Sunlight & Health in Abnormal Times

Few of us need to be convinced to perk up when the sun comes out—we perk up automatically. In normal times, we set off on vacations, enjoy cookouts and flock to public outdoor spaces. While this type of behavior is extremely inadvisable due to our ongoing battle against the coronavirus, the sun’s advent is still a welcome invitation to safely enjoy the outdoors after weeks cooped up indoors. Even in the era of the pandemic, time spent in the sun is time well spent, and research confirms that sunlight makes us happy and can keep us healthy.

Sunlight and Vitamin D
When sunlight hits our skin, our bodies use that light to make vitamin D. Vitamin D helps us absorb calcium and other minerals that keep our bones, muscles and joints strong.

We find it naturally in eggs, and in fatty fish like salmon, tuna and sardines. Some foods, like milk or yogurt, are fortified with vitamin D. But the easiest way to get it is through direct exposure to sunlight. In just 10-15 minutes a day, our skin absorbs enough sunlight to provide our daily requirement of vitamin D.

We need vitamin D to absorb calcium and minerals to keep our bones strong.

The Mayo Clinic lists vitamin D as one of three preventative measures against osteoporosis (the other two being adequate calcium intake and exercise). Osteoporosis is age-related and is characterized by the loss of bone tissue. As bones age, they shed cells more quickly than they add new cells, making them brittle and more fragile. A lack of vitamin D prevents us from absorbing calcium and regenerating bone tissue.

Want to have healthy bones? Combine a weight-bearing exercise with sunlight. Even a brief walk in the sun will keep your bones strong, while ensuring that you get your daily dose of vitamin D.

Vitamin D and Alzheimer’s Disease
Alzheimer’s disease is characterized by a buildup of harmful proteins, called beta-amyloid plaques, in the brain. The plaques build up over time, blocking cell-to-cell communication. This reduced communication is thought to play a role in the cognitive decline associated with Alzheimer’s disease, including memory loss and difficulty with language.

Scientists recently discovered that vitamin D3—a type of vitamin D we get from sunlight—sends signals to cells in the immune system to break up beta-amyloid plaques. Exposure to the sun...
The Cherry: A Sweet, Summer Superfood

People have been enjoying cherries since antiquity. The first cherries were brought to America in the 1600s by settlers from Europe. In the 1800s, Michigan emerged as the ideal location for cherry farming. Due to the proximity of Lake Michigan, the orchards were protected from northern arctic winds in the winter time and cooled by breezes from the lake in the summer, providing the perfect climate for tart cherries to thrive. Today, Michigan is the largest producer of tart cherries in the country, providing 75% of the tart cherry crop. Every year in July, a National Cherry Festival is held in Traverse City, Michigan, known as the “cherry capital of the world.” The festival includes a ceremonial blessing of the cherry blossoms and many, many opportunities to consume cherries!

While Michigan is America’s indisputable tart cherry leader, the Pacific Northwest is the center of sweet cherry production. Together, the states of Washington and Oregon are responsible for 60% of the domestic sweet cherry crop.

Health Benefits
- Just one cup of cherries contains 15% of your daily Vitamin C needs.
- Cherries have a lower glycemic index than most other fruits. Because of this, they don’t cause dramatic spikes in blood sugar and are good for protecting against and managing diabetes.
- Cherries are a natural source of melatonin, the hormone that regulates sleep cycles. Research has shown that consuming cherries in the morning and at night can result in increased duration of sleep.
- Drinking tart cherry juice can help lower LDL cholesterol and protect against cardiovascular disease.
- If you experience soreness or pain after exercising, you might consider drinking cherry juice. Cherries help protect against cellular wear and tear and are a popular choice for athletes in reducing soreness and reducing the risk of workout-related injury.

National Parks Trivia Challenge

In normal times, summer is the season for vacations and outdoor exploration. National parks across the country are swarmed with sightseers and nature lovers. How much do you know about our country’s treas of national parks? Take the quiz and check your answers on the back cover of the newsletter.

1. Signed into law by President Ulysses S. Grant in 1872, what national park located in Idaho, Montana and Wyoming became the first national park in the United States?

2. Measuring in at 275 feet tall and 25 feet in diameter, the General Sherman Tree is the largest tree in the world. It is estimated to be 2,300 - 2,700 years old! To what national park does this tree belong?

