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Midsummer Musings

Dear Friend,

I hope you're having a delightful summer! Here's the July newsletter, packed with captivating stories and helpful tips to enhance your summer experience.

This edition features "The Flight Of Icarus," an engaging retelling of the classic Greek myth that explores themes of ambition and heeding wise counsel. We also delve into "July's Historical Moments," which highlight significant events from this month that have influenced our world.

If you're thinking about buying or selling, then let me know and we can talk about what you have in mind. Believe it or not, we're past the mid-mark of this year and if there is anything I can do to help you host the holidays in a different space, then now is the time to start the process and make it happen.

In the meantime, I wish you a joyful and carefree month!
Jim Urban

The Flight Of Icarus

Daedalus, a master craftsman and ingenious inventor from the ancient Greek era, was famed for engineering the intricate labyrinth on the island of Crete, a maze constructed to confine the fearsome Minotaur. However, when Daedalus aided the hero Theseus in navigating the snaking paths of the maze to escape its clutches, he invoked the wrath of King Minos, the sovereign of Crete. Enraged, King Minos condemned Daedalus and his son Icarus to a desolate tower.

Daedalus, undeterred by his and Icarus's grim circumstances, hatched a daring plan for freedom. He meticulously fashioned wings from a mosaic of feathers bound together with wax. As they prepared to take their perilous flight from captivity

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Daedalus imparted a solemn warning to his son: "Fly not too high, lest the sun's blaze melt the wax. Nor too low, for the sea's mist will weigh down your wings."

Icarus, overwhelmed by the exhilaration of flight and the allure of liberty, carelessly soared too high, captivated by the boundless skies.

Tragically, as they glided over the azure expanses of the Aegean Sea, the scorching sun melted the wax of Icarus's wings. His desperate fall ended his life in the sea's cold embrace and left Daedalus to mourn his loss in solitude.

*The tale serves as a poignant reminder:
Ambition fuels the spirit, yet wisdom must guide it.*

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July Roundup

Canada Day, July 1: This marks the unification of the country's provinces. Activities throughout Canada include fireworks, concerts and other festive events.

Independence Day, July 4: This day marks the adoption of the Declaration of Independence in 1776, typically observed with fireworks, parades and family gatherings.

International Ice Cream Day, July 21: An international celebration of one of the world's most popular desserts. What's your favorite flavor?

2024 Summer Olympics, July 26: Let the games begin in Paris!



Dessert Pizza... yes, please!

Grilled dessert pizza is a fun and creative way to enjoy a sweet treat at your next barbecue or outdoor gathering.

Ingredients:

1 package of pre-made pizza dough (or homemade, if you prefer)
1/2 cup of Nutella or other hazelnut spread
1/2 cup of mini marshmallows
1/2 cup of fresh berries (such as strawberries, blueberries or raspberries)
1/4 cup of white chocolate chips
1 tablespoon of powdered sugar (optional)

Preheat the grill

Preheat your grill to medium-high heat (400-450°F). If using charcoal, ensure the coals are evenly distributed for even cooking.

Preparation: Alternate slices of tomato and mozzarella on a plate. Tuck basil leaves between them. Drizzle with olive oil and balsamic glaze. Season with salt and pepper.

Grill To Perfection

Close the grill lid and cook for an additional 3-5 minutes, or until the marshmallows are golden brown and the pizza dough is fully cooked. Keep a close eye on the pizza to prevent burning.

Serve And Enjoy

Once the pizza is done, remove it from the grill and let it cool for a minute or two. Sprinkle with powdered sugar if desired, then cut into slices and serve.

Dessert Pizza Tips

Add Variety: You can customize your dessert pizza with different toppings, such as sliced bananas, chopped nuts, caramel sauce or chocolate drizzle.

Grill Safety: Use grilling gloves and long-handled utensils for safety, and always monitor the grill while cooking.

Timing: The exact grilling time may vary depending on the grill and dough thickness, so adjust as needed.

Enjoy this delightful grilled dessert pizza with friends and family for a sweet ending to your summer barbecue!



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SUMMER PET CARE



Summer can pose challenges for pet owners, with heat, outdoor activities and travel impacting pet safety. Here are some tips to maintaining pets' happiness and health during the summer months:

Beat the Heat. Pets can be susceptible to heatstroke, so it's crucial to keep them cool. Avoid walking pets during the hottest part of the day, provide plenty of fresh water and ensure shaded areas are available. Cooling mats and pet-friendly pools can also help maintain pets' comfort.

