

GREEN TREE TIMES

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January 2021 Represents a New Year Filled With Hope



Building a fun snowman is the perfect way to find happiness in simplicity.

The year 2020 has passed and will be a time that everyone will remember and talk about for generations to come. Each of us experienced the ticking of the seconds down to midnight on January first, whether we chose to recognize it or not.

Although there was no significant change overnight, the start of the new year symbolizes hope for new and better things to come as well as the passing of the bad things from the prior time. This one, very important second brought us all together in a single moment where we were all the same. We were filled with the idea of change, however that may look, and hope.

Each of us have different levels of comfort when it comes to activities and socializing during this COVID time, so there are a variety of things mentioned.

One thing we can all do to make this year the best we can is to stay safe but still do the things that make us and our families happy. It may be a little different but that's okay. This is temporary, just like winter.

The winter months means shorter, darker and colder days. You can combat that by getting the most out of the daylight hours and finding enjoyable things to do during the darkness.

You could try to find Hygge (pronounced Hue-guh) this winter. Hygge is a Danish way of life that means a feeling of coziness, enjoying the little things and finding happiness in simplicity. Easier said than done but following are some ideas to get us through the winter.

If you like being outdoors, winter activities are in abundance. The ski resorts are all open and practicing safety guidelines for everyone.

The PA resorts nearest us are Seven Springs Resort (7springs.com), Hidden Valley (hiddenvalleyresort.com), Laurel Valley (laurelmountainski.com), Boyce Park (allegHENYcounty.us/parks) and for snow tubing, NemaColin's (nemacolins.com) Mystic Mountain.

All of the places are requiring ski rentals to be done online and in advance as well as ticketing. Go to their websites for instructions.

If you'd rather enjoy the snow right in your neighborhood, head out and build a snowman or for sledding, just go online, order a sled or tube and head to a nearby hill. It's just as fun! Make sure to have hot chocolate ready to go for when you're finished.

Get some fresh air doing a self guided walking tour. There are six to

choose from through the Pittsburgh History and Landmarks Foundation. You can download the maps at phlf.org.

Try driving to Mt. Washington or West End Park overlook and take in the view.

Venture Outdoors offer many different hikes and are following guidelines for COVID safety. Check out their calendar at ventureoutdoors.org.

There are also many trails, stairs and neighborhoods to stroll. It's a great way to get some exercise, enjoy the daylight and fresh air.

If you'd rather stay in the car, try taking a drive through the parks or some country roads to look at the scenery and wild life.

If you can't get outside, find a window that you can set up as a comfortable sitting place. Just enjoy reading by the window light or just look out in silence. Hang a birdfeeder near a window and sit and watch for the different visiting birds. Make the spot however is best for you.

Darkness comes early now so make the best of it by welcoming the opportunity to enjoy looking at a candle or hanging lights. Maybe sit by the fireplace or head outside and sit bundled up by a campfire. It could be the time to watch a movie or play a board game.

As I write this the current restrictions are scheduled to be lifted on Monday, the 4th for dining in restaurants. There are different feelings about that so do what you are comfortable with doing. If dining in is okay with you, then skip making a meal and go support your local restaurants when you can. You can enjoy take-out from most restaurants if you aren't ready to eat inside.

There are some places that have gotten extremely creative to make outdoor dining and/or indoor but private dining a possibility.

Tako Restaurant and Bridges and Bourbon, downtown, and Northpark Lounge, McCandless, have put up greenhouses, igloos or domes that accommodate parties from four to eight. They are decorated with lights,

heaters and bluetooth speakers for music. You can go out to dinner with very little risk and be mask free. Definitely worth checking out. Go to the websites to make reservations.

If you want to stay in there are virtual activities available. The Virtual Speaker Series at The Aviary will host "Planning Ahead to Save Species!" on Jan. 7, 7 p.m. Info at aviary.org.

The Live Virtual Architecture Tour will be held on Jan. 13 (Shadyside) and 21 (Cultural District), 27 (Grant St.) at 2 p.m. and Jan. 28, (Fallingwater) at 6 p.m. Info at phlf.org.

