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FIREWORKS AND FAMILIES

MY FOURTH OF JULY MEMORIES

Independence Day is a holiday full of traditions for my family. I'm so excited for our newborn, Max, to experience his first Fourth of July. His arrival is the most exciting thing going on in our lives, and it's been really fun to watch our other children interact with him. Our daughter, Avy, has already begun mimicking her mom in terms of taking care of the baby. Jett, our three-year-old son, is still adjusting to the fact that he's no longer the youngest and center of attention, but I can tell he's excited about having a little brother.

This year, I'm taking off the week before the Fourth in order to head up to a cabin my in-laws have rented in Island Park. It might be a cliché that you don't get along with your wife's parents, but in my case, that couldn't be further from the truth. My in-laws are awesome! I really cherish any time I get to spend with my extended family, and this trip will be an awesome chance to get away and unwind. It will also bring back memories of the camping trips I used to take with my family when I was a boy, which were always an early summer staple.



“It's hard to believe that bumping into my aunt and uncle at the Rexburg Fourth of July parade started a chain of events that would lead to a connection that will last a lifetime. Talk about a spark setting off fireworks!”

On Independence Day itself, we always head to Rexburg for the parade. The kids really enjoy seeing all the floats, tractors, and fireworks. They particularly love when the fire truck comes by to cool everyone off with a blast from the hose. I'll be looking forward to the family barbecue. I'm no master, but I do like grilling from time to time. This year, though, I'll probably leave those duties to another relative, as I'm just as content to be on the eating side of the equation.

When I think back to all the previous Fourth of Julys I've spent in Rexburg, there is one that stands out. Nine years ago, I graduated

dental school and started working in Boise as an associate dentist in a large group practice. That summer, I went back to Rexburg for the Fourth of July weekend to be with my family. I went to the parade and happened to see my aunt and uncle, and they invited me back to their place for a barbecue afterward. My cousin and his wife were there, and we started chatting. During the course of the conversation, my cousin's wife said that she had a best friend who was single and going to Boise State. She thought we might hit it off. The woman she was talking about, of course, was Meredith, the love of my life. It's hard to believe that bumping into my aunt and uncle at the Rexburg Fourth of July parade started a chain of events that would lead to a connection that will last a lifetime. Talk about a spark setting off fireworks!

Here at the office, I hope you've noticed the new sign we finally got installed. It's been a six-month ordeal jumping through hoops to get it approved, but I'm really happy with the way it turned out. I think it's much more reflective of the atmosphere inside the practice. Here's wishing everyone a safe and happy Fourth of July. May you enjoy it with your families.

- Dr. Chris Thomason

DESTINATION: HAPPY PEOPLE VISIT THE HAPPIEST PLACES IN THE WORLD — IT'S CONTAGIOUS



Visit a hustling, bustling tourist trap and what do you get?

Crowds of competitive travelers and a local population that is sick to death of them. Visit a place with happy people, and you get good service, friendly faces, and you'll learn firsthand what Harvard researchers affirmed in a 2012 study: Happiness is contagious.

Luckily for the average traveler, the places that topped a nationwide Gallup poll and the United Nations' annual World Happiness Report have plenty to offer in addition to cheerful locals.

The Happiest States in the U.S. If we were to tell you that Hawaii is the happiest state in the country, you probably wouldn't be surprised. And sure enough, Hawaii ranked first in overall happiness for the sixth consecutive year. The sunny beaches, rich culture, and perfect weather give tourists a taste of paradise that the natives enjoy all year long.

Next in line is a state that has little in common with the Aloha State. **Alaska** came in second place for the third consecutive year. With eight national parks, including Denali, Glacier Bay, and Gates of the Arctic, Alaska's 663,000 square miles are filled to the brim with the wonders of nature.

The Happiest Country in the World Denmark has long been the standard bearer in this category. This year, it relinquished the title to its Scandinavian sister. Norway is home to some of the most breathtaking vistas on earth, most notably its western fjords like the world-famous Geirangerfjord and Nærøfjord. For the city wanderer, you'll find choice seaside restaurants and walkable streets in towns like Bergen, the country's second-largest city, which sports rainbow architecture and a 15th-century waterfront.

Knowing the heart of a destination begins and ends with its people. Tack on beautiful scenery and daydream-worthy activities, and you just found yourself the perfect vacation.

GROW CRYSTALS WITH YOUR KIDS

A mentally sedentary summer can cause your child's learning to stagnate and backslide, erasing the equivalent of as much as two months of in-school learning. But you can have fun with your kid this summer and help them learn at the same time. Try this project from sciencebob.com, which demonstrates how geodes are formed and gives a primer on the science of crystals. The results are stunning!

