

GREEN TREE TIMES

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The Outlook for February Seems to be So Far, SNOW Good



A good old fashioned snowball battle can be one of the most fun things to do!

The cobalt blue, cloudless sky and bright sun that is currently shining through my window does not accurately reflect the temperatures outside but I must say, it's beautiful! The snow is covering the ground and reflecting the light creating sparkles everywhere. It's what one would consider a perfect winter day.

In two days, we will find out if there is going to be six more weeks of this weather or if spring is waiting around the corner. Luckily for us, we have a furry fellow Pennsylvanian that will let the country know what's in store. For today, it's snow.

Who Knows? Once this melts, we may not have any significant amounts again this winter. This is a do it now moment and there is so much you can do in the snow that is fun and free!

An all time favorite is to build a snowman. Head out alone or gather a group and start building. There is no limit to what your snowman or woman might look like, so go crazy! If you aren't up

for the traditional snowman building, just grab a couple handfuls of snow and make a mini snowman or even a snow family for fun.



We all know the saying, "Don't throw rocks!" Well, it's the opposite when you are talking about a snowball. It's irresistible, so be prepared when in the snow with friends or family, to be hit with a flying ball of the cold, white, fluffy stuff! Be sure to retaliate - all's fair in snow and war!

Another absolute must, especially for kids, is making a snow angel. Just dress



warm or be ready to run inside to take the chill off when you are done with your masterpiece.

Living in the Pittsburgh area ensures you that there is a hill nearby, so grab a tube, sled, saucer or even a thick trash bag and fly down the hill as if you are 12



again. If that's just out of the question, take the kids in your life sledding and you watch and take pictures. Then you can provide the snowman filled hot chocolate for when they are finished!



There's nothing quite like a winter scene to take your breath away, so another option is to stay warm inside and just look out the window at the birds at the feeder or just the quiet glistening of the snow covered landscape.



Other winter activities around the area do cost to participate but are worth it.

For some cold weather fun, you could head to the slopes. We live near many ski resorts within 1-3 hours away if you are

looking to get the most out of the area's snow this season. There's Seven Springs, Laurel Highlands, Hidden Valley, Mystic Mountain at Nemacolin Woodlands, Timberline Resort, Olgebay Resort, Peek n' Peak, and Wisp Resort near Deep Creek. All offer skiing and snow boarding as well as many indoor amenities like spas, bowling, swimming, and more!

Snow tubing and skiing closer to home can be done at Boyce Park which is only about 30 minutes away and filled with fun! Info at alleghenycounty.us.



There's also outdoor ice skating in our area. The usual rinks at North Park, South Park, and downtown at PPG Place are all open. There's also a new rink at Southside Works in the North Lot to try out. Check websites for information and ticketing. Schenley Park is open for regular public skating and they are having their annual *Valentine's on Ice* on Feb. 14, 7-9 p.m. The event will offer two for one admission, selfie booth, raffle prizes, caricature artists and Betsy Anne Chocolates and flowers on exit for each couple.



My favorite season is still summer, but I do love it when it looks this beautiful outside!

Even so, I'll be crossing my fingers Phil sees an early spring in our future but until then, enjoy the snow!

MUSINGS...ENJOY YOUR LIFE



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.

Enjoyment is an incredible energizer to the human spirit.

John C. Maxwell

I know, I know. There's a lot to worry about, and many people are suffering. And yet, and yet.....your worrying doesn't really help AND you'll have lots more energy to help

the suffering in your life and in the world if you enjoy yourself more.

Enjoy - Why?

You'll be healthier
You'll be happier
You'll be nicer to be around
You'll have more energy to do whatever matters to you

Enjoy - What?

Don't wait until you go on vacation or retire – learn to enjoy life every single day in simple ways. Consciously look for things to enjoy – the splashy sunrise, a woodpecker out the window, the first sip of morning coffee. Enjoy the way your body tingles and feels alive after a brisk walk; laugh, thinking of the joke your friend shared yesterday. If the news is depressing, turn it off. Enjoy reading, planning a meal, then put on some music and dance as you clean up. Talk and laugh out loud to yourself, even if you live with others who will think you've lost it. They'll also enjoy it.

