

Get Out and Exercise

by Phil Dimon

Many of us are well aware of the importance and benefits of exercise, and yet we still do not make the commitment to exercise on a regular basis. Exercise, whether it's simply a 30-minute walk or a vigorous workout in the gym, is extremely important for our physical and mental health. My hope is that this article will convince you to make time in your weekly schedule for regular exercise (and if you already exercise regularly, keep it up!).

Consider the following statistics: approximately 1.6 billion adults are overweight, and 400 million of these adults are considered obese (according to the measure where a body mass index of over 25 is considered overweight and over 30 is considered obese). Excess weight has become a global epidemic, and the percentage of overweight people is rising rapidly in almost all parts of the world. India is relatively low on the list, with approximately 16 percent of adults currently overweight or obese. However, this statistic is increasing rapidly, and in urban areas of India it is approximately 40 percent. Statistics for the U.S. are much worse: approximately 70 percent of adults in the U.S. are either overweight or obese. According to the World Health Organization, the fundamental cause of obesity and overweight is an imbalance between calories consumed and calories expended. The rapid increases in obesity and overweight can largely be attributed to a global shift in diet towards foods with more fat and less nutrients, and a trend towards decreased physical activity due to work that involves less exercise, changing modes of transportation, and increasing urbanization. Put simply, if we want to maintain a healthy body weight, we need to eat healthier and exercise more!

In addition to helping us maintain a healthy body weight, regular exercise also helps us to live longer and avoid diseases – who doesn't want that? Exercise helps in strengthening the heart muscles and maintaining appropriate cholesterol levels, thus reducing the risk of heart disease and stroke. Exercise also strengthens the bones and tissues in the body, promotes bone growth, and increases bone density, thereby reducing the risk of developing osteoporosis in later years. Exercise also helps reduce the risk of high blood pressure, cancer, diabetes, and depression.

Perhaps lesser-known are the many mental health benefits that

regular exercise provides. Studies have shown that people who exercise regularly tend to be more productive and energetic during the day. Exercise tends to reduce stress levels, as it enables people to take their mind off the daily grind of life, or use pent-up energy for a productive purpose. Exercise can even improve cognitive ability, as it helps to increase the flow of oxygen and blood to the brain and creates new nerve cells. People who exercise regularly also tend to sleep better at night, as their body has expended more energy and can sleep more easily. Some people also feel that exercise increases their problem-solving ability, focus, and clarity of mind. In my personal experience, I have noticed this when working on major projects that involve many hours of work in one day. I find that if I take a break during the work and go for a run, I am able to come back to the project with renewed focus, clarity of mind, and energy. Last but not least, exercise can be fun! Exercise doesn't need to be thought of as a chore, and if the thought of running on a treadmill is just agonizing, as it sometimes is for me, then perhaps you can go out and play your favorite sport and get exercise that way.



(Continued on page 2)



FilterForGood and trainer Bob Harper hosted a private yoga session on March 31, 2010, in New York, to share simple steps to help sustain your body, mind and the environment. Learn more at filterforgood.com. (Diane Bondareff/AP Images for Brita)

The American Center

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H O L I D A Y S

January 17: Martin Luther King's Birthday
 January 26: Republic Day

A WORD FROM THE CENTER

In December, I attended an amazing conference called INK – Innovation and Knowledge – that was held in association with TED (a small nonprofit devoted to Ideas Worth Spreading, which started out as a conference bringing together people from Technology, Entertainment, and Design). It brought together a host of fascinating thinkers and actors from a range of disciplines. One of the most impressive talks, and directly relevant to this month's health theme, was by Alexander Tsiaras, renowned technologist, artist, journalist, entrepreneur and author. He has worked on developing amazing scientific visualization software to allow him to "paint the human anatomy" using volume data. I encourage all of you to check out the fruit of his labor at www.thevisualmd.com. Here, you can physically see differences in the body that are caused by unhealthy behavior, allowing the comparison of healthy bone tissue to osteoporotic bone tissue.

The site outlines the nine rules of wellness visually. While none of these "rules" is new, it is helpful to see them clearly delineated, and the accompanying visuals help to demonstrate very clearly the importance of following these rules. With 2011 just starting, there is still time to make resolutions and I would encourage all of you to focus on improving your health through following these nine rules:

- Rule 1: Baseline Your Health
- Rule 2: Define Your Wellness Mission
- Rule 3: Develop and Maintain Nutritional Balance
- Rule 4: Get Aerobic and Anaerobic Exercise
- Rule 5: Never Smoke. If You Smoke Now, Quit
- Rule 6: Take a Moderate Approach
- Rule 7: Make Sleep a Priority
- Rule 8: Manage Your Stress
- Rule 9: Embrace Joy

