

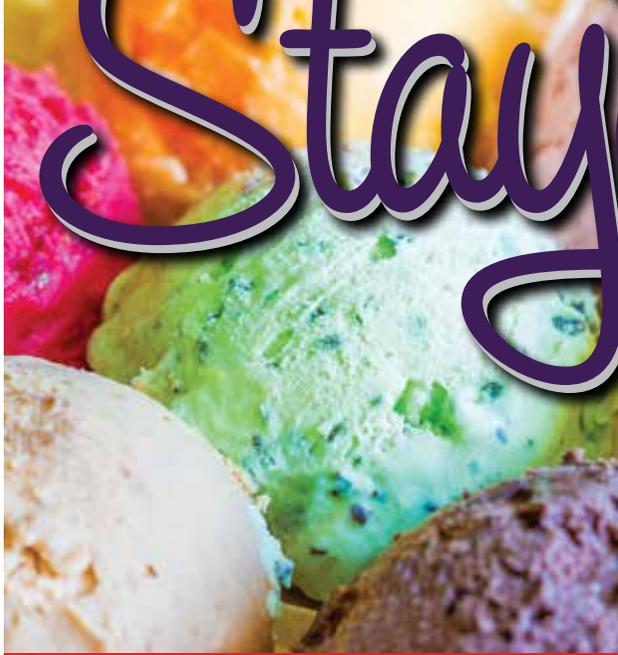
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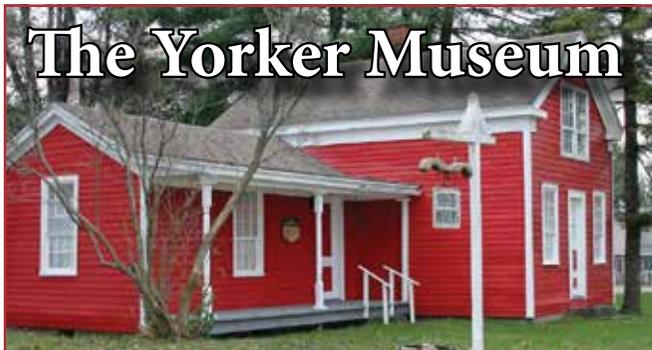
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Ice Cream Truck History

ARTICLE BY METRO CREATIVE GRAPHICS, INC.

On a sweltering day, few things bring relief as immediately as a favorite frozen treat. The United States leads the world in ice cream consumption, with an average of 26 liters per person consumed per year.

Ice cream has been around for quite some time, and it is believed ancient Greeks ate a crude form of the dessert as early as the 5th century B.C. While ice cream parlors, dessert shops and supermarket freezers are popular places to sample favorite flavors, ice cream also can be purchased from ice cream trucks.

The tinkling of the ice cream truck music box and the sight of that dessert haven on wheels is enough to send any child (and many adults) into sensory overload. Some of the early precursors to the modern day ice cream truck were ice and ice cream sandwich carts that gained popularity in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

Confectioner and visionary Harry Burt was instrumental in developing the ice cream truck. Burt invented ice cream novelties that could be enjoyed on a stick, including the Good Humor bar. Burt wanted an easy way to deliver the treat into the hands of hungry kids, so he commissioned refrigerator trucks and hired drivers who looked pristine and safe to deliver the treats to neighborhood children. To entice the youngsters outside, the drivers rang a bell so kids would investigate the noise. Eventually the bell and standard routes helped families know when to expect the ice cream man.

Early ice cream trucks may have sold prepackaged treats, but they eventually broadened their offerings. Some turned into mobile ice cream shops, offering soft-serve or hard ice cream in everything from sundaes to cones to shakes.

Many ice cream truck businesses are independently-owned seasonal businesses. The trucks are seen when the first warm days arrive, and many can still be seen patrolling neighborhood streets into late fall.

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Enjoy *Safe* Backyard Barbeques This Summer

ARTICLE BY METRO CREATIVE GRAPHICS, INC.



