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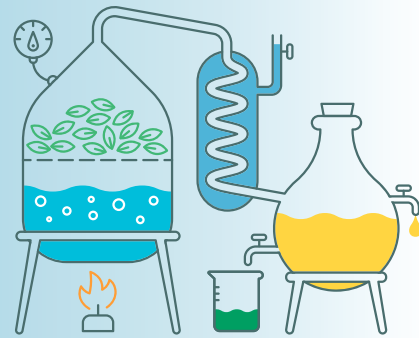
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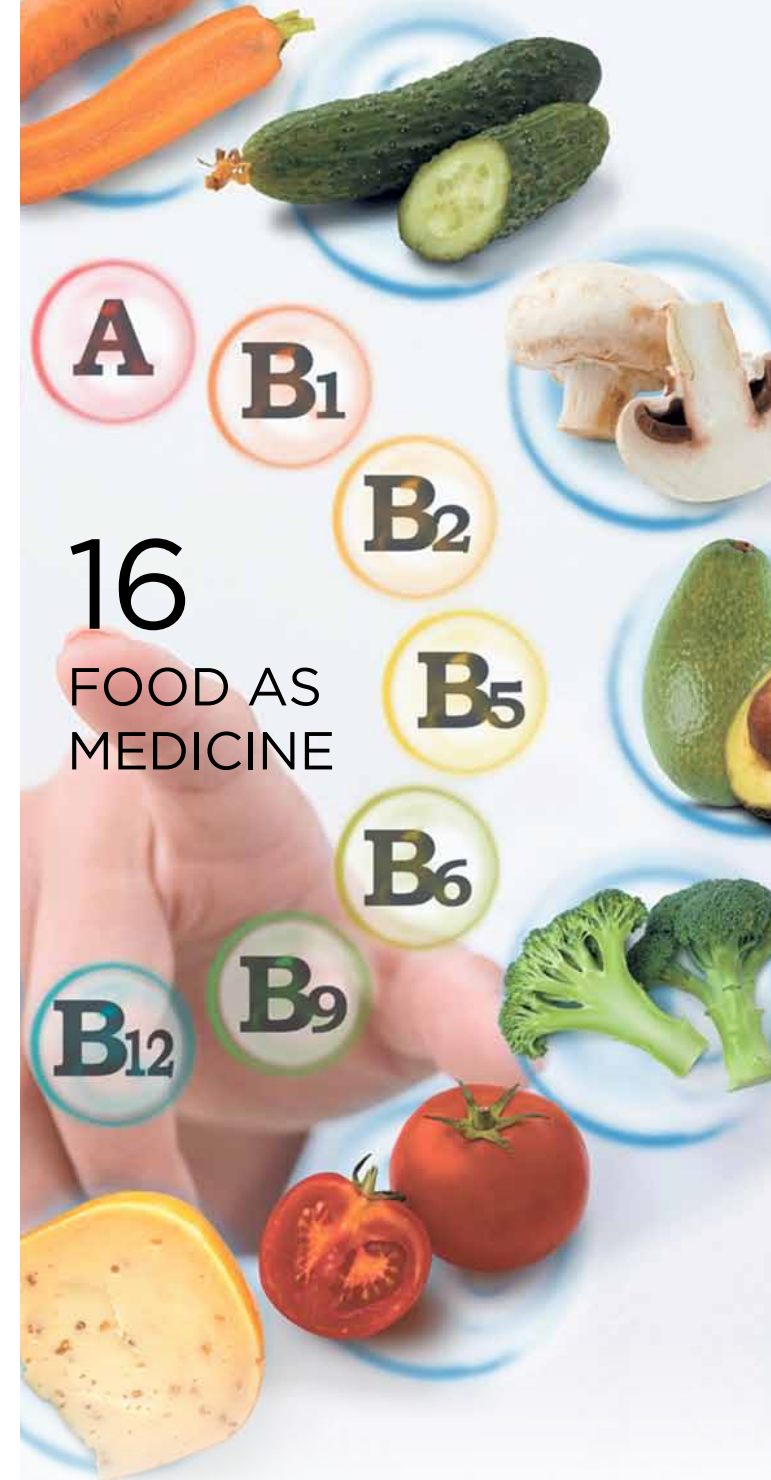


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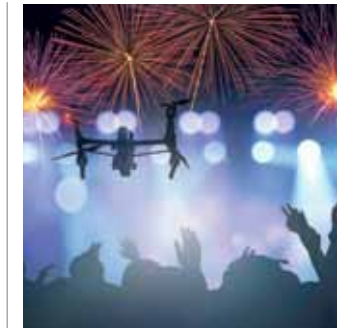
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2021'S TOP 5

The following are the most-read articles we've published in 2021 thus far.



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COVER PHOTO



Our July cover photograph was taken by **Thu Tran** of **2TPhoto**. Photography fuels Tran, an Atlanta-based yoga, family and destination wedding photographer. She loves to feel the energy of what she sees, and make it radiate through her lens. She feels the most alive when she is behind the camera, outdoors, traveling, and/or with her family. Tran has previously contributed photos for our yoga section on numerous occasions, and we are grateful! The cover photo was taken at Elohee Center, a retreat facility about 90 miles north of Atlanta in Sautee Nacoochee, Georgia.

For more information: 2TPhoto.com and Elohee.org.

CORRECTION: In our June Atlanta Brief on Giving Tree Yoga + Wellness, we incorrectly stated that the studio just started offering yoga teacher training. Giving Tree started offering YTT in 2019 and completed its fourth 200-hour cohort in June 2021.

HEALTHY LIVING HEALTHY PLANET



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The Good News,
The Bad News &
The SAD News

Which do you want first? Here's the sad news. It turns out that the Standard American Diet—yes, “SAD”—is now considered a primary risk factor for high blood pressure, dangerous cholesterol levels, high blood sugar levels and weight gain, according to the World Health Organization (WHO). The good news is that the risk of developing many of our deadliest conditions—heart disease, Type 2 diabetes and cancer, to name a few—can be significantly reduced with the help of a healthier diet and lifestyle changes. Plant-based eating is finally going mainstream, and many respected studies show it can treat, reverse and even prevent chronic disease. It's so doable! Read more in our feature article, “Food as Medicine,” on page 16.

The bad news is that way too many Americans don't have the convenient access to healthy, alive food the rest of us take for granted. More than 35 million Americans faced food insecurity in 2019 and a reported 54 million in

2020. Where's the good news? People are creating and discovering innovative and sometimes fun ways that you and I can help turn the problem around if we choose to. Check out “Growing Food Security” on page 33. The good news is that it's summer! That means it's time to brush off your grill and brush up on your grilling techniques. “Sizzling on the Grill” on page 14 gives invaluable advice on how to grill healthy, delicious meals that avoid objectionable ingredients like carcinogens and chemicals.

There's more good news in that, thanks in part to the pandemic, more people are catching on to the benefits of natural health products. Check out the trends in “COVID Raises Fever for Natural Products” on page 20.

Here comes the hot good news! Summertime is a great time to de-quarantine, escape the tedium of life and immerse oneself in something meaningful. For many of our readers, that means going on a retreat. In Noah Chen's story

“Time for a Retreat?” on page 28, find out why some people find them profoundly rewarding. Or learn about how combining energy work with yoga asanas can be a more powerful way for people to find balance and well-being than either practice alone in Sheila Ewers' story, “Energy Balancing Plus Gentle Yoga” on page 24. And Patricia Wallenburg, Owner of OAK Sanctuary in Kennesaw, tells us how flower essences can help heal body and mind in “Bach Flower Essences” on page 22.

Finally, with sadness, we say “Happy Trails!” to gifted writer and contributor Kim Green, who recently moved with her family to Tucson, Arizona. Read her wonderful final essay for us, “Calculating Risk,” in our Walking Each Other Home segment on page 38. ♡



Diane Eaton,
Managing Editor

Raw Chef Winners Crowned

The theme of this year's raw food competition at the Wonderful Wizards of Raw, a lively three-day festival celebrating raw food, was "aphrodisiacs," and the winners were: Larese Dockery of IAMOH Herbals in first place; Chanda Lee of Embrace Raw Living in second; and Satice of Mela9ated Magic in third.

The festival was held the first weekend in June in the backyard of Tassili's Raw Reality Café in Atlanta's historic West End.

"Our annual event is an opportunity to encourage raw food chefs to experience friendly competition and to be creative, knowledgeable, and to think outside the box," says Tassili Ma'at, founder and owner of the café.

Dockery's offering was a chocolate-raspberry sea moss jelly she calls IAMOH Herb-Infused Wild Sea Moss Gel. "It was so good it just tasted sexy!" said Ma'at, who served as one of the competition's five judges. "And all the sensual ingredi-



Larese Docker, Satice, Chanda Lee (Photo: Paul Chen)

Winners received custom-made crowns and gift cards to Tassili's Raw Reality Café.

For more information, visit IAMOH-Herbals.Square.site, Mela9atedMagic.com or facebook.com/OrganicFlavas.

ents in there to activate and sustain arousal were combined in such a healthy way that it got unanimous agreement by the judges."

Lee's offering was pizza. Says Ma'at: "The second-place contestant would have been first if the competition was just based on the food. The pizza was so delicious, you could really taste the love put into it."

Satrice's was a dessert concoction. "The cinnamon and nuts together blended well for a very sensual eating experience," says Ma'at. "And then she topped it with the cacao and other goodies that topped off the aphrodisiac component."

GAIA GARDENS SEEKS ORGANIC FARMER



Gaia Gardens, one of Atlanta's first organic urban farms located just four miles from downtown Atlanta, has begun a search for its next farmer.

An open house is scheduled for 1 p.m. on July 18. A tour of the farm and surrounding community will be followed by a discussion, a Q&A session and a meet and greet. Interested parties should RSVP to Karen Minvielle at KarenMinvielle@gmail.com.

Founded in 1998 within the cohousing community of East Lake Commons (ELC), Gaia Gardens is a five-acre organic garden with two pole barns, a heated greenhouse, two high tunnels, two walk-in coolers, three sheds, two tractors and tools and implements.

