1. Syrian Refugees
In this RAND Policy Circle briefing, experts address what countries are doing to help abate the humanitarian crisis and ongoing security efforts to counter the terrorist threat. MORE AT www.rand.org/a160225

2. The Pardee RAND Food-Energy-Water Index
This online tool, funded by philanthropy through the Pardee Initiative for Global Human Progress, allows users to compare countries around the world in terms of their level of and capacity for development. MORE AT www.prgs.edu/food-energy-water

3. Public Funding of Medical Research
A RAND Europe study offers evidence that public funding of medical research in the UK is money well spent: Each pound of public funding leads to an additional 99 pence investment in medical research from the private sector. MORE AT www.rand.org/b160427

4. Robust Decision Making
RDM can inform decisions under conditions of deep uncertainty, in areas such as energy and resources management, infrastructure investment, and policy planning for cases in which stakeholders do not know—or cannot agree upon—actions, consequences, and probabilities. MORE AT www.rand.org/v131105

5. Department of Defense and Security Cooperation
Earlier this year, Michael J. McNerney, associate director of the RAND International Security and Defense Policy Center, testified before the Senate Armed Services Subcommittee on Emerging Threats and Capabilities. MORE AT www.rand.org/t/CT454
The Resilience of Military Families

What it takes for families to survive the strain of a deployment—and bounce back after the homecoming

Army Capt. Bill Mendelsohn, left, walks with his daughter, Emelie, as he leaves for deployment to Iraq in this 2010 photo. A recent RAND study found that families experienced a wide range of stresses and strains during deployments, but most returned to their pre-deployment baselines in the months after the homecoming. “We’re not broken,” Mendelsohn’s wife, Debra, said.
Dog Owners, Parked

A trip to the dog park may turn your toy poodle into a wanna-be greyhound, but chances are it leaves you standing around like a lazy old watchdog.

A RAND research project funded by the National Institutes of Health studied dog parks to see whether they might improve the fitness of dog owners by getting them out and moving along with their four-legged friends. What they found instead: Nearly 80 percent of the owners stood around without moving or were otherwise sedentary at the park, and the rest did little more than walk.

Sit? Stay? That was the owners.

And that’s a missed opportunity, the researchers wrote in a recent journal article. With 70 percent of Americans overweight or obese, and fewer than half getting the recommended 30 minutes a day of physical activity, running around a dog park could be an easy way to get in a little workout.

The researchers suggested adding dog agility courses to more dog parks, which might encourage owners to walk and play with their dogs. They also found that around 70 percent of visitors drove to the dog park; improving foot or bike paths might get them to lace up instead.

After all, the researchers noted, something as simple as a daily walk has been shown to have important health benefits—whether it’s on two legs or four.

MORE AT www.rand.org/t/EP66378

The Cost of Corruption

Corruption costs the European Union as much as €990 billion—or more than $1.1 trillion—every year, researchers from RAND Europe concluded in the most complete accounting to date of the toll taken by dirty deals, secret kickbacks, and sticky fingers.

That estimate is more than eight times higher than found in previous attempts to price out the cost of European corruption. Even the most generous reading of the data in RAND’s analysis pegs corruption as a €179 billion-a-year industry in Europe, far bigger than previously thought.

RAND researchers built their estimate from government and academic statistics, economic indicators, and corruption indexes for each of the 28 member nations of the European Union. They described the best-performing countries as the Magnificent Seven: Finland, Denmark, Sweden, the Netherlands, Luxembourg, Germany, and Austria.

The worst performers? Lithuania, Poland, the Czech Republic, Italy, Slovakia, Greece, Latvia, Croatia, Bulgaria, and Romania.

To arrive at their €990 billion estimate, the researchers calculated how much each nation could save if it achieved the trust- (and credit-) worthiness of the Magnificent Seven. Added up, that produced what they described as one of the most current and realistic estimates available of corruption’s true cost to Europe as a whole.

They acknowledged, though, that corruption, by its very nature, is hard to measure—much less stop.

MORE AT www.rand.org/t/RR1483
A Long Road to Safety

Can test drives alone prove that autonomous vehicles are any safer than their human-operated counterparts? Sure—if they got started around the time of Shakespeare.

