

The ARNIC Observer

The English-Speaking Union of the United States (ESUUS)

Andrew Romay New Immigrant Center (ARNIC)

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People grow through experience if they meet life honestly and courageously. This is how character is built.
— Eleanor Roosevelt

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Yoga & Meditation Foster a Healthy Mind & Body

BY CHRIS LEWIS (INDIA)

THE WESTERN WORLD is experiencing a rapidly growing interest in yoga and meditation and the eastern traditions that underlie them. They have ancient historical roots in India, but have more recently evolved into a North American cultural phenomenon. Why have these traditionally eastern practices gained such admiration in the West?

Rising approval has mainly focused on the Buddhist and Yoga traditions, which although quite distinctive, share much in common. Both originated in the Indian subcontinent over two thousand years ago. Buddhism began with Siddhārtha Gautama, the prince of a Hindu tribe in what is now Nepal, who lived around the time of Socrates (approximately 500 BC). He gave up his royal status for a contemplative life, which led him to be eventually called the “Buddha” or the “one who is awake.” The origin of Yoga is much more difficult to trace. Yoga’s origin lies in Hinduism, but was arguably first systematized in a series of Vedic teachings by the Hindu Philosopher Patanjali, who lived around 150 BC.

Whether seen in a religious context or not, meditation can be understood as a means of perceiving our self, emotions, motivations, behavior and our relationships with others. Meditation provides the tools for investigating the whole range of an individual’s experience so that he or she may, ultimately, better apprehend why things are the way they are. Nevertheless, a very reasonable question that should be asked is what relevance, if any, does meditation have in the modern western world?

In academia, meditation is now a legitimate subject of investigation by psychologists, neuroscientists, philosophers, psychotherapists, and other health professionals. This intellectual

interest runs parallel with pragmatic concerns. For example, mindfulness-based cognitive therapy (MBCT) and mindfulness-based stress reduction (MBSR) are treatments which use meditation found to be effective in remedying depression, anxiety, stress, and disease-related emotional imbalance.

Not so long ago, meditation and yoga centers were an unusual sight in western cities. Now, they can be found in all major urban areas. However, the fact that something is popular does not necessarily mean that it is appropriate. Returning to the original question, it seems westerners find these eastern traditions relevant because they seem reconcilable with their secular and scientific worldviews.

Similarly, Patanjali defines yoga in the Vedic teachings as “yogas sitta-vṛtti-nirodhaḥ.” This means, “yoga is to calm the patterning of the mind.” Again, we see that yoga and meditation are tools to help a person make sense of their mental life. But why does the mind need to be calmed? In Buddhist and Yoga traditions, the dissatisfaction and misery we all experience-- regardless of

our station in life--is constructed by the mind itself. By calming the mind, genuine happiness is possible. Is there a connection with being a westerner, the rapidly growing popular interest in meditation, and the promise of overcoming misery and dissatisfaction? What we see is that many westerners feel some component is missing and astray, which is perhaps why they turn eastward, like many before them have, for an answer.



Rendering of a man in a meditative state of reflection.

Painting by Natalia Barvink

SPECIAL CELEBRATIONS

Momentous May Holidays

BY KATTIE SENAT (HAITI)

IN HAITI where I grew up, Mother's Day is an amazing holiday. Gifts are shared and it's a day of family get-togethers. On that day, usually my father, my little brother and I went to the florist and bought a bouquet of pink roses and a card to wish her happiness, and shared a home-cooked meal.

In American culture, the two holidays in May that are celebrated with flowers are Mother’s Day and Memorial Day. The American incarnation of Mother’s Day was first advocated by Anna Jarvis, an activist and former schoolteacher, as early as 1907 and became an official U.S. holiday in 1914. While dates and celebrations vary around the world, it now falls on the second Sunday in May and traditionally involves presenting mothers with flowers, cards and other gifts.

Not only is it a day to recognize and pay tribute to mothers, it’s also a day to remember that all family members should share the responsibility of household chores, the cooking, the cleaning, and doing laundry. At times, Mother's Day has also been a date for launching political or feminist causes. In 1968, Coretta Scott King, wife of Martin Luther King Jr., held a march in support of underprivileged women and children on Mother’s Day. In the 1970s, women groups also used the holiday as a time to highlight the need for equal rights and access to childcare.

Traditions on Mother's day include churchgoing and family dinners, and wearing a carnation symbolizing the purity of a mother’s heart—red for living mothers and white for deceased ones. According to the greeting card industry, Mother’s Day is also one of the biggest holidays for sending cards, with an estimated 50 percent of American households doing so.