Buy something you really want – something delicious or beautiful, and then savor it, knowing that outside-in enjoyment isn't as sustainable as inside-out.

Enjoy - How?

You can't enjoy yourself if you are tense. So learn to relax. Practice mindfulness or progressive relaxation.

Breathe deeply, with a pause at the top of the breath and another pause at the bottom. Then move. Be in nature. Go to a place with trees and drink them in. If you can't get out, watch a nature movie and enjoy it thoroughly.

Intend to enjoy – make it a habit to enjoy your life. Instead of comparing your life to someone's that looks better, find the gold in your own. History is full of people like Victor Frankl who learned to enjoy himself in a concentration camp against all odds. Cultivating enjoyment helps you survive and thrive.

Look for ways to enjoy your work...even the parts you don't usually like. My daughter Lisa's recent podcast, How Manure Management Brought Us Peace, can be a model, even if you work in an office or at home. It's the spirit you bring to the job that makes a difference.

Stay connected with people, even in the pandemic. I yearn to be back in person with friends and family, yet where I live it's not really safe yet. In the meantime, I'm delighted and amazed at the creative ways people have invented to stay in touch. The fabulous music that has been produced, the zoom parties, riveting con-

ferences – so many ways that people can be close while apart.

Chelan Harkin has written a poem (from the book Susceptible to Light) that sums up what I'm suggesting.

YOUR OWN DA*N JOY

The price of admission
into heaven
is your own da*n joy.
Please stop denying yourself this
and please stop telling yourself
you'll only (maybe) get there when
you die—
go there now!

What kind of da*n fool
puts off heaven?
Child, it lives in the center of your
heart
that endless meadow of happiness
and praise.

The world needs you
to go there now
to do your part in turning it
into a paradise.

COACHING QUESTIONS:

1. What have you already enjoyed today? How did it feel?
2. How can you enjoy more?
3. Plan a way to enjoy one task that seems hard to you.

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Publisher/Editor

Shelly Davis, 412-956-9265

Writers

Shelly Davis

Sharon Eakes

Sam Hall

Jayesh Gosai, M.D.

Marketing

Shelly Davis, 412-956-9265

Dena Rose, 412-498-2872

greentreetimesonline.com

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Pittsburgh, PA 15205

412-956-9265

pittsburghjuniortimes@comcast.net

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Heart Month Update: Advanced Testing Can Help Prevent and Detect Heart Disease



Jayesh Gosai, M.D.

For decades, stress tests have been the standard for detection of heart disease but cardiologists are now embracing advanced imaging and blood tests that give a more accurate assessment of heart attack risk. Studies are proving that certain tests can detect cardiovascular disease 20 to 30 years before it gets severe enough to cause a heart attack or stroke.

These tests are available at most medical centers and hospitals. If your doctor doesn't order them for you, request the ones that are recom-

mended for your gender, age group and risk category.

Cardiac Calcium Scoring

A CT scanner checks for atherosclerotic plaque (made up of calcium, cholesterol, and scar tissue) in your heart's arteries. After electrodes are attached to your chest and to an EKG machine that monitors your heartbeat, you lie on an exam table that slides into a short, doughnut-shaped tunnel and hold your breath for 10 to 20 seconds.

Calcium scoring is a good predictor of a future heart attack. Calcified plaque, a major warning sign of coronary artery disease (the leading cause of heart attacks), appears at least 10 years before a heart attack or stroke happens. By catching the problem early, you can treat it before the buildup severely narrows arteries.

Ask for the test if you're 50 or older with risk factors or if you have a family history and other risk factors.

