



A group of us once got a bacteria infection and fever from drinking from this lake in Canada. (Mark Rackay/Special to the MDP)

Fever is a warning sign

I had finally begged, pleaded, threatened, and harassed my old man mentor, Mr. Castor, to take me fishing on the upcoming Saturday. Having a fishing trip planned gives a kid reason to live, considering I was serving a sentence in the third grade.

The morning of the trip, I came staggering out of my room, apparently looking a mite poor. My grandmother took one look at me, put her hand on my forehead, and said, “Land sakes boy, you’re burning up with fever. Back to bed, no fishing for you today.”

I protested the accuracy of her method in determining my temperature, but not so much. You see, her other method of taking my temperature was far more intrusive and embarrassing. Without getting too specific, let’s just say she did not believe in oral thermometers. Back to bed I went.

The normal body temperature we have all been told is 98.6 degrees F. This comes back to a German doctor by the name of Carl Reinhold August Wunderlich. Dr. Wunderlich spent years in the mid-1800s studying the temperature of the human body.

He used a thermometer that was a foot long and took the armpit temperature of 25,000 people to determine the average temperature to be 98.6 degrees. The thermometer took 20 minutes to register.

I would bet people were less than enthralled to see him come strolling up with his thermometer in hand. His finding did determine that a fever is a symptom and not a disease.

The normal temperature of the human body can fall within a range, from 97 F to 99 F. It is usually lower in the morning and goes up during the day, peaking in late afternoon or evening. This temperature can fluctuate as much as 2 degrees.

It seems everyone is getting their temperature taken whenever they enter businesses, airports, and just about anywhere else, as a precaution to help stop the spread of the coronavirus. If you’re healthy, you don’t need to take your temperature regularly.

New research suggests that the normal body temperature has gone down and a person’s age, weight, gender, or time off day did not make a difference. Sci-



Tips from the Posse

By Mark Rackay

ence suggests the reason is we have lower metabolic rates because we weigh more than people did a century ago, lower rates of infection, and better and more accurate thermometers.

Doctors don’t consider a person to have a fever until your temperature is above 100.4 F. You can still be sick, even if you don’t have a fever. Consider 2 degrees above your normal to be a sign of an infection.

You get a fever because your body is fighting off an infection by trying to kill a virus or bacteria that is causing the infection. Most bacteria and viruses cannot survive when you have a fever. A fever is a sign that your body’s immune system has kicked in and is fighting the infection.

Additional symptoms and signs of a fever can include sweating, chills and shivering, headache, muscle aches, loss of appetite, weakness and dehydration.

Over-the-counter medicines like acetaminophen, aspirin and ibuprofen are fever reducers. When your temperature is between 100 F and 102 F, drink plenty of fluids and rest. Take the fever reducers if you wish.

If your temperature is over 102 F, seek medical attention, or if the temperature does not fall within an hour of taking a fever reducer. Any fever with a cough, shortness of breath, sore and aching body, sore and stiffness in the neck, swelling or confusion could be a sign of a serious condition and requires a visit with your doctor immediately.

It’s one thing to be sick when you are on the couch in your home but is another problem to be sick when you are in the great outdoors. If you are on a camping trip when the bug hits you, pretty much the same rules apply. Take fever reducers, drink plenty of fluids, and rest, are the course if you

choose to stay, rather than head home.

Make an honest assessment of your health, even if it means ruining the trip for others. Be aware of the danger signs mentioned above.

If you are coughing, sneezing and achy, and feeling like resting, do so and don’t push yourself. If you feel like you are not getting better or have digestive issues that don’t allow you to keep anything down, you should head for home and contact the doctor.

And it goes without saying, if you have any of the COVID symptoms you need to isolate and immediately seek medical attention.

Usually, the fever the outdoor person has to deal with is minor and short of duration. A group of us on a fishing trip in Ontario all came down with a high fever at the same time. We determined it was from the lake water we were drinking and had to boat out a couple days early.

We met up with a doctor in a small town who diagnosed us with a bacterial infection, and put us all on an antibiotic, and sent us back to the wild. He said that if we did not get the help from the medicine, the infection would have worsened, and in a couple days we might not have made it out.

