

JULY 2024



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FROM BEACH DAYS TO BASEBALL

The Summer of Sports

A typical summer for my family has traditionally meant quiet days at the beach. Since childhood, my favorite memories revolve around Breezy Point, where we would spend every summer basking in the sun, swimming, and enjoying the sound of the waves. We have been spending our summers at Breezy Point since our kids could walk, and those sunny days have always been the highlight of my year. However, this year has been vastly different.

Owen, Sean, and Finn are now 14, 12, and 10, and sports have taken over our summer. Owen is on two baseball teams, while Sean plays on one baseball team and attends a football camp. Instead of our annual beach retreats, we now spend our summer traveling across New Jersey for sporting events. This month, we travel to Maryland for Sean and Boston for Owen. Jenny often stays behind with Finn to enjoy a few days at the beach while I am the designated sports dad. It has been a massive shift from my favorite summer pastime, and while I sometimes find it frustrating, a big part of me knows I will miss these days once they are gone, so I try to take it all in while I can.

Our current summer routine has been intense. Sean has games during the week, while Owen has games on both weekdays and weekends. Of course, practices are sprinkled in as well. I usually drop one kid off at practice on my way to the other's game while Jenny is doing the pick-up. I love watching them play the sports they love while they grow and improve daily.

Baseball season runs through July, leading straight into August — football pre-season. Owen, now entering his freshman year of high



school, has a busy August with football practice four days a week. Sean has the same schedule starting in the middle of August. The schedule is very demanding and requires a lot of dedication from the kids and us as parents — it is safe to say this is the ultimate summer of sports.

Just this past weekend, we had a tournament an hour and a half away with an 8:30 a.m. start time, meaning we had to leave the house super early (6:00 a.m.) because the coach likes the team to be there an hour prior to the game so the players can start warming up on the field and in the batting cages. These tournaments can last all day, sometimes turning into 12-hour marathons where you keep playing until you are eliminated. It is exhausting, but there is such a thrill in seeing the kids give it their all out on the field every day.

I always cherish the moments spent watching my children pursue their passions, so I embrace the whirlwind of sports for now. As much as I miss the summers spent at the beach, one day, I will look back and miss the chaotic, sports-driven summers just as much as my kids will. I hope you all are enjoying your summer — no matter how you spend it!

-Brian O'Connor

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LOBSTER TALES

THE CULINARY ODYSSEY OF AMERICA'S FAVORITE CRUSTACEAN

It may be hard to believe, but for much of our nation's history, you would be more likely to find lobster on the menu of a prison cafeteria than an upscale restaurant. For centuries, these crustaceans harbored a reputation as protein for the poor. In fact, lobster has only recently become a luxury item. This is the story of the lobster and how it rose from a side dish to the main course.

Seafood for Settlers

When settlers first arrived in America, they soon discovered the shores were teeming with shellfish, which the Native Americans often used as fishing bait and fertilizer. Lobster was so plentiful that settlers did not need to dive to catch them: They would simply pile up on the shore like produce at a grocery store.

The crustaceans, some weighing up to 40 pounds, were so prolific and cheap that it was the primary food for prisoners, workers, and children.

Servants ate so much that they got sick of them and reportedly included stipulations in their employment contracts that an employer would only serve lobster a maximum of two times per week.



Canned Crustaceans

While lobster became known as a ready food source for those living on the coast, its short shelf life made it inaccessible to those living farther inland. This all changed in the 1870s with the advent of canned foods and train travel, which made lobster even *more* affordable and plentiful nationwide. However, their affordability led to increased demand, which resulted in overfishing. Eventually, lobster numbers dwindled, and they became less accessible.

Shellfish Revival

In the 1920s, people yearned to taste lobster once more.

This yearning only grew once chefs discovered that boiling the crustaceans while they were still alive helped to

enhance their flavor — much to the lobsters' dismay. Restaurants in New York and Boston began serving lobster on their menu, but the increased demand and scarcity made them into the expensive treat we know today. Lobster's rise from bottom feeder to a top-shelf delicacy has changed the culinary landscape worldwide — the scrumptious shellfish is now a delicacy served worldwide.

LIGHTS, CAMERA, CASH

WHY REAL MONEY CAN'T TAKE CENTER STAGE

Have you ever wondered how moviemakers can afford to blow up piles of money on the big screen? It turns out that it's tricky, as the government has a set of strict rules to follow when studios feature U.S. currency on screen. So, roll out the red carpet because we're about to explore the laws of prop money.



Identical bills are illegal.

Prop money can't look identical to actual bills because of concerns about whether it could be circulated to the public and used. This happened after a "Rush Hour 2" scene where they blew up billions of dollars in prop money. Extras took home some of the fake cash and tried to use it in Las Vegas. The Secret Service got involved immediately, shutting down the shoot and confiscating the bills. If the money is a replica, it must be either 75% smaller or 150% larger than real bills. One of the most common methods studios use is printing only one side of the fake money. The design can also be altered slightly, like changing the shading or picture.

