

Chorus Chatter

News and Musings for Young at Heart Chorus Members

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Breathe Away Stress

Feeling stressed out? Take a few minutes to breathe deeply. Focused breaths will quickly calm you down by engaging the relaxing parasympathetic nervous system. One popular technique is 4-7-8 breathing. Inhale through your nose for four seconds, hold your breath for seven seconds, and exhale through your mouth for eight seconds. Repeat for about two minutes, or until you feel relaxed. "Think of breathing in fresh, clean air and breathing out the waste," says Dr. Kenneth Bock, founding director of Bock Integrative Medicine in Red Hook, NY.

Newsmax Maxlife



Stairway in Valparaíso, Chile

A Banana a Day...



Researchers at the University of Alabama have found that eating bananas every day could help prevent heart attacks

and strokes. Their study, which aimed to determine how the mineral potassium affects blood flow and artery health, examined mice who received a diet containing either low, normal, or high levels of potassium. Overall, mice given a low-potassium diet had much harder arteries than their counterparts. Mice who received high levels of potassium showed significantly less artery hardening and reduced stiffness in their aorta.

Previous studies and data also show that a potassium-rich diet helps lower blood pressure and reduce the risk of heart disease, according to Ragavendra Baliga, MD, a cardiologist at the Ohio State University Wexner Medical Center.

For most people, eating potassium-rich foods like bananas, sweet potatoes, beans, and dark leafy greens will contribute to a healthy diet and possibly reduce the risk for cardiovascular disease. Many people in the United States consume less potassium than is recommended. *Reader's Digest*

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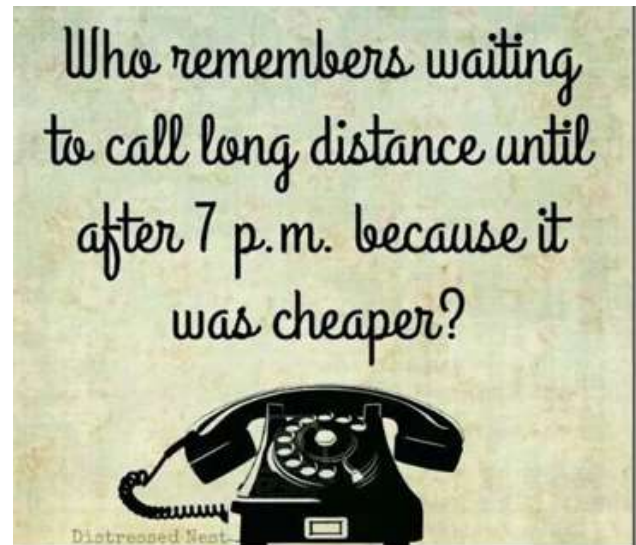
Different Sides of the Road



It might seem bizarre that drivers in the U.K. stay to the left, but they're not alone. Around 35 percent of the world population does the same, including people in Ireland, Japan, and some Caribbean islands. Originally, almost everybody traveled on the left side of the road. For Medieval swordsmen on horseback, it made sense to keep to the left to have their right arms closer to their opponents. Things changed in the late 1700s when large wagons pulled by several pairs of horses were used to transport farm products in France and the

United States. Without a seat in the wagon, the driver sat on the rear left horse, with his right arm free to use his whip to keep the horses moving. Since he was sitting on the left, he wanted other wagons to pass on his left, so he kept to the right side of the road. The British Government refused to give up their left-hand driving ways, but post-revolution France, under their left-handed ruler Napoleon, embraced a permanent move to the right side of the road.

When Henry Ford unveiled his Model T in 1908, the driver's seat was on the left, so cars would have to drive on the right-hand side of the road to allow front and back passengers to exit onto the curb. Canada, Italy, and Spain changed to right-side driving in the 1920s, and most of Eastern Europe followed suit in the 1930s. However British drivers remain on the left, and this is highly unlikely to change. *Reader's Digest*



Keep Your Hope Up

Hope is crucial to our physical and mental health. It protects against anxiety and despair and guards us from stress. Research shows that people with higher levels of hope have better coping skills and bounce back from setbacks faster. They're better at problem-solving and have lower levels of burnout. They have stronger relationships, because they communicate better and are more trusting. Psychologists define hope as a yearning for something possible but not certain— such

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as a better future—and a belief that you have some power to make it happen. And they believe it has two crucial components: The motivation to achieve the desired goal, and a strategy, or pathway to do that. This is how it differs from optimism, which is the belief the future will work out no matter what you do.

Anthony Scioli is a professor of psychology at Keene State College in Keene, N.H., and co-author of "Hope in the Age of Anxiety" and "The Power of Hope." He believes hopeful people draw on four main resources: Attachment is a sense of continued trust and connection to another person. Mastery, or empowerment, is a feeling of being strong and capable—and of having people you admire and people who validate your strengths. Survival has two features—a belief that you aren't trapped in a bad situation, and an ability to hold on to positive thoughts and feelings even while processing something negative. Spirituality is a belief in something larger than yourself.

Wall Street Journal



Head in the Sand?



Most of us get by happily on a single idea about ostriches: They are big birds that bury their heads in the sand in times of crisis, supposedly thinking that if they can't see danger, they are safe.

Big they are, weighing as much as 300 pounds and standing as high as nine feet tall. However, they hold their heads low to the ground, not under it, to feed on plants or tend to their nests, rather than to ignore danger. Ostriches are the fastest animal on two legs and have been clocked sprinting at more than 40 miles an hour. Their eyes are bigger than an elephant's, helping them keep close watch on the world around them, even spotting trouble almost two miles away on an open plain.

National Geographic

