

# GREEN TREE TIMES

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## Creative and Enriching Opportunities Are Just a Click Away



A variety of classes are offered online including flower arranging, cooking, knitting and more.

Each September, I would usually be writing about the upcoming Octoberfest activities and fall festivals but this year is different. We are still in a social distancing and mask wearing mode due to COVID 19.

You can support local restaurants by ordering takeout, eating outside or finding a place that can accommodate inside dining, if you feel safe doing so. While it's still nice weather, check out the many patios around the area this fall. Many restaurants have created new outdoor dining options by putting up tents, blocking off part of a parking lot, or using the sidewalk or even street, if allowed.

As the month arrives it has been decided about how schools, grades K-12, are going to proceed this fall. There is a mix of remote learning, a hybrid approach and full in-person classes. There are different views as to the importance of returning in person versus remote during the COVID 19 pandemic. As for you, there is the option to use this COVID 19 time, when activity options are limited, to take a "fun" class online.

You can google almost any interest and find a class or video on how to do it. It can be a lot of fun to start learning something that is completely new to you or learn something that has always interested you. All you

need is a computer with internet or a smart phone with a data plan. There are a variety of sites to go to and I'll mention some in this article as well as what you might find there but don't stop there, do some searching yourself. If you feel uncomfortable with doing that, maybe your first class should be *Power Searching with Google*. Google Search makes it amazingly easy to find information. Learn about the powerful advanced tools they provide to help you find just the right information. They offer a free class at [coursebuilder.withgoogle.com/sample/course](http://coursebuilder.withgoogle.com/sample/course).

You could take a traditional online class or two in business, finance, marketing or art at many different universities for free or on sites like Coursera, Khan Academy, OpenCourseWare, and Udacity. These can just be for fun or you can actually get the credit towards a certificate or degree.

Try something really different like learning about sharks, natural disasters or dinosaur ecosystems on [edX.com](http://edX.com). Learn to code at [generalassembly.com](http://generalassembly.com), [codecademy.com](http://codecademy.com) or [upskillcourses.com](http://upskillcourses.com).

Learning to knit is made easy at [allfreeknitting.com](http://allfreeknitting.com) or [skillshare.com](http://skillshare.com). You can find so many different classes on skillshare from flower ar-

ranging, film, writing, music, art, photography and more.

If you like wine, take a class about wine and how it's made, the different regions, grapes and so much more. The classes available range from being free to a small cost per class. Some even offer a "wine tasting party" package where you get your wine in advance and do the class via zoom. Some places to try are [burghundy.com](http://burghundy.com), [palatepartners.com](http://palatepartners.com), [americanwineschool.com](http://americanwineschool.com), [napavalleywineacademy.com](http://napavalleywineacademy.com).

Online cooking classes are also so popular right now. Locally, Gaynors' School of Cooking is offering virtual cooking classes if you don't feel safe enough to do the in person class just yet. Youtube and Instagram offer videos of cooking lessons of all kinds. Just go to their site and search cooking or baking. The choices will probably take your breath away, so don't get overwhelmed, just review a few and pick one to try.

Check with the local libraries to see what activities they are offering online as well. Some are having virtual book or film clubs, writing groups, and crafts.

At a site called [instructables.com](http://instructables.com), you can learn to tie fishing flies, bake

bread, tie knots, mix concrete, recycle and so many more things! It's all free!

In researching this article, I kept getting distracted by watching the videos myself. That can be a problem if you don't have a specific goal in mind. You could sit down to do a class and before you know it, hours will have passed and you haven't done anything other than shop around. It's similar to going to the mall to "shop" without anything in mind, just browsing. That's a recipe for a day, not an hour. To avoid that, try to have a specific site in mind or give yourself a set time frame to choose something.

The weather over the next couple of months is still going to be nice enough to keep socializing outside, so take advantage of that. Walking, biking, and even canoeing are still doable this month as well, so enjoy these things while you can!

Most movie theaters are now open in the area. They are following all state and county health guidelines as well as enhanced cleanliness and safety measures.

Dependable Drive-In is an outdoor movie option that offers the newest releases and you can keep social distanced. They are currently open on three screens.



Get outside and enjoy the nice weather by taking a walk with a friend or family member.