Real cash can't be destroyed.

Even though blowing up or burning money on camera can pump up the action for the audience, legal tender *cannot* be destroyed

in movies. Anyone can be charged with a federal crime, punishable by 10 years in prison and fines for destroying money. Only the Federal Reserve has that power. Technically, it's illegal to even flatten a penny.

You can't print money.

Real currency is printed on a unique blend of cotton and linen available only to the U.S. government. Prop money can't feel like the real deal. It has to be on paper and printed at a lower resolution. Robert De Niro didn't like how the prop money felt in his hands while filming "Goodfellas." To get around it, the prop master withdrew money from his bank account for De Niro to use. At the end of each scene, no one could leave until all the money was counted and returned.

So, next time one of your favorite movie characters has cash to burn, remember, those are fake bills in the flames!

TAKE A *BREAK*



QUINOA VEGGIE BOWL

This recipe is packed with protein-rich quinoa and a colorful array of vegetables. It's ideal for a healthy lunch or a quick dinner!

INGREDIENTS

- 2 tbsp olive oil
- 1 red bell pepper, diced
- 1 yellow bell pepper, diced
- 1 cup diced zucchini
- 1 cup diced mushrooms
- 1 tsp dried oregano
- Salt and pepper, to taste
- 2 cups cooked quinoa

DIRECTIONS

1. Heat olive oil in a large skillet over medium heat.
2. Add bell peppers, zucchini, and mushrooms and cook until softened, about 5 minutes.
3. Add oregano, salt, and pepper and stir to combine.
4. Add the cooked quinoa and mix thoroughly.
5. Cook for an additional 5 minutes, then serve.

ADVENTURE AWAITS

CRAFT A BUCKET LIST OF FUN ACTIVITIES FOR YOUR KIDS

For many parents, the end of the school year begins a long, challenging stretch of unstructured time when children need something to do. Social media personalities are rushing to fill the gap by suggesting activities to inspire parents and kids alike to make the most of their time off.

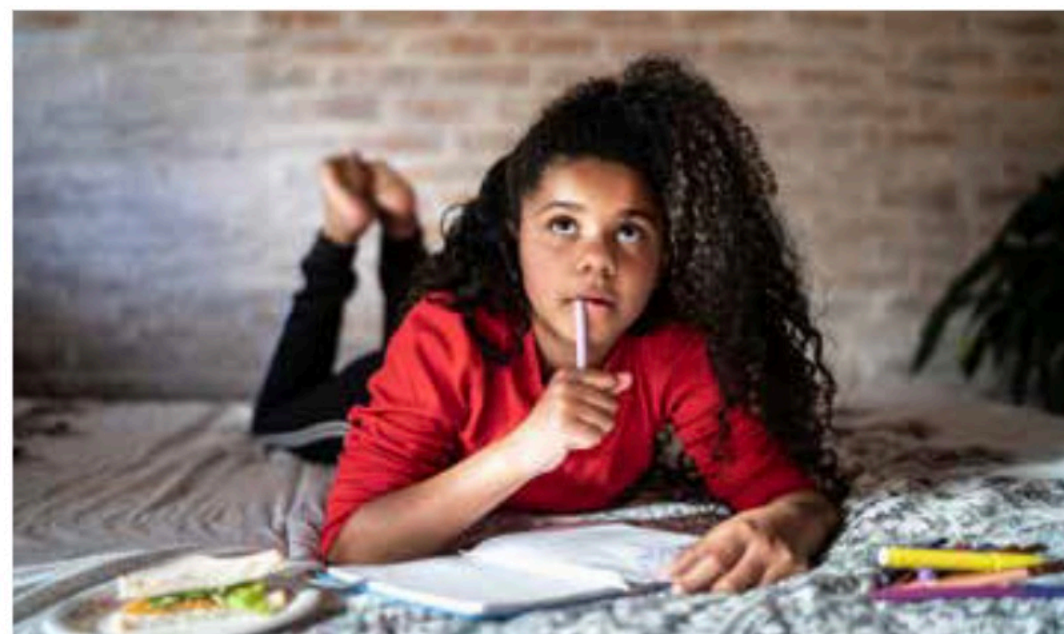
The term "bucket list" was popularized by a 2007 film of the same name. It originally denoted an inventory of experiences or achievements you hope to accomplish before you die. But the idea of figuring out what you want to do in the future is handy at other stages of life, too. Young adults and parents have embraced the term as a tool for planning summer activities.

Framing her suggestions as a "summer bucket list," one YouTuber, Advice by Angel, suggested no less than 70 summer activities, from painting old shoes or taking pictures with a Polaroid to camping on the beach, and included beautiful photos to illustrate each suggestion. Among her more creative suggestions are making Nutella pizza, cliff jumping, and a trampoline sleepover.