The new year, 2021, has a lot riding on it and fingers crossed that it lives up to the hopeful expectations of everyone! We need a light at the end of this tunnel. We need to feel some sense of normalcy again for ourselves, our parents and grandparents and especially for the kids.

Stay safe, help keep others safe and have a great 2021!



Enjoy watching birds through the window on a cold winter day.

**HAPPY
NEW YEAR!**

MUSINGS...WHERE IS THE LIGHT?



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.

Sharon and Nancy Smyth, her business partner in Two Wise Women, together published, "Chocolate or Lunch, How Choices Impact Relationships." If you have tense relationships, this book is for you. Both books are available through Amazon.

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*It is during our darkest moments
that we must focus to see the light.*

Aristotle

Darkness

So much darkness:

Short days.

Risks of the coronavirus

Extreme political polarization

Economic uncertainties

Racial disparities laid bare

Where is the light?

Planetary Light

The Winter Solstice is the darkest day of the year in the northern hemisphere. How fitting that this year on the day of the Winter Solstice, Dec. 21, we also get the Great Conjunction: Saturn and Jupiter so close that their lights coalesce and appear as a single, bright point of light to the naked eye. The last time this bright light was in 1226. Unlike stars, which twinkle, both planets shine with consistent brightness, so they're easy to see on clear nights.

Light in Spiritual Traditions

We have just had the Jewish celebration of Hannukah. The menorah commemorates a time when only enough oil for one day miraculously burned for 8 days and saved the sacred Temple.

Dewali, also called The Festival of Lights, is celebrated by Hindus, Sikhs and Jains in November. Light in this case symbolizes the triumph of light over darkness, good over evil, hope over despair.

The Christian Star of David shone when Christ was born. (Some speculate the Star of David, shining so brightly, was an earlier Great Conjunction.) The tradition of lighted

Christmas trees and candles in our windows all symbolize the importance of light.

The metaphors of light in scripture are compelling: "So powerful is the light of unity, that it can illuminate the whole earth." Baha'u'llah, founder of the Baha'i Faith

Light in You

Most spiritual traditions believe that God or spirit is inside of everyone. Native Americans talk about how God is in everything, every rock, tree, bird, person and interaction.

Every day I hear of ways compassionate people are helping others, bringing them food, shoveling their snow, calling to check in.

I have always felt that my purpose in being a coach – in its broadest sense – is to see the light in people and reflect it back to them so they can see it in themselves. When I really get to know each person, and there have been no exceptions in 25 years of practice, I see light inside.

How blessed I feel to have work that asks me to see the light in everyone and encourage it to shine.

Light in Me

It is a relief and a blessing to see and relax into our own light. To step into our best self. This shift often requires that we shove aside layers of self-doubt, judging, blame and fear. Remember the song, This Little Light of Mine? There are several renditions on YouTube...here's my favorite: This Little Light of Mine.

These dark times invite us to find the light inside of us and let it shine it on the path forward.

COACHING TIPS/QUESTIONS:

1. What are your best qualities/natural gifts? – Make a list of them (humor, creativity, kindness, problem solving, integrity, etc.)
2. How can you use your light to make a difference for others or the world?
3. Where else do you see light during this dark time?

Did you know?

Celebrating the new year on January 1 is a relatively recent phenomenon. The calendar as we know it today has evolved several times and months have gone by different names. On the early Roman calendar, March was the first month of the 10-month calendar. That is why the last four months of the year have prefixes that coordinate with the seventh (September), eighth (October), ninth (November), and tenth (December) numerals. King Numa Pompilius reformed the calendar around 700 BCE by adding the months of January and February to the original 10 months. But the calendar still required some additional tweaking to be more aligned with the seasons. In 46 B.C., Julius Caesar introduced a solar-based calendar that was an improvement on the ancient Roman one, which was lunar-based. During this time, the month of Quintilis was renamed July in honor of Julius Caesar and Sextilis was renamed August in honor of Augustus. Shortly after the introduction of the solar calendar, the beginning of the year was moved from March 1 to January 1.