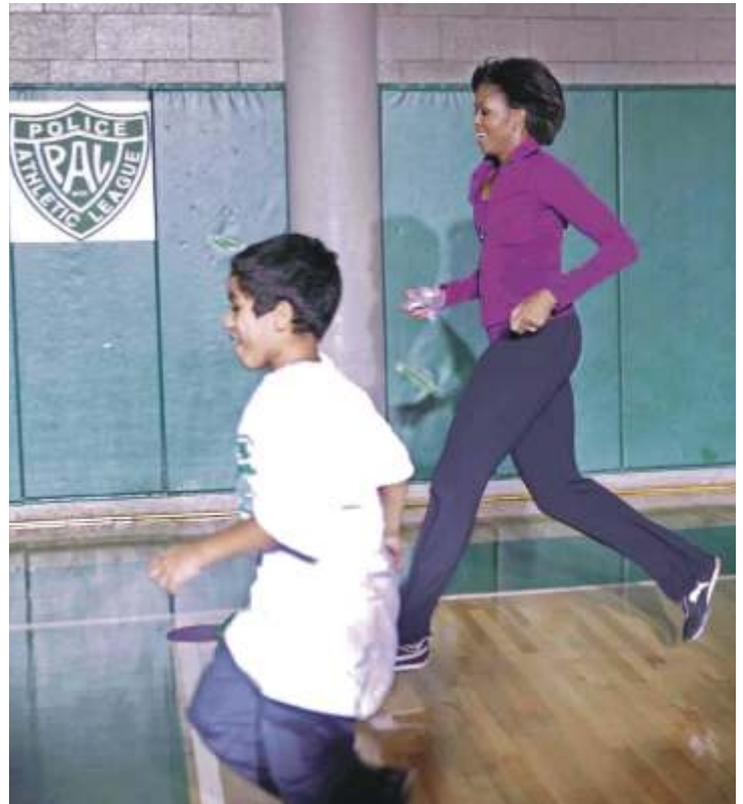
Here's to a healthy and happy 2011.



Christine Dal Bello
Information Officer

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Now that you are aware of some of the great physical and mental health benefits that exercise provides (and there are many more), how can you take action? Health experts advise that three days of exercise per week is good and five days of exercise per week is even better. Take a look at your weekly calendars and see if you can fit in at least three different times for exercise. As far as what type of exercise is appropriate, choose something that you enjoy and are physically capable of doing. Running in a race will of course burn more calories than going for a stroll in the park,



First Lady Michelle Obama runs alongside a youngster while promoting her "Let's Move" exercise program on November 18, 2010, at the Police Athletic League Harlem Center in New York. (AP Photo/Kathy Willens)

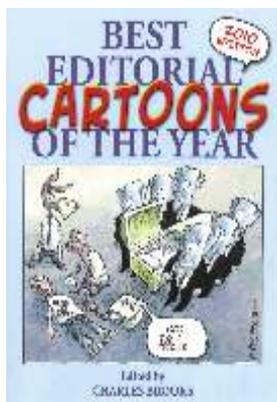
but both are great for physical and mental health. In Mumbai, I'm heartened to see many people out walking early in the morning along Worli Sea Face, and I have friends in Bandra who run along Carter Road. I know others who have joined gyms and some who take yoga classes. If you have a favorite sport, play more of it. And if you get really ambitious, maybe you can start training for the Mumbai Full or Half Marathon, held every January. So, get out there, go get 'em, and good luck!

Phil Dimon works at the U.S. Consulate General, Mumbai



NOTES FROM THE AMERICAN LIBRARY

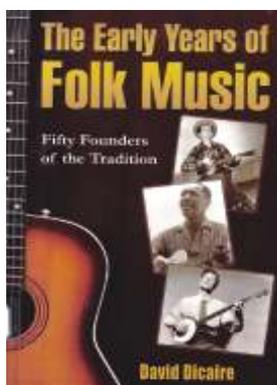
New Additions to the Library



Best Editorial Cartoons of the Year 2010

Edited by Charles Brooks
Pelican Publishing Company, 2010

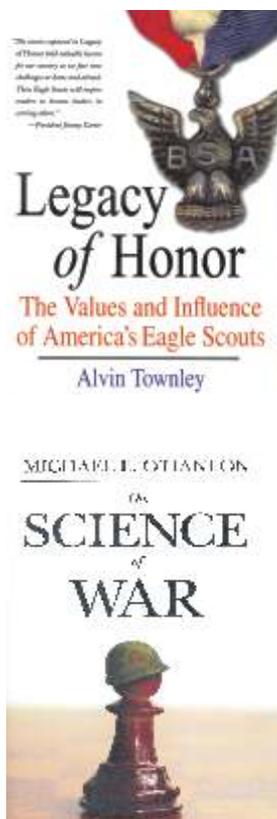
This book consists of a collection of more than 400 cartoons by leading editorial cartoonists which span the political spectrum from liberal to conservative. Prize-winning and other leading editorial cartoonists cover topics such as the Obama Administration, the economy, government bailouts, and healthcare reform.