Backyard barbecues are synonymous with warm weather. And why wouldn't they be? Grilling over an open flame when the weather is warm embodies the relaxing spirit of spring and summer, prompting many people to leave their oven ranges behind in favor of charcoal and gas grills. As relaxing as backyard barbecues can be, they can quickly take a turn for the worse if cooks don't emphasize safety when grilling out. According to the National Fire Protection Association, an average of 9,600 home fires are started by grills each year. In fact, the Consumer Product Safety Commission notes that, between 2012 and 2016, an average of 16,600 patients went to the emergency room each year because of injuries involving grills. Such statistics only highlight the need to balance the fun of grilling with safety when hosting a backyard barbecue or cooking for the family.

The following are some steps people can take to ensure their backyard barbecues are safe:

- Recognize that gas grills pose a threat as well. It's easy to assume gas grills don't pose as great a threat as charcoal grills, which produce soaring flames once the charcoal is lit. But the NFPA notes that gas grills are involved in 7,900 home fires per year. No grill is completely safe, and cooks must emphasize safety whether they're using gas grills, charcoal grills or smokers.
- Only use grills outdoors. Grills should never be used indoors. Even if rain unexpectedly arrives during a backyard barbecue, keep the grill outside. If unexpected rain is accompanied by lightning and thunder, extinguish the fire in the grill and go indoors.
- Place the grill in a safe location. Grills should be placed well away from the home. Avoid locating grills near deck railings or beneath eaves and overhanging branches. Cut overgrown branches before lighting a grill fire if they are in close proximity to the grill.
- Keep your grill clean. The buildup of grease and fat, both on the grill grate and in trays below the grill, increases the risk of fire. Clean the grill routinely.
- Properly light the grill. Lighting gas and charcoal grills requires caution. Before lighting a gas grill, make sure the lid is open. If you must use starter fluid to light a charcoal grill, the NFPA advises using only charcoal starter fluid. Never add any fluids to the fire after it has been lit.
- Do not leave a grill unattended. Cooks should never leave a lit grill unattended. If you must leave the grill, only do so if another adult can stand in your stead. Lit grills pose a threat to children and pets, and unattended grills can be blown over by gusts of wind or tipped by wild animals, such as squirrels. Standing by a lit grill at all times can protect against such accidents and injuries.



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Relaxation Techniques to Embrace as Summer Begins

ARTICLE BY METRO CREATIVE GRAPHICS, INC.



Summer is a time of year that's synonymous with relaxation. The warm air and glowing sun of summer helps people to relax and take some time away from work to smell the roses. Or so it may seem. According to the U.S. Travel Association, Americans accumulated 705 million unused vacation days in 2017. That's 43 million more unused vacations than the year prior. Americans' neighbors to the north seem to be following suit, as a 2018 survey from ADP Canada found that only one in three Canadian workers use their two weeks' of vacation each year.

Unused vacation time may be having a more adverse effect on workers

than they know. The American Institute of Stress notes that various studies have shown that job stress is a major and primary source of stress for American workers. When workers don't use their allotted vacation time, they never get a break from that stress, allowing its effects to accumulate and put their long-term health in jeopardy. The arrival of summer presents a perfect opportunity for professionals to take some time off from work and focus on reacquainting themselves with relaxation. The following are various practices that can help people relax, courtesy of the NorthShore University Health system.

Breathing

Healthy breathing techniques can help the body take in more oxygen, which can relieve anxiety, slow the heart rate and stabilize blood pressure. Deep breathing exercises can teach people how to control their breathing.

Meditation

Various forms of meditation can be employed to help people alleviate stress. Meditating for as little as five to 10 minutes can be effective. The Synchronicity Foundation for Modern Spirituality notes that meditating for as long as you feel comfortable, whether it's 10 minutes or an hour, can be effective, and that it's even possible to meditate too much. The group advises paying attention to your meditation tolerance and set aside enough time to benefit from meditation without overdoing it.

Yoga

Many people find yoga to be great exercise for the body and an excellent way to alleviate stress. Combining various poses with breathing exercises, yoga can relax the mind and promote flexibility in the body. That latter benefit can be especially useful for people whose muscles tighten as a result of stress.