The current farmer, Joe Reynolds, is in his 11th year and will depart at the end of 2021. His tenure has been accentu-



Joe Reynolds (Photos: Joe Reynolds)

ated by community leadership; Reynolds served as a member and chair of the board of Georgia Organics.

"We are very sad to see Joe leave us since he, his wife Judith Winfrey and all of his employees have become an integral part of our community," says Minvielle, who chairs ELC's garden committee. "It will be exciting to see how Gaia Gardens will grow from fresh new ideas from a new farmer or farming-related organization and see how they steward this land."

Minimum qualifications for the position include organic farming experience, a desire to try something unique and a willingness to collaborate with ELC's residents.

For more information: tinyurl.com/nn7532dt. Interested parties should email a personal statement and résumé to FarmerSearch@eastlakecommons.org.

Georgia Organics' 2021 Awards

Celebrate Farmers and Champion Chefs

Every year, Georgia Organics, the oldest statewide nonprofit providing direct support to small and organic farmers, honors Georgia's foremost leaders in the organic agriculture and sustainable food community with two awards, the Land Steward Award, which honors those who have contributed significantly to the organic agriculture movement, and the Barbara Petit Pollinator Award, honoring those who've shown outstanding community leadership in Georgia's sustainable farming and food movements.

In 2021, the organization added a third award category: their Farm-to-Restaurant program's Farmer Champion award. The award honors restaurants or chefs that have allocated at least 5% of their food costs to local and organic producers, demonstrated a commitment to Georgia producers, and are an example to others that sourcing locally is possible.

All of Georgia Organics' award winners embody the organization's ambitious vision to foster a healthy environment, improve personal and public wellness, build a sustainable farm economy, promote food justice as racial justice and protect animal welfare.

This year, Jenny and Chris Jackson from Jenny Jack Farm received Georgia Organic's Land Stewardship Award, and Brennan and Gwendolyn Washington of Phoenix Gardens were

honored with the Barbara Petit Pollinator Award. The organization's newest award, Farmer Champion, went to Chris Wilkins of Root Baking Co., Steven Satterfield of Miller Union, Stevenson Rosslow of Wrecking Bar, and Hugh Acheson and Sam Herndon of Empire State South.

"Georgia Organics' annual awards are all about celebrating the farmers and food leaders working tirelessly to improve their communities and the soil," says communications director Mary Elizabeth Kidd. "While we couldn't gather in person this year, it was so exciting to see farmers, chefs and other supporters come together—via Zoom—to support the winners and celebrate these incredible farmers and chefs in spite of the distance."

Visit Georgiaorganics.org/awards to learn about the organization's awards and this year's award winners.



Jenny & Chris Jackson (Photo: Kayla Williams)



Brennan & Gwendolyn Washington (Photo: Kayla Williams)



Hugh Acheson Steven Satterfield Chris Wilkins Stevenson Rosslow (Photos: Courtesy Georgia Organics)

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The CBD Joint & Viva Wellness Open Second Locations

The CBD Joint, founded by Roz Grigger in 2019, opened its second store in Smyrna in mid-June. The new storefront is located at 668 Windy Hill Road SE in Smyrna; its first store is at 801 Church Street, Unit 100, in Marietta.



The CBD Joint in Smyrna (Photo: Roz Grigger)

The new store has about 1,200 square feet of floor space, which includes a room for healing sessions, plus a lot more space outside for events.

“I am extremely excited for the next level of The CBD Joint,” says Grigger. “This is the 2.0 version—more awesome, innovative, quality products, and we’re partnering with other wellness businesses and services that use CBD in their practice.”

As an example of a “2.0 partnership” with Grigger, Dr. Sherterica Hall, a chiropractor, uses CBD products from The CBD Joint in her practice. The two also help add to each other’s offerings: Grigger offers CBD education to Dr. Hall’s patients, and Dr. Hall provides wellness education to customers of The CBD Joint in Smyrna.

Viva Wellness of Atlanta, located in Marietta, opened

its second location in Kennesaw at 1619 Collins Rd, Suite 200, in late June.

The company “offers natural solutions for skin care, through our Eminence products, as well as natural hormone pellet therapy,” says Dr. Fatisha Gayton, founder and owner of Viva Wellness. “We also have many non-invasive products to help with skin care and body sculpting, and we have weight loss programs as well.”

Gayton graduated from the Morehouse School of Medicine and served her residency at Emory. She worked for many years as an emergency physician before pursuing her passion for aesthetics by opening her Marietta office last year.

For more information, visit TheCBDJointCollective.com and Viva-Atlanta.com.



Dr. Fatisha Gayton
(Photo: Alima Industries & STUDIO NINETYTWO)

CSA Senior Minister Passes Away

The Center for Spiritual Awareness (CSA) of Lakemont, Georgia, announced the passing of senior minister Ron Lindahn on May 14. He was 73 years old.

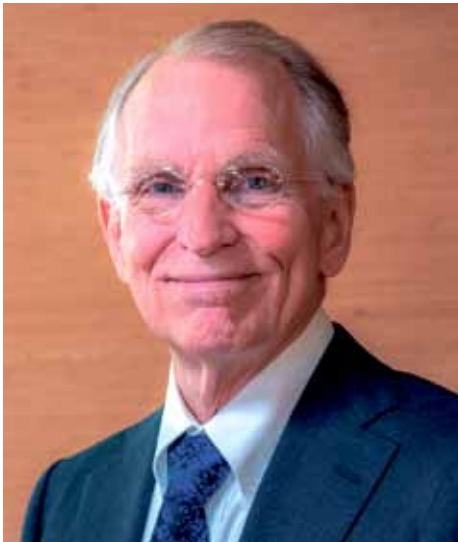
Lindahn was ordained by Roy Eugene Davis, founder of CSA, in 1978, after meeting him eight years prior. Davis was the last active direct disciple of Paramahansa Yogananda, who is credited with bringing the philosophy of yoga to the West early in the 20th century. Davis himself passed away in 2018.

“A dedicated kriya yogi, Ron’s sincere, joyous, intelligent service to CSA, to guru, and to God touched many lives and inspires us to deepen our spiritual unfoldment,” says Clifford Rosen, president

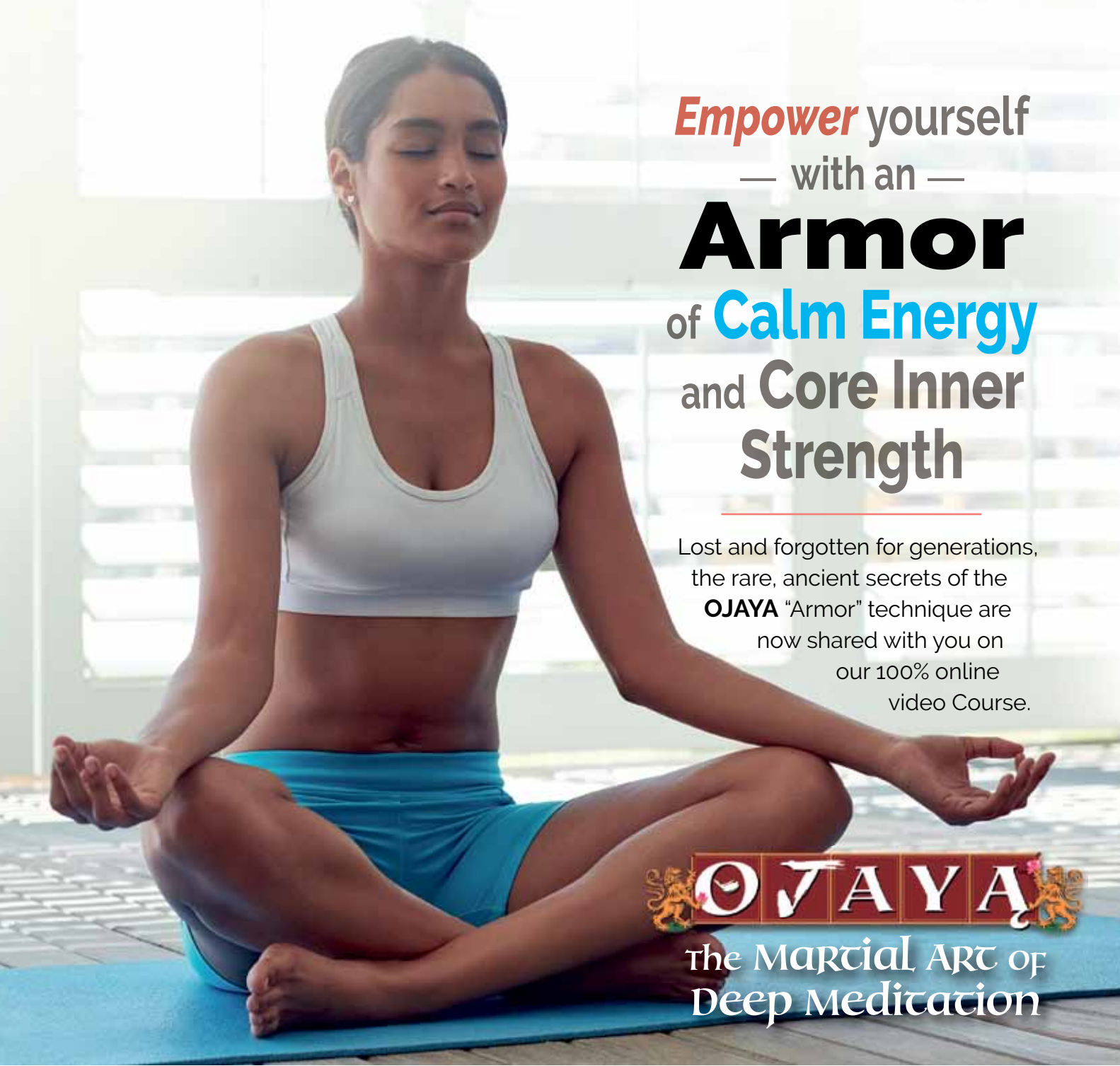
of the board of trustees of CSA, in his announcement of Lindahn’s passing.