Hydrangeas and lilies and forsythia and daffodils! Oh my!

Memorial Day

Memorial Day is a Federal holiday in the United States for remembering the people who died while serving in the country's armed forces. The holiday, which is observed every year on the last Monday of May, originated as Decoration Day after the American Civil War in 1868, when the Grand Army of the Republic, an organization of Union veterans, established it as a time for the nation to decorate the graves of the war dead with flowers.

By the 20th century, the customs of competing union or northern soldiers and confederate or southern soldiers, who celebrated on different days, had merged. Memorial Day eventually extended to honor all Americans who died in military service. It typically marks the start of the summer vacation season, while Labor Day marks its end.

In addition to decorating graves in public cemeteries, in cases involving a family graveyard where remote ancestors as well as those who were deceased more recently are buried, the rituals may take on the character of an extended family reunion to which some people travel hundreds of miles. There often is a religious service, a picnic-like "dinner on the ground"—the traditional term for a potluck meal in which people spread the dishes out on sheets or tablecloths on the grass. It is believed that this practice began before the American Civil War.

The custom of decorating soldiers’ graves with flowers is an ancient one. In the U.S., a claim was made in 1906 that the first Civil War soldier's grave ever decorated was in Warrenton, Virginia on June 3, 1861, implying the first Memorial Day occurred there. Contending documentation says that women in Savannah, Georgia decorated confederate soldiers’ graves in 1862. Regardless of when and where the custom of Memorial Day began, it is still one of the most important and patriotic Federal holidays celebrated in the U.S.



Photos by Ximena

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Editorial

Building a Wall

“Something there is that doesn’t love a wall.”

ONE OF AMERICA’S most beloved poets, Robert Frost, in *Mending Wall* (1914) responds to his neighbor’s comment about good fences making good neighbors, “Why do they make good neighbours? Isn’t it where there are cows?...Before I built a wall I’d ask to know what I was walling in or walling out. And to whom I was like to give offence.”

One presidential hopeful has proposed building a wall to stop people from Mexico entering the U.S. It’s true that we live in a world of borders and walls. In the 24 years since the fall of the Berlin Wall, as many as 26 new walls and fences have gone up around the world, built by both totalitarian regimes and democracies in such places as Korea, Israel, Thailand, South Africa and the European Union. Justification for these physical barriers includes protection from terrorists, drug cartels and criminals, and for this presidential aspirant—unauthorized immigrants.

A wall across the southern border of the U.S. with Mexico would be 664 miles long. Who would pay for this? How tall would it have to be? How deep would it extend underground to prevent tunneling? How many surveillance cameras would be needed? It’s certainly disingenuous to say that Mexico would foot the bill for a misguided scheme that wastes precious resources. If it’s our money, might not it be better spent on worthy concerns like education, child welfare, or medical research, to name only a few.

In addition, if people want to enter the country illegally, couldn’t they sneak north to Canada and enter from there? Furthermore, according to the Cato Institute, about 42 percent of unauthorized immigrants entered legally and overstayed their visas. A wall wouldn’t prevent that. Lastly, a wall could actually increase the undocumented immigrant population by corralling them in.

Mass deportation of 11.3 million undocumented immigrants, of whom Mexicans account for 49 percent, has also been suggested as a strategy. The price tag alone for this, estimates the American Action Forum, ranges from \$420 to \$620 billion and the process would take nearly 20 years. That means an immigrant’s five-year-old daughter could be his lawyer at the deportation hearing commencing decades from now. The logistics simply boggle the mind—the number of enforcement agents, the building of detention centers, and the flooding of the legal system all add up to an unruly, ugly, and protracted process of apprehension, detention, and transport.

What about the charge that undocumented immigrants steal jobs from real Americans? A joint study by the Universities of Utah and Arizona confirms that most work in low-skilled jobs that Americans do not want, like housekeeping, manual and farm labor, babysitting, taking care of the disabled and elderly, and even washing the windows of skyscrapers. Plus, the surprising fact is that immigrants create jobs. It’s simple economics—if more people spend more money, more jobs are created. Workers without documentation still pay rent, buy food and clothes, go to the movies and contribute significant sums to Social Security, Medicare and other portions of the U.S. budget, but because few of them qualify for benefits, they take little out.

Building walls and mass deportation are not in the best interests of the U.S. and shouldn’t be components of a rational immigration policy. Irresponsible and unrealistic proposals do not add to the national debate, they merely demean and debase it. As Martin Luther King, Jr. said, “Nothing in the world is more dangerous than sincere ignorance and conscientious stupidity.”