Visualization

Visualization involves participants imagining relaxing settings and focusing on their details. The goal of visualization is eliminate stressful thoughts and calm the body.

Summer is a time of year that's synonymous with relaxation. It also marks a great time for people dealing with stress to embrace various relaxation techniques that can help them reduce their stress and restore their energy levels.

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Did you know?

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The Consumer Product Safety Commission says that many parents are unaware that common sparklers can burn at temperatures between 1,200 and 2,000 F or more depending on the fuel and oxidizer used. That is hot enough to melt some metals and can cause third-degree burns. Despite this, sparklers are commonly handed out to children at celebrations without anyone advising on proper safety use. The American Academy of Ophthalmology says sparklers cause 27 percent of all fireworks-related injuries. Parents may want to look for safer options for kids, like noisemakers used during New Year's celebrations. Confetti, water guns and balloons also can be relatively safe ways for children to participate in July 4th fun.

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How To Identify Poison Ivy

ARTICLE BY METRO CREATIVE GRAPHICS, INC.



only highlights the importance of learning to recognize poison ivy on a property and taking the appropriate measures to prevent anyone from coming into contact with it.

Is all poison ivy the same?

Many people may be surprised to learn that all poison ivy plants are not one and the same. Poison-Ivy.org notes that there are different types of poison ivy in different places, so curious homeowners should visit the site to determine how to identify the type of poison ivy specific to where they live. Eastern Poison Ivy grows on the ground, climbs and sometimes appears as a shrub. And despite its name, Eastern Poison Ivy grows from the east coast to the midwest, affecting people in middle American states like Kansas and Nebraska. Eastern Poison Ivy also can be found in some parts of Texas and Arizona.

Poison ivy is an unwelcome guest on many properties. Unfortunately, many people don't recognize the presence of poison ivy on their property until it's too late and they've already fallen victim to the uncomfortable, itchy red rash that is the plant's hallmark.

According to Poison-Ivy.org, a

website providing information about poison ivy, poison oak and poison sumac, the rash from poison ivy may first appear as just a slight itchy spot. But that spot will gradually get worse and can even cover your entire body with giant red sores if left untreated or if it goes undetected for too long. That

What Are Some *Telltale Signs* of The Poison Ivy Plant?

Eastern Poison Ivy is the most widespread poison ivy plant, and these are some of its characteristics:

- Poison ivy plants always have leaves of three. No poison ivy plants have more than three leaves.
- The edges of poison ivy leaves are never saw-toothed or scalloped.
- Poison ivy always grows left, then right. That means that the stem/branch of leaves closest to the root of the plant will always lean left. Subsequent stems/branches of leaves can lean right. Stems/branches of poison ivy leaves are never side by side.
- Poison ivy leaves will appear differently depending on the season. In spring, Eastern Poison Ivy leaves will appear red. As spring turns into summer, the leaves will gradually appear more green. Come fall, the green leaves will look as if they were brushed with red, with some leaves featuring patches or spots of red.
- Poison ivy plants never have thorns.

How To Conserve Water *As The Mercury Rises*

ARTICLE BY METRO CREATIVE GRAPHICS, INC.

Conserving natural resources is often so simple that people make some adjustments without affecting their daily lives at all. But sometimes it's not so easy to conserve.

Summer is one time of year when conservation efforts tend to require more sacrifice than normal. Even the most devoted conservationist may find it difficult to conserve water during the dog days of summer, when drought and soaring temperatures make it difficult to maintain lawns and gardens. Thankfully, there are ways to help lawns and gardens withstand summer's dog days without wasting water.

