

June 2020

# Stone Crest Assisted Living

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## Celebrating June

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## Sweden's Midsummer Dream

After the long dark of winter, Swedes look forward to the Midsummer festival, the most important holiday of the year after Christmas. Midsummer may fall on June 20, but festivities begin on Midsummer's Eve. Midsummer is a celebration of the sun and all the life it brings. School is out of session, flowers and trees are in full bloom, and the sun does not set. For many Swedes, Midsummer marks the start of a five-week holiday, a time to enjoy the sweet summer weather while it lasts. Families load up their cars and leave the cities for the countryside, where hills and pastures are speckled with flowers.

At its heart, Midsummer is a time to gather outdoors with family and friends. The maypole, or *midsommarstång*, is central to this gathering. The first tradition of Midsummer is to decorate the tall pole with garlands and flowers. People, too, don flower crowns. The maypole is erected in a public square or park where everybody gathers to perform the customary dances. One of the most interesting is the Little Frogs dance, *Små grodorna*, where people hop around the pole pretending to be frogs.

All that hopping makes people hungry, and lunch stretches throughout the entire afternoon. Pickled herring and boiled new potatoes dressed in sour cream, dill, and chives are traditional, followed by grilled salmon or meat. Dessert consists of fresh summer strawberries with cream. Of course, beer and herbed schnapps flow freely, accompanied by popular Swedish drinking songs—the bawdier the better. Lunch blends into dinner, and before the meal's end, many are up and dancing again on stages set up along lakes or nestled between hillsides.

It's time for bed, but the sun still has not set. Sweden is awash in a mysterious twilight. Perhaps this is why Midsummer has so many magical legends. On the way home, young women are supposed to pick seven different types of wildflowers. Legend states that if you place the flowers under your pillow, you will dream of your future spouse. Perhaps the greatest magic of Midsummer lies in the many wedding vows that take place under the blessing of the midnight sun.

## The Making of a Man

Not only is June 21 Father's Day, but June is Men's Health Month. All June long, we are asked to honor the men in our lives: dads, husbands, brothers, and uncles. Ironically, research suggests that men may be unsure of how best to honor themselves, partly because some men are questioning traditional definitions of manhood.

The strong silent type. A man of action and not words. The breadwinner. The jock. The buffoon. All of these are common male stereotypes. And while working hard, enjoying sports, and joking around are certainly positive qualities, some psychologists argue that American society tends



to overemphasize qualities of toughness, self-reliance, material wealth, and emotional detachment in boys and men. Qualities such as willingness to compromise, showing vulnerability, expressing

emotions, and nurturing others are viewed as feminine and signs of weakness. This wasn't always so. In the late 19th century, men were expected to be compassionate caretakers. But when the bulk of men's work moved from the homestead to the factory, masculine ideals began to shift. In fact, the Boy Scouts were founded in 1910 to reinforce those qualities of loyalty, courteousness, and kindness that were feared to be lost. Many men today share similar fears.

Groups of men all across the country, such as Philadelphia's Masculinity Action Project and the global ManKind Project, are attempting to promote "healthier masculinity." They hope to keep all of the positive traits of manliness while throwing out characteristics that are harmful. While some critics have gone so far as to call this a "war" on traditional masculinity, many men in these groups feel better about themselves: they have better relationships, stronger core values, and better mental health. These men are not only becoming, in their eyes, better men but they are becoming better humans. Furthermore, when these men understand and define what makes them positive male role models, they are better equipped to pass those traits along to younger generations.

## Nailed It!

In preparation for the footloose and barefoot days of summer, June 1 is Nail Polish Day. While today's nail art is largely a reflection of personal style, when it originated nearly 5,000 years ago in Babylonia, nail polish was a marker of social status and class. Babylonian warriors ground *kohl*, a charcoal-like mineral, into a dark powder and used it to color their nails and lips before going into battle. The dark shade signified a high rank. Similarly, around 3000 BC, the Chinese used varying nail colors to signify differences in rank and dynasty. Rulers often wore bright colors like red, gold, or silver, while lower classes could be punished if they dared to wear colors deemed acceptable only to the ruling class. It wasn't until much later, in 19th-century Paris, when manicure parlors became fashionable and women regularly began to "get their nails done." In 1878, an American named Mary Cobb, after learning the art of the manicure in Paris, opened a shop in New York City, America's first nail salon called "Mrs. Pray's Manicure." Cobb would go on to open a series of salons, invent the emery board, and market an entire line of nail products. Cobb was truly the mother of the nail salon industry.

## Ladies' Day at the Ballpark



During the early years of baseball, the game was geared toward an audience of men, for many during that narrow-minded era believed that the rules of baseball were just too difficult for women to understand. That is, until 1883 when the New York Gothams (soon to be Giants) hosted the first "Ladies' Day" at the Polo Grounds, where women were admitted free of charge. Baseball player, manager, and pioneer Abner Powell would later capitalize on this promotion when his own New Orleans Pelicans struggled to draw crowds. Powell held Ladies' Days every week throughout the season. His reasoning? Not only would it expand the game's audience but the presence of women would discourage unruly behavior.