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Fed Up with Hollywood?
Try Film Society of Lincoln Center

BY CHIYOMI ODAMAKI (JAPAN)

WHAT DO YOU ASSOCIATE with the words “movies in America?” Would you say “the buttery smell of popcorn,” or “rude audiences stretching their legs on the seats in front of them,” or outer space movies on big HD 3D screens and gaudily sentimental Hollywood movies?

Wait a minute! We are in Manhattan, a world-famous center of international cultures. The cinema is no exception. Providing an urbane array of performing arts, Lincoln Center has yet another mission in promoting artistic merit in films.

Film Society of Lincoln Center, founded in 1969, has two state-of-the-art facilities, the Walter Reade Theater (150 seats) built in 1999 and the Elinor Bunin Munroe Film Center with three theaters: the Francesca Beale theater (150 seats), the Howard Gilman Theater (90 seats), and the Amphitheater (75 seats), all built in 2011. It features American independent films and acclaimed foreign films by both emerging and established directors. The Society also offers in-depth talks by filmmakers for movie lovers to increase their knowledge of these gems.

Movies I have seen there since January exemplify what the organization emphasizes: *Peggy Guggenheim: Art Addict* (an American documentary portraying the eccentric modern art collector and her turbulent love life), *In the Shadow of Women* (a French drama illuminating the divergent interpretations of infidelity between men and women), *The Club* (a Chilean drama with black humor, revealing the truth about four priests’ secluded life in a small, seaside town), and *The Story of the Last Chrysanthemum* (a classic Japanese movie depicting the forbidden love between an egoistic young Kabuki actor and his devoted lover).

Coming April 22 through May 1, the Society will offer “the season’s most exciting program,” *An Early Clue to the New Direction: Queer Cinema Before Stonewall*. Even if you don’t know about the 1969 Stonewall riots and aren’t interested in gay/lesbian history, you will find thought-provoking classic psychological movies like *Persona* (Ingmar Bergman, 1966), *Rope* (Alfred Hitchcock,



Elinor Bunin Munroe Film Center

Photo by Chiyomi

1948), and a famous pop artist’s ground-breaking *My Hustler* (Andy Warhol, 1965).

The selections showcase cinematic values, regardless of the latest Hollywood blockbuster shown in commercial cinemas. The ticket prices are similar to other independent film theaters, such as IFC Center, Sunshine Cinema, and Angelika Film Center: Adults \$14, Members \$9, and Students and Seniors \$11.

Besides the thoughtful seating arrangement (the rows of reclining seats descend from the back to the front, so your vision isn’t blocked by the head in front of you) and the comfortable atmosphere of the two cinemas, there is an attractive café, Indie Food and Wine, at the Munroe Film Center. It opens at 8:00 A.M., and especially from 11:00 A.M. through 5:00 P.M., movie lovers enjoy healthy and tasteful dishes at reasonable prices.

The Society’s best recognized international event is the New York Film Festival, an annual fall happening, which features top films from celebrated filmmakers as well as fresh talent from around the world. This year, the 54th festival starts on September 28 and runs for more than two weeks. Its main venue is Alice Tully Hall on Broadway between 65th and 66th Streets.

Now that you have become familiar with Film Society of Lincoln Center, you might say, “Move over Hollywood.” Take your girl or boyfriend there, and together experience a more aesthetic time and space, which rarely happens in commercial movie theaters like AMC.

Camp of Leisure and Training for Children

BY ANISE D. ST. PIERRE (HAITI)

WHEN YOU ARE GOING anywhere with kids you must plan beforehand in order for things to go smoothly, succeed, and be fun for the children and staff members. Children are the most precious beings, the most protected and loved.

Organizing a camp outing for kids from 10-17 years old involves planning and imagination. “Pathfinders,” for example, “is a worldwide organization of young people sponsored by the Seventh-day Adventist

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Photo by Wensky

A group of pathfinders and the Master guide after worship service

TALES OF TWO LAKES

Aquatic Cats of Van Lake

BY ANNA GARKUSHA (UKRAINE)

IN ANCIENT GREECE, it was known as Thospitis Lacus or Arsissa Lacus, today we call it Lake Van (Van Golu in Turkish). It is the largest lake in Turkey, the second largest in the Middle East, and the biggest saltwater lake in the world. It lies on the high grounds of Eastern Anatolia near the border with Iran. It was formed by a crater caused by a volcanic explosion and covers an area of 1,434 square miles (3,713 square km) and is more than 74 miles (119 km) across at its widest point and 457 meters at its deepest.