- Water wisely. Watering lawns and gardens in the early morning hours is a savvy move for various reasons. Heat-related illnesses such as heat stroke and heat exhaustion pose a



serious threat to people of all ages, and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommends cooling off in air conditioned places as temperatures climb. By watering their lawns and gardens early in the morning, homeowners are ensuring

they won't be outside watering during those times of day when their risk for heat stroke and heat exhaustion is at its peak. In addition, watering in the early morning when the sun has not yet reached its peak decreases the amount of water that will be lost to evaporation, thereby increasing the amount of water that will make it into water-needy lawns and gardens.

enthusiasts can conserve water and save money on their water bills by taking quick showers at the beach to wash the sand off. A cold shower can be the perfect remedy after a long day of soaking up some sun at the beach. And because beach showers use cold water, beachgoers are less likely to take luxurious, potentially wasteful showers than they might at home.

- Take nights off from doing dishes. Hand-washing dishes may seem like a more effective way to conserve water than using a dishwasher, but that's not the case. The National Resources Defense Council notes that hand-washing dishes can consume as many as 27 gallons of water, while Energy Star®-rated dishwashers consume just three gallons of water. Before running the dishwasher, make sure it's full.

- Cover your pool. Keeping pools covered during the dog days of summer reduces the likelihood that pool water will be lost to evaporation. In fact, the GRACE Communications Foundation, a nonprofit organization dedicated to creating sustainable food systems, notes that uncovered pools can lose as much as 1,000 gallons of water to evaporation each month.

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How To Help Flowers *Withstand Heat Waves*

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hoses when watering flowers because they promote deep watering that can help the plants withstand the summer heat. If you must use an overhead watering system, set the timer so plants are watered in early in the morning or evening.

- Routinely check the soil moisture. Soil moisture can help gardeners determine if their flowers have enough water to withstand the heat. The NGA advises gardeners to dig a 12-inch deep wedge of soil from their gardens to determine its moisture levels. If the top six inches of the soil is dry, water. If that area is still wet or moist, the plants have enough moisture to withstand the heat. Check these moisture levels more frequently during heat waves than other times of year.

- Avoid overwatering. Novice gardeners may be tempted to water more frequently when they see wilted leaves on their flowers. But wilted leaves are not necessarily indicative of suffering plants.

Plants release moisture to protect themselves from excessive heat, and that release of moisture can cause leaves to wilt as the plants try to protect themselves by providing less surface area that can be exposed to the sun. So long as soil moisture levels are healthy, the flowers should be fine, even if their leaves have wilted.

Heat waves are an inevitable part of summer in many places across the globe. While humans can escape indoors to air conditioned rooms when heat waves hit full swing, flowers planted around a property have no such luxury, putting their survival in jeopardy whenever the mercury rises to especially steamy heights.

Wilted flowers that have succumbed to the summer sun are a sight many gardening enthusiasts can recognize. But there are ways to keep flowers safe and vibrant during periods of extreme heat.

- Water at the appropriate times of day. The National Gardening Association notes that it's best to water in the early morning and evening because less water will be lost to evaporation during these

times of day than during the afternoon, when temperatures tend to be at their hottest.

- Choose the right watering method. It's not just when but also how you water that can affect flowers during summer heat waves. Aboveground sprinklers might be great for lawns, but the NGA notes that such sprinklers can encourage the spread of disease on certain plants, including roses. Many gardening professionals recommend soaker

No gardener wants to see their flowers succumb to the summer heat. Fortunately, there are many ways to help flowers survive heat waves.



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Great Ways to Enjoy a Day On A Boat

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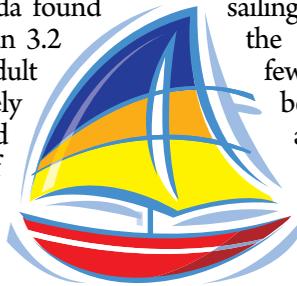
Few things can be as enjoyable on a warm day as spending some time on a boat. For many people, the sound of the water lapping beneath a boat and the feeling of a warm summer breeze blowing through their hair is the very essence of summer relaxation.

Boating appeals to people with varying interests, and there are many ways one can enjoy a day spent traversing a nearby river, lake or ocean.