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The Fishin' Hole



Sam Hall

2020 is behind us now and we are all hoping and praying for better things in 2021. The Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission is selling 2021 fishing licenses online. The 2021 Trout Opening Day for our region is currently slated for April 17th. The Fishin' Hole reminds you that due to the coronavirus in 2020 the Opening Day was moved to April 7th state-wide and was on a Tuesday. We will keep close watch for you as April approaches and do our best to keep you abreast of any changes to the 2021 calendar and schedule.

There's still plenty of fishing to do between now and April. The crowds will thin out a little with the colder weather up in Erie. There will still be steelhead in good numbers in the tributaries throughout January and even February.

Closer to home, one of my favorite things to do during the months of January and February is sight fish for carp in our local streams. The colder water temperatures will mean the fish are way less active and they will tend to hold in slacker, slow moving water, and in pretty large groups. If you can walk along the stream without disturbing the water or the fish, you are very likely to see larger groups of carp just biding their time to make it

through the winter months. Now the tricky part is getting one to bite AND getting the ones that do bite to shore without spooking the other fish into leaving your spot. Small baits and as little weight as possible are the keys to getting the fish to bite. Start with a split shot or two and add a little, cast by cast until you have just enough weight to hold your bait just off the bottom and near the fish. In the right conditions you will be able to see the fish take your bait before you feel it. Now comes the tricky part... getting the fish to swim with your bait either up or downstream away from the group before you really set the hook. It will take a lot of practice and patience. Open your bail and let the line free roll as you see the fish take your bait, now a fish with bait in its mouth will a lot of times just naturally move away from other fish. Your job is to go whichever way the fish does without scaring the others. You don't have to go far. Just go somewhere into the current and you can set the hook properly and land the fish! Now if you've done it perfectly you will be able to release the fish and go back to the spot where the other fish are and continue fishing. This can lead to hours of fun in the same spot and even sometimes you can challenge yourself by picking out the biggest or prettiest fish in the group and making it your specific target. Stay dry and you will have a much better chance of staying warm as well. I love this way of fishing because it feels sometimes as much like hunting as it does like fishing. I hope you will try it and send me your pictures to samdhall@comcast.net. Take care of one another, be safe and we will have the countdown to opening day coming up in February. Keep those lines tight!




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Resolve to Stay Safe and Get Healthy in 2021

The year 2020 brought many challenges for everyone. The promise of 2021 is the hope of a healthier future and this is the perfect time to make worthy, healthy resolutions. Small changes can make a big difference and help to reverse some of the unhealthy consequences of pandemic-related changes in your lifestyle and well-being. There are many healthy goals to choose from. Here are just a few resolution ideas to get you on a path to good health in the New Year.

Lose the Extra Weight: Losing weight is the most popular resolution but it is the most difficult one to commit to. You can lose the extra pounds gained in 2020 if you manage your expectations. Set long-term goals (instead of the quick fix) and figure out the best plan to make them happen. Don't just say, "I want to lose weight." Decide to lose 10% of your body weight through healthy diet and exercise, or plan to lose 15 pounds by cutting out processed foods and sugary drinks. Keep track of what you eat and have a support system in

place with a family member or friend. Ask your health care provider for a specific weight loss plan and add accountability by setting a goal for your next appointment.

Get Moving Again: The many months of limited social activity this past year affected the exercise routines for some people. It can be hard to get motivated to go back to regular exercise, it is too easy to find excuses. Joining a gym is not for everyone and the pandemic has made keeping up with this routine more difficult. This year, set yourself up for success by finding ways to exercise at home or at work and by giving yourself specific, measurable goals. Making a resolution to simply be more active can be a great first step. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommend that adults get at least 2 1/2 hours of physical activity each week. Here are a few ideas to get more activity into your daily life:

-Take the stairs instead of the elevator.