Carotid Intimal Medial Thickness Test

This "ultrasound of the neck" takes a picture of the left and right carotid arteries, which supply blood to your head and brain. After putting a gel on your neck, a technician glides

an ultrasound transducer over your carotids to measure the thickness of the arteries' lining. Studies show a link between abnormal thickness of the carotid lining and coronary artery disease.

Ask for the test if you're 40 or older or if a relative (parents or siblings) had a heart attack or stroke before age 55.

High-Sensitivity

C-Reactive Protein Test

This blood test measures CRP, a protein in your blood that indicates inflammation throughout the body. Cholesterol plaque injures blood vessels, triggering inflammation and raising CRP levels in your blood. A high CRP is most dangerous if you also have another risk factor: a waist circumference of more than 35 inches, indicating the presence of belly fat.

Ask for this test if you're 40 or older.

Advanced Lipid Profile and Lipoprotein(a) Test

Unlike the traditional cholesterol blood test, which measures total cholesterol, HDL, LDL, and triglycerides, the advanced test also looks at particle size. This is important because some particles are big, so they tend to bounce off artery walls as they travel through the body. Others are

small and dense and can penetrate the artery lining to form clumps of plaque. Having many large particles cuts risk, while small ones raise it. The more Lp(a) you have, the worse it is too—it makes LDL particles extra sticky, so they cling to the lining of blood vessels, causing plaque and clots.

Genetic Tests

A blood sample is tested at a lab for mutations of the KIF6 and APOE genes. A common variation in the KIF6 gene and two mutations in the APOE gene raise your heart disease risk. These tests can help your doctor better tailor your treatment to prevent a heart attack.

Stress Echocardiography

This advanced stress test includes an ultrasound, both before and after exercise, to evaluate blood flow to your heart's pumping chambers and check for blockages in the arteries that supply the heart. Adding echocardiography to the standard stress test raises accuracy by as much as 85%.

Ask for this test if you have signs of heart disease, regardless of your age. If you experience shortness of breath, chest pain, neck pain, or any other symptom, you need this test.

The Fishin' Hole



Sam Hall

Ice fishing reports are off the charts with good news for local anglers as January 2022 changes into February 2022. Trout, perch, panfish, catfish, and crappie are all hitting as the first ice is safe for the most part all around the region. If you have been thinking about ice fishing, there is a tremendous amount of free information about getting started, where to go and more Go to fishandboat.com, then scroll down and click ice/winter fishing. You can check out the interactive map of ice fishing destinations or the Introduc-

tion to Ice Fishing video series and The Fish and Boat Commission are also offering a FREE virtual introduction to ice fishing for the entire family on Tuesday, February 8, from 6 to 8:30 p.m. Learn everything from safety tips, to what to wear, where to go and what equipment you will need all in one fell swoop. You can register online at the link mentioned. We've learned to zoom everything during this pandemic, so zoom fishing is something I can definitely get behind.

If you are a veteran ice-angler, be safe and be warm, but get out there as soon as possible because from what I am hearing the action is off the charts. Remember to always take a friend, tell others where you are going, and never go fishing on ice that is less than four inches thick.

As for keys to success, I would add that the water under ice is almost always super-clear. For that reason, the smaller your line diameter and your bait presentations, the better. Four pound test line is my go-to and 1/16 ounce jigs tipped with a minnow or a meal worm will produce a tremendous variety of fish from un-

der the ice. Can't say it enough, stay warm, and stay safe, and also, it's important to stay away from anything sticking up out of the ice.

If you are waiting for the open water, take heart because it's a mere seven weeks until spring 2022! That's right, soon we will be talking about bug-sprays and fly-hatches instead of ice thickness and augers.

As for Erie, there is some ice fishing going on up there as well, but also some open water on some of the tributaries back away from the lake a

bit. I caution you that the tribs can be very, very dangerous fishing right now. Ice shelves can break away and what you have experienced as the usual slippery trib fishing can quickly become "ice-rink walking" dangerous. Proper gear on your feet is imperative, or it can be difficult just to stand up in one place, let alone walk around.