Fishing

Recreational fishing is wildly popular. According to the Recreational Boating & Fishing Foundation, in 2016 more than 47 million Americans participated in

fishing at least once during the calendar year. In its Survey of Recreational Fishing in Canada, the organization Fisheries and Oceans Canada found that more than 3.2 million adult anglers actively participated in a variety of recreational fishing activities in Canada in 2015. The sheer volume of people who enjoy recreational fishing suggests it's an activity that has widespread appeal and it can benefit people of all ages and skill levels. What's more, fishing provides a wonderful excuse to spend a day on a boat.



Sailing

Sailing is a rewarding and demanding hobby. Avid sailors often describe the origins of their love of sailing as "catching the bug." Indeed, few hobbies can be as gratifying as sailing, which the organization Discover Boating® notes requires participants to be more active than almost any other type of boating. While sailing can be physically demanding, when the waters are calm, few activities can be as peaceful and relaxing.

Exploring

Of course, even people

who do not own their own boats can still enjoy time on the water. The Recreational Boating and Fishing Foundation notes that roughly 90 percent of U.S. residents live within one hour of navigable bodies of water. Many waterfront communities, particularly those with tourism-based economies, are home to small businesses that provide local river, lake or ocean tours. These can be great ways to learn about local history and/or see local marine life.

A day spent on a boat is a great way to enjoy a warm afternoon. And the options are endless when it comes to how to spend such days on the water.

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Reasons You Need a Hammock or Hanging Chair

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Sunny days and warm weather beckon us to the great outdoors. A day spent in the pool or lounging around the patio is a great way to embrace the relaxing spirit of summer. But those who want to go the extra relaxing miles should consider adding a hammock or swinging chair to their backyard oasis.

Hammocks and swinging chairs make great investments. Outdoor enthusiasts can take them on camping trips, and they're equally at home right in the backyard. People on the fence about these symbols of relaxation can consider these benefits of hammocks or swinging chairs.

1.

Nap Comfortably Outdoors.

Who needs an excuse to catch up on missing sleep? If the time presents itself, the sun and the fresh air can induce a deep sense of relaxation. Lying on a hammock or floating in a hanging chair provides that additional soothing rocking motion that can make a cat nap even more enticing.

2.

Use It Indoors Or Outdoors.

Create a retreat in any corner of your yard or home. A hanging chair can be hung in the corner of a bedroom to provide a spot to curl up with a good book or rock a baby to sleep. The same chair can be brought to a covered deck or patio so people can swing with the breeze when the weather allows.

3.

Super Stargazing Retreat.

Hammocks and swinging chairs can make it easier and more comfortable to stargaze at night. With a double hammock or chair, bring a romantic partner along to snuggle and watch the cosmos. Or teach children about the constellations in the night sky.

4.

Be Inconspicuous Among Nature.

Lying on the ground disturbs the lawn and other outdoor components. Being suspended several inches above the ground in a chair or a hammock can help a person blend in with the natural environment. Birds, small animals and insects may not even know you're there, and that can make them easier to observe.

Everyone can appreciate the opportunity to sit back and relax. Hammocks and swinging chairs can help a person feel lighter than air and recharge in the warm summer air.



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Did you know?

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Ticks spread Lyme disease to people and other animals. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention says that, in humans, untreated Lyme disease can create an array of symptoms, depending on the stage of infection. Anyone who has spent time outdoors should be aware of the potential symptoms, which can include fever, rash (classic erythema migrans rash, also called 'bull's-eye rash'), facial paralysis, and arthritis. Some people with later stage Lyme disease may have rashes on other areas of their bodies; intermittent pain in tendons, muscles and bones; and experience heart palpitations. LymeDisease.org states that not every person suffering from Lyme disease will develop the same symptoms. The distinctive rash occurs in less than 10 percent of those who contact Lyme. If a tick bite is verified, promptly contact a physician.

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Start Thinking Summer With Desserts That Refresh

ARTICLE BY METRO CREATIVE GRAPHICS, INC.

Ice cream is a go-to dessert in warm weather. Creamy, cold and refreshing, ice cream makes for the perfect complement to a hot afternoon. Ice cream can be served in various ways, including in a cup, on a cone, in sundae form accompanied by a bevy of favorite toppings, or mounded on a hot waffle. This cool treat is also

stupendous in shakes or as the a la mode when served alongside pies and cakes. There's just no end to the ways ice cream can be enjoyed.

