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## Lazy Days of Summer: Time to Relax and Contemplate

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## Lazy Days of Summer: Time to Relax and Contemplate

**By Mark Routhier**  
UCF Forum columnist  
Wednesday, June 25, 2014

It's summertime! The solstice just went by and as the days now become shorter, summer has officially begun. It's a time to relax and reboot. It's a time to find some water to splash around in. And it's a time for contemplation...

Central Florida is classing up. Great markets are popping up, including East End Market, known as a "Hub for Food and Culture," and Trader Joe's.

East End Market in Orlando's Audubon Park neighborhood celebrates the culture of food by inviting local farmers and artisans to ply their wares all under one roof. They support local, small businesses and food entrepreneurs, so it's a great place to find great beer, cheese, bread, coffee, and the list goes on. The vendors are friendly and the clientele is generally seeking yummy food and drink to support a local, sustainable culture.

The new Trader Joe's in Winter Park is a national chain that essentially focuses on the idea that they buy direct from their suppliers, buy in volume, negotiate, contract early, don't charge their suppliers fees for stocking their merchandise, and do what they can to pass the savings on to their customers. The produce is always fresh and the Trader Joe's brand is inexpensive and delicious. Try the dark chocolate-covered pretzels!

Food is our fuel and one of the foundations of culture. Having these fresh choices makes our community a better place. And hopefully, these new markets will inspire more like them.

As another part of the summer contemplation, let's look at the culture of excessive celebration.

Some athletes go over the top to celebrate in the middle of games: in basketball after a particularly impressive dunk, in football after a drive-stalling tackle or a first-down circus catch, etc. Most of our athletes do it now.

There's the chest-pounding (Look at how awesome I am!), the in-your-face head nodding in front of the other player, the camera or the crowd (Yeah, I'm the best athlete you will ever see!), the goofy dance (this one is less egregious because at least there's an element of humor in it), and of course, the multiple fist pump (another less offensive form because one can at least see elements of "I just scored one for the team").

It has become perceived as cool and widely accepted to celebrate in this manner, and it does not matter if it's a go-ahead goal or if the celebrator's team is winning at all. It's about self-congratulation.

But back in another day, athletes such as Jerry Rice, one of the best receivers of all time playing on a dynasty San Francisco 49ers team, after catching the ball — whether it was a scoring play or not — would toss the ball back to the ref. Larry Bird, another star athlete who helped make his Boston Celtics a dynasty, after a basket would turn and run to the other end of the court — ready to play some defense.

The list of excessively celebrating athletes today far exceeds the list of humble all-in-a-day's work athletes.

We can look at similar behavior in celebrities when they win awards. It's not as rampant as it is in sports, but it's there. Matthew McConaughey, accepting the Oscar for his performance in *Dallas Buyer's Club*, let us know that he is his own hero 10 years away, and always will be. What's the message here? Be your own hero. It's not about team and collaboration, it's about me!

As for other contemplations of summer, here are some topics that just get too much airplay, so we're going to skip them altogether:

Gridlock in government. Rather not go there.

Maintaining neutrality on the Internet. Too much attention.

Fracking and our diminishing clean water resources? This needs serious consideration.

The destabilizing of Iraq? I hope the Iraqi people can one day live in peace.

How about Facebook and Twitter and social media and their effect on our children?

People are getting more and more used to communicating in sound bites — 140 characters per tweet, maximum. And who wants to read anything longer than a paragraph on Facebook? No one. Some people do not know how to construct a simple sentence. They have not been trained how to organize their thoughts to articulately and effectively communicate them.

Illiteracy is not new. As long as there has been literacy, we have had illiteracy — but at the university level? Really?

Should we blame social media? Should we blame cryptic Facebook posts such as: "Today, I just can't." Or the recent spate of reposting articles about 127 Drunk Celebrities With Too Much Plastic Surgery Peeing Near Dumpsters by the Beach? Or should we blame tweets such as, "I'm gonna jump! #notreally #justkidding #justjumpinginthewater #it'ssohotout? Is this a summer contemplation worthy of more than a paragraph? Mmm, probably not.

Global warming and the opportunity to implement new technologies? That one's pretty cool.

*Orange is the New Black* and *House of Cards* and the way Netflix, Hulu Plus, HBO Go and Apple TV have changed the landscape of television. Another great summertime contemplation.

So much to explore. So much to opine. But it's summer and I want to take it easy.

It's so much more fun to be breezy than stormy, so much more fun to smile than frown.

The Central Florida summers can be particularly stultifying because of the oppressive outside heat and humidity, but it gives us the opportunity to luxuriate in contemplation. I prefer to think of it this way, as opposed to just calling it lazy.

How about a tweet: Lazy days of summer #contemplating #lottathinking #enjoyyoursummer!

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