3. With a 400-mile long cave system, which national park is home to the largest known cave system in the world?

4. Name the National Scenic Trail that passes through 14 states, including Massachusetts.

5. Name the famous naturalist who is known today as “The Father of Our National Parks System.”

6. What national park located in southern Oregon is home to the deepest lake in the United States?

7. What national park contains the highest peak in North America?

8. Which of these four landmarks is NOT administered by the National Park Service: a) Plymouth Rock b) The White House c) Mount Rushmore d) The Tomb of Ulysses S. Grant

9. Which national park bordering California and Nevada harbors the Badwater Basin, a salt flat that is 280 feet below sea level?

Movie Review: 45 Years

Written and directed by Andrew Haigh, 45 Years (2015) features stellar lead performances from Charlotte Rampling and Tom Courtenay, who play Kate and Geoff Mercer. The entire film takes place over the course of the week leading up to the Mercers’ 45th anniversary party. This compression of cinematic action provides elements of tension and foreboding as the couple grapples with unexpected secrets that emerge during this week.

In the opening scene, Geoff puzzles over a note he has received in German. “I’m not so good with the verbs anymore” he says to Kate, though he is able to make out the core of the matter: the body of his former girlfriend has been recovered in a glacier in the Swiss Alps, where she met her death 50 years ago. “She’s been preserved,” he realizes out loud, “in the ice, just as she was back then. And here I am, 50 years older . . .” Geoff mulls over whether to make the trip out to the Swiss Alps to see the remains – the authorities, back then, thought we were married,” he tells Kate. “So as far as they are concerned, I’m her next of kin. That’s why I’m being notified.”

Kate expresses her surprise and dismay at the revelation that her husband never told her about the pretend marriage, though Tom swears he did tell her, when they first began dating. As the film draws closer to the date of the big 45th anniversary party, their discussions about Katye (the name of the former girlfriend) become increasingly contentious. It is difficult to decide who is more “justified” in the rift that ensues: on the one hand, Geoff seems to be deliberately misleading his wife about the scale of his emotional ties to Katye; on the other hand, Kate comes off as unreasonably critical of Tom for having had a life of his own before meeting her. The themes of marital responsibility and betrayal are deftly explored as Kate stumbles into a final, shocking revelation the evening before their big event.

45 Years can be rented online via Youtube or Amazon Prime. If you are in the mood for a soul-searching and suspenseful drama about the compromises we make in marriage, this film is a must-watch.
Stay Hydrated
In the summer, staying hydrated can be a challenge, as warm weather causes us to lose fluids more rapidly through perspiration. The single best way to stay hydrated is to drink water! On average, men need six to eight 8-ounce glasses of water a day, and women tend to need around five 8-ounce glasses a day.

Trivia Answers
1. Yellowstone National Park
2. Sequoia National Park
3. Mammoth Cave National Park
4. Appalachian Trail
5. John Muir
6. Crater Lake National Park
7. Denali National Park
8. Plymouth Rock
9. Death Valley National Park

Happy Birthday!
Gloria F.       June 5
June K.         June 7
Joan-Marie S.   June 25
Sheila C.       June 29

Mission
We are a Catholic health ministry, providing healing and care for the whole person, in service to all in our communities.

Our Heritage
Youville Assisted Living Residences are communities grounded in the spirit of St. Marguerite d’Youville, foundress of the Sisters of Charity of Montreal, “Grey Nuns.” Trusting in God’s love, each community serves all those in need with compassion and respect.

Transportation Services
Transportation Hours
Monday through Friday
8:00 AM - 2:00 PM
The fee for transportation is $10.00 for Lexington and $20.00 for surrounding communities. Please see the Programs Department with any questions. We will make every effort to accommodate your wishes, but please understand that no transportation can be guaranteed with less than 48 hours notice.

Shopping Requests
Youville offers concierge service for your shopping needs every Tuesday. Shopping forms are available at the Reception desk. A surcharge of $5.00 will be charged for requests exceeding five items.