Traveling with Pets. Use secure carriers for car travel, stop frequently for bathroom breaks and never leave pets in a parked car. When traveling by air, check airline policies on pet transport and choose direct flights when possible.

Outdoor Safety. Pets often spend more time outdoors during summer, which can increase their risk of becoming injured or getting lost. Use identification tags and microchips, and keep pets on a leash in unfamiliar areas.

The Influence Of Kind Words

Dr. Masaru Emoto, a Japanese researcher, claimed that water could be influenced thoughts, words and music.

In his experiments, Dr. Emoto exposed water to various stimuli and then froze it to examine the resulting crystals. He found that water exposed to positive words, such as "love" and "gratitude," or to classical music formed more intricate and beautiful crystals. Water exposed to negative words or harsh music produced less-appealing crystals.

Dr. Emoto's work became popular, especially among persons interested in positive thinking. His book "The Hidden Messages in Water" gained a following. However, his research has been widely criticized for lacking scientific rigor and reproducibility.

Critics point out issues with his methods, including observer bias and the inability to replicate his results under controlled conditions.

Despite the controversy, Dr. Emoto's work continues to spark interest in the idea that thoughts and energy could influence physical phenomena.



REMOTE WORK: TIPS FOR PRODUCTIVITY AND FOCUS

Remote work offers flexibility but can challenge productivity and work-life balance. Here's a condensed guide to staying focused and efficient while working from home:

Create a Dedicated Workspace: Designate a quiet, well-lit area as your workspace, separate from personal spaces. Use ergonomic furniture for comfort.

Establish a Routine: Set a consistent schedule for work, breaks, and meals to create structure and maintain balance.

Dress for Work: Dressing in work-appropriate attire can help set the right mindset, even when working from home. Be comfortable but avoid hanging out in your pajamas all day.

Minimize Distractions: Identify and reduce distractions, such as social media or noise, to stay focused during work hours.

Use Productivity Tools: Leverage task management and time-tracking apps like Trello, Asana or Toggl to stay organized and efficient.

Take Regular Breaks: Avoid burnout by following the Pomodoro Technique, working in focused intervals with short breaks.

Communicate Effectively: Use video conferencing and messaging apps to maintain clear communication with your team.

Focus on Results: Prioritize tasks based on importance and deadlines, focusing on outcomes rather than hours worked.

Implement these tips to boost productivity and maintain a healthy work-life balance while working remotely.

“Productivity is never an accident. It is always the result of a commitment to excellence, intelligent planning, and focused effort.”

Paul J. Meyer





JULY'S HISTORICAL MOMENTS

July has been the backdrop for significant historical events that have shaped nations, cultures and ideologies. This article explores and reflects on some notable moments in history that occurred during July.

American Independence: One of the most celebrated events in July is American Independence Day, commemorating the adoption of the Declaration of Independence on July 4, 1776. This pivotal moment marked the beginning of the United States' journey as a sovereign nation, leading to a global impact on democracy and governance. Today, Independence Day is celebrated with fireworks, parades and patriotic ceremonies throughout the United States.

The Storming of the Bastille: July 14 marks Bastille Day, a significant event in French history. In 1789, the storming of the Bastille, a fortress and prison in Paris, became a symbol of the French Revolution and the fight against tyranny. Bastille Day is now a national holiday in France, celebrated with parades, fireworks, and communal festivities.

The First Moon Landing: On July 20, 1969, humanity achieved a monumental feat with the first moon landing during NASA's Apollo 11 mission. Astronauts Neil Armstrong and Buzz Aldrin became the first humans to walk on the moon, an event memorialized by Armstrong's iconic words, "That's one small step for man, one giant leap for mankind." This achievement marked a milestone in space exploration and remains an inspiration for scientific discovery and human ingenuity.

The Signing of the Civil Rights Act: On July 2, 1964, President Lyndon B. Johnson signed into law the Civil Rights Act, a landmark legislation in American history. This act aimed to end segregation and discrimination based on race, color, religion, sex or national origin. The Civil Rights Act became a cornerstone for advancing equality and social justice, laying the foundation for future civil rights movements.

These historical moments remind us of the power of change and the importance of commemorating milestones that continue to shape our world. Each event offers lessons in courage, determination and the enduring spirit of humanity.

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