If you are hitting the hard water be sure and get your pics to me at samdhall@comcast.net. Until next time, when we start getting ready for spring, keep those lines tight.





Fun and Games for Kids

(Answers on back page)



February Puzzle Fun!

Unscramble the letters to make February themed words and then put the letters to match the numbers in the last section for the final word. Have fun!

DER	<input type="text"/>
NINLAETEV	<input type="text"/>
HETCACOLO	<input type="text"/>
AYDCN	<input type="text"/>
VELO	<input type="text"/>
TEAHR	<input type="text"/>
HURNODGOG	<input type="text"/>
BURRYEFA	<input type="text"/>
RIWTEN	<input type="text"/>
WADSHO	<input type="text"/>

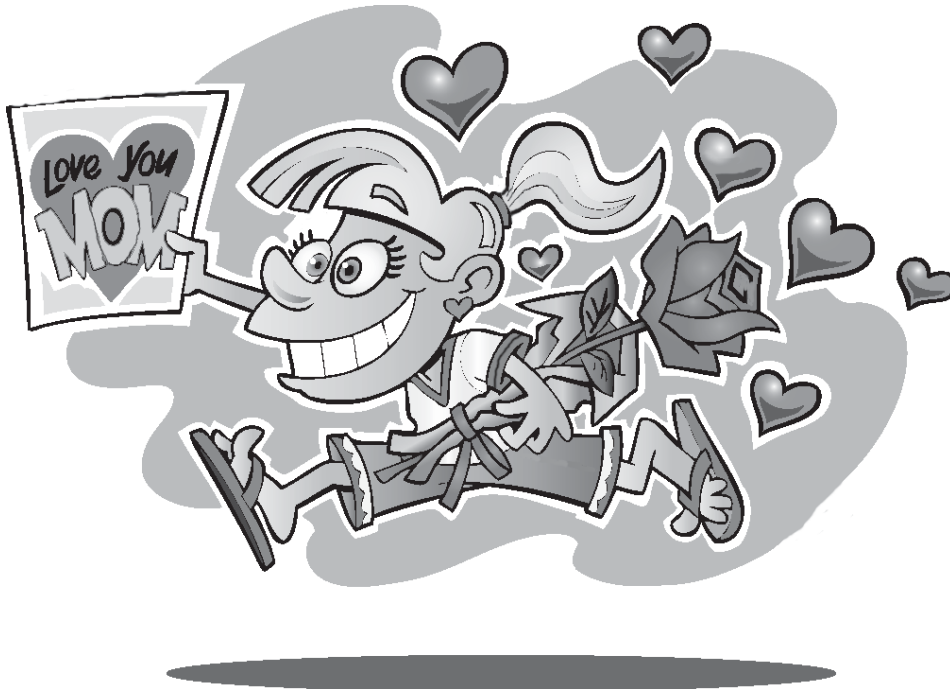
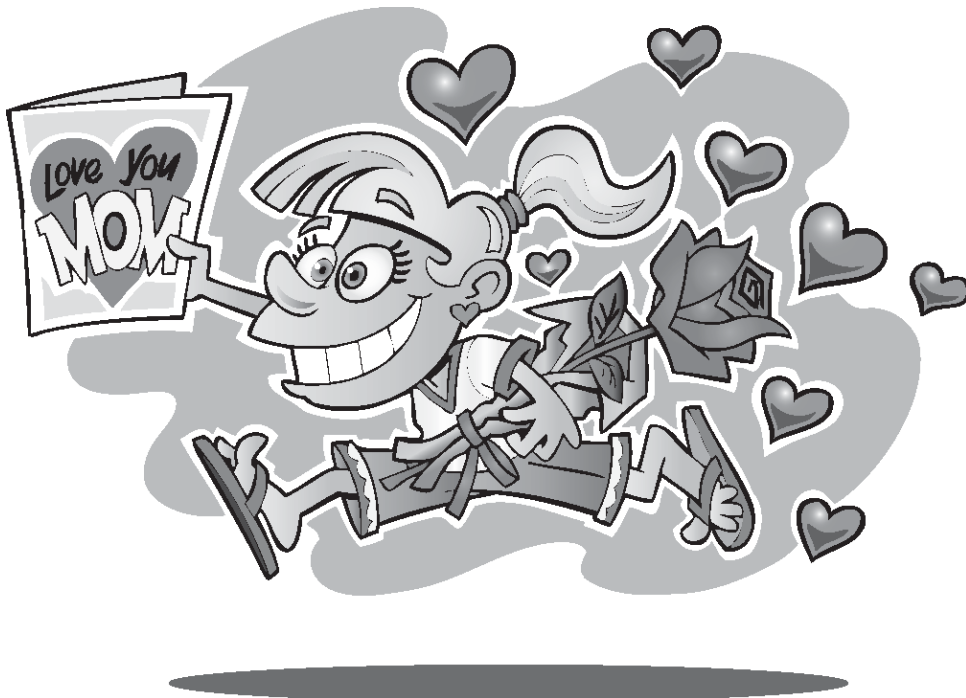
<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Hink Pinks!