Lindahn moved to Lakemont after being ordained and worked with Davis for three years. He remained in the area and taught locally and then rejoined CSA full-time in 2005.

As a professional photographer and videographer, Lindahn and his wife, Hélène, produced the film *Yogananda and the Kriya Yoga Masters*, which honors Yogananda’s impact on America and provides insights about the tradition’s spiritual teachers. When 2020 forced all classes to go online, Lindahn took a leadership role in giving CSA the ability to stream its offerings.



Ron Lindahn (Photo: Todd Bush)



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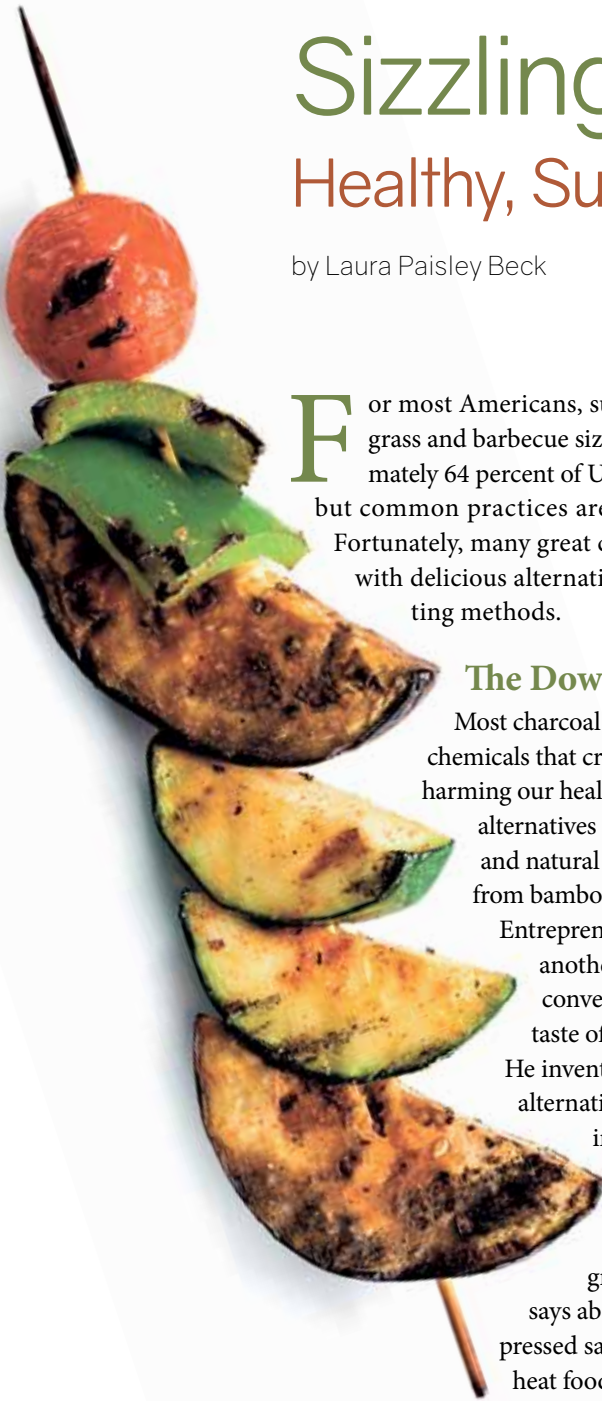
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Sizzling on the Grill

Healthy, Sustainable Summer Fare

by Laura Paisley Beck



For most Americans, summer smells like fresh-cut grass and barbecue sizzling in the backyard. Approximately 64 percent of U.S. adults own a grill or smoker, but common practices are bad for the environment. Fortunately, many great chefs have the problem covered with delicious alternatives to traditional, carbon-emitting methods.

The Downside of Grilling

Most charcoal and all lighter fluids contain chemicals that create air pollution when burned, harming our health and the environment. Better alternatives are sustainably sourced, organic and natural materials, such as charcoal made from bamboo or coconut shells. Entrepreneur Fred Grosse sought to solve another problem associated with conventional grilling materials: the taste of lighter fluid on barbecue foods. He invented Mojobricks, a carbon-neutral alternative to charcoal designed to impart a smoky flavor to grilled foods. “You’re breathing in 50 percent less particulate matter standing at the grill than if you grill with charcoal or wood,” he says about his bricks made with compressed sawdust from wood mills. “They heat food more efficiently, take up less storage space than bags of charcoal and keep trees growing in the forest.”

What Gets Grilled Matters

Americans eat three times more meat than the global average. To meet the immense demand, mass-produced beef is trucked across the nation with dire environmental impacts including cow methane emissions, the burning of fossil fuels for transport and excessive land use. To curtail these impacts, Americans can choose to reduce or eliminate their beef consumption and when they do decide to grill a ribeye or New York strip, choose local, organic, grass-fed beef. Eliminating meat is simple as vegetarian and vegan options are innumerable. “Question what a burger is, and off you go with legumes, root vegetables, mush-

rooms, cheese or whatever you happen to feel like,” says Martin Nordin, author of *Green Burgers*. Genevieve Taylor’s new cookbook, *Charred*, features enticing meals to cook over a flame that include vegetables, spices, nuts, herbs and other inventive ingredients. Amy Lawrence and Justin Fox Burks, co-authors of *Low-Carb Vegetarian*, have had a dramatic increase in requests for grilled versions of vegetarian dishes, a sign of increasing outdoor cooking trends.

Presentation for the Planet

When hosting backyard dinner parties, consider that paper and plastic dinnerware will end up in the landfill. Ask guests to bring a plate and fork or mix and match whatever dish sets are on hand. Another suggestion is to go vintage. “There has already been so much manufactured of everything, we wouldn’t need to manufacture another plate, for example, for another generation or two,” says Morgan Miller, owner of Rewind Decor vintage store in Madison, Wisconsin.

With a few adjustments, eco-grilling is easy, delicious and much better for the planet. Marinate locally sourced ingredients, burn as carbon-neutral a fire as possible and serve up delicious food on real plates that friends and family will help wash. Guests will be inspired and follow suit in their own homes. As Grosse says, “Each small difference adds up to big change.”

Laura Paisley Beck is a freelance writer and self-proclaimed foodie in Madison, Wisconsin. Reach out at LauraPaisleyBeck@gmail.com.

Great Grilling

BBQ Brussels Sprouts Sandwiches with Brussels Sprout Slaw

YIELD: 6 SANDWICHES

- 2 lb Brussels sprouts
- 1 cup shredded carrot (about one large)
- 2 Tbsp mayonnaise
- 1 Tbsp grainy mustard
- Kosher salt and cracked black pepper (to taste)
- 1 white onion (quartered and sliced)
- 2 Tbsp toasted sesame oil
- 1 Tbsp apple cider vinegar
- 2 Tbsp of *The Chubby Vegetarian’s Memphis BBQ Dry Rub*
- 1 cup BBQ sauce
- 6 hamburger buns

First, make the Brussels sprout slaw. Thinly slice enough of the Brussels sprouts to have 2 cups. Reserve the remainder of

the Brussels sprouts. In a large bowl, combine the 2 cups shredded sprouts with the shredded carrot, mayonnaise, mustard and salt and pepper to taste. Toss until well-incorporated. Set aside in the refrigerator until ready to serve. (Makes about 2 cups of slaw.) Preheat the grill on high for 10 minutes. Cover the grill with a single layer of aluminum foil. Slice the remaining Brussels sprouts in half. In a large bowl, toss the halved Brussels sprouts and the onion with the sesame oil, vinegar and BBQ dry rub until everything is coated. Place the Brussels sprouts on the grill for 5 minutes on one side and 4 minutes on the other side, or until the edges are brown and they’re cooked through. Remove sprouts from the grill and place them into a medium bowl. Pour in BBQ sauce. Using a spatula, toss the Brussels sprouts in the sauce until they’re well-coated.



Put the BBQ Brussels aside until ready to assemble the sandwiches. On the bottom part of each hamburger bun, pile on the BBQ and top it with the slaw.



The Chubby Vegetarian’s Memphis BBQ Dry Rub

(MEASURE ALL INGREDIENTS BY VOLUME)

- 2 parts chipotle chili powder
- 2 parts sweet paprika
- 2 parts smoked paprika
- 2 parts granulated garlic
- 2 parts kosher salt
- 2 parts cracked black pepper
- 2 parts cumin
- 2 parts dried thyme

- 2 parts dried oregano
- 1 part cinnamon
- 1 part ground ginger
- 1 part light brown sugar
- 1 part powdered, dried porcini mushrooms*

Mix all ingredients in a large food storage container until equally distributed.

*Dried porcini mushrooms can be found at almost any specialty grocery or ordered online. Turn the dried mushrooms into a powder by placing them in a coffee grinder or food processor and pulsing until no large bits remain.

Recipe by Justin Fox Burks and Amy Lawrence of *The Chubby Vegetarian* blog and cookbooks.



Sevananda now carries Tassili's famous kale wraps!



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FOOD AS MEDICINE

The Healing Power of Nutrition

by Julie Peterson

Eating is a basic need, but many Americans are not filling this need with healthful choices. Among the more than 700,000 Americans that die each year from heart disease, stroke or Type 2 diabetes, about 45 percent eat meals heavy in salt, processed meat and sugary drinks, and low in fruits, vegetables, fish and nuts, according to a March 2017 study in the *Journal of the American Medical Association*.

“I fully understand and empathize with people in the public,” says T. Colin Campbell, Ph.D., author of the groundbreaking *The China Study* and founder of the T. Colin Campbell Center for Nutrition Studies, in Ithaca, New York. Campbell has often stressed that public and professional understanding of nutrition is lacking.

The problems with the Standard American Diet (SAD) start with the very ground it is grown in. Large-scale farming in the U.S. has depleted the soil, producing lower nutrient foods. In addition, many foods are processed by manufacturers to improve shelf life, which further destroys nutrients and requires toxic additives.

“The default choice, the easy choice, is the inexpensive, highly processed food. Our built environment throughout the country has made it easier to find fast food than a produce store,” says Lisa McDowell, director of lifestyle medicine and clinical nutrition at Saint Joseph Mercy Health System, in Ann Arbor, Michigan.

