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STATEMENTS

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FROM THE DESK OF JOHN RAZUMICH

Interesting January Holidays

1. New Year's Day
2. Run Up the Flagpole and See if Anyone Salutes Day
3. Fruitcake Toss Day
4. National Spaghetti Day
5. National Bird Day
6. Cuddle Up Day
7. Old Rock Day
8. Bubble Bath Day
9. Play God Day
10. Houseplant Appreciation Day
11. Learn Your Name in Morse Code Day
12. National Hot Tea Day
13. Make Your Dream Come True Day
14. Dress Up Your Pet Day
15. National Hat Day
16. National Nothing Day
17. Ditch New Year's Resolutions Day
18. Martin Luther King Jr. Day (celebrated on the third Monday)
19. National Popcorn Day
20. National Cheese Lover Day
21. National Hugging Day
22. National Blonde Brownie Day
23. National Pie Day
24. Compliment Day
25. Opposite Day
26. Spouse's Day
27. Chocolate Cake Day
28. Fun at Work Day
29. National Puzzle Day
30. National Inane Answering Message Day
31. Inspire Your Heart with Art Day



BEATING THE WINTER BLUES HOW TO HAVE A HAPPIER SEASON

I love the holidays, but now that they're over, a long winter lies ahead. With the hustle and bustle of last year behind us, I think it's easy to feel like there's not much of anything to look forward to until spring. Between the short days, frigid temperatures, and additional time spent cooped up inside, a lot of people — including kids — become lethargic, irritable, or even depressed.

Yes, the winter blues are real. Sometimes, they rise to the level of a diagnosable condition called seasonal affective disorder (SAD), aka seasonal depression. Other times, they just result in feelings of boredom or listlessness. Either way, feeling down during the winter can have a big impact on you and your children.

If you or other members of your family experience the winter blues, rest assured that not all is lost. With some dedication, and by following these steps, you can have a happier winter!

Get Some Sun

During the winter, the days are short and the nights are long. The extra darkness is generally considered to be a major cause of seasonal depression because the sun helps balance serotonin and melatonin levels and replenishes our vitamin D. So, it's important for adults and children alike to get as much sunlight as possible, even when it's cold outside.

When the only daylight hours are spent at work or school, this can be tricky. You can compensate by opening the curtains to let in as much sunlight as possible and spending all the time you can in sunny areas. The weekends are also a great time to make up for the sunlight lost

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during the week. Make sure everyone in your family has a warm coat and boots before venturing outside for a walk or snowball fight.

Exercise Regularly

Since most people spend more time indoors during the winter, they also tend to get less exercise. However, exercise can reduce symptoms of depression and anxiety, which is even more valuable when you're feeling down. You can encourage your kids to get in some activity and also use their need for exercise as motivation to get your own.

Because of the sunlight exposure, engaging in activities outdoors is best. You could try ice skating, hockey, or hiking. (Shoveling snow is also great exercise, if you're looking for an excuse to enlist your kids.) But plenty of indoor options exist too! Take your kids to a trampoline park or indoor basketball court or pool. Dance and martial arts are great activities to keep kids moving, and video games that require movement can trick them (and you) into getting a workout without even realizing it.



Set a Sleep Schedule

A lot of people tend to sleep more during the winter, but more sleep doesn't necessarily equal better sleep. In fact, sleeping too much can be a sign of poor sleep quality, and it has its own effects on mood. Meanwhile, the consequences of not getting enough sleep include irritability, reduced hormone production, and a likelihood of increased stress.

Your kids probably have a set bedtime, but you should, too. For the best sleep possible, everyone should follow a simple but regular bedtime routine that includes winding down and dimming the lights. Consistently going to bed and waking up at the same time every day (yes, even on weekends!) will create better sleep, and morning exposure to light is critical to training your circadian rhythm.

If these tips don't work, it's time to visit a doctor. If symptoms last for longer than two weeks, the "winter blues" can really be SAD. Treatments, including light therapy and medication, are available for all ages, and should be discussed with a professional.

Whether you and your kids need professional care or just a little pick-me-up, winter is much too long to spend feeling sad. Despite the cold and the darkness, everyone can have an enjoyable season with a little help.

SKILLS THAT ENRICH US

THE IMPORTANCE OF HAVING A HOBBY

January is National Hobby Month, and since it falls at the beginning of the year, it's the perfect time to try something new! Hobbies add variety to your life and ensure you aren't just living to work, so to speak. The best way to find a hobby you enjoy is to be open to new things. Whether it's gardening, reading, drawing, running, fishing, crafting, or even beekeeping, finding an activity you enjoy is important. Here's why!

Hobbies are stress relievers.

Hobbies offer a healthy escape from your busy lifestyle by keeping you engaged in something you find pleasure in. Instead of just relaxing on the couch and turning off your mind for a bit (which is totally acceptable sometimes), hobbies allow you to remain mentally productive while winding down at the same time.

Hobbies also provide eustress.

Believe it or not, one type of stress is deemed beneficial: eustress. If you aren't overly stressed and are feeling a little under-stimulated, a hobby can provide activity for both your mind and body to keep you feeling excited about life and ready to take on new challenges and adventures.

Hobbies offer a social outlet.