The water of the lake, fed by rainfall, ice melt and small rivers, is not suitable for drinking or irrigation because of its high salinity, and only limited species of fresh water fish such as Darekh, a species of herring, can live in it. On Sundays, people who live near the lake do their laundry in it without using soap. The water from the lake is also valued for its medicinal properties.



Courtesy photo

Turkish Van Cats

Have you ever heard about cats who are good swimmers? In the area around Lake Van lives a special breed of felines who have distinctive eyes and love the water. These Turkish Van cats are native to the lake environs, where they still roam free. Locals speak proudly of Lake Van, Van cheese, Van silverwork and...the Van cat! They are known to be very social, renowned for their singular beauty and aquatic habits. They boast an auburn and white coat, but with a pattern that is very rare: The auburn color is restricted to areas around the ears and the tail.

When the Ark came to rest at Mount Ararat millennia ago, Noah must have been a bit busy keeping the animals from stampeding in their eagerness to reach dry land. In the hustle and bustle, two white and red cats leaped into the water and swam ashore. When the flood receded, the cats set out for Lake Van, located about 75 miles (121 km) to the south, where they have lived ever since.

At least, that is one story about the appearance of the Turkish Van, a breed that has inhabited the Lake Van region of Turkey and the bordering areas of Syria, Iran, Iraq, and Russia for heaven knows how long. Also called Swimming Cats, the likely explanation for this lies in the extreme temperatures of the region, which exceed 100° F. (37.8°C.) in the summer; the cats may have learned to swim to survive.

This also may explain the development of the Van's unique water-repelling coat. Most domestic cats hate getting wet, possibly because they must spend hours putting their fur

back in order. The Turkish Van's cashmere-like coat is water resistant, allowing the cat to go dog-paddling and come out relatively dry.

They are loyal, loving, and very intelligent. Their temperament depends on the amount of human contact and handling they received as a kitten, and the temperament of the mother herself. If they do not have relations with human beings, they can become wild.

However, once adopted, they want to be with their owner all the time. They play a lot, even when they get older. When they play, they act first and think later. So if you do not have a sense of humor, choose another breed. Some say that felines have no feelings at all, but this does not apply to the Van for they can be happy, sour, moody, and caring. If you humor them and give them attention, they thank you by climbing on your shoulders and giving you hugs. They have great personalities, even as kittens! In Turkey, they breed what is called the real Turkish Van—a white cat with no markings at all and one blue eye and one amber eye.

Van cats are so special for the Turkish people that their export is prohibited. At the entrance to Van city, visitors are greeted by two huge statues of white felines—Van cats.



Map courtesy of www.welt-atlas.de

Lake Van and the Dead Sea

The First International Health Spa

BY DARIA ERMOLAEVA (RUSSIA)

HAVE YOU EVER BEEN to The Dead Sea? What do you know about it?

The Dead Sea, also known as the Salt Sea, is a salt lake bordering Jordan to the east and Israel to the west. People travel from all over the world to slather themselves in nutrient-rich mud from it.

Legend says it was the Queen of Sheba on a trade mission in the seventh century B.C. who first discovered its mystical healing powers. Later and more famously perhaps, is the one woman who coveted the Dead Sea—Pharaoh Cleopatra VII. Reigning over Ancient Egypt and a close ally of the leaders of the Roman Empire, she fiercely believed that the Dead Sea possessed therapeutic properties. She built the world's first spas on its shores and reportedly made various attempts to acquire it for Egypt. She attributed her much acclaimed beauty to the secrets of the sea and her beauty routines, in particular, are still talked about millennia later.

It isn't known if Cleopatra applied the black mud, which possesses a high mineral composition and is known to be highly penetrative to the skin, to rid herself of joint pains or skin disorders, but it did help her retain her youthful appearance. When warm, the mud can help to stimulate blood flow, which helps stimulate the production of collagen and elastin to keep skin firm and supple.

Flora and fauna were not ignored in Cleopatra's beauty regimen. Cold-pressed oils from the finest botanicals were used to treat Cleopatra's skin and hair. The plants on the Dead Sea shores are remarkable, thriving in the hostile environment. The same botanicals are used today, but are kept a much better secret with the Alpine Rose especially coveted.

The Bible says the Sea was a place of refuge for King David. It was one of the world's first health resorts (for Herod the Great), and it has been the supplier of a wide variety of products, from balms for Egyptian mummification to potash for fertilizer.