SAD is a primary risk factor for high blood pressure, abnor-

mal blood lipids, increased blood glucose and weight gain, according to the World Health Organization (WHO). These intermediate conditions can lead to full-blown chronic diseases such as heart disease, stroke, cancer and diabetes, all of which are on the rise. The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Preven-

tion reports that 60 percent of American adults have at least one chronic disease and 40 percent have two or more, making chronic disease the leading cause of death and disability in the country.

The good news from WHO is that up to 80 percent of heart disease cases, 90 percent of Type 2 diabetes cases and one-third of cancer incidences could be avoided by a healthier diet, as well as lifestyle changes like stopping smoking and increasing physical activity.

A healthy diet is not as simple as cutting out convenience foods, because many people literally can’t stop eating them. Studies have compared the addictive properties of added sugar and salt to those of nicotine and cocaine. “Additives like sugar release opioids and dopamine in the brain. The same neurochemical changes in the brain occur in addictions,” says Claire Stagg, DDS, founder of Health Connections Dentistry, in Indian Harbour Beach, Florida, and author of *Smile! It’s All Connected*, a layperson’s guide that explains the essential connections between the mouth and overall wellness. “People need to be educated, or re-educated, to take ownership of their health by remembering the basic premise that their bodies can be healthy if they get the right nutrients to facili-

tate and support that basic process.”

Campbell agrees that more people need to be educated. A major theme in his latest book, *The Future of Nutrition*, is how to sift through the conflicting information that exists.

Healthier Helpings

As the food industry continues to woo Americans with fast and easy processed foods, there are consumer shifts taking place. “About a quarter of U.S. adults are trying to manage a health or medical condition by making healthy food and beverage choices,” stated the NPD Group consumer research firm in 2019. “Younger adults, ages 18 to 24, are particularly interested in using foods to improve their health.”

It turns out that it’s most beneficial to focus on adding what is needed for optimal health, instead of worrying about what to eliminate. As William Li, M.D., counsels in *Eat to Beat Disease*, “Human nature abhors deprivation.” As president of the Angiogenesis Foundation, in Cambridge, Massachusetts, Li advises us to “practice health care at home every day in our own kitchens.” He suggests frequently eating such simple, but disease-defying foods as dark chocolate, walnuts, kiwis, sourdough bread and sauerkraut.

“I recommend participating in bigger box stores. They do a great job at making high-quality food available at an inexpensive price,” says McDowell. She also suggests batch cooking and planning meals ahead for the week.

The Power of Plants

Plant-based eating is finally becoming mainstream, thanks in part to such eye-opening documentaries as *Forks Over Knives*, *Earthlings*, *PlantPure Nation* and *Food, Inc.* Research backs up the benefits. In a 2019 study in the *Journal of the American Heart Association*, Johns Hopkins researchers report that in a 30-year period, people eating a mostly plant-based diet were 32 percent less likely to die from a cardiovascular condition and 25 percent less likely to die from any cause. A 2017 report published in *International Journal of Epidemiology* suggests that fruits and vegetables are associated with a reduced risk of many chronic diseases and may protect against certain types of cancers.

For treatment, reversal and prevention of chronic disease, the American College of Lifestyle Medicine, in Chesterfield, Missouri, recommends eating a primarily plant-based diet containing minimally processed vegetables, fruits, whole grains, legumes, nuts and seeds.

Campbell says that moving to a 100 percent plant-based diet “and staying there for one to three months, provides an opportunity for virtually everyone to finally crave a salad on a regular basis. This is a place wherein people have little or no interest to backslide because their taste preferences have profoundly changed.”

As plant-based eating gains momentum, there are more imitation meat products. These foods can be helpful to transition away from meat, but Campbell cautions, “They do not replace the whole plant-based foods, even though they are plant-based, because salt, sugar and added oil are usually added.”

Eating by the Colors

Eating fruits and vegetables in a rainbow of vibrant colors ensures we get a variety of phytochemicals, vitamins, minerals and antioxidants. The federal Office of Disease Prevention and Health Promotion recommends consuming two and one-half cups of vegetables and two cups of fruit each day. McDowell suggests including “deeply pigmented fruits and veggies in at least five different colors, so that you’re getting all of the micronutrients and they’re all working together.”

Aim to include a couple different foods from each of the following color groups over a week’s time. Infographics and charts are available for download from the American Heart Association (*Heart.org*), *VeganEasy.org*, Dr. Ranjan Chatterjee (*DrChatterjee.com*) and others. Apps such as Eat the Rainbow Food Journal, Eat Five and VegHunter also make vegetable and fruit intake easy to track.

GREEN: Dark greens have cancer-blocking chemicals like allyl sulfides, lutein and indoles, which inhibit carcinogens. They also contain folate for healthy cells and calcium for stronger

Food to Heal the Planet

Eating healthy also means making a choice for the health of the planet.

Organic, locavore and small-farm advocates are speaking out against the industrialized U.S. food system with its extensive use of pesticides, poor treatment of animals and lack of regenerative soil management. Organizations like the Rodale Institute, Regeneration International, Kiss the Ground and the Ecological Farming Association are working to train farmers to regenerate soils to not only restore climate stability, but also provide far healthier foods from nutrient-rich soils.

“I believe if we have a greater understanding of our local and regional food systems, we will be moving in a more sustainable, intentional and responsible direction for ourselves, our communities and the planet,” says Andrea Bemis, author of the farm-to-table cookbook *Local Dirt* and operator of Tumbleweed Farm with her husband Taylor in Mount Hood, Oregon.

Local food is easier on the planet for several reasons. “Large commercial farms work the soil so intensively that they must use synthetic fertilizers to get anything to grow,” says Brock Hall, owner of Florida Fields to Forks, in Malabar, Florida. Alternatively, cover crops keep nutrients in the soil, requiring less water and naturally sequestering more carbon from the atmosphere. Shorter transit or shipping distances after picking uses less pollution-causing fuel.

“Choosing the right food is not only important for our personal health, but also is important for our planet and for our checking account,” says T. Colin Campbell, author of *The China Study* and *The Future of Nutrition*. “I have come to believe, after being in this discipline for 65-plus years, that our choice of food is the easiest and most important choice we can make to address the many existential problems that we now face.”

bones, muscles and heart regulation. Get plenty of asparagus, avocados, broccoli, Brussels sprouts, green tea, kale, kiwi, spinach and green herbs.

BLUE AND PURPLE: Anthocyanins wipe out free radicals, boost brain health and reduce inflammation. Resveratrol can delay cellular aging, protect the heart and reduce risk of some cancers. Add blueberries, blackberries, eggplant, elderberries, figs, grapes, plums, raisins, eggplant and purple cabbage.

RED: Rich in lycopene, a potent scavenger of gene-damaging free radicals, red plants lower risk of certain cancers and boost heart, brain, eye and bone health. Try apples, beets, cherries, cranberries, raspberries, red peppers, tomatoes and watermelon.

YELLOW AND ORANGE: Contain vitamin C, hesperidin and carotenoids such as beta-carotene to inhibit tumors, protect eyes, detoxify the body, reduce inflammation and boost the immune system and heart health. Add apricots, bananas, cantaloupe, carrots, mango, oranges, pineapple, pumpkin, sweet po-

tatoes, tangerines and yellow peppers.

WHITE AND BROWN: The onion family contains allicin and beta glucans, which have anti-tumor properties and can help lower cholesterol. Nuts contain healthy fats. Other foods in this group contain blood pressure-regulating potassium and antioxidant flavonoids like quercetin and kaempferol, along with digestion-boosting fiber. Choose beans, cauliflower, garlic, leeks, mushrooms, nuts, onions, parsnips and whole grains.

Gaining Gut Health

The gut contains the organs that make up the digestive tract and the gut microbiome, a balance of microorganisms that survive on food. A healthy gut can prevent and heal illnesses in the digestive tract, immune system, cardiovascular system, kidneys and brain.

If the gut is burdened with unhealthy foods and digestion is impeded, illness may arise. However, shifting to healthier, plant-based foods can cause a measurable shift in the gut microbiome in three to four days, Duke University researchers report

in *Nature*. Gut health can be enhanced and restored with specific foods:

ENZYMES to break down food are found in raw fruits, vegetables, sprouts, nuts and fresh herbs, and can be destroyed by cooking or processing. These work before the body’s digestive enzymes kick in to improve digestion, eliminate toxins and boost energy. Studies have shown that raw plants also help with weight loss, decreasing cholesterol and reducing inflammation.

PROBIOTICS, live bacteria that promote healthy gut flora, are found in fermented foods like sauerkraut, kimchi, sourdough bread, yogurt, kefir, pickles, miso and cheddar cheese.

PREBIOTICS, undigestible natural fibers that feed probiotics, abound in apples, asparagus, bananas, barley, burdock root, dandelion greens, flaxseeds, garlic, oats and onions.

Going Local

Whole foods grown locally provide the most nutrition. Michael Pollan, professor of science and environmental journalism at the University of California, Berkeley, and author of *In Defense of Food*, famously said, “Don’t eat anything your great grandmother wouldn’t recognize as food.”

Buying, preparing and eating whole foods may seem laborious at first, but the shift away from “easy foods” can quickly become a way of life as the body begins to feel better. “We hear stories every week about people who have fixed health issues from eating healthy,” says Brock Hall, owner of the Florida Fields to Forks organic community supported agriculture (CSA) farm in Malabar, Florida. He adds that everyone “ought to get closer to your food” by growing it or getting to know organic farmers at local markets, self-pick operations or through CSAs.

Healthy eating is about balance. Enjoy comfort foods occasionally, focusing on the bigger picture of more healthful foods overall. ♡

Julie Peterson has contributed to Natural Awakenings for more than a decade. Connect at JuliePeterson2222@gmail.com.

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The Shift in the Medical Field

“We, as a society, have gotten locked into focusing on disease cure over health care,” writes T. Colin Campbell, Ph.D., author of the bestselling *The China Study* and the recently released *The Future of Nutrition*. Fortunately, as studies prove that diabetes, kidney disease, cancer and Crohn’s disease improve with changes in diet, the medical community is slowly shifting toward using nutrition in tandem with traditional care to help manage and prevent disease.

