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Children love June, and, if you really crave light, then you too should enjoy June too, for it's the month with the longest daylight hours of the year in the Northern Hemisphere, thus, allowing one to remain outside and play longer, avoiding the boredom of TV that lurks inside every home, offering seemingly an infinite number of channels yet ultimately nothing of real worth, save perhaps some interesting NHL playoff games.



In June, students know they will soon be free from their teachers, as it marks the beginning of summer when the sun rises in the constellation of Taurus, my astrological sign. I know nothing of the Zodiac's myriad mysteries, but I was warned often by my mother to stay out of china shops, and that was fine with me.

June is known for the large number of marriages that occur over the course of the month. According to one etymology, June is named after Juno, the goddess of marriage and a married couple's household, so some consider it good luck to be married in this month. It seems that marriages need a lot of good luck these days, for half of them suffer the same fate as that of the Titanic.

I will save my successful marriage tips for a future column. Suffice to say that Miriam and I have been married now for 46 years and for this, she deserves any number of medals. We have been together so long that mind-melding regularly occurs. She magically completes my sentences, and our children are continually amazed when we play word games such as "Password" with them, and we respond with the correct answer to the most bizarre word clues.

For example, let's say that the desired response is "chain." Our children, I confess, are quite smart, and one might cleverly offer "fetter" as a clue word to the other. Nevertheless, the wrong answer is provided, for example, "lock." Now, if I am providing the clue word, I merely say "Aretha," and Miriam shouts out "chain," the correct answer, and our children collectively scream, "HOW DID YOU GET THAT!"

Miriam explains that Aretha Franklin is my favourite singer, and that combining "Aretha" with "fetter" leads immediately to her great song, "Chain of fools," and the children collectively wince and refuse to play anymore knowing that they are doomed.

There are other interesting associations with June. D-Day landings took place by the Allied forces in Normandy on June 6, 1944, a mere 20 days after my birth. In Iceland, folklore suggests that if you bathe naked in the morning dew on the morning of June 24, you are supposed to keep aging at bay for longer. How much longer, it doesn't say. If you are silly enough to bathe naked in dew on any day, I have a bridge in Brooklyn that I'd like to sell to you.

If you are part Irish like me, you will know that Bloomsday in Ireland and worldwide for fans of James Joyce's *Ulysses* is celebrated on June 16. Joyce was a famous writer, so everybody



likes to say that they have read *Ulysses*, but really, nobody understands it. Joyce was one of the first to write in stream-of-consciousness mode which is no big deal because I have been using it for decades. I think one of the neatest facts about Joyce is the name of his wife and muse, Nora Barnacle. It takes a lot of courage to adopt somebody by the name of Barnacle as your muse. I much prefer Miriam which is far more poetic, don't you think?

One of my favourite stories by Joyce was *The Dead*, which is his final story in the *Dubliners*. It was made into a 1987 movie by John Huston and it relates how Gabriel Conroy and his wife Greta attend a Christmas dinner with friends at the home of his spinster aunts. It is haunting and often dreary, and it never fails to knock me out, but maybe that's because I'm part Irish.