While it's perfectly acceptable to head to the nearest supermarket freezer section for a pint or two of the cold stuff, many people overestimate how much work goes

into making ice cream at home. Anyone can whip up their own custom flavors and keep the freezer stocked with fresh desserts.

Start with base ingredients for basic vanilla ice cream, courtesy of The Food Network, and then customize with creativity.

Homemade Vanilla Ice Cream

- 3 cups heavy cream
- 1 cup whole milk
- 3/4 cup sugar
- 1 tbsp pure vanilla extract
- Kosher salt
- 5 large egg yolks



Whisk the cream, milk, sugar, vanilla, and 1/2 teaspoon salt in a medium saucepan and bring to a simmer over medium heat. Beat the egg yolks in a medium bowl.

Slowly whisk 1 cup of the hot cream mixture into the beaten yolks, then pour back into the saucepan, whisking, and return to medium heat. Cook, stirring constantly with

a wooden spoon, until the mixture thickens, coats the spoon and reaches 180 F on a thermometer, 6 to 8 minutes.

Remove from the heat and strain the custard through a fine-mesh sieve into a large bowl or measuring cup; discard the solids. Stir often until the mixture cools to room temperature. Lightly press plastic wrap directly

against the surface of the custard to prevent a skin from forming. Chill until cold, about 3 hours.

Freeze the mixture in an ice cream machine according to the manufacturer's instructions. Place the ice cream in the freezer to set up for at least 1 hour.

Now comes the fun part - Choosing Flavors!

- Add in crumbled bits of pretzels and peanut butter for a sweet and salty favorite.
- Stir in bits of oatmeal cookie and cooked-down apple bits for an apple pie-inspired flavor.
- Transform vanilla into peach ice cream with the addition of canned peaches.
- Hazelnut flavors are all the rage, so be sure to mix in creamy Nutella and some chocolate cookie chunks for a cookies and cream variety that wins.
- Evoke the taste of cheesecake with the addition of a little cream cheese, graham cracker pieces and blueberry compote.
- Add freshly brewed coffee to your ice cream base and some caramel sauce for a dessert that's straight off a coffee shop menu.

Anyone will scream for homemade ice cream with customized fresh flavors!

Prevent *Mosquitos* From Ruining Your Summer Fun

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Summer is a beloved time of year that's often dominated by time spent outdoors soaking up summer sun. But all that extra time outdoors can make people vulnerable to mosquitoes. According to the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health, mosquitoes are more than just hungry, unwanted backyard guests. In fact, mosquito-borne diseases, including the Zika virus, the West Nile virus and dengue, pose significant threats. While not all mosquitoes carry disease, even those that don't can still bite humans, leaving them to deal with discomfort and itchiness. Taking measures to control mosquitoes outside your home can reduce your risk of being bitten by mosquitoes.

- Remove places where mosquitoes like to lay their eggs. Mosquitoes like to lay their eggs in standing

water. Once a week during summer and other times of the year when mosquitoes might be buzzing around, walk around your property to remove standing water. Bird baths, flower pots, kids' toys, pools, old tires, and trash containers are some of the more common places where water can collect and present perfect places for mosquitoes to lay eggs. Turn these over to empty any standing water you find. Remove empty flower pots and old tires from the property, and make sure water storage containers are tightly covered at all times.

- Address areas where mosquitoes like to rest. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention notes that mosquitoes like to rest in dark, humid areas. This includes car ports, garages and beneath patio furniture. Outdoor insecticides can prevent mosquitoes from

resting in such areas. When inside a home, mosquitoes may be resting under a sink, in closets, beneath the furniture or in a laundry room. Indoor insect sprays and indoor insect foggers work quickly and can be highly effective, but reapplication might be necessary, as they won't prevent more mosquitoes from entering the home at a later time.