Unfortunately, says John Osborne, M.D., director of cardiology at State of the Heart Cardiology, in Dallas, “The amount of nutritional education in medical school is minimal.” Now, the American College of Lifestyle Medicine (ACLM) is aiming to fill that void by training healthcare teams to prevent and reverse chronic disease through lifestyle behaviors.

Saint Joseph Mercy Health System, in Ann Arbor, Michigan, is one example. After a group of physicians and registered dietitians received ACLM certification, it launched a Lifestyle Medicine and Clinical Nutrition program. “The goal is to provide support to individuals and teach them to hardwire best practices that optimize their own personal health and potential,” says Lisa McDowell, program director.

The Food as Medicine Institute, in Portland, Oregon, also offers a training program for healthcare professionals and nutritionists to implement community-based nutrition programs. The Cleveland Clinic Center for Functional Medicine, in Ohio, offers programs that help patients identify genetic, lifestyle and environmental factors to shift health from illness to well-being. The Gaples Institute, in Naperville, Illinois, offers nutritional training and accreditation for medical clinicians, as well as free nutritional instruction online for the public.





COVID RAISES FEVER FOR NATURAL PRODUCTS

by Noah Chen

Elderberry. Melatonin. CBD. Over the past year, these three health products have been flying off the shelves of vitamin and supplement stores around the country. While the reasons people take them vary, all of them have been growing in popularity due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

The demand for certain products has risen so much that Fortune Business Insights, a global market research orga-

nization, adjusted the growth goals of the vitamins and supplements industry to accommodate a surge in interest brought on by the pandemic. The industry is now expected to grow from \$108 billion to \$185 billion by 2027.

"One of our big sellers is elderberry. Elderberry syrup, elderberry gummies, elderberry everything," says Greg Lee. Lee manages the eight Good Nutrition stores that can be found around Atlanta, and he

says that elderberry and other immune-boosting supplements like vitamin C and D3 have been selling fast.

Elderberry gains its immune-boosting properties by being chock-full of antioxidants. A paper exploring the physiological role of antioxidants, published by the National Library of Medicine, states that antioxidant supplementation can significantly improve certain immune responses. The antioxidants speed up the rate of response to certain immune system attacks and can even preserve our immune system responses later in life.

Mari Geier, CEO of Nuts 'n Berries, an Atlanta-based nutrition store, agrees that elderberry and other immune-boosting vitamins have been in high demand. "The good news is, doctors are telling people to take them," Geier says. "And so they are coming in."

Elderberry suppliers weren't the only ones seeing increased interest in their product. COVID brought with it many struggles, and for some, the stress of the day carried into the night. Sleeping problems soon followed.

"We found that sleep support and things that can help people get a better night's sleep have been off-the-charts popular," says Geier. Her most popular product? Chewable melatonin, a hormone whose primary function is to regulate the body's day and night cycles.

Our bodies naturally produce melatonin, and some people who have trouble falling asleep don't produce enough of it. For others, their stress is enough to keep them awake. Either way, melatonin supplements are meant to help us fall asleep deeper and easier.

While melatonin may be one of the most popular sleep aids right now, it's not actually the one Geier recommends. "The fact is, it has a 'negative biofeedback,' so if you take it for too long, your body stops making it."

Geier instead suggests alternative sleep aids like Gaia Health Adrenal Nightly Restore, which she says is made with a blend of herbs that, together with the adrenal support, help solve the problem. Eventually, people don't have to take any supplements, she reports.

Like Geier and Lee, Deandre Cannon, an Atlanta-based bodybuilder and founder of A Better Rebuild, an e-commerce vitamin and supplement retailer, has seen spikes in immune boosters and sleep aid sales. He also saw growth in CBD.

"I've seen a dramatic jump in sales of my CBD gummies," says Cannon. "I think it's twofold. People are becoming more aware of the overall health benefits of taking CBD. But COVID was also a stressful time for a lot of people, and when there's something available to you that you don't need a prescription for to help with your anxiety, that's something a lot of people looked into."

For immune system support, Geier recommends the product MyCommunity by Host Defense, a blend that incorporates mushrooms. For anxiety, Lee recommends ashwagandha, an Ayurvedic herb said to relieve anxiety and help with a number of other ailments. To help with sleep, Cannon recommends CBD. For non-CBD users, Geier recommends Gaia Herbs' Adrenal Nightly Restore.

While the pandemic saw an increase in the popularity of elderberry, melatonin and CBD, Lee thinks the interest in health products in general will widen and impact the entire vitamins and supplements industry as a whole. Thanks to COVID, more people are thinking about health in general, increasing the traffic to stores like Good Nutrition. The increased awareness and acceptance by the medical world might also be a factor in the trend.

"Over the years, supplements have become more mainstream," says Lee. "One of the key ones is vitamin D. Doctors now regularly check for it when they do blood tests." The heightened education, coupled with "better and better technology," has Lee optimistic for the future.

As more and more citizens become vaccinated and the pandemic starts to wind down, the vitamins and supplements industry will continue to support Americans' health needs. Retailers like Nuts 'n Berries, A Better Rebuild, and Good Nutrition are excited to bring the hottest products to their customers and are grateful to have been able to support them during a pandemic-stricken year. 🍀

For more information on the retailers, visit NutsNBerries.com, GoodNutritionAtlanta.com or ABetterRebuild.com.

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BACH FLOWER REMEDIES

Vibration Healing for Body and Mind

by Patricia Wallenburg



(Photo: Patricia Wallenburg)

**There is no true healing unless
there is a change in outlook,
peace of mind and inner happiness.**

~Dr. Edward Bach

Dr. Edward Bach was an English medical doctor in the early 20th century who saw disease as a physical manifestation of emotions. Bach felt that he could help patients if he could reduce emotional imbalances, which he believed were the causes of physical illness. As he became more dissatisfied with conventional medicine, he looked to nature to find healing remedies. In the early 1930s, Bach settled on 38 healing flowers and trees that would become his signature Bach Flower Remedies. They have been a valued healing modality to countless many throughout the world since then.

As a medical doctor, Dr. Bach worked in bacteria and virus research, but he was dissatisfied with that approach to illness and wanted to find something different and more complete. He started working with flowers and tested many plants before he found the right ones. He discovered that each plant addressed a specific emotional or mental component and used his intuition to find just the right plant. Holding his hands over each plant while feeling a particular emotion, he noted

how he changed. He first collected dew drops from the plants, believing that they would contain the vibration needed. Later, he concluded that the dew did not contain enough of the essence of the plants to get the result he was seeking, so he began collecting the flowers.

Bach suggested that illness is a message from the body encouraging a change in one's emotional and mental outlook. As a result, treating only the physical ailment is not enough; emotional factors need to be addressed, too. He pointed out that emotional imbalances lead to stresses that weaken the body, and physical illness can emerge as a result. Yet, as an emotional state gets more balanced, the body is better able to heal itself. To address our emotions, then, Bach organized the flower remedies into seven categories of emotional states: fear, uncertainty, lack of interest, loneliness, oversensitivity, despair and overanxiety for others' welfare.

Bach left his medical practice in 1930 to continue his research into flower remedies. He spent the spring and summer months gathering and preparing plants and then tested them on people,

for free, in the winters. He wanted to make sure that his remedies were kept as simple and accessible as possible, so once he was satisfied with his research and results, he burned his research notes. Before he died, he left very specific directions on how and when to make the remedies, and his assistants had to promise never to alter them. He felt strongly they were complete and his methods for creating them shouldn't be changed.

How the Remedies Are Made

Bach Flower Remedies are considered a homeopathic healing method, in which a small dose of something that causes an illness is administered, encouraging the body to build its own defenses and heal itself. Hand-produced exclusively in England, Bach Flower Remedies are made from spring water that's been infused with wild flowers, using either a sun method or the boiling method.

The sun method uses the flowers of blooms from late spring and early summer, which are placed on the surface of a glass bowl filled with fresh spring water. They are left in the sunshine for several hours. The boiling method involves placing flowers and stems in a pan, covering them with spring water and simmering them for 30 minutes. A twig of the same plant is used to remove the flowers, and the contents are filtered, ready for the next stage.

**It is not the disease that is
of importance; it is the
patient, the way in which he
or she is affected, which is
our true guide to healing.**

~Dr. Edward Bach

The remedies work on a vibrational level, which is why a small dose works so well. They are sometimes confused with essential oils since both are made from plants and capture the vibration of each plant. However, the production methods are entirely different, as are the resulting products.

How to Use the Remedies

The goal of the treatment is to peel away the layers of negative emotion until the core problem is uncovered, allowing it to be resolved. As layer after layer is healed, the underlying problem is revealed and can then be addressed.

The typical protocol is to choose from two to seven remedies. Add two drops from the main bottle into a personal bottle that is filled with water. Take four drops of the mixture at least four times a day—either in your beverage or on your tongue. There is no harm if you take it more often.

It was Bach's wish that his flower remedies be accessible to everyone, and he encouraged people to make their own blends. To do so, search online for the Bach Remedies questionnaire and purchase the recommended remedies. Or you can consult with a registered Bach Remedy practitioner for a personalized blend.

Studies have found that flower essences are safe to use and don't conflict with any medications, according to WebMD. They are gentle but effective in assisting with emotional issues. They do not work on specific illnesses or diseases; instead, they can assist with healing the emotions that cause those conditions.

Bach Flower Remedies are considered safe for plants and animals and recommended by some veterinarians. Animals have emotional imbalances as humans do, and the remedies can help relieve them. The treatment is the same. Plants benefit from remedies, especially if they have been pruned or transplanted. 🌿



(Photo: Jane Sweeney)

Owner of OAK Sanctuary in Kennesaw, Patricia Wallenburg received her training as a BACH Foundation registered practitioner at Bach's home in England. She offers customized consultations in person or by phone. Call 404-903-4104 or visit TheOAKSanctuary.com

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O'Connor reads her client's energy field (Photo: Terri O'Connor)



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Energy Balancing and Gentle Yoga

How One Teacher is Blending Asana with Energy Work

by Sheila Ewers

Science is just beginning to prove what ancient yoga sages and rishis have understood for millennia: everything we know—from the earth, sea, trees, animals, stars and planets to our thoughts, feelings, sounds and colors—*everything* pulses with energy. Quantum physics now tells us that what we perceive as matter consists of vibration within a field and that all fields are connected, permeating one another and vibrating together. Just as ancient spiritual texts have suggested.