Technology heavyweights like Google are betting that driverless cars will become the safer and more efficient ride of the future. But a RAND analysis concluded it would take millions of miles of test drives—maybe even billions—to demonstrate their safety over human drivers with any real confidence.

Serious crashes are just not that common, even for we humans, given the sheer number of miles we put on the road. So showing that autonomous vehicles perform any better would require an excessive amount of road testing to cancel out the statistical noise, the RAND researchers wrote.

They calculated that it would take 51 million miles to show with some precision that driverless cars get into fewer crashes than human drivers. That’s somewhat reasonable: A fleet of 100 driverless cars running nonstop at a constant 25 mph clip could cover that in just under 2½ years.

But to show that they get into fewer serious crashes that cause injury? That would take 125 million miles, or nearly six years for that same never-resting fleet of cars. And when it comes to fatal crashes, it would take 8.8 billion miles, or around 400 years.

As Shakespeare himself said: “Tomorrow, and tomorrow, and tomorrow.”

That’s not to say that driverless cars will never be deemed safe enough for the open road, the researchers wrote, just that test drives alone won’t get us there. Regulators will have to consider other options to address and manage that uncertainty—such as simulations, mathematical modeling, or limited pilot studies—before we all share the road with robots.

MORE AT www.rand.org/t/RR1478

Funding for this study was provided by philanthropic contributions from RAND supporters and income from operations. We especially appreciate the support from the RAND Justice, Infrastructure, and Environment Advisory Board and the National Cooperative Highway Research Program.

Trading on Justice

When the giants of Wall Street go to court, the judges who hear their cases differ in fundamental ways from the rest of the federal bench, RAND researchers have found.

“This is troubling as a matter of basic fairness,” they wrote in a recent article published in The Georgetown Law Journal.

The researchers found that federal judicial rules meant to ensure that judges remain fair and impartial preclude many from hearing cases involving the likes of General Electric, IBM, and Exxon. The rules require judges and justices to recuse themselves from a case if they own any stock from one of the litigants.

Nearly two-thirds of federal appeals court judges held direct stock ownership that would disqualify them from some cases under those rules, the researchers found in a review of disclosure forms from 2003 to 2010. So did six of the nine Supreme Court justices. The judicial stock holdings were concentrated in some of the largest companies on Wall Street.

That leaves a shallower pool of judges who can hear cases involving those companies. RAND’s analysis found that they are more likely to be male, African-American, young, appointed by a Republican president, and with fewer personal assets.

It’s not clear whether that has affected the outcome of any actual cases. But it’s at least theoretically possible that plaintiffs or defendants could try to get unfavorable judges thrown off their cases by pulling in companies in which the judges own stock. Making it easier for judges to sell off their stock might remedy that, the researchers wrote; at the very least, courts should be more transparent whenever stock ownership forces a judge off a case.

MORE AT www.rand.org/t/EP50867
1,320
Annual number of fatalities that could be prevented if U.S. traffic-safety funding were increased by 10 percent and allocated to states that need it most. Such a national approach to traffic safety is more cost-effective than dividing funding equally among the states, which would save 660 lives, a RAND study concluded.

MORE AT
www.rand.org/t/RR1224

4 percent
Estimated percentage of neighborhood park visitors who are seniors. A recent RAND study, the first national examination of parks and park use, suggested adding walking loops and other enhancements to get more older users out and active.

MORE AT
www.rand.org/t/EP66402

3.1
Number of alcohol advertisements that adolescents in Southern California see every day. RAND researchers said their study, the first to measure exposure in real time, should prompt greater consideration of restrictions on alcohol advertising outdoors and on television.

MORE AT
www.rand.org/nr160517ads
Increase in assaults against police when officers use body cameras. Preliminary results from a RAND study of eight UK and U.S. police departments also found police use of force increased when officers turned cameras on and off during their shift.

MORE AT www.rand.org/nr160517cameras

Economic return for every $1 invested in full-scale, high-quality preschool programs. RAND’s analysis concluded that such programs produce meaningful gains in school readiness, as well as longer-term benefits such as higher high school graduation rates.

MORE AT www.rand.org/t/RR1461

Share of visits to retail health clinics that are for new use of medical services, which patients otherwise would not have sought. That suggests the clinics, often seen as a convenient and cost-saving alternative to physician offices or hospital emergency departments, might instead create new demand and spending, RAND found.