## A Monument to Love

On June 17, 1631, Mumtaz Mahal died during the birth of her fourteenth child. The emperor of India, Shah Jahan, was so devastated by the death of his wife that he commanded a mausoleum be built in her honor, one so beautiful that it would never be matched. Today, the Taj Mahal stands unmatched as a monument to undying love and marital devotion.



By all accounts, Shah Jahan and his wife were deeply close. Mumtaz Mahal's name, bestowed upon her by the emperor, means "the exalted one of the palace." The empress's residence was the finest ever built, decorated in pure gold and precious stones, with rosewater fountains. Mumtaz was both a confidant to Shah Jahan and an advisor on matters of state. She was even allowed to use the Mehr Uzaz, the emperor's personal seal, to validate imperial decrees. The empress was as beautiful as she was smart and cultured, a woman more than worthy of the mausoleum constructed in her honor.

Construction of the Taj Mahal began in 1632 and continued for 22 years, employing 1,000 elephants and 22,000 artisans from India, Persia, and Europe. The mausoleum's architect was most likely court architect Ustad Ahmad Lahauri, the same man who designed Delhi's Red Fort. Situated across the Yamuna River from the royal palace, Shah Jahan could gaze upon the final resting place of his beloved wife forevermore. The mausoleum is made of white marble and inlaid with precious and semi-precious stones such as jade, crystal, lapis lazuli, amethyst, and turquoise. Its central dome rises 240 feet, surrounded by four minarets. The Ninety-Nine Names of God are inscribed in calligraphic inscriptions on the sides of Mumtaz's tomb. Not only is the Taj Mahal an enduring symbol of India's rich cultural heritage but it remains the finest example of Mughal architecture in the world. The tomb and its surrounding gardens host eight million visitors each year, and the complex has repeatedly been included on lists of the New Seven Wonders of the World.

## Napoleon's "Waterloo"

Napoleon's defeat at Waterloo in Belgium occurred on June 18, 1815. Napoleon is remembered as one of history's greatest military strategists. With the French army under his command, he waged war against most of Europe, vastly expanded the French Empire, and crowned himself emperor. After 1812, however, Napoleon suffered grave defeats and was exiled to the island of Elba, but Napoleon was not used to defeat. He escaped from Elba and rebuilt a massive army to march against the foes that had defeated him. At first, Napoleon was successful. On June 16, 1815, he defeated the Prussians. But on June 18 at the village of Waterloo, he commanded his force of 72,000 troops to hold off their attack until mid-day in order to allow the battleground to dry. It was a fatal mistake. During those few hours, new troops joined the opposition, and Napoleon's forces were overwhelmed and overrun. He was forced to return to Paris in defeat and abdicate the throne. Napoleon's reign was over, and the name of Waterloo would become forever synonymous with defeat and humiliation.

## Horsing Around



In June of 1878, photographer Eadweard Muybridge put an end to a debate that had been raging for years: whether or not all four of a horse's hooves left the ground during a gallop.

Muybridge was no mere photographer but also a savvy inventor. Cameras in 1878 had lengthy exposure times of two seconds, but over two seconds a horse in motion would have galloped across an entire field, preventing it from being photographed. Muybridge's solution was to create a mechanical wooden shutter that could close within one-thousandth of a second. His photos seemed to freeze time, capturing each movement of the horse. He not only proved that all four hooves left the ground but he created the first motion picture and laid the foundations of the movie industry.

## Fatherly June Trivia

### June Birthdays

In astrology, those born between June 1 and 20 are the Twins of Gemini. A Gemini's dual nature is expressed through skillful communication and dynamic sociability. The Twins are energetic, quick-witted, optimistic, and emotionally intelligent. Those born between June 21 and 30 are Cancer's Crabs. Crabs care deeply about their family and home. After all, they carry one on their backs! Guided by their hearts, Crabs are sympathetic and loyal friends and imaginative collaborators.

Morgan Freeman (actor) – June 1, 1937  
Angelina Jolie (actress) – June 4, 1975  
Prince (musician) – June 7, 1958  
Frank Lloyd Wright (architect) – June 8, 1867  
Hattie McDaniel (actress) – June 10, 1893  
Harriet Beecher Stowe (author) – June 14, 1811  
Paul McCartney (musician) – June 18, 1942  
Bob Vila (builder) – June 20, 1946  
George Orwell (author) – June 25, 1903  
Bernard Harris Jr. (astronaut) – June 26, 1956  
Lena Horne (singer) – June 30, 1917

### Elvis Shocks the Nation



By 1956, Elvis Presley had already hit No. 1 on the music charts with "Heartbreak Hotel," and he was becoming a rock 'n' roll sensation, but nothing prepared the public for his live performance of "Hound Dog" on *The Milton Berle Show* on June 5, 1956. Elvis had already appeared on television several times, including on *The Milton Berle Show*. But in these appearances, Elvis was always filmed close-up or behind his guitar. On June 5, the 21-year-old Elvis was televised head to toe, swinging his hips in wild gyrations as he danced, earning the moniker "Elvis the Pelvis." The next day, critics across the country roundly criticized Elvis, calling him vulgar and untalented. Ed Sullivan declared Elvis would never appear on his show. None of this criticism stopped Elvis from becoming rock 'n' roll's first superstar. In the end, Elvis' critics had to eat their words.