

pleasant than ones that begin on a low note, then recover.

Subjects imagined a vacation that went from bad (hurricane) to good (festival) or vice versa. A week later, people said they'd pay more than twice as much for the deteriorating vacation than for the improving one. Why? Given a list of things to remember, items at the beginning and end stick in your head the best, but over time the late material fades faster than the early stuff.

Don't immediately curse a trip that ends badly, insists study co-author Nicole Montgomery of the College of William and Mary, or later you'll recall that judgment instead of your actual experience. —Matthew Hutson

HEART AND SOIL

Magical Thinking Makes Israel Sacred Ground

BROKERING AN AGREEMENT between Jews and Arabs over the land Israel sits on may require sensitivity to people's superstitions. Recent research suggests that many consider the soil to be liter-

A quarter of Israelis wouldn't trade Mount Herzl even with the graves removed.

ally steeped in history. Paul Rozin and Sharon Wolf of the University of Pennsylvania asked Israelis



and Jewish Americans how attached they were to the land in Israel. They also asked them whether spiritual essences could pass into inanimate objects, such as a great-grandmother's ring. Those who believed most strongly in the contagion of essences also believed most

firmly that Israeli land must never be traded.

Rozin notes similar land disputes in Iraq, Northern Ireland, Sri Lanka, and Taiwan. While some people will trade land for peace, he says, "it's going to be hard to convince everybody." A quarter of Israelis said they would never give up the Mount Herzl cemetery even if all the graves were dug up and a Palestinian prison sat on it for 10 years.

OWN A PIECE OF HOME

You can take soil from the land but you can't take the land out of the soil.

■ **HOLYLANDEARTH.COM:** 16 OUNCES ISRAELI DIRT, \$40 "Holy Land Earth brings the essence of the Holy Land to all living things." Suggested uses: burials, ground-breaking, plantings.

■ **OFFICIALIRISHDIRT.COM:** 16 OUNCES IRISH DIRT, \$10 The Auld Sod Export Company lets you "own a little piece of Ireland no matter how far from the Emerald Isle you are."

■ **LITTLEAFRICA.COM:** SANKOFA SAND, \$30 A decorative container holds sand from a beach in West Africa, "where over 10 million of our ancestors last set foot on the African continent before boarding ships to the Americas as slaves."

—Matthew Hutson

The Pedestal Awaits

A national need for heroism

WHEN TAKEN HOSTAGE by pirates, Captain Richard Phillips became an overnight hero. U.S. Airways pilot Chesley Sullenberger reached icon status the moment he landed

a plane safely in the Hudson. Where does our fascination with heroism come from?

Part of the allure resides in the tension between the cynical feeling that one person cannot make a difference and the optimistic wish that one could, says Robin Rosenberg, a clinical psychologist and author of *The Psychology of Superheroes*. We want to believe in heroes, especially when the world feels unsafe. Rosenberg notes that *Spiderman*, *Smallville*, and *24* all came out soon after 9/11. "As a country, we were just sucking up the concept of someone coming in and rescuing us."

Heroes also serve as role models. "There's the hope that we can extract general principles from their lives," Rosenberg says.

If Sully can splash land without losing a single life, maybe I can give up my seat for a pregnant woman. —Joshua Gowin