MORE AT www.rand.org/t/EP66379
The Resilience of Military Families

By Doug Irving, Staff Writer

A FOCUS ON THE RESEARCH OF
Sarah O. Meadows, Terri Tanielian, and Benjamin R. Karney

RAND.ORG | JULY-AUGUST 2016
Debra Mendelsohn knows the midnight fear of having a loved one in danger, the juggle of raising two kids alone, the heartbreaking frustration of a bad Skype connection.

Hers is a military family, one that has held together through three deployments that could have stretched it to breaking—but didn’t. She has come to trust what a pivotal RAND study recently found to be true: For the most part, military families get through it.

Above, the Mendelsohn family after Bill returned from a deployment in southern Iraq in 2010 and, at left, relaxing in front of their home in 2013.
The RAND study was unprecedented in scope, a three-year effort to answer a question made raw by years of combat in Iraq and Afghanistan.

The study confirmed what prior research has found, that the deployment of a spouse and parent can shake a family to its core—but then it went a step further and found something unexpected. By several measures of family health and function, most of the study participants eased back to something approaching their pre-deployment baselines in the months after the homecoming.

“The families serve, too, but that doesn’t mean we’re broken,” said Mendelsohn, a protective hug of a mother whose husband, Bill, most recently deployed in 2010 to southern Iraq in command of an Army logistics unit. “We’re just changed. It’s part of the fabric of our family.”

The RAND study was unprecedented in scope, a three-year effort to answer a question made raw by years of combat in Iraq and Afghanistan: How do families cope when a loved one is sent to war? It was given such high priority inside RAND that around 30 researchers contributed to it.

Service members and their families reliably name deployments as the most stressful experience the military throws at them. Studies have attributed higher suicide rates, divorce, and childhood behavioral problems to the strain of deployments. Yet no one had followed a large sample of military families before, during, and after a deployment to see what was happening.

RAND researchers tracked nearly 3,000 military families over three years, some of whom deployed and some of whom did not. That allowed the researchers to compare outcomes and see where deployments had an impact over and above the everyday strains of military life.

They found plenty of examples. Service members experienced more depression while they were away; their spouses experienced more anxiety and the stress of single parenting. Their children were more likely to exhibit emotional or behavioral problems that only got worse with longer deployments.

How they fare

But another pattern began to emerge as the researchers followed the families into the fragile months after the homecoming. Again and again, they saw dramatic changes in family function during the deployment itself, but then a slow but steady return to pre-deployment baselines. By the end of that reintegration period—around eight months, on average—family relationships and well-being had generally returned to pre-deployment levels.

There were exceptions. Teenagers reported a letdown in the relationship when a deployed parent came home. Parents reported greater concern for the emotional well-being of their children, even long after a deployment.

Husbands and wives reported a significant drop in marital satisfaction over the course of the deployment cycle—but so did couples that did not experience a deployment. That was somewhat to be expected, the researchers noted: Declining satisfaction is one of the most reliable findings in any study of married couples over time, deployed or not.

But on outcomes ranging from parenting stress to spousal depression to teenage anxiety, the study highlighted what the researchers called the remarkable resilience of military families.

“We thought, no, for sure these families have to be worse off. That’s what all the [research] literature says, that deployment is bad,” said Sarah O. Meadows, a senior sociologist at RAND who helped lead the study and recently briefed the White House on its findings. “But there is something about the families in our study that allows them to cope. At the end of the day, they seem to be alright.”
The weight of trauma

The researchers are quick to point out that the study was a product of its time. The families that participated were almost all veterans of at least one previous deployment. They were surveyed from 2012 until 2015, well past the bloodiest years of the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, and a time when the pace of deployments had slowed.

Nonetheless, some of the service members in the study did experience the trauma of combat, physical injuries, or psychological shocks during their deployments. Those different kinds of trauma, the study found, weighed on families in different ways. Psychological trauma, for example, was associated with higher rates of marital aggression, while combat seemed to strain relationships between parents and teens.

In fact, those traumatic experiences—rather than the separation itself—might better explain the negative family outcomes so long associated with deployments, the researchers wrote. Those findings could help the military better anticipate which families might need more support after a deployment, even in the absence of PTSD or other clinical warning signs.