In yoga, we call this all-encompassing energy “prana,” and most yoga practices focus on optimizing the healthy flow of prana within the body. Yoga asana uses movement to free stagnated prana and release tensions that can cause “dis-ease” and pain, feelings of lethargy, anxiety and depression. Over time, yoga practitioners can learn to gain some control over their own energetic field, often leading to better health and a sense of equa-


nimity, peace, balance and connection to all other beings.

Energy healers also engage with prana; they work with clients to help balance, clear and direct the flow of prana in the body and the energy field surrounding the body. All energy healers—whether they practice reiki, acupuncture, pranic healing, auric cleansing, chakra balancing, sound therapy or any other type—understand that the human energy field is a dynamic system intimately related to one’s physical, emotional and spiritual well-being. Working with energy can be a tremendous path to healing.

Yoga + Energy Healing

Recognizing the commonalities in the two practices, yoga teacher Terri O'Connor has developed a unique service that combines energy healing with traditional yoga movement. The owner of Plum Tree Yoga in Roswell, O'Connor is an ERYT500 yoga teacher, a certified reiki master, a graduate of White Winds Institute of Energy Medicine, and a student of Dee Wagner’s Chi for Two relational energetic training. She supports her clients’ ability to feel integrated by providing them with tools to help them build and maintain well-being. O'Connor believes that the combination of physical and energetic modalities enhances each client’s ability to become more vital, aware and functional in their lives.

O'Connor’s private sessions typically begin with a conversation to discuss the client’s concerns and requests for support. As the client relaxes on a massage table,



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O'Connor observes the alignment and tensions of the physical body, the flow of energy through the spine, joints, organs and major energetic vortices, or *chakras*, as well as the bio-energetic field that surrounds the client's body.

As she tunes in, the client's energy field directs O'Connor to the areas that need to be addressed so she can help restore the energy fields. As a result, cells, tissue and organs are revitalized, and the functions of the physical body are renewed.

The uniqueness of O'Connor's sessions comes in the way that she folds yoga practice into her energy healing process. Each of O'Connor's sessions includes a unique, customized sequence of gentle and supported yoga poses to decompress the body, mind and emotions. The client moves off the table and onto a yoga mat where they are given a series of active and passive poses to strengthen, lengthen and align their physical bodies that will help them maintain the energetic openings from the session. Having a physical practice to take home between sessions



provides the client with insight and tools to help integrate greater awareness and well-being into their daily lives.

O'Connor's "hybrid" model empowers clients to take responsibility for maintaining balance within their own physical and energetic bodies. Penny Summers, a client of O'Connor, says, "O'Connor's work is deep energetic healing. She engages the body's intelligence to clear old energy and allow for more vitality. When I receive a session, I feel like tight places have unwound mentally and physically and that I have more access to myself and my energy." Client Steve Howard says, "The pictures and the follow-up via text were huge in helping me develop the techniques I needed to use."

O'Connor says that energy balancing can also be instrumental in relieving mental and emotional stress, so good health and well-being can be re-established. "Our physical and energetic bodies are in constant communication and always in a state of flux relative to our lifestyle, relationships, families, jobs, activities, challenges and celebrations," says O'Connor.

For more information about O'Connor's Energy Balancing & Gentle Yoga sessions, visit PlumTreeYoga.com/healing, contact her at plumtreeyoga@gmail.com or call 404-434-3542.



Sheila Ewers, ERYT500, YACEP, owns Blue Lotus Yoga in Johns Creek. A former professor of writing and literature, she leads group and private lessons, yoga philosophy workshops, yoga teacher training and retreats. Contact Sheila at Sheila@JohnsCreekYoga.com.

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truthinmotionyoga.com

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Time for a Retreat?

FRESH PERSPECTIVES ON AN ANCIENT PRACTICE

by Noah Chen



Rooftop yoga with Blue Lotus Retreats in Amorgos, Greece (Photo: Sheila Ewers)

For centuries, people have sought seclusion through retreats to gain a better understanding of themselves, their lives and their place in the world. The practice might seem odd for the uninitiated. After all, why would one want to go on a meditation retreat when they can meditate at home—or do yoga, adopt new health practices or do any of the other activities that retreats feature? Yet, for those that make retreats a part of their lives, the benefits are real, tangible and substantial. I spoke with four experienced retreat-goers, each attracted to a different type of retreat. Though their experiences may differ, the benefits they reap are often remarkably similar.

Retreats offer time to immerse oneself in a particular practice, opportunities for personal transformation and even, on occasion, moments of spiritual epiphany. There are many types of retreats—from spiritual seclusions to healing hideaways. While many are aimed at specific concerns, most seem to offer a similar suite of core benefits.

Tucked away in the mountains of

North Carolina, surrounded by verdant trees and sweeping valleys, is the Art of Living Retreat Center (AoLRC), a low, wide building with alabaster columns and a gold-peaked dome. There, and in retreat spaces like it around the world, individuals and small teams have the time and space to focus on matters that require intentional dedication and energy.

To begin, the theme of transformation

permeates the feedback of our repeat retreat-goers. “I felt it really rejuvenated me,” says Jenny Melick, an attendee of the Shankara Ayurveda Wellness Treatment program at the AoLRC. “It just made me feel new and shiny coming out of it.”

Melick started attending Ayurvedic retreats to see if she could find a solution to health problems that have shadowed her for years. While Western doctors said

her problems were in her head, she said the retreats showed her there were natural remedies available; she would just have to take the time to slow down and learn them.

“One of the biggest benefits I get from going on retreats is that they allow me to be my own advocate of my body, and I see how my body responds so well to natural treatments,” Melick says, adding that her first retreat was life-changing; she felt she re-entered her daily routine with a fresh perspective.

Natalia Rothman also experiences a kind of transformation from the many yoga retreats she’s done with Blue Lotus Yoga. Unlike Melick’s Ayurveda program, the locations of the Blue Lotus Yoga retreats change each time; Rothman recently returned from a trip to Costa Rica. While she has gone on many retreats, Rothman says her passion for yoga has not always been so deep; for a while, it was just another way for her to work out. But during her first retreat, which was gifted to her, she had time



Jenny Melick (Photo: Dani Nicole Photography)



Natalia Rothman (Photo: Tocomé)



Rashida Atkinson (Photo: Melinda M.)

to consider the deeper meaning behind her practice. “I began looking at yoga from a totally different perspective—as something that combines the mind, body and spirit.”

Rothman says it’s possible she wouldn’t have gone deeper with yoga if the retreat hadn’t offered her the chance to slow down and do a deep dive into a subject that interested her.

“Retreats give you time to get away from your daily responsibilities,” says Rothman. “And that helps you concentrate more on your practice and your spiritual development.”

Rashida Atkinson has been on four Starshine and Clay empowerment retreats, which are led by Octavia Raheem and designed for Black and Brown women. She compares her experiences to a feeling of rebirth.

“When I come back from the retreats, I feel rejuvenated and renewed; I come back into my life with my husband and my son, and I look at things differently,” says Atkinson. Even during the pandemic, when retreats could only be offered virtually, Atkinson described

The Mantram of Unification

The sons of men are one
and I am one with them.

I seek to love, not hate;
I seek to serve and not
exact due service;
I seek to heal, not hurt.

Let pain bring due reward
of light and love.

Let the soul control the outer
form, and life and all events,

And bring to light the
love which underlies the
happenings of the time.

Let vision come and insight.

Let the future stand revealed.

Let inner union demonstrate
and outer cleavages be gone.

Let love prevail.
Let all men love.

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RelaxationLounge at the Art of Living facility (Photo: Jenny Melick)

them as a “body scrub” for the soul that left everything feeling brand new for her.

The retreats Atkinson attends are a mix of group activities and quiet moments of personal reflection. She says that some of the most impactful aspects of her retreats include those moments when she is able to build bonds with other women. “Raheem is very big on giving Black and Brown

women a space to just be,” Atkinson explains. “We don’t get many spaces like that.”

“Every time I’ve gone, I’ve learned something new about myself. And I’ve had this experience with dozens of other women that look like me.” In the end, Atkinson says, that is her motivation for going.

While some only rarely attend retreats, others have made it part of their lifestyle. Over the last 15 years, Cynthia Vannoy estimates she has attended more than 30 retreats of different kinds, most of them Buddhist.

“Going on a retreat is a critical way to stay connected with your spiritual self,” explains Vannoy. It functions as ongoing



Cynthia Vannoy (Photo: Cynthia Vannoy)

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maintenance for her spiritual life, she says. Separation from her day-to-day life is key, as it helps reinforce the fact that her sole purpose is to be on the retreat. It allows her to completely immerse herself in her practice and maximize the retreat's benefits. It also leads to some deeply spiritual experiences.

"Imagine you are at a retreat," says Vannoy, "and you are in touch with oneness

and everything that is one, and God, and your soul, and your Divine Self. That's what you touch in a retreat."

Rothman, Melick, Atkinson and Vannoy keep going on retreats because of the growth, progression and fresh perspectives they acquire from the experience. Despite the differences in the focus of their choice in retreats, they reap a common set of rewards upon their return. 🌿

Southeastern Retreat Resources

Art of Living Retreat Center

The Center offers meditation and Ayurveda retreats and hosts third-party retreat leaders. 26 events are currently scheduled through 2021, including Cultivating Hopes in Difficult Times, Fix Your Life, Getting the Love You Want, Wild Awakenings: A Writing Workshop and The Agreements of Love with Don Miguel Ruiz, Jr.

639 Whispering Hills Rd. | Boone, NC
ArtofLivingCenter.org

Elohee Center

Located 95 miles northeast of Atlanta. Ten retreats are currently scheduled through mid-November including Rest & Relaxation Weekend and Radically Awakened Women. Several yoga retreats are also offered.