All you need are some clean eggshells, water, several different soluble materials (salt, sugar, baking soda, borax, cream of tartar), coffee cups, spoons, food coloring, and egg cartons.



First, crack the eggs as close to the narrow end as possible. Then, clean the eggshells in hot water, which allows you to pull the skin out of the inside.

Place the shells in an egg carton lined with wax paper to hold them upright. Boil the water and pour half a cup into each coffee mug, followed by ¼ cup of one of the soluble materials, stirring until it dissolves. Keep adding the solid slowly until the water is supersaturated — this simply means that the water has absorbed all it can and any additional solid won't dissolve.

Then, add food coloring to the solutions. See what creative color combinations your child can come up with.

Carefully pour the solution into an eggshell, filling it as full as you can without the solution overflowing or the egg tipping over. As the water evaporates (be patient!) crystals will begin to form inside the eggshells.

But how? As the water is heated, it expands, allowing more space for the dissolved solution. When it cools and evaporates, that space goes away, and the solids are forced to become solid again.

See, science is fun and educational! Check out further science experiments on sciencebob.com, sciencekids.co.nz, or redtri.com/classic-science-experiments!

SMILING INCREASES HAPPINESS!

LEARN HOW SMILING ACTUALLY IMPROVES YOUR MOOD

NOTHING PROJECTS HAPPINESS QUITE LIKE A BIG, beautiful smile. The connection between smiling and joy, however, is not a one-way street. A study by psychologist Robert Zajonc shows that facial expressions contribute to the feelings associated with them. That's right — smiling more will actually make you a happier person, and nothing will motivate you to flash those pearly whites more often than being excited about the alignment and appearance of your teeth.

Feeling great about your teeth is one of the chief benefits of orthodontic treatment. When you look in the mirror and see a flawless smile, you gain an increased sense of self-worth. Not only are people with straight teeth more likely to be successful and score more dates, but according to a Kelton study, they also feel better about themselves. High self-esteem yields positive results in every facet of your life and will have you grinning from ear to ear.



Heightened self-confidence isn't the only benefit to working with an experienced orthodontist. Straighter teeth also contribute to your overall oral hygiene. Crowding and crookedness increases the likelihood of plaque buildup and cavities. The health benefits of orthodontic treatment extend beyond the mouth as well. Loads of ailments — like jaw aches, sleep apnea, and migraines — can be alleviated through orthodontic treatment. These added bonuses will lift your mood even higher.

Everyone is searching for inspiration to smile more often. The job of an orthodontist is to give you as many reasons as possible to broadcast your inner contentment. Possessing the best possible smile will improve your mood and, in turn, will keep you smiling from dawn till dusk.

TESTIMONIALS ★★★★★

"I just went in last week to have them check for cavities and clean my teeth. The staff and the doctor did a great job. The hygienist made sure to clean better and longer than others I've been to, as well. A friend referred me, and I'm glad I went. Very impressed, would recommend to anyone."

-Matt S.

"Being new to the area, I found Eagle Dental Care. I could not be more pleased. The staff was very friendly checking me in. The hygienist, Jennifer, was such a delight. She made my visit very relaxing and enjoyable (as much as one could enjoy going to the dentist). I would recommend Eagle Dental to anyone!"

-Kristine K.

"I always have the best experience at Eagle Dental Care! Jennifer Knight cleans my teeth, and she makes my experience a great one! Extremely knowledgeable in her profession and keeps the cleaning experience fun with her discussions!"

-Clay R.

"Dr. Thomason and his staff are excellent! I had cavities filled today and didn't feel a thing! Jen did an amazing job making sure my teeth were super clean before I left. The doctor made sure that I knew exactly what my treatment plan was and answered all my questions. I would absolutely recommend this office to anyone!"

-Ciara P.



SUMMERTIME FROZEN YOGURT PIE

Looking for a summer dessert you don't have to feel guilty about indulging in? Try this easy, low-fat frozen treat!

INGREDIENTS

- 1 premade graham cracker pie crust
- 1 (8-ounce) container Cool Whip
- 1 cup frozen or fresh mixed berries (strawberries, blueberries, and blackberries)
- 3 (6-ounce) containers regular yogurt (berry flavors work best)



INSTRUCTIONS

1. Combine Cool Whip, mixed berries, and yogurt in a bowl. Mix with a spatula until well-blended.
2. Pour yogurt mixture into pie crust.
3. Cover pie with foil or plastic lid.
4. Store in freezer for at least 3 hours, or until frozen through.
5. Serve frozen or slightly thawed.

LAUGHING GAS