“It’s the constant grind of the stress and the pressure that really adds up over time,” said Karen Ruedisueli, a deputy director of government relations at the National Military Family Association. Her husband is currently in Afghanistan with the Army, his fourth combat deployment. The last one, in 2010, was so dangerous that two officers from another unit were killed before their deployment had even officially started.

“I was sleeping with my fists clenched to the point that my arms were sore,” Ruedisueli said. “Has it brought us to our knees? No, but it most certainly has an effect.”

Coming home

Experiences like that underscore another central finding of the RAND study, the make-or-break importance of that period of family reintegration immediately following a deployment. The study highlighted a greater need for programs to ease families through that transition—to get more support to those leaving the military with mental-health issues, for example, and to shore up parent-teen relationships.

Erin Henderschedt has been through the deployment experience seven times. She documents the life of a Navy spouse and mother of four on her blog, The Deployment Diatribes. She compares family life during a deployment to riding a unicycle while juggling, and said it doesn’t get much easier when the deployment ends.

“You see the YouTube videos, the news clips, when service members come home,” she said from her home in East Asia, where her family is now stationed. “It’s great, it’s a fantastic moment. But then the cameras go away. And it can take months for everything to settle down.”

For Debra Mendelsohn, 18 months, to be exact, before her husband, Bill, turned to her on a coffee date and said, “You know, I finally feel like we’re back.” He had to get used to the constant hum of chatter in a house with two teenagers after his tour in southern Iraq; she had to remember to introduce them as “our children” again, not just “my children.”

She didn’t know that he had seen actual combat during his deployment until she picked him up at the airport and saw the combat badge under his jacket. She slugged him in the arm. But later, she realized it was an emblem not just of what he had survived, but of what they all had: “I felt,” she says now, “like we earned our own version of a combat badge, back home.”
Tens of millions of Americans will have their credit-card numbers, hospital records, or digital identities hacked or stolen this year, RAND research suggests—victims of a cybercrime industry that now rivals the illegal drug trade in reach and sophistication.

The numbers are more sobering than surprising. For years now, RAND researchers have documented the growing threat posed by a digital underworld where hackers sell their services like mercenaries and credit-card numbers can be had for pennies on the dollar.

Their research has helped define that threat from the perspective of attackers, defenders, and the everyday consumers caught in the middle. Taken together, it offers a rare glimpse inside the secret world of cyber hacks and counterattacks—and some hard lessons for anyone with a computer or a credit card.
The hackers are winning

The numbers alone are damning. A RAND report released earlier this year estimated that 64 million American adults had been notified in the previous year alone that their personal data had been breached—more than a quarter of the adult population.

The survey was the first of its kind to examine consumer attitudes and responses to the data breaches that have become a near-daily fixture in news headlines. Most of the cases it found involved stolen credit-card numbers or financial records, the staples of cybercrime.

But at least a fifth of the victims said they had lost health data or social security numbers. That’s a troubling statistic, the researchers warned, because those records are much harder to recover and repair—and that makes them valuable for identity theft, medical fraud, or blackmail.

The survey also revealed that consumers don’t always respond to breaches as expected—and often don’t even act in their own best interest. Around two-thirds of the respondents said they accepted free credit-monitoring services after a breach, much higher than previous estimates. But barely half bothered to change their account passwords, and nearly 90 percent said they continued to do business with the companies that lost their data.

“Consumers seem to be pretty forgiving,” said Lillian Ablon, a cybersecurity and emerging technologies researcher at RAND. “There doesn’t seem to be much incentive for companies to change.”

Costs are rising, but security isn’t keeping pace

The chief information security officers in charge of network defense face a costly catch-22: No matter how much they spend on cybersecurity, there’s no way to know when it’s enough—only, in the aftermath of a successful attack, when it wasn’t. RAND researchers call it the defender’s dilemma.

Worldwide spending on cybersecurity now totals around $80 billion a year. Yet in interviews with public and private cybersecurity executives, RAND researchers found little confidence that they will gain the upper hand anytime soon. They live by a grim maxim: People who run networks should always assume the hackers have already gotten in.

Those interviews also revealed that it’s not the loss of data that most concerns corporate and government security officers; it’s the loss of reputation and public trust. That raises the stakes exponentially, making even a harmless breach cause for alarm and driving up security costs, sometimes out of proportion to the actual threat.