- Check your window screens. Mosquitoes might prefer the outside, but that doesn't mean they won't enter a home looking for meals if given the opportunity. Inspect window screens to look for holes that may provide mosquitoes with access to your home's interior, replacing any damaged screens immediately. When leaving or entering a home, make a concerted effort to close doors as quickly as possible.

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Maximize Your *Summer Vacation*

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Summer can fly by. Because summer can sometimes seem to come and go in a flash, it's important for everyone to make the most of this relaxing time of year.

Vacations from work and school are great ways to make summer memories, and there are many ways to get even more out of these relaxing breaks from the norm.

Try Out These *Summer Staycation* Ideas

- Disconnect for a few days. Truly disconnect from electronic devices for a period of time to give yourself a mental break. Stop answering work emails, avoid social media and turn off reminders of things that do not need your attention while you are on vacation or taking a break.
- Book a trip. It's not the destination but the opportunity to step away from the norm that can help make a person feel like he or she has truly gotten a break. Get away from your surroundings, if only for a weekend. Nearby resorts and water parks are great for short jaunts with the kids.
- Take a week off just to relax. Sometimes a person needs to recharge after going on vacation, as planning a trip and then the trip itself can require a lot of work. Staycations or devoting another week to just lounging around or catching up on tasks around the house can ease pressure. Then it's possible to go back to work or school feeling even more recharged.
- Get out of the house or office. What's the good of sunny skies and hot temperatures if you do not get to enjoy them? Make it a point to spend time outdoors every day. Go for a midday walk, sit in the park after work lets out or throw the ball around with the kids in the backyard. Sunlight can be great for the mind and body. Doctors with the Heliotherapy, Light, and Skin Research Center at Boston University Medical Center say sunlight triggers the release of serotonin and other hormones associated with a good mood. Increased exposure to sunlight also can regulate circadian rhythms for better sleep. Sunlight can trigger the release of nitric oxide into blood vessels, helping to lower blood pressure.
- Explore summer programs. Adults and children can try new skills and explore different talents this summer. Sign up for a camp or a class that runs several weeks. This will help stimulate the mind.
- Visit friends and family. Now that schedules have loosened up, take the opportunity to increase time spent with friends or family members, whether they live close by or far away. Make it a point to reconnect with someone who has been out of touch.

Summer is a great time of year to reconnect with nature and loved ones.

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Sunday: *The Boys, Baltimore, MD ✦ MC: DJ Ken Olowin*

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Family Cycling is an Enjoyable Escape

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Cycling as a family can be an enjoyable way to spend an afternoon & get some exercise.

Going for a bike ride is one of the best ways for people to exercise in fresh air. Cycling is not only earth-conscious and convenient, but it also is a fun and popular activity that anyone can enjoy.

Around 1.6 million residents of New York City ride a bike at least once a month, and in Portland, bike riding

rose by 3 percent each year since 2012, according to Bikemunk, a website dedicated to helping people understand bikes, especially in the context of making a purchase. The Alliance for Biking & Walking discovered that 0.6 percent of all commuters in the United States biked to work in 2013, up from 0.5 percent in 2009 and 0.4 percent in 2005. But many people are embracing cycling as an entertaining form of recreation that the entire family can enjoy.

Adults may have fond memories of their own cycling adventures as children that they want to pass down to their kids. Since families may feature cyclists with various levels of experience, it can be safe to employ certain strategies in the hopes that everyone gets the most out of their time in the cycling saddle.

Have Fun As A Family *Without Breaking The Bank*

ARTICLE BY METRO CREATIVE GRAPHICS, INC.



parents can save even more money by packing picnic-style foods, like salads and sandwiches, rather than using grills provided by the park (parks may or may not charge fees to use grills).

- Family days: Local attractions like zoos and museums may designate a certain day of the week as “Family Day.” Admissions might be discounted on these days, and some attractions may even allow kids to enter free. Take advantage of these promotions whenever possible. In addition, inquire about family memberships at local attractions. Such memberships may offer year-round entry for the whole family for an annual fee. Depending on how often you visit the attraction, paying an annual fee can save you a lot of money compared to paying regular admission prices on each visit.

