



A Newsletter For Customers and Friends Of Helix Courier

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Editor's notes:

We may not know what the future holds for us, but we are learning more and more about our pre-historic past. Archeologists now believe that the first four-legged creatures to spend their entire lives on dry land lived some 345 million years ago. The fossilized remains of a single small foot unearthed near the Scottish fishing village of Burnmouth changes the timeline for the appearance of land-based animals, pushing it earlier by 20 million years.

A mass extinction approximately 360 million years ago killed half of all vertebrate creatures on the planet, but the discovery of the five-toed foot, only 10 millimetres across, suggests that animal life bounced back in about 10 million years. Scientists exploring similar sites in Scotland and Canada hope to add more fossil information to our knowledge of the evolution of life on land.

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June gets its name from the Old English word "Junius," which translates roughly to "month of Juno." She was the Roman goddess of marriage, women, and the queen of the gods as the wife of Jupiter.

And here's what the present month offers us:

D-Day Anniversary, June 6 -- This day marks the 68th anniversary of D-Day, the Allied invasion of Europe during World War II that signaled the beginning of the end of the Nazi regime. More than 325,000 allied troops from 12 countries crossed the English Channel at its widest point in rough weather to attack the German forces. They landed on five beaches along 50 miles of the Normandy coast of France. The Allies deployed 5,000 ships, nearly 11,000 airplanes, and 50,000 military vehicles. The fierce fighting that ensued left more than 10,000 dead and wounded.

World Oceans Day, June 8 -- Celebrate the beauty and diversity of life in the world's oceans.

Magna Carta Day, June 15 -- On June 15, 1215, King John of England was forced to sign the Magna Carta, the "great charter" of English liberties that for the first time limited the authority of government and placed the rule of law above the power of the king. (Many, many government heads should be continually reminded of this great day.)

Summer Solstice, June 20 -- An instant in time when the Earth's axial tilt is most inclined toward the sun in the northern hemisphere, and when summer traditionally begins.

Father's Day, June 17 -- Give a hug and a kiss to all the important men in your life who are dads.

St. Jean-Baptiste Day, June 24 -- This is a public holiday in Canada because this saint was deemed patron saint of French Canadians by Pope Pius X in 1908. Celebrations include parades, parties, and bonfires.

Clean up your air with the right houseplants

Clean air is essential to good health at home and in the workplace. One simple way to keep the air you breathe fresh and free of odors and chemicals is to keep a few houseplants around. They'll clean the atmosphere and make your surroundings more pleasant and relaxing. Pick up some of these:

• **English ivy** -- This climbing vine grows in hanging baskets and low planters, and it helps clear away formaldehyde. (Be aware that it requires regular misting, especially during the winter months.)

• **Peace lily** -- A flowering plant, the peace lily will eradicate toxins like acetone, benzene, and ammonia from the air. Remember to wash the leaves every once in a while.

• **Rubber plant** -- This plant is hardy enough to survive cool temperatures and low light, making it ideal even if you're not particularly good with plants. Like the English ivy, it acts to reduce formaldehyde in the air as long as it gets plenty of water.

To Stay Fit, Stay on Your Feet

Mayo Clinic endocrinologist Dr. James Levine thinks "work" and "workout" shouldn't be mutually exclusive. Levine is pushing a concept he calls "NEAT," for "non-exercise activity thermogenesis": simple, everyday activities like walking at lunch, pacing while you talk on the phone, and generally getting out of your chair as much as possible to burn off extra calories.

Levine's own office features a treadmill he can walk on while using his computer or telephone. But you don't have to redesign your cubicle: Getting on your feet for a few "walk-and-talk" meetings during the day, taking a brisk 3--minute stroll at lunch, and other easy strategies can burn as many as 500 to 1,000 calories a day. So get moving!



Some thoughts to share with your new graduate . . .

It is June and your son or daughter have finally finished spending your money (or so you hope) and have graduated from college or university. For words of wisdom to share with them, we often turn to various commencement speakers for inspiration. This year we picked up a few quotable quotes from one of our favourite raconteurs, P.J. O'Rourke.

O'Rourke shares that he is a member of the 1960s generation but laments that "We didn't have any wisdom. We were the moron generation. We were the generation that believed we could stop the Vietnam War by growing our hair long and dressing like circus clowns."

He declares that he does not offer conventional advice but rather tells young people to, "Go out and make a bunch of money." Even though money can't buy happiness, it sure can rent it. He reminds us that in a "free society, with the rule of law and property rights, no one loses when someone else gets rich.