What is needed, the researchers wrote, is a new way to think about cybersecurity. Organizations could more effectively defend themselves if they focused more of their security spending on the most pressing and likely threats, and less on the nightmare scenarios sold by software vendors.

“A lot of cybersecurity spending comes from the fear we have,” said Martin Libicki, a senior management scientist at RAND. “But in practice, very little happens. Yes, the bad guys can bring down a network, but very few want to.”
Cybercrime has become a multibillion-dollar industry.

RAND researchers call it the hackers’ bazaar: a teeming marketplace where hackers and other cybercriminals meet and deal in clandestine chat rooms or secret forums. They found that its inner workings can be as sophisticated and structured as any commodities trading floor. Some of its online storefronts are as bright and welcoming as Amazon or eBay.

Its underground markets often have their own rules and regulations, their own administrators to keep order, their own brokers, vendors, middlemen, and moneychangers. Consumers who know the way in can find anything from hospital records to hackers for hire to devastating exploit kits, botnets, and off-the-shelf ransomware programs. For the right price, they can even buy their way into private computers or public servers through secret pinprick vulnerabilities known as zero-days.

There’s even a kind of brand-name hierarchy, the researchers found. Russian hackers have a reputation for quality. Some Vietnamese groups focus on e-commerce. Chinese hackers are known for targeting intellectual property, and Americans tend to specialize in financial crime.

One expert estimated that the cybercrime market generates billions of dollars, at least. It can be more profitable than the illegal drug trade in some aspects, the researchers concluded—with lower costs to enter and much less risk to participate.

“It’s very easy to become a cybercriminal,” RAND’s Ablon said. “All you need is an internet connection.”

“It’s gone way beyond, I’m a sultan in Namibia and you’ve got $10 million USD coming your way.”

—RICK HOWARD, FORMER TOWN MANAGER OF DISCOVERY BAY, CALIF., WHICH WAS HIT WITH A RANSOMWARE ATTACK IN 2015. IT HAD TO PAY $700 TO GET BACK THOUSANDS OF LOCKED FILES.
“People don’t realize how badly this affects your life. I literally have been fighting to prove that I pay my bills. Here it is, three years later, and I’m still fighting. It tears you apart.”

—TINA MATHER, A SOUTH CAROLINA RESIDENT WHO LOST HER IDENTITY IN A DATA BREACH IN 2012

There are reasons for optimism—and for pessimism

The very pessimism that shrouds the cybersecurity industry might also be cause for some guarded optimism, the RAND researchers concluded. Companies are paying far more attention to network security than they did just five years ago—driving a market for security tools that will at least make it more difficult and expensive for hackers to break in. And Apple’s iPhone has shown that it’s possible to protect data so well that even the FBI has trouble getting to it.

At the same time, though, the sheer number of things connected to the internet surges by the day—not just phones and laptops, but medical devices, home thermostats, even kitchen appliances. By one widely quoted estimate, there could be six times as many devices online by 2020 as there are humans—every one a potential new vulnerability to be bought and sold in the hackers’ bazaar.

As the researchers wrote: “Will consumers understand that a refrigerator with a 20-year lifetime also needs 20 years’ worth of software [security] patches?”
Data theft cuts across all demographics—about 105 million Americans, or about 43% of all U.S. adults—have been affected. More than half (56%) didn’t know their data had been stolen before receiving a notification of the breach. Nearly two-thirds (62%) reported accepting an offer of free credit monitoring. While the median loss was around $500, an estimated 6 million adults reported perceived costs to them as $10,000 or more. Companies do a good job at responding, with more than three-quarters of adults reporting being very satisfied with post-breach responses. But 11%, or an estimated 11.5 million Americans, stopped dealing with the responsible company entirely as the result of a breach.

Victims suggest 3 ways companies can improve

1. Implement new procedures so that it doesn’t happen again.
2. Offer free credit monitoring following a data breach.
3. Notify the victim immediately.

Victims value these improvements more than monetary compensation.