- Festivals: Community festivals are another great way for families to get out of the house without taxing their budgets. Community festivals typically do not charge for admission. Parents should not downplay the benefits of free entertainment, as a report

from the Bureau of Labor Statistics found that the average American spent just over \$2,900 on entertainment in 2016.

- Camping: Campsites may charge fees, but such fees are nominal compared to the costs associated with more traditional lodging, like hotels. Camping is a fun activity the whole family can enjoy, providing a great weekend getaway that won't cost parents too much money.

Parents whose budgets are stretched thin can still find affordable ways to have fun as a family.

Raising children is no small task. Parents face numerous challenges when raising their kids, and while it may not be the biggest hurdle they face, the cost of raising a family can sometimes seem daunting.

A 2015 report from the U.S. Department of Agriculture found that a typical middle-class American family spent just under \$13,000 annually per child. Those costs included housing, food, childcare, health care, and the various other expenses associated with raising children. Multiply that number by 18 years and parents can expect to spend \$234,000 per child by the time the youngster graduates high school. That's before parents write a single college tuition check. The cost of raising children is no less significant in Canada, where Loans Canada, a

nationwide financial services firm, estimates that raising a child from birth to 18 will cost parents just under \$254,000.

Since the costs of raising children are so substantial, it's no surprise that parents are often on the lookout for budget-friendly ways to have fun as a family. The following are a handful of ways that families can have fun without breaking the bank.

- Picnics: Dining al fresco is an enjoyable way to break bread, but if backyard barbecues have grown stale, parents can always plan picnics in local parks. Park admission is probably free, and

Play



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auduboncnc.org

Did you know?

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Fireflies are often seen lighting up the night sky on warm evenings. They are particularly abundant during the summer months. One reason that fireflies glow is to attract mates. Males will flash, and females will respond to mates they find interesting. Fireflies also may glow to avoid predators. The luciferase enzyme in firefly cells causes a chemical reaction that stimulates light, a phenomenon called bioluminescence. Fireflies are filled with lucibufagins, a poor-tasting chemical that turns off predators from attacking the blinking bug. Some fireflies cannot light up at all and use pheromones to attract mates. Fireflies can be fun to catch and release and also beneficial to have around. In the larval stage, fireflies will eat destructive insects. Adult fireflies may feed on nectar and could help to pollinate plants. Despite their name, fireflies aren't really flies. They actually are a type of beetle. Fireflies are difficult to spot during the day because they're often resting on leaves or plants. It's only at night when their brilliant light show comes alive.

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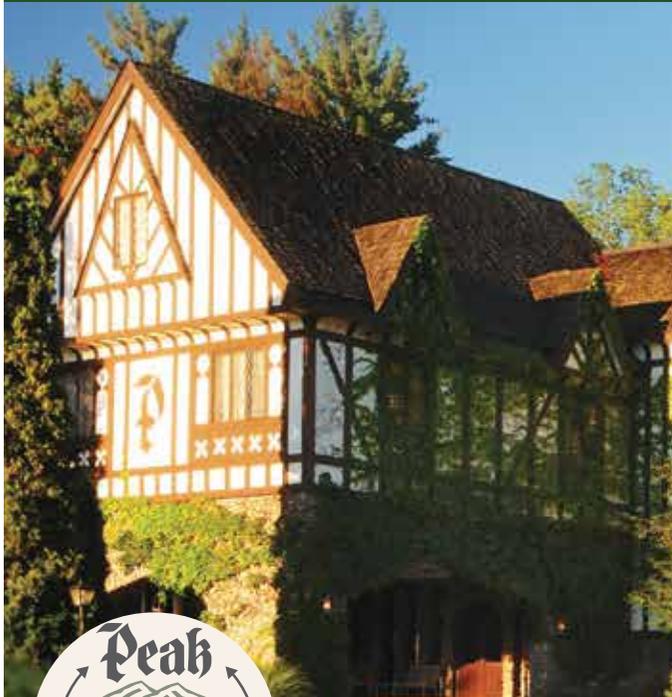
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