O'Rourke counsels the graduates to forget about fairness. In fact, he advocates for unfairness. He relates the anecdote about his 10-year-old daughter who is always saying, "That's not fair." When she says this, her father responds with: "Honey, you're cute. That's not fair. Your family is pretty well off. That's not fair. You were born in America. That's not fair. Darling, you had better pray to God that things don't start getting fair for you."

The author even cites the Bible to make his points. He discusses the 10 commandments which is a brief list of obligations and solemn moral precepts. Right at the end of the list is the admonition, "Don't envy your buddy because he has an ox or a donkey." As O'Rourke explains: "Think about how important this commandment is to a community, to a nation, to democracy. If you want a mule, if you want a pot roast, if you want a cleaning lady, don't whine about what the people across the street have. Get rich and get your own."

His final tongue-in-cheek piece of advice is, "Don't listen to your elders! After all, if the old person standing up here actually knew anything worth telling, he'd be charging you for it."

Some summer tips for . . .

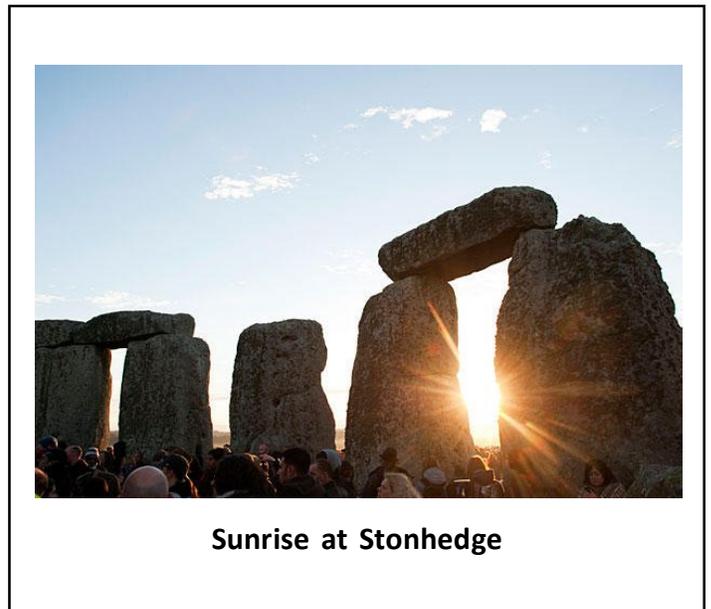
Long Car Trips

Do your kids get antsy on long drives? Do you or your spouse get drowsy? Aromatherapy experts say the scent of essential oils can fix both problems. To keep the kids relaxed and in a pleasant mood, opt for peppermint and lemon. For the driver, try rosemary for alertness. In both cases, put a few drops on a cotton ball or tissue and place in a plastic baggie. Open and inhale occasionally -- about every half hours -- for maximum effectiveness.

Walking on Sand

If you're heading for the beach this summer, you can improve your fitness and build up your calf muscles by taking a walk. A Belgian study found that walking on dry sand requires 2.1 to 2.7 times more exertion than walking on a hard surface.

According to the Kerlan-Jobe Orthopaedic Clinic in Los Angeles, walking on sand requires extra effort to position and roll the foot, leading to better coordination and more muscle mass.



Sunrise at Stonehenge

The Summer Solstice June 20

One of the most spectacular summer solstice celebrations takes place at Stonehenge, the ancient circle of massive stones on Salisbury Plain in Wiltshire, England. The first day of summer is one of the few days of the year when English Heritage -- the governing body that preserves the site -- opens the gates to allow people to watch the sun rise. Since the early 1900s, people have gathered at Stonehenge to welcome in the new season but, by the 1980s, England's Prime Minister Margret Thatcher put an end to the festival, declaring that there was too much public disorder at what is regarded as one of the world's great historical sites. By the late 1990s, English Heritage agreed to grant access to modern-day Druids, followers of the ancient Celtic religion. They wear white robes and dance and chant as part of their solstice ceremony. Others greet the dawn by playing drums and horns.

From the vantage point of the centre of Stonehenge, the sun rises in direct alignment with the massive Heel Stone, one of the stones that lies outside the main circle. Archaeologists believe that Stonehenge was built between 3,000 to 5,000 years ago as a calendar. By counting the days between these annual alignments, people could determine the length of the year.