251 Elohee Dr. | Sautee Nacoochee, GA
Elohee.org

Mountain Light Sanctuary

Michael Lightweaver hosts this secluded personal retreat facility 35 minutes north of Asheville. Accommodations are rustic; there is limited electricity and no heat in some of the options. Common areas include living room, kitchen, library, meeting room, gazebo, sun deck, a pavilion for yoga and meditation and more. Previously a counselor and hypnotherapist, Lightweaver offers personal guidance sessions. Payment is by gifting; no one is turned away because of lack of funds.

Pisgah National Forest, NC
MountainLightSanctuary.com

OM Sanctuary

As of this writing, OM has yet to reopen, but plans to do so very soon. When it does reopen, it will not automatically resume its prior-to-pandemic programming and will offer individual Sanctuary Renewal Retreats that will include optional midday centering classes. Its Wellness Immersion and Mindfulness programs will return in 2022.

87 Richmond Hill Dr. | Asheville, NC
OMSanctuary.org

Prama Institute & Wellness Center

Located about half an hour north of Asheville, Prama offers two types of retreats: Juice Cleanse + Yoga and Silent Meditation.

182 Ananda Girisuta Dr. | Marshall NC
Prama.org

Seven Springs Yoga & Holistic Retreats

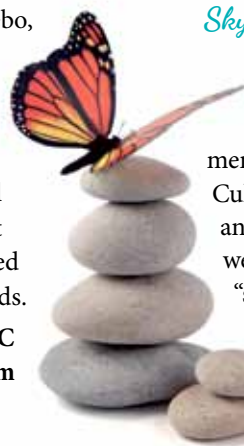
Located just south of Knoxville, Seven Springs hosts private wellness, group and corporate retreats, family reunions and weddings. Their 2021 programs include More Than Wisdom, Rest to Reset, Embracing Messiness, and Root Down to Rise Up.

125 Sweet Hollow Way | Maryville, TN
SevenSpringsRetreats.com

Skyterra Wellness Retreat

Located about an hour south of Asheville, Skyterra offers five programs: Self-Care and Stress Management, Weight Loss, Fitness and Mobility, Culinary and Nutrition, and Recreation and Adventure. They also offer a four-week LoseSmart program that promises "sustainable" weight loss.

75 Skyterra Way | Pisgah Forest, NC
SkyterraWellness.com



Growing Food Security

The Benefits of Urban Gardening

by Laura Paisley Beck



expand her reach. "My garden spits out a lot of food. I discovered there are local food banks and charities that collect food. I was surprised that they will take any abundance," says Truong.

Garrett Livingood, a North Atlanta, Georgia, blogger, developed *GrowMyCommunity.org* where local farmers, growers and community gardens can upload their location and what they offer, so that the locals know where to go for fruits, vegetables, herbs and other healthy eats. According to Livingood, "Forty percent of produce gets thrown out every year, so it's not that we don't have enough food, the problem is access."

Food Security Equals Health

Ashlie Thomas, a research scientist known as *The Mocha Gardener* on Instagram, started gardening for healthy produce and medicinal plants at home in Graham, North Carolina, when family members on limited incomes living in a food desert had been diagnosed with health issues like hypertension and Type 2 diabetes.

"Imagine having diet requirements that included mostly plant-based food, but your resources are simply not there," Thomas says. "I didn't know there was a term for that: food security. There is an increasing population with disease, and food could be the answer."

The problem is particularly prevalent in communities with no grocery stores, forcing residents to buy food at gas stations or drive considerable distances to big-box stores. Thomas observed that choices at these kinds of facilities are often between expensive produce or inexpensive junk food. Healthful food is not available or affordable for all.

Thomas believes gardening empowers people to take control of their diet and their health, not only physiologically, but psychologically and spiritually. "It doesn't just stop at the garden," she says. "How you treat your body and other people has a positive healthy impact, as well."

For a lot of Americans, healthy food is scarce. According to *FeedingAmerica.org*, more than 35 million Americans faced food insecurity in 2019. That number is expected to increase substantially due to the pandemic, which disrupted the food supply chain in ways that most Americans have never seen.

The good news is that urban and localized gardening can bring fresh, healthy, organic, sustainable and affordable food to nearly every household. A 2013 abstract from Michigan State University published in *Agriculture & Food Security* states that urban gardens could not only provide healthy food, but also create a more resilient food system.

During the pandemic, many people jumped at the chance to put in a garden, and in cities, where available land is limited, creative solutions have emerged. Just about any space could serve as a viable garden, including a spare room, rooftop, shipping containers or an empty warehouse. With hydroponics, no soil is required and with vertical systems, planters are stacked, requiring a small footprint.

Veggies Instead of Lawns

Phan Truong, known as *A Suburban Gardener* on Instagram, turned her entire yard into an organic vegetable garden and invited her Scaggsville, Maryland, neighbors to share in the bounty. "I had this table of abundance in front of my house, but people weren't taking anything! So, I hid in my garden, waiting for neighbors to walk by, and then I'd rush the fence and encourage them to take food," Truong says. "My husband thought everyone would think we were weird." Now, instead of getting polite waves from afar, the garden has become a communications hub among neighbors.

Sharing the Abundance

When Truong witnessed friends losing jobs and struggling, she was inspired to lend a hand by assisting some of them to plant their own low-maintenance, high-yield gardens to save money on healthy meals. Once she had assisted people close to her, she decided to



geografika/AdobeStock.com

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Tips to Get Started

Follow local gardeners on social media to get ideas.

THINK LOW-MAINTENANCE, HIGH-YIELD. Cherry tomatoes, salad greens, cucumbers and beans are high-producing, low-cost staples.

FLOWERS CAN BE FOOD. Try violets, pansies, nasturtiums and chives to beautify the garden and the plate.

GROW ORGANIC. It's cheaper and doesn't harm anyone or anything. "I grow organic because I want to respect my space. I don't want to control Mother Nature, I want to work with her," says Thomas.

HERB IT UP. Mint, rosemary and basil taste great and can deter pests.

Overall, keep it simple. Set up for success with just enough to learn and enjoy a new lifestyle. It can be expanded upon year after year, providing a bounty of nutritious food security. 🌱

Laura Paisley Beck is a freelance writer and self-proclaimed foodie in Madison, Wisconsin. Reach her at LauraPaisleyBeck@gmail.com.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Publicize your event! This section hosts free and paid listings. Each month, we select a limited number of events — they must have broad appeal and cost no more than \$10 to attend — to list for free. Otherwise, basic listings are \$35 and enhanced listings are \$75.

Submit free listings to calendar@naAtlanta.com and paid listings to ads@naAtlanta.com.

WEDNESDAY, JULY 7

Virtual: Crystals for Thriving in Everyday Life – 6pm. Learn about tried and true crystals and techniques to help you thrive on a daily basis. More info & to register: WithLoveAndLight.com.

THURSDAY, JULY 8

Online Wild Woman Moon Meditation – 7-8:30pm. Guided by Hannah Onians, explore archetypal, cosmic energy, meditate, journal and craft intentions for the month ahead. To register: Santosha-Studio.com.

FRIDAY, JULY 9

Sustainability in Action Roundtable Webinar – 11am-12:30pm. A conversation with our panelists on how we can embed environmental justice and racial equity into a regenerative economic model. Free. Register: Southface.org.

SATURDAY, JULY 10

Integrated Restoration Technique: A Cervical, Cranial & Sacral Mobilization Workshop – July 10-11. 9am-5pm. Learn how to assess and apply specific corrective techniques for both the sacrum and cervical spine. Heal Center, 270 Carpenter Dr NE, Ste 505, Sandy Springs. 404-303-0007. HealCenterAtlanta.com.

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FRIDAY, JULY 9

Poetry Open Mic Night – 7-9pm. With Michael Burke. An evening of splendor with enchanting and thought-provoking spoken word performances from some of Phoenix & Dragon Bookstore's flourishing community of poets. Poets of all ages. Free.

FRIDAY, JULY 16

Online: Past Life Regression – 7-9:30pm. With Don Simmons. Discover for yourself through past life regression why you are the way you are; the hidden meaning of your intimate relationships; the understanding of any difficulty within your life. By seeing it, clarity takes place and healing begins. \$25. Via Zoom.

THURSDAY, JULY 22

Wisdom and Healing Through Shamanic Journeys – 7-8:30pm. With Vicki Evans. An opportunity to connect with Spirit and your guides for healing and direction. You can use the journeys to ask about all areas of your life, not just the spiritual side. \$20 via PayPal. To register: PayPal.me/vickieevanshealing.

SUNDAY, JULY 11

Living Foods Institute 3-Wk Bootcamp: Starts 3rd Week in July – 3 days/wk; virtual or in-person options. Interactive, hands-on support to deeply detoxify, super strengthen immune function, and jumpstart a lifetime of healthy living with an easily incorporated Living Foods Lifestyle. More info: LivingFoodsInstitute.com.

TUESDAY, JULY 13

Virtual: Hypnosis for a Calm & Peaceful Existence – 11am. Allow Kelbi of Luminous Healing to gently guide you into a theta state, where you are able to access your unconscious mind and change thought & behavior patterns to improve your life. More info & to register: WithLoveAndLight.com.

WEDNESDAY, JULY 14

Online: Sacred Sound Series – 7-8pm. 2nd Wed. Join Gabriel Nelson to explore the mysteries of sacred sound. Love offering requested. Visit the calendar listing for Zoom link: UnityAtl.org.

TUESDAY, JULY 20

Reflexology Practitioner Course – 10am-1pm. A 48-hr foot reflexology course based on the BodySystems Method. Providing a strong foundation of knowledge and skill. Heal Center, 270 Carpenter Dr NE, Ste 505, Sandy Springs. 404-303-0007. HealCenterAtlanta.com.

WEDNESDAY, JULY 21

Online: How to Talk to Your Body – 7-8pm. Join Licensed Unity Teacher, Larry Bergmann, for this powerful healing service. Learn techniques for connecting your mind and body together for healing, empowerment and more. Love offering requested. Visit the calendar listing for Zoom link: UnityAtl.org.