Some hobbies involve group activities, such as bowling, sports teams, book clubs, and even wine tasting. Connecting with others offers the social support humans depend on to lead a healthy and fruitful life. Who knows? Maybe you'll find some great friends who share the same passions as you!

Hobbies develop patience.

When you take on a new hobby, you are tasked with learning something new. Whether you're practicing a new instrument, learning a different language, or figuring out how to make jewelry, a learning curve is involved. Building new skills takes patience, a very important attribute for success.

Finding a hobby that suits you may take some exploration and trial and error, but it is all in good fun! Make it your goal to try something new or learn a new skill each month until you find something that sticks. Once you do, you're sure to find that hobbies are both enjoyable and enriching!



AIRPLANE EARS

THE SCIENCE BEHIND YOUR EARS POPPING ON FLIGHTS



When it comes to flying on an airplane, you can avoid cramped legs by upgrading to first class or catch a view by picking the window seat. However, there's no getting around your ears popping during takeoff and landing. Believe it or not, there is a scientific explanation behind this common annoyance.

As you read this, you're likely not on an airplane, and the air pressure on either side of your eardrums is equal. Air is currently passing right on through your eustachian tube, a narrow passage that leads from your middle ear cavity to your pharynx and allows for pressure to be equalized on each side of your eardrums. When you're in flight on

an airplane, air pressure is not equal. During both ascent and descent, your eardrums stretch to try to adapt to the changes. In order to equalize the pressure, your eustachian tube needs to open and close. When it does, your ears pop!

Usually, the ear popping is irritating but nothing more. However, in rare cases, the pressure can lead to ear pain and even loss in hearing, especially if your ears don't pop.

In this case, you may need to make an effort to get your eustachian tube to open by yawning, talking, or swallowing. Sucking on a piece of candy, swallowing some water, or chewing gum may also help! One of the best things you can do is make sure you are not sleeping as the airplane takes off or lands because your eustachian tube isn't able to open and close normally. If you commonly struggle with congestion or sore ears on flights, taking a nasal decongestant before you board may ensure that your eustachian tube is not blocked.

If your hearing and ears do not return to normal shortly after the flight, be sure to schedule an appointment to see your health care professional as soon as possible.



Chicken With Lemon Herb Sauce

Inspired by FoodNetwork.com

Ingredients

- 1/3 cup and 2 tbsp olive oil, divided
- 4 boneless chicken breasts
- 1 clove of garlic, minced
- 1/4 tsp salt
- 1/2 cup parsley, chopped
- 1/3 cup mint, chopped
- 1 1/2 tsp pepper
- 1 lemon, for juice and zest

Directions

1. Preheat oven to 450 F.
2. In a large ovenproof skillet, heat 2 tbsp olive oil.
3. Season chicken with salt and pepper if desired and sear it in the skillet for 3 minutes on each side. Bake chicken until its internal temperature is 165 F.
4. In a blender, add 1/3 cup olive oil, garlic, salt, parsley, mint, pepper, and lemon zest and juice and blend ingredients until coarsely mixed.
5. Top chicken with sauce and serve!

TAKE A BREAK!





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How Much Are Your Favorite Pants Worth?

ONE MAN ESTIMATED HIS AT \$54 MILLION



Everyone knows that the perfect pair of pants can be hard to come by, but are they worth \$54 million? Administrative Judge Roy L. Pearson had a favorite pair of pants, but in 2007, he claimed that Custom Cleaners lost them and returned a completely different pair instead.

It all began when Pearson took his pants to the Washington, D.C., dry cleaners for alterations worth \$10.50. The pants were sent in error to the incorrect dry cleaner, so Pearson's pickup was delayed by several days. Once the pants were returned, despite bearing all the correct tags and matching his receipt, Pearson declared that the pants were not his. When the dry cleaner refused his demand for \$1,000 compensation, he decided it was time for legal action.

Pearson originally sued the cleaner's owners, Soo Chung, Jin Nam Chung, and Ki Y. Chung, for a whopping \$67 million in damages but later reduced the claim to a far more reasonable \$54 million. In his suit, Pearson requested \$3 million for mental distress, \$90,000 for a rental car to visit another dry cleaner, and \$500,000 in attorney's fees (Pearson represented himself). At the heart of his claim, though, was

the company's failure to live up to their "Satisfaction Guaranteed" and "Same Day Service" signs in the window.

The media had a field day, joking about the case as a "pantsuit" and inspiring a "Law & Order" episode called "Bottomless." Pearson seemed to relish the spectacle, calling his lawsuit "an awesome responsibility" in court and breaking down into tears on the stand. He also called a witness who compared the Chungs to Nazis. Even though the Chungs offered him a \$12,000 settlement to make the case go away, Pearson persevered.

He ultimately lost his case. At the end of the trial, the judge declared that no reasonable person would consider the signs at Custom Cleaners to be an unconditional promise — and also that Pearson had failed to prove the returned pants weren't his.

The Chungs ultimately recovered their court costs via a fundraiser, and Pearson lost his judicial appointment. Unsurprisingly, this prompted another lawsuit, which he also lost. In 2020, Pearson was suspended from practicing law for 90 days as a result of his actions in *Pearson v. Chung*. But for bringing new meaning to the phrase "I'll sue the pants off of you," his place in legal history is secure.