-Stretch for 10 minutes after every hour that you work.

-Park farther away from buildings to increase your walking distance.

-Take a walk and commit to walking 2 to four times a week

Start with small goals so you can stay consistent.

Find Ways to Stay in Touch: Feel like old friends (or family) have fallen by the wayside because of the pandemic? It's good for your health to reconnect with them. Research suggests people with strong social ties live longer than those who do not. In fact, lack of social bonds can damage your health as much as alcohol abuse and smoking, and even more than obesity and lack of exercise. In the smart phone and Zoom era, it's never been easier to stay in touch—or rejuvenate your relationship—with friends and family, so take the time for some face time or even a regular phone call.

Get More Sleep: Adequate, quality sleep is the foundation of good health. Sleep deficiencies have a negative effect on your health and your immune system. Resolve to Take pro-



Jayesh Gosai, M.D.

active steps to get quality sleep by building some wind-down time into your evening. Try reading or listening to relaxing music before you retire. Stop eating after dinner the dinner hour. Stay away from lighted screens (like your computer, your phone, and your TV) at least one hour before bedtime.

In 2021 resolve to stay safe and get healthy. Meeting with your primary care physician can help you make the right decisions towards wellness and a healthier lifestyle.

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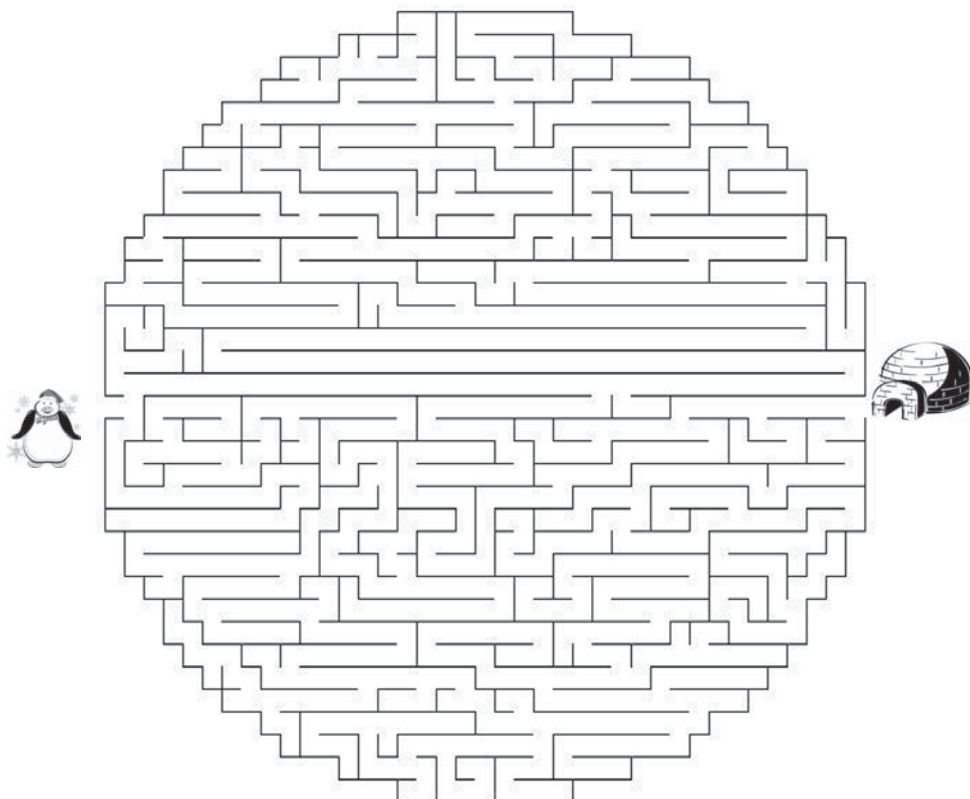




Fun and Games for Kids



Help the penguin get to the igloo.



Find the 9 differences between the pictures below.

(Answers on back page)



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Aid
Aid

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