THURSDAY, JULY 22

Online Transmission Meditation – 7:30pm. A meditation to help the world. Sponsored by Share International USA SE Region. Free. Via Zoom. Info: 404-680-7423, Info-SE@Share-International.us. Share-International.us/se. Register: Tinyurl.com/3abv942x.

MONDAY, JULY 26

Allow Yourself to Manifest – 11:30am. A life alignment experience that will help you to clear your path in manifesting. More info & to register: WithLoveAndLight.com.

SATURDAY, JULY 31

Position of Ease for Low Back and Hips – July 31-Aug 1. 1:30-7pm. Gentle trigger point release techniques. Heal Center, 270 Carpenter Dr NE, Ste 505, Sandy Springs. 404-303-0007. HealCenterAtlanta.com.

ONGOING EVENTS

sundays

Online Sunday Experience – 9am, Adult Study; 9:30am, Meditation; 10am, Music; 10:30am, Service. With Spiritual Living Center of Atlanta. slc-atlanta.org. To watch: Facebook.com/spirituallivingcenteratlanta.

Red Clay Sangha Sunday Morning Service – 9am, meditation; 10:30-11:30am, dharma discussion. Via Zoom. To watch: RedClaySangha.org.

Online Meditation Open House – 10am. A 30-min meditation and a 30-min discussion via Zoom. To watch: Atlanta.Shambhala.org.

Second Sunday Sober Bike Ride – 10:30am. Brings together people from all walks of sober living who are seeking fun and active ways to connect with likeminded people. BTA Bicycle Tours of Atlanta will provide a bike at no charge if needed. Bicycle Tours of Atlanta, 659 Auburn Ave NE, Atlanta. Register: Tinyurl.com/yjzutjf4.

One World Spiritual Center Sunday Service – 11am. To watch: OneWorldSpiritualCenter.net.

Shamanic Journey – 11am. 1st Sun. A virtual healing experience brought to you by Heron House via Zoom. Free; donations accepted. To register: Tinyurl.com/ycptr49j.

Unity Atlanta Sunday Services – 11am. Watch live stream or register to attend in person. 3597 Parkway Ln, Peachtree Corners. 770-441-0585. UnityAtl.org.

Sunday Morning Talks and Discussion – 11am-12pm. With Vedanta Center of Atlanta via Zoom. To watch: VedantaAtlanta.org.

Unity North Online Sunday Service – 11:15am. To watch: UnityNorth.org.

Last Sunday Social – 12:12-3:33pm. Last Sun with Kosmic Brew. Join us and our community of vendors as we share a healing space, engage in meaningful dialogues and create lasting memories. Gallery 992, 992 Ralph David Abernathy Blvd, Atlanta. More info: Hi@KosmicBrew.com or Linktr.ee/KosmicBrew.

mondays

The {SAMA} Class: Virtual – 9am. Also held Thurs & Fri. Incorporates 25 mins of yoga, 10 mins of breathwork, finishing off with 10 mins of meditation. Each teacher will bring their own spin to the class based on their particular lineage of training. More info: SamaFoodForBalance.com.

tuesdays

Heart Jewel Chanted Prayers and Meditation – Mon-Fri, 8-9am. Chanted Buddhist prayers and meditation. Free. To register for livestream: MeditationInGeorgia.org.

Online Meditation Open House – 7pm. A 30-min meditation and a 30-min discussion via Zoom. To watch: Atlanta.Shambhala.org.

Metro Atlanta Sierra Club Meeting – 7:30pm. 2nd Tues. More info: SierraClub.org/georgia/atlanta.

wednesdays

Zoom Check In: Wellness Wednesdays – 10am. Check in with your community during COVID-19 crisis. slc-atlanta.org.

Decatur Farmers' Market – Thru Nov 17. 4-7pm. Local farmers, artisanal food makers and crafts. Masks required. First Baptist Church Decatur, 308 Clairmont Ave, Decatur. cfmatl.org/decatur.

Unity North Online Wednesday Evening Experience – 7pm. To watch: UnityNorth.org.

Weekly Wednesday Meditation Class – 7-8:30pm. Open to all levels. Experience true inner peace. With the Venerable Nicholas Thannissaro of the Georgia Meditation Center via Zoom. To register: MeditationCircle.org.

thursdays

Stretch & Recover – Thru Aug. 12pm. Free online classes. More info: TheHomeDepotBackyard.com.

Dunwoody Beekeeping Club – 6:30-7:30pm. 1st Thurs. Meeting features a program, followed by a question and answer session with the ability to meet and learn from other local beekeepers. Free. 5343 Roberts Dr, Dunwoody. 770-394-3322. DunwoodyNature.org.

TwinHeartsMeditation – 7pm. This meditation is an act of service. We use divine energy to bless the planet, our loved ones and every part of our life. With Atlanta Pranich Healing Center via Zoom. To watch: AtlPranichHealing.com.

fridays

Qigong Exercises & Meditations – 12-12:45pm. 1st & 3rd. Led by Master Cheng, who has been teaching in Atlanta since 1976. Free/member, \$8/nonmember. Tai Chi Association, 3079 Midway Rd, Decatur. More info & registration: Tai-Chi-Association.com.

Drumming Is the People's Medicine – 4-7pm. There is liberation, experimentation, meditation and laughter at this supportive, donation-based gathering for beginners led by Daniel Ellis or Kim Hobbs. Santosha Studio, 896 Davis Dr, Atlanta. More info & to register: Santosha-Studio.com.

Prayers for World Peace – 6:30-7:15pm. An opportunity both to simply pray for world peace and to be a part of the solution. Includes a guided meditation, a short teaching and chanted prayers for world peace. To register for livestream: MeditationInGeorgia.org.

saturdays

Free Saturday Meditations – 8-8:30am. To register for livestream: MeditationInGeorgia.org.

Dunwoody Nature Center Saturday Volunteers – 9am-12pm. 2nd Sat. For anyone in the community who wishes to volunteer. A wonderful way to start off your weekend in nature and service. To promote social distancing, sign-up is mandatory; limited to 24 people. 5343 Roberts Dr, Dunwoody. 770-394-3322. DunwoodyNature.org.

Oakhurst Farmers' Market – Thru Dec. 9am-1pm. Closed Dec 25. Fresh produce, meat, baked treats, and more. Additional offerings include live music and chef demonstrations featuring seasonal recipes. Masks required. Sceptre Brewing Arts, 630 E Lake Dr, Decatur. cfmatl.org/oakhurst.

Free Online Guided Meditation for All – 9:45-11am. Will go over basics and guided meditation. No prior experience is needed. Classes meant to come together and meditate and learn little by little. Via Zoom. Register: Tinyurl.com/y3x5yy2s.

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CALCULATING RISK

by Kim Green

Years ago, my awakening came when my financial advisor casually befuddled me with an off-the-cuff question.

“How tolerant of risk are you?”

Calmly, I responded, “Not tolerant. At all.”

Gracefully, she coaxed me with a well-worn monologue about the importance of risk tolerance. She said, “When you can tolerate a little more risk, your gains can be much greater than your losses.” This simple and targeted explanation hit me in a powerful way. It changed my life and saved it at the same time.

You see, once upon a time, I was *extremely* risk-averse. I am a woman so afraid of childbirth that I chose adoption as the safest alternative. I still avoid crowds, rollercoasters and people who believe that citizens need or deserve guns. I don’t enjoy any activity that involves falling, blood loss or loss of limbs. I can’t watch action movies because of the blood. I am delighted by the mask mandate and, although I am fully vaccinated, I just ordered a new color palette of masks which I plan to wear for the long haul.

My fear of risk should be no surprise. Fear has been genetically instilled. I am an African American woman raised by a wary ancestry. Distrust is my nature. Objectively, I know that my former fearfulness was unreasonable, overarching and cultural due to an undeniable history. I only reveal these deeply held secrets, not because I am proud, but because I celebrate how much I’ve grown. I understand how fear limits the very expanse of the soul. The ability to take risks is one of the foundational attributes of freedom.

As the bad news in 2020 droned on and on about rage politics, indecision, mass murders, racial reckoning and inert and inept politicians, my four walls started to close in on me. So many of the ideals and truths that I held sacred were being washed away by a raging sea of newfangled hatred. The only way I could handle it was to shout, “I gotta get out of here!” at Chris Cuomo every night.

The “Apocalypse of 2020” sent souls scurrying, desperate for something new to counteract the constant vertigo. Out of the blue, risk whispered in my ear: “Stop complaining. Do something.”

Nevertheless, armed with an ever-expanding list of new things to fear—travel, hotel rooms, rental cars, door handles, poorly vented restaurants, public bathrooms, groceries, recalled hand sanitizer, deadly vaccines—I prepared my house for sale. I found a realtor, mapped out a safe four-day version of the journey to our new destination and took bold steps forward to a new unknown.

“Isn’t moving across the country for younger people? Who will you have to support you all the way out there?”

As I listened to these concerns about our move, it became even more exhilarating to me. The non-existent answer to their inquiries made it even more liberating. It would just be my spouse and me, braving the wild, wild West as we had always dreamed. We had only each other to rely on. The not knowing is the very promise of new possibilities that will restore the energy that the pandemic has sucked out of us.

It was the most significant calculated risk of my entire life. What did I really have to lose but the tragic regret of not acting on the call from my tattered spirit? I needed to stretch myself further than ever before. I had become too complacent. I needed to re-learn how to use all of my faculties, survive a whole new set of challenges, learn my way and be present in each moment. Now, in the wilderness, we are charged with becoming kinder, gentler human beings and keeping our eyes open. The animals are always watching.

July is the month we celebrate independence; making this risky move has been the most formidable way for me to show my independence. This month, I celebrate risking everything I have ever known to gain everything I have yet to know. 🌻



Photo: Colby Fiore

Author and coach Kim Green works with clients who are ready for transformation in their writing or in their lives. An Atlanta resident for 18 years, she only recently moved to Arizona. Reach her at BlankPageConsult.com or 678-938-2777.



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