## MUSINGS...Facing Loss



*Editor's Note: Sharon Eakes is a personal and executive coach, who is a regular columnist for our paper as well as for the Huffington Post. She is the author of Fresh Views on Resilient Living. She may be reached by calling 412-741-1709 or email Sharon@hopellc.com.*

*No one ever told me that grief felt so like fear.*  
C.S. Lewis

### Sadness

This pandemic time has brought with it so many losses. They hurt and threaten to overwhelm:

Loss of life – deaths of family members, friends, leaders, musicians, so many peoples' loved ones

Loss of jobs – and the serious uncertainties that come with that – where will the money come from to eat/pay rent?

Loss of hugs or even casual conversations with people in the grocery store

Loss of freedom of movement – I hardly go anywhere

Loss of school as we know it – and the questions that go with that. Can kids learn well remotely?

Postponed reunions/vacations/weddings

Loss of shopping as we know it

Loss of ability to see my loved ones who live across the country. My daughter worried, "Will I ever see you again?"

Ripple effects everywhere – Air Marino, my favorite airport parking company – closed

Loss can slam us. In 1992 my husband Gene went from just fine to dead in 4 days. I felt unmoored, adrift in a strange world. It took me months, even years, to feel anything like normal again. At first, after Gene died, I coped by staying busy. Working non-stop from dawn until night, I fell into bed exhausted. After awhile I realized this wasn't sustainable. I needed to face my loss, feel my sadness. So I forced myself to sit quietly on the couch for 30 minutes each day and acknowledge my grief. My beloved Gene was gone. My heart literally ached,

as if a hole had been drilled through me. I looked at pictures from our life together, read cute notes he'd written to me. I wept. I experienced many of the things Elisabeth Kubler-Ross talks about as the stages of grief: denial, anger, bargaining, depression, and eventually acceptance.

Multiply my loss experience about a million times, and no wonder these times feel scary.

### Dancing with a limp

Although I couldn't imagine it then, and I still miss Gene, I have had a wonderful life in the 28 years since his death, including another marriage and widowhood.

We can't see all of the upside of this pandemic now because we're still in its throes. But there are signs. So much learning and creativity and resilience. It's slowed us down, cut toxic emissions, increased the number of people gardening, making art and music. I just attended an amazing conference called LIFT with over 500 entrepreneurs from around the world. The generous-spirited creativity of this group blew me away. I began to see that the global impact might be huge in terms of new energy, new ideas, great creativity, even though there is a lot of uncertainty about how it will unfold.

*"You will lose someone you can't live without, and your heart will be badly broken, and*

*the bad news is that you never completely get over the loss of your beloved. But this is also the good news. They live forever in your broken heart that doesn't seal back up. And you come through. It's like having a broken leg that never heals perfectly—that still hurts when the weather gets cold, but you learn to dance with the limp."*

Anne Lamott

The growth of resilience inside each of us and globally may depend on our taking a two-pronged approach to this historic time:

1. Acknowledge and take stock of our losses. Make room for grief. Feel the sadness.

2. Notice and feel grateful for any of the pandemic's gifts: a slower rhythm, more innovation, generosity of spirit, learning.

Let's learn to dance with a limp.

### COACHING TIPS/QUESTIONS:

1. What are the losses you are experiencing?
2. How are you feeling the sadness? Grieving the losses?
3. What gifts are you noticing?
4. How can they energize you for the next chapter of your life?
5. How can you help others accept and move through this difficult time?

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## Get Ready for a Healthy Start to a Challenging School Year



Jayesh Gosai, M.D.

Even without a pandemic, back-to-school can be stressful and challenging. Now more than ever, heading back to school, whether for in-person or virtual classes is anything but routine. Uncertainty about classes, sports, and after-school activities can cause anxiety for children and parents. It is important to have a consistent focus on health as you embark on a safe, productive school year. Here are a few back-to-school health tips:

**Keep vaccines updated:** Your children (and your family) should get

vaccinated early in the school year. Many schools require certain vaccinations before children can enroll. Talk to your children's health care provider to find out information and recommendations. It is not too soon to consider getting the flu vaccine, too. The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommends an annual flu vaccine for everyone 6 months of age and older.