To get your children involved, one resourceful mom, Amy Pettiford, shows on a TikTok video how she listed about 70 summer bucket list choices on a posterboard in various colorful markers and mounted it on the refrigerator. She suggests checking off activities as you do them and adding the date. Among her entries are making a leaf scrapbook, jumping over waves, painting outdoors, and building a blanket fort.

Making and using these lists can teach children some valuable lessons. For example, it can inspire parents and kids to think about how they spend their days. It encourages them to do things they might not otherwise pursue, such as Pettiford's suggestions to dance in the rain, serve a neighbor, gaze at the stars, or perform a random act of kindness. Some items a parent might add, such as Pettiford's "go garage sale hopping," can create an opportunity to teach children how to earn money.

When fall arrives, your children can return to school with a sense of satisfaction that their summer vacation has been well spent!



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FLIGHT PATH FALLOUT

TAYLOR SWIFT'S JET-TRACKING TROUBLES

When pop megastar Taylor Swift travels anywhere, the whole world seems to hang onto every detail. It's all made possible by information technology student Jack Sweeny, who has been tracking her private jet and posting all the details online.

Swift's lawyers sent the Florida student a cease-and-desist letter in December 2023, claiming he was providing "individuals intent on harming her, or with nefarious or violent intentions, a road map to carry out their plans." The star's team also stated that the timing of stalkers seems to correlate with Sweeny's posts about her flights.

Sweeny's site, GRNDCTRL, and social media accounts source public data from the Federal Aviation Administration on the flight details of billionaires, celebrities, and other public figures like Elon Musk, Kylie Jenner, and Bill Gates. He also gets information on the fuel usage and

emissions produced by private jets, which he shares online.

Though Sweeny said he never intended to cause harm to Taylor Swift or any of the other celebrities he tracks, he is using public data available to anyone; he's just repurposing the information. His legal team said he was "engaged in protected speech that does not violate any of Ms. Swift's legal rights." Further, his lawyer claims Swift's team has failed to prove the posts have led to stalking or harm of the singer.

Swift hasn't been able to shake it off yet. Sweeny continues to post flight information for the singer, though he has switched to posting it on a 24-hour delay rather than in real time. The student has said he believes in transparency and has an environmental angle for what he is doing — he wants to expose the carbon emissions produced by Swift's flights and those of other wealthy celebrities.

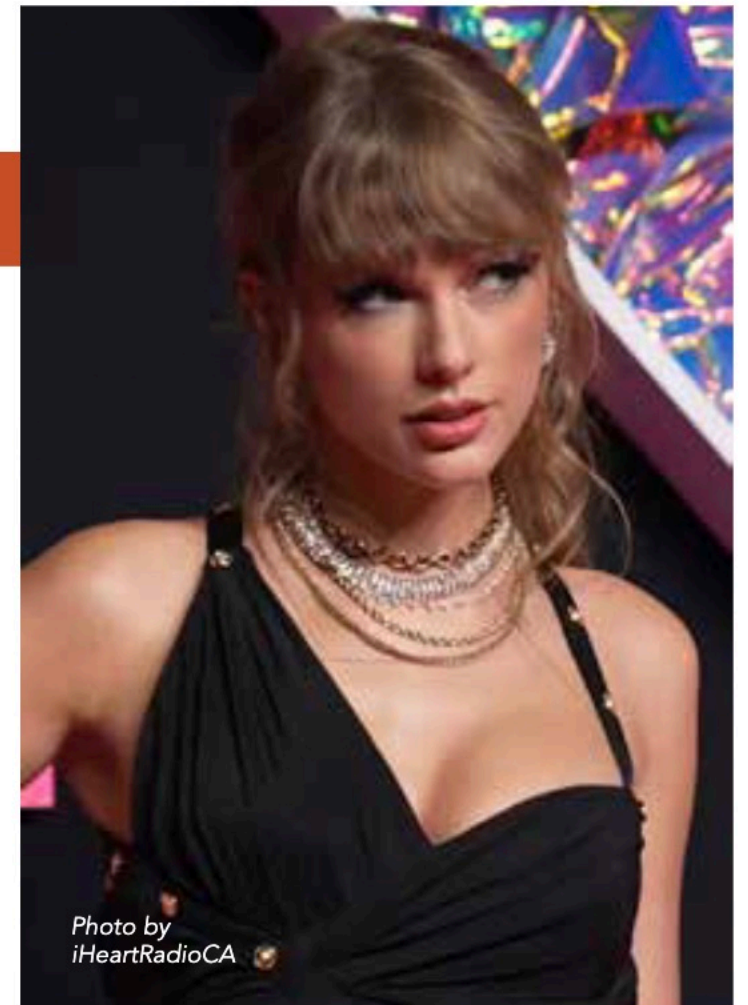


Photo by
iHeartRadioCA

Swift's team has taken no further action, and Sweeny's lawyer said he doubted any more legal action would be taken. As for Sweeny, he suggested that if Swift really wanted her privacy, she could register her private jet with an anonymous corporate entity and choose an ID code that is not her birthday and initials.