At 377 meters (1,237 feet) deep, it is the deepest hypersaline lake in the world, meaning a landlocked body of water that contains significant concentrations of sodium chloride or other mineral salts, with saline levels surpassing that of ocean water. With 33.7% salinity, it is one of the world's saltiest bodies of water, in which people can easily float due to natural buoyancy. It is roughly 8.6 times saltier than the ocean, which makes for a harsh environment in which animals cannot flourish (hence its name), although minuscule quantities of bacteria and microbial fungi are present.

The Sea is 67 kilometers (42 miles) long and 18 kilometers (11 miles) wide at its widest point and has become a major center for health research and treatment, not only for the mineral content of its water, but also the very low pollen count and absence of allergens in the atmosphere, the reduced ultraviolet component of solar radiation, and the higher atmospheric pressure at this great depth.

"The Dead Sea water contains 35% minerals per liter of water," says Ziva Gilaad, chief cosmetics director for Ahava, a major packager of Dead Sea skin products. Gilaad says that the concentration of more than 21 different minerals is believed to help with skin problems, like eczema and psoriasis, plus aching joints and even fluid retention. The sea contains high levels of calcium, magnesium, bromide, potassium and sulfate. "The Dead Sea is the biggest, widest natural spa on earth," Gilaad says.

Dr. Loretta Ciraldo, a clinical professor of dermatology at the University of Miami agrees that it contains lots of choice minerals and nutrients. However, "You don't need a royal budget to try these skin care tactics. I tell people they can get products of the Dead Sea anywhere from the drugstore to high-end skin boutiques. You should just buy the brand that you feel comfortable with," Ciraldo says. Fortunately, I have been there several times, and it was the best treatment and spa for me. I recommend going there in any season except summer, when it is way too hot.



Photo by Daria

Thalassotherapy at the Dead Sea

Mystical Places of Saint Petersburg

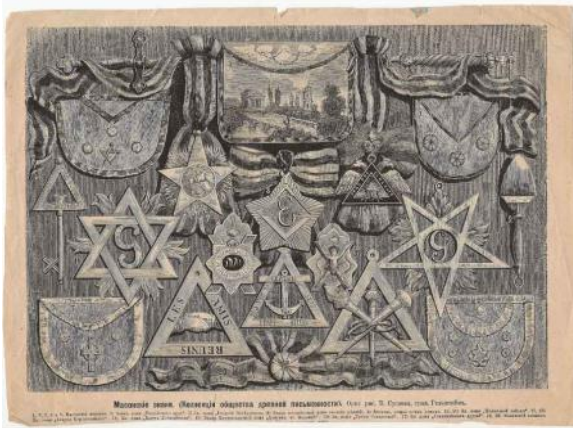
BY IVAN FEDOROV (RUSSIA)

FOR THE LAST THREE YEARS I’ve lived in one of Russia’s most beautiful cities—St. Petersburg. This city has many mysterious legends, both curious and fascinating.

In one of the squares on Vasilyevsky Island in the river Neva there is a famous brick tower called Griffon Tower, so named for the mystical creature with the body of a lion, the head of a beaked bird, and enormous wings. Many years ago this tower, which stands 11 meters tall, was built near Pela’s Pharmacy. What makes it so bizarre is that it is covered with numerals. Legend has it that the meaning of these numbers are a code to all the universe. If somebody can count and add up all the numbers, he will discover the secrets of immortality. According to rumor, pharmacist Pela in the daytime made and sold cures, but at midnight he practiced black magic. It’s believed that in this tower he created the famous creature, the Griffon, and if somebody comes to this place at midnight, he will see the dark silhouettes of these strange and fantastic birds on the roof.

A second tale involves a mysterious palace called the Rotunda on Gorohovaya Street. With six columns spaced equally around a circle and topped by a dome, the Rotunda is atypical because it is inside a house. In the past it was just a simple house, built by the merchant Ustinov, but in 1827 it became

a center of many mysteries and secrets. All of them connect with legends about the house in the 19th century being a secret meeting place for Masonic



Freemason symbols

organizations, which were officially prohibited in Russia in 1822. (The decree was signed by Alexander I after a wave of revolutions in Europe.)

At the front of the stairs inside the house there is a little door leading to the basement, through which Masons allegedly experienced a rite of passage. Miracles were said to happen there and today, some people believe that these who try to go inside this

basement, get older faster or go insane. According to rumor, St. Petersburg has many Rotundas and if all of them were connected by lines drawn on a map, you would see the pentagram of the Masons—a magical symbol protecting the city. In more modern times, this place was famous among the hippies and other like-minded individuals, because its silence and emptiness created the perfect venue for wild and crazy parties.

St. Petersburg is one of the oldest and most mysterious cities in all of Russia; in every square