

TIME



CRAZY TRAVEL.
CRAZY COSTS.
CRAZY STRESS.

HOW KID SPORTS TURNED PRO

BY SEAN
GREGORY

Melanie Barcenas, 9,
of San Diego spends
most weekends
competing for her
travel team



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▲ *King-Riley Owens, a top 9-year-old basketball player, at home in Los Angeles on Aug. 2*

ON THE COVER AND ABOVE: Photographs by Finlay MacKay for TIME

PROMISE AND LIMITS

RE "HOPE FROM A STRANGE Source" [Aug. 7]: Congratulations on a fascinating article acknowledging the usefulness of current treatments for depression, their limits and new possibilities. But you are a little harsh when you describe a 30% nonresponse rate to available treatments as a "dismal failure." A 70% response rate is much better than in many areas of medicine. New treatments offer real hope, however, as do the "drug-free treatments backed by science" that you wisely highlight.

Brendan Kelly, DUBLIN

WHENEVER A PERSON EXPERIENCES a major loss such as the death of a loved one or termination from a job, during that transition period, the primary characteristics of loss are feeling depressed, frustrated, angry and betrayed. During the transition period, experiencing repeated episodes of depression is normal. Awareness, patience, and a committed, long-term meditative practice result in a permanent transition not accessible through standalone antidepressants. I speak from experience.

Paul Sybor,
VANCOUVER, WASH.

LOCKED UP ABROAD

RE "THE ART OF THE HOS-tage Deal" [Aug. 7]: Your

article by Elizabeth Dias describes the inhuman treatment of U.S. nationals detained abroad. An obvious question arises: If the U.S., with its unmatched military and diplomatic power, is so helpless against these abductions and imprisonments, then who can provide succor to the people still held without trial in Guantánamo Bay, Cuba? If the U.S. started treating all humans equally and set high moral standards, perhaps it could start demanding from other states similar standards of conduct.

Agha A. Gul,
QUETTA, PAKISTAN

CANCER AND COURAGE

RE "IT'S O.K. TO BE A Coward About Cancer" [Aug. 7]: I am 73 years old and have been living with severe emphysema for 15 years. I do the very best I can, struggling with oxygen 24/7, while I carry on working. I think I've been pretty brave about it. But people need me to continue to "be strong," to "fight back." This is very difficult to deal with, and it's a very lonesome feeling. Josh Friedman speaks to the millions of people who are struggling with disease and trying to be "brave" and "strong," even though sometimes it kills us to have to put up this front. I've known far too many people who feel



judged by their loved ones as they begin to lose their battle. Thank you for this most wise article. I'm cutting it out and will read it over and over on those days when I need to be reassured that it's O.K. to be "weak."

Kathleen M. Gildea,
ATLANTA

IT IS ALL ABOUT COURAGE, Friedman. Especially if the "Terminator," as you call it, finds you. My friend, and so many others like her, has looked the Terminator in its face and said, "I will live my life to the fullest." And she does. With courage.

Neeraj Joshi,
SINGAPORE

READING TOO MUCH INTO IT

RE "THE HIDDEN (AND NOT-So-Hidden) Racism in Kids' Lit" [Aug. 7]: I take exception to the suggestion of racism in *The Cat in the Hat*.

How many children in at least the past 20 years have any knowledge of minstrelsy when reading this Dr. Seuss story? Philip Nel is clutching at straws to fill his book. Political correctness is a modern conception. In my grandmother's days, there were many words for describing ethnic people that were not considered offensive but were in the common vernacular. Nel should consider the age in which these so-called offensive books were written.

John Steers,
SHEFFIELD, ENGLAND

SETTING THE RECORD

STRAIGHT ▶ Because of an editing error in the Aug. 21 issue, "Birdbrain Is a Misnomer" misstated Alex the parrot's age when he died. He was 31. In the same issue, a timeline misstated the decade Elvis Presley began his movie career. It was the 1950s. Additionally, a caption for a photo of Presley on the Index page misstated the year it was taken. It was 1956.

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