A Hink Pink is a pair of rhyming words that match a silly definition.
Example: sky colored hint = blue clue.

- | | |
|------------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1. ebony tarter | 6. girl from Switzerland |
| 2. smooch my sister | 7. spin female |
| 3. cow chuckle | 8. believable food |
| 4. electric measurement jerk | 9. improved A |
| 5. fishing worm box | 10. amusing roll |

Find the 9 differences between the pictures below.



More fun at
greentreetimesonline.com

Free Throw Championship!

All boys and girls ages 9-14 are invited to compete in the Knights of Columbus St. Raphael the Archangel Council #11143.

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to see in-person services and
virtual activities for the
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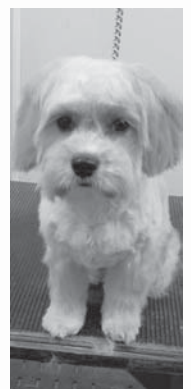
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Answers for Kids' puzzles

1. black plaque 6. Swiss miss
2. kiss sis 7. twirl girl
3. calf laugh 8. credible edible
4. volt jolt 9. better letter
5. bait crate 10. fun bun

Hint Pinks:
friends
final word:
shadow
winter
February
groundhog
heart
love
candy
chocolate
valentine
red

Nine Differences: Word Scramble:
ponytail holder
3rd heart from top
line on pants
eyebrow
word MOM
bottom heart
center of rose
line on sleeve
back of card

LIBRARY INFORMATION

Most libraries throughout the area are now open and offering the ability to borrow books. Some activities are in person and some are still remote. Check with the library near you for the details.

ask a
librarian

GREEN TREE PUBLIC LIBRARY

10 Manilla Ave., Pittsburgh, 15220
greentreepubliclibrary.org, 412-922-9292

SCOTT TOWNSHIP PUBLIC LIBRARY

301 Lindsay Rd., Scott Twp., 15106
scottlibrary.org, 412-429-5380

CARNEGIE LIBRARY OF PITTSBURGH MAIN - OAKLAND

4400 Forbes Ave., Pittsburgh, 15213
carnegielibrary.org, 412-622-3114

CARNEGIE LIBRARY OF PITTSBURGH MT. WASHINGTON

315 Grandview Ave., Pittsburgh, 15211
carnegielibrary.org, 412-381-3380

CRAFTON PUBLIC LIBRARY

140 Bradford Ave., Pittsburgh, 15205
craftonpubliclibrary.com, 412-922-6877

CARNEGIE LIBRARY OF PITTSBURGH WEST END

47 Wabash St., Pittsburgh, 15220
carnegielibrary.org, 412-921-1717

THE ANDREW CARNEGIE FREE LIBRARY AND MUSIC HALL

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carnegiecarnegie.org, 412-276-3456

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