This infographic summarizes the results of a nationally representative survey of 2,038 adults regarding the last breach notification they received. Dollar losses and population numbers are estimates extrapolated from those survey data.
At 40, a Pioneering Health Care Experiment Remains Relevant

Regardless of the outcome of this year’s presidential election, one result is fairly certain—a new administration will take a second look at the Affordable Care Act, the landmark health reform legislation President Obama signed into law in 2010 that led to a significant expansion of health insurance accessibility. It set off the most significant overhaul of the U.S. health care system since the advent of Medicare and Medicaid in 1965. But it’s a little known fact that these milestones of change to our health insurance system, enacted decades apart, share a link to one of the largest innovative social science experiments in U.S. history.

We need to turn the clock back to 1971 to tell this story. Called the Health Insurance Experiment, the study was launched that year by RAND Corporation researchers seeking to answer two key questions: How much more medical care would people use if it were free, and what would be the consequences for their health? At the time, the national debate centered on free, universal health care and whether Michael D. Rich is president and chief executive officer of the RAND Corporation.

A version of this commentary was published in April 2016 by Modern Healthcare.
Pictured left to right are Naihua Duan, Joe Newhouse, Bill Rogers, Carl Morris, and Will Manning, who were members of the team that conducted the RAND Health Insurance Experiment, initiated by Newhouse in 1971, and fully launched 40 years ago in 1976. Top photo: President Obama signs the Affordable Care Act into law in 2010.
the benefits would justify the costs. Health maintenance organizations were still a relatively novel concept in the United States. In addition, more than 20 million people had signed up for Medicare, and the federal government was looking for hard data on the effects of “cost sharing,” the out-of-pocket costs not covered by insurance.

Between 1974 and 1982, RAND conducted fieldwork for the study, funded by what is now the Department of Health and Human Services. More than 7,700 people from around the country were randomly assigned to one of several insurance plans designed to reflect an array of cost-sharing options. One of the study’s major findings had a counterintuitive twist: For the most part, those who had to pay for a share of their health care used fewer services than those who received free care, yet there was generally little or no difference in health outcomes between the groups. But there were exceptions: Free care led to health improvements among the poorest and the sickest patients, and the study suggested that cost sharing should be minimal or nonexistent for the poor, especially those with chronic disease.

The impact of the Health Insurance Experiment has been wide-reaching. The study’s conclusions encouraged the restructuring of private insurance and helped increase the stature of managed care in the United States. Its reach has extended as far as China, where RAND conducted a similar study in the early 1990s that led to a rural cooperative medical system affecting about 800 million people.

Within RAND, lessons learned from the Health Insurance Experiment continue to reverberate as we pause this year to mark the 40th anniversary of the study, which was fully launched as of 1976. It’s a reminder that innovative research and health care reform don’t happen overnight. Before research could even begin, we had the challenging task of coming up with objective ways to measure health status and quality of care—standards that are now used around the world.

Even now, a high-tech descendant of that research with roots in the 1970s is still helping to shape the current round of ongoing health care reform. Over the last decade, RAND has developed a complex computer-based simulation model called COMPARE that assesses the likely effects of different health coverage policy options on millions of individuals’ health care choices. Insights generated from the model’s results were shared widely with members of the Obama administration and Capitol Hill staffers during the debate over the Affordable Care Act. And since that act’s passage, COMPARE has helped state and federal policymakers understand the likely future implications
When the Supreme Court upheld a key part of the Affordable Care Act that provides health insurance subsidies to all qualifying Americans, the decision cited RAND research.

More recently, when the Supreme Court upheld a key part of the Affordable Care Act that provides health insurance subsidies to all qualifying Americans, the decision last June cited RAND research that was conducted using this model. Funding for the project’s new analytical tool came from private donors who had the foresight to recognize that over the long term, providing data to decisionmakers about the impact of different reform choices was going to be necessary if we wanted policy to continue to make steady health care policy improvements.

When the Health Insurance Experiment wrapped up in 1986—15 years after it began—an abundance of findings showed the relationship between costs of coverage, health care utilization, and outcomes. The DNA of that groundbreaking study continues to live on in our work—in the ability to measure quality of care objectively, in the development of quality-assurance tools, and especially in the willingness to take the long view.

Reforming the health care system in ways that help promote the efficient and effective use of resources, take into account patient preferences, and ensure the delivery of safe and high-quality care is a long-term proposition. And a tall order. So as longtime innovators in the field of health policy research, we have our work cut out for us. One lesson learned from the Health Insurance Experiment and our subsequent work in the area of health reform comes through loud and clear: When we invest in cutting-edge analysis to help policymakers look over the horizon, they are empowered to make better-informed decisions that can advance a healthier future for all of us.
Morgan Fairchild describes herself as a science nerd, a student of public policy whose interests range from terrorism to climate change to the economic rise of China. She follows the epidemiology of emerging disease as a hobby.