The Early Years of Folk Music: Fifty Founders of the Tradition

by David Dicaire
McFarland & Company, Inc., 2010

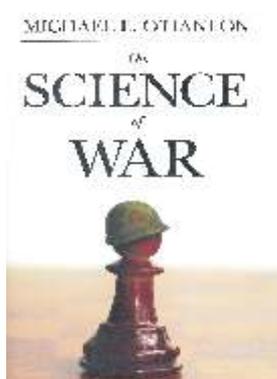
This book presents an overview of international folk roots from the seventeenth century to the mid-twentieth century. Profiles of Pete Seeger, Burl Ives, Woody Guthrie, and others show how the stage was set for the American folk revival of the 1960s.



Legacy of Honor: The Values and Influence of America's Eagle Scouts

by Alvin Townley
Thomas Dunne Books, 2007

The story is about America's Eagle Scouts who have earned a reputation for service, virtue and leadership recognized throughout the world. They have made a mark on American history and have played an integral part in American life. The author, an Eagle Scout, set out across the country to explore the legacy of Scouting.



The Science of War

by Michael E. O'Hanlon
Princeton University Press, 2009

This textbook provides U.S. defense policy analysis by explaining key issues such as the U.S. military budget and logistics, technology, missile defense, space warfare, and nuclear weapons testing.

Ask a Librarian: Please write to the American Library at libref@state.gov for research queries related to information on U.S. international relations, education, law and legislation, English language, and literature.

**A View of Memphis, Tennessee,
Through My Eyes ... A Jewel of the South!**
Discussion led by Omari Faulkner

Monday, January 24
American Center Auditorium

6:00 p.m.

Come learn more about the ways in which Memphis has shaped history in the United States and internationally. Its history, culture, and diversity are just a few tidbits that make the city one of a kind. Come learn more about Memphis, a view of its past struggles and triumphs; a vision of today's political climate and other fun facts about what makes Memphis special, from the mouth of a TRUE Memphian.

Omari Faulkner worked for PepsiCo/Frito-Lay, prior to joining the Department of State. In 2005, he served as a Cultural Envoy for the U.S. Department of State's Culture Connect Program. As a Cultural Envoy, Omari traveled to more than 40 countries (including Mumbai, New Delhi, and Kolkata in India), conducting cultural exchange events with children, parents, and community leaders. He received his Bachelor of Science degree from Georgetown University and was also a four-year varsity basketball player for the Hoyas. During his Georgetown tenure, he received numerous student athlete awards and also holds a Master of Arts degree from the University of Arkansas. In his spare time, he enjoys spending every moment with his wife Marquex Faulkner, their daughter Presley, and the family's two dogs, Princess and Vixen.

American Center Auditorium
3:30 and 6:30 p.m.

Friday, January 21

Based on the novel by Jodi Picoult, this poignant drama stars Abigail Breslin as an 11-year-old girl who was conceived through in vitro fertilization to serve as a genetic donor to her terminally ill older sister (Sofia Vassilieva). Told she must give up a kidney, Breslin sues her parents (Cameron Diaz and Jason Patric) for medical emancipation. But taking control of her life may come at the cost of her sister's.

My Sister's Keeper
(2009, 110 mins)

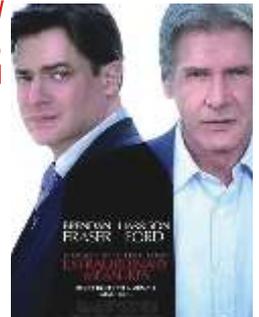


Friday, January 28

Meet Mumbai-based *Wall Street Journal* journalist and author, **Geeta Anand**, whose book, *The Cure*, inspired *Extraordinary Measures*.

Compelling, fact-based drama focuses on a couple (Brendan Fraser and Keri Russell) whose two youngest children suffer from Pompe disease, a potentially fatal neuromuscular disorder. Desperate to find a cure, they take it upon themselves to raise the money necessary for a maverick research scientist (Harrison Ford), to continue his work on a controversial drug that may be the children's only hope.

Extraordinary Measures
(2010, 106 mins)



social media

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Starting this year, the American Center will display a "Facebook Favorites" section in our monthly bulletin featuring the top three postings. So become a fan of the American Center Mumbai and get a chance to see your posting selected for our bulletin!

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Admission to American Center programs, restricted to persons over 14, unless otherwise specified, is on a first-come, first-served basis. The auditorium doors will open 30 minutes before the start of the program.