Youville Place Management Team
Nicole Breslin    CEO & President
Joanne Scianna   COO
Tom Landry       Director of Human Resources
Kathleen Kelleher Director of Mission & Spiritual Care
Paula Desmond-Wallace Regional Controller
Katie Blanchard  Director of Programs
Susan Snow       Director of Marketing
Kathryn Carlino, RN Director of Wellness
Dan MacRae       Director of Dining Services
Bob Salamanca    Director of Environmental Services
Virginia Ellis   Director of Community Life
Yanira Burgos    Director of Community Relations
Melissa McGee    Director of the Courtyard
Summer Days Remembered: A Case for Nostalgia

Five years have past; five summers, with the length of five long winters! and again I hear These waters, rolling from their mountain springs With a soft inland murmur. – William Wordsworth

Most summers, Katie Blanchard, Director of Programs at Youville, likes to return as often as she can to an old camp on Little Sebago Lake in Gray, Maine. The area is full of childhood memories and formative moments, summers spent learning how to swim, fish, skip rocks, waterski and appreciate the lake’s natural beauty. Entire afternoons were spent roaming along wooded paths with cousins, grandmother at the helm, learning the names of different trees and plants along the paths, hunting for the smoothest rocks they could find to paint faces on back at the camp.

This property, formerly owned by her grandparents, has remained an enduring place of solace and a conduit to the past. “I associate the camp with my grandparents and the role they played throughout my childhood,” says Katie. “Now I see my daughter having the same experiences with her cousins and the cycle continuing. It is a very special way to relive those old times through a fresh pair of eyes.”

The return of summer tends to elicit nostalgia for summers past. The first summer you ever spent away from home was likely a milestone in your life. It was then that you probably became acquainted with nostalgia itself – nostalgia for the home you’d temporarily left behind. Months later, back at home, you experienced the same nostalgic longing for the far off place where you spent your summer vacation.

Is nostalgia just a perverse inability to enjoy the present? Or is there inherent value in reminiscing? When Joannes Hoffer, a 17th century Swiss doctor, first invented the term, he described nostalgia as a “neurological disease of demonic cause.” In later centuries, physicians and researchers associated nostalgia with depression, “immigrant psychosis,” and other psychological maladies. In general, it was thought that people who longed for the past must be unhappy in the present.

Attitudes have certainly changed since then. A series of nostalgia studies was conducted by Dr. Constantine Sedikides, a social psychologist living in Southampton who had been experiencing feelings of longing for Chapel Hill, the college town where he had received his education. Dr. Sedikides told a colleague that “Nostalgia made me feel that my life had roots

continued
and continuity. It made me feel good about myself and my relationships. It provided a texture to my life and gave me strength to move forward.”

Sedikides devoted much of his professional research to studying the link between nostalgia and well being, and came to some uplifting conclusions. According to John Tierney, who wrote about Sedikides in a 2008 article for The New York Times, “Nostalgia does have its painful side – it’s a bittersweet emotion – but the net effect is to make life seem more meaningful and death less frightening. When people speak wistfully of the past, they typically become more optimistic and inspired about the future.”

While nostalgia may lead to feelings of sadness, it just as often enriches our experience of the present. Poets in the throes of nostalgia have used it to their advantage. In his “Lines Composed a Few Miles Above Tintern Abbey,” William Wordsworth describes a nostalgic summer experience that reaches sublime heights. In the middle of July, the poet has returned to a spot in nature where he used to gallivant as a younger man. The place is fondly remembered for many reasons, but most of all because of its strong associations with his sister. In spite of a five year absence from the area, he has continued to think of those sacred acres a few miles below Tintern Abbey—

in hours of weariness, sensations sweet,
Felt in the blood, and felt along the heart;
And passing even into my purer mind
With tranquil restoration: - feelings too
Of unremembered pleasure

The poet’s reminiscences have provided him with an enduring sense of connection to his own past. Like Wordsworth, we can learn and benefit from our own reminiscences. The ability to wax nostalgic is the privilege of a well-lived life, an enjoyable practice that never stops yielding emotional dividends. So by all means, indulge! 🎭

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**Get fit. Stay sharp. Age well. ©**

- **Dance** is one of the few cardiovascular workouts that enables you to connect physically with music in a structured setting. Regular dancing strengthens bones and tones muscles throughout the body.

- **Dark leafy greens** are a rich source of vitamins C, K, E and B, as well as iron, calcium and fiber, which are essential for good health.

- **Meditation and prayer** are arguably the two most common spiritual practices in the world. These practices not only connect us with faith traditions, but engage the spark of life at the center of our being.

- **Even with a lifetime of facts and impressions crammed into our brains, we always have the ability to learn new things. The brain retains what is called “neuroplasticity” in later life, the ability to make new neural pathways.**

- **Crafts such as knitting, crocheting, painting, cooking, woodworking or gardening** offer a unique mix of experiences that promote mental and emotional wellness, and may even protect against age-related cognitive decline.