That’s not how most people know her, of course. She’s spent the better part of her life in Hollywood, bringing a touch of glamour to roles on stage and screen. But off-set, she’s been a RAND follower for decades, a regular consumer of research reports and a fixture at public-policy events.

“T
hat seemed like the next logical step for me to support the work, rather than just glean information from it.”

MORGAN FAIRCHILD

“T
hey never cast me that way,” she says with a laugh. “I wanted to be a doctor or a paleontologist when I was growing up. But all the things I’d actually be good at, they never cast me as.”

Fairchild was introduced to RAND in the 1970s, just as her career was taking off on daytime soap operas. She was interested in the growing phenomenon of international terrorism—“the psychology of it, what would make someone do that”—and began a lifelong conversation with RAND’s resident expert on the subject, Brian Michael Jenkins.

“I’m very interested in how the world functions,” she says, and that brings her to RAND: “It’s obviously a very complicated time, and I’m trying to stay on top of it. They’re always forward-thinking, and looking at how to improve things.”

That fits well with Fairchild’s lifetime role as an off-screen activist. She was an early advocate for people with AIDS, fighting for funding and greater recognition of the disease when it was still relegated to back-page news briefs. She helped sound the alarm about climate change, pressed Congress to better protect California’s deserts, and visited the front lines of the 1990s war in Bosnia.

Her reading list these days sounds like a library of RAND research reports: Presidential politics. The Iran nuclear deal. The Middle East, post–Arab Spring. How China is positioning itself in the world. A recent article in The Daily Beast declared Fairchild’s Twitter feed one of the “best sources for consistently reliable information and analysis” on subjects as varied as Syria, Ferguson, and the Ebola outbreak.

Fairchild is a member of RAND’s Policy Circle, a community of donors whose support allows RAND to pursue research free of partisan or ideological constraints, and to ensure that research makes an impact. “It seemed like the next logical step for me to support the work, rather than just glean information from it,” she said. “It’s very important for an institution like RAND to exist. It covers so much, in so many different areas.”

To learn more about giving, visit www.rand.org/giving

(Left to right) Valerie Plame, Morgan Fairchild, and Naveena Ponnusamy at a Policy Circle event at RAND in 2015. Plame formerly worked at the U.S. Central Intelligence Agency; Ponnusamy is the executive director of Development at RAND.
“Who invented this nutty sport?!" you might ask yourself while washing up on the beach with your board and sail all tangled after a nasty run-in with some awesome wave. Though the RAND Corporation won’t likely come to mind, it’s a fact. A now hugely popular summer pastime, windsurfing was invented in 1969 by aeronautical engineer James Drake. While taking a break from his defense systems work at RAND’s headquarters campus in downtown Santa Monica, California, he’d walk across the street to the beach, which provided both a perfect distraction and an opportunity for this kind of extracurricular thinking.

He described a new water-sport vehicle in which “a different sailing skill is required, more akin to surfing and skiing—boredom is completely eliminated—and once windsurfing is mastered, it gives a unique and heady blend of sporting thrills.” Drake envisioned a craft that one rode in a standing position and was steered by a handheld sail assembly. The sail was designed so that the driving and turning forces were sensed and controlled directly by the rider, with no rudder necessary, and the board “surfed” on the swells even in the open ocean. He called it the “Baja Board,” a 15-foot-long, 2.5-foot-wide board with a 14-foot mast carrying a 56-square-foot sail. RAND officially published his paper, Wind Surfing—A New Concept in Sailing, in which he illustrated the design of the board.

Read the paper online at www.rand.org/t/P4076 … or just get back in the water and get stoked by an epic frontside!

LITTLE HAS CHANGED FROM DRAKE’S ORIGINAL DESIGN TO MODERN-DAY WINDSURFING.
The RAND Corporation is a research organization that develops solutions to public policy challenges to help make communities throughout the world safer and more secure, healthier and more prosperous. RAND is nonprofit, nonpartisan, and committed to the public interest.