

Using simple keyboard shortcuts can significantly improve daily productivity. For example, **Ctrl + C (copy)** , **Ctrl + V (paste)** , **Ctrl + A (select all)** and **Windows + L (lock screen)** are quick ways to perform common tasks more efficiently.

Small habits like these can save time throughout the workday.

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