The moral of the story is, don’t take chances with your health when you are far from home. Many times, a bug will get far worse before it gets better. While you may make it out today, tomorrow you may have to be airlifted, so be conservative with your judgment when afield.

I have often thought that being sick on weekends and on vacation would not count as time off and you should be awarded extra days off when you get healthy again. Perhaps congress could look into some kind of law about that.

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The fountains of nature

There is nothing like having a cup of coffee when out in a wild setting; at a campsite, on a trail, from an overlook. Any morning elixir can be substituted.

Awaiting the dawn at Warner Point in Black Canyon National Park, the autumn air is bracing, the colors of oak leaves are jewel-tone rich, and the smell of coffee ... The sun cracks the sky at the horizon, its rays stream through trees and over pinnacles. The warmth is immediately inviting. The coffee invigorates.

Named for park founder, Mark Warner, I wonder how many sunrises he might have seen over Black Canyon. He stood at this point that bears his name on his last visit to the park, in the fall of 1973, and the scene is largely unchanged.

Some trees are young, old ones have died, the sandstone blocks are still scattered across the point. And the vistas are as broad as they were when Utes traveled the rim.

The sunrise advances. A breeze wafts through the pinyon pine trees. A raven croaks as it flaps by. It seems that the same call to action in protecting our natural heritage that Warner felt in the 1920s is still in the air. In his case, he responded to an invitation from Aldo Leopold.

Leopold was at the forefront of creating a land conservation ethic in the United States that sprang forth in the early 20th century.

One of his earliest efforts was the founding of Game and Fish Protective Associations. Leopold initially wrote the first Game and Fish Handbook for the U.S. Forest Service, but by late 1915 he led the founding of associations in several New Mexico cities.

The citizen-led organizations aimed to work towards saving threatened species with plans for conserving them;



Outdoors

By Paul Zaenger

they advocated for action by the U.S.F.S., and publicized the need for animal protection. A state-wide organization was initiated the following year. The effort soon spread to Colorado.

Advocates for the Colorado Game and Fish Protective Association recruited members in Montrose during a trip in 1921. They signed up 50 people – annual dues were \$1.50 (more than \$20 today). Their goals were similar to those down south, and members could soon be located in almost every county in the state.

Records are scarce, but it seems local advocates soon banded together to form the Montrose Game and Fish Protective Association.

Mark Warner, a lifelong supporter of the outdoors, was likely a part of the local association’s founding. He made an address at the first banquet held by the Montrose association in 1926; his remarks made at the annual dinner two years later were much more pointed.

He raised questions about how settlement and industry over the previous centuries had altered the landscape, reduced wildlife populations, and driven away indigenous tribes.

Calling for conservation of all our resources, he believed that the natural world would restore the soul to a society that appeared to have embraced madness. He was speaking at a time when life moved at a fast and

reckless rate, the “Roaring Twenties.”

His most powerful words are handed down to us today, “You may drink from the fountains of nature and come back again and again to satisfy your thirst. But if you destroy the fountain, you destroy the stream that the fountain feeds. Nature gives abundantly, but she does not give inexhaustibly. You cannot exterminate and still possess. All life about us testifies to this fact.”

Standing at the overlook that bears his name at the beginning of a new day, it’s hard to ignore his message 100 years later.

A dynamic natural world is here, minutes from a community that now boasts some 40,000 residents. Warner was a hunter, angler, skier, hiker, and learned from modern and ancient indigenous cultures. He felt that the natural heritage passed on to him revived his soul in ways that only a living world can manage.

From my perch on Warner Point I pour another coffee from the thermos. The peaks of the West Elk Mountains come to life as the world draws in the breath of the dawn. The branches of a juniper tree enfold the fiery orb like arms taking hold of the day’s promise.

Do our times provoke a thirst that calls us to be satisfied from nature’s fountains? Warner’s voice, like Leopold’s and others, hearkens us to nature today the same as their fast-paced world did then. Find a landing and grasp a glorious sunrise. You, too, can be revived.

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Light percolates through trees and over landforms as the golden rays of sunrise stream out across Black Canyon and western Colorado. The mellowing grace of morning brings a daily renewal to life in the waning days of autumn. (Courtesy photo)