**Schedule earlier bedtimes:** Learning at home or in the classroom requires focus and the of constancy of a daily schedule. It's essential for kids (and adults) to get enough sleep each night to stay healthy and engaged during the day. Parents and caregivers also need enough sleep to deal with the demands of the in-school (and out of school) schedules. Most adults need about eight hours of sleep each night, and children and adolescents need even more. Try to get back into a routine – cut back the weekday late-nights, even if classes start later or there is no commute.

**Sharpen hygiene habits:** Help your kids avoid getting sick (and prevent them from spreading germs), by teaching them how to protect them-

selves. Good habits should be stressed year-round. For example, the simple habit of hand washing after using the restroom and before eating at home (and at school going to lunch or eating a snack) can prevent COVID 19 and many other illnesses. At home, take frequent breaks that include hand-washing. You can provide your children with on-the-go hand sanitizer or hand wipes to use only when washing their hands isn't convenient. Also, instruct them not to share food or drinks (even at home) or with other kids at school.

**Healthy foods matter:** Pre-made snacks do not constitute a healthy diet. A healthy diet is important to feed the body essential nutrients and illness-fighting vitamins. At home, Stock up on healthy foods for lunches and quick snacks. Fruit, vegetables, whole-grain bread and lean protein are tasty and healthy. Prepare healthy snacks in advance – pre-slice fruits and vegetables, prepare tuna salad or hard-boiled eggs and buy plenty of containers for nutritious dinner leftovers. Insulated lunch bags and ice packs will give you more options for healthy choices if children are back at school.

**Reduce stress:** Stress can lead to a variety of health issues such as insomnia and sluggish immune systems. A set routine, physical activity and healthy eating promote stress management – this can be accomplished even if you are home-bound during the day or if in-school sports have been postponed. Schedule exercise breaks and activities – walks, runs biking or videos. Also, regular communication with your children and teens can encourage them to talk about problems at school or with virtual learning.

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# The Fishin' Hole



by Sam Hall

It is officially time to get serious about fishing here in southwestern Pennsylvania. September is a transition month where water temperatures will drop as the nights get cooler and longer. This will trigger almost all fish to start eating! Most importantly it will get my two favorite sport fish in the area to get to work.

September is when the largemouth and smallmouth bass will begin to try and pile on as many calories as they can to carry them through the winter months. Largemouth will eat very large baits when they start this type of feeding. Have you ever caught a bass that was biting on something that was almost as big as or

bigger than itself? It happens in September and October. Even juvenile largemouth have that switch tripped over in their mind that says "got to eat now, got to eat a lot."

There are some amazing videos on the internet of bass doing this. Bass are often caught on camera with the tail of a fish they ate still flapping and sticking out of their mouth. Bass have been known to eat ducks, squirrels, rats and even other bass when in this mode. That makes for a lot of fun fishing in September and October.

I personally had a crazy experience in a state park two years ago that told me all I needed to know about the largemouth appetite. I was having a fantastic fall Saturday morning catching some very healthy largemouth in the two to three pound range. On one particular cast I set the hook on a very nice fish, three pounds or more for sure. He was very angry and giving me still a tremendous fight when about 10 feet from the bank. I watched as a monster fish came out of nowhere and tried to literally eat the bass I was already catching. It was crazy. Twice, this fish in the five pound range tried to inhale the fish I was reeling in. The second time, I got so worked up, I fell down

moving back and forth along the shoreline. Then once I had caught and released that bass, I started trying everything I could think of to catch the monster. Never saw him again, that day or any day after as I kept going to the same place week after week. I will be back there at some point this September.

Smallmouth bass have had a long, hot, very dry summer in the streams. The rain and cooler nights will be very welcome to both the fish and the anglers in the area.

This weather is not just about bass success. If you like to battle with some of the huge catfish in our local rivers these next two months are prime-time for trying to catch your personal best. For flatheads using cut bait and fishing at night usually produces the best results. These fish can get very large so make sure you have appropriate tackle to vanquish your foe.

The Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission posted this report August 26th on their website:

"Monongahela River anglers are seeing a huge increase in Flathead Catfish catch rates. Water temps have dropped slightly, into the upper 70s and baitfish have begun pooling in area tributaries. Several 30+ pound catfish have been

landed in the preceding few days using 3-5 inch Bluegills and several variations of baitfish with high oil content."

A thirty pound fish demands that you have the proper equipment or all you are going to do is leave a fish with a hook in their mouth for someone else to catch.

Keep those lines tight and send your pictures and stories to [samdhall@comcast.net](mailto:samdhall@comcast.net). Next month we will talk steelhead and Erie tributaries!



Prime time for beautiful smallmouth bass like this.



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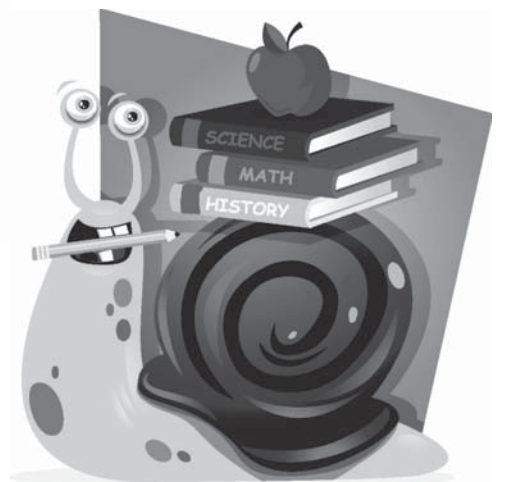
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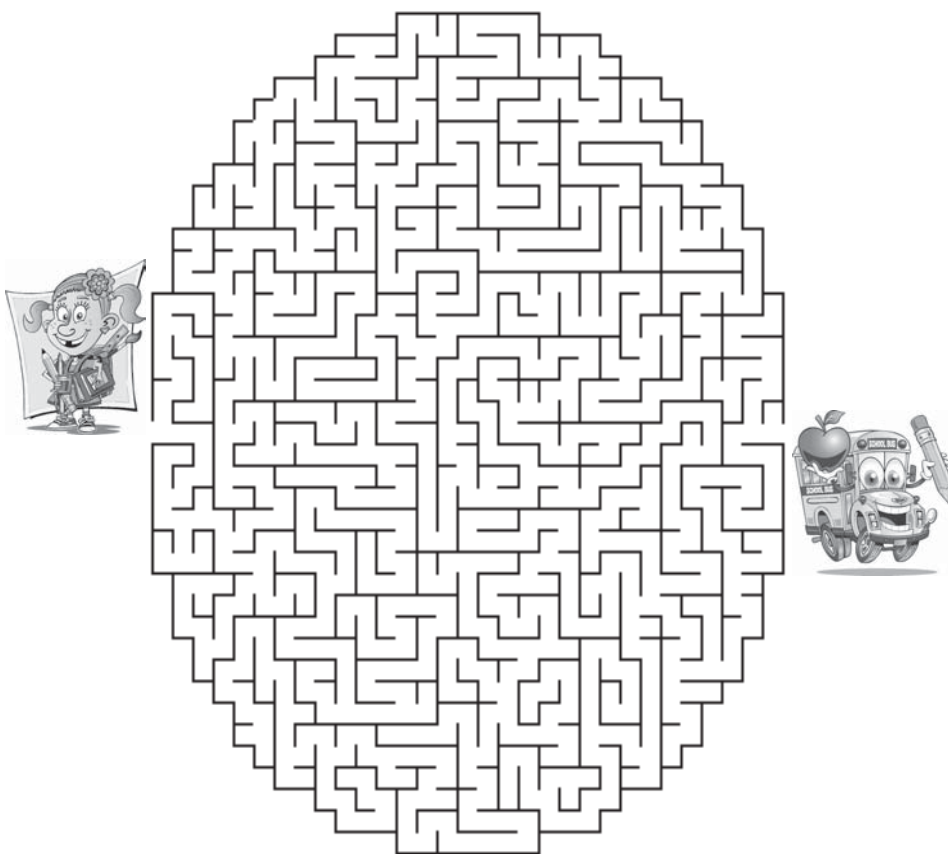
Solve the Rebus Puzzles

Find the six differences in each set of pictures below.

(Answers on back page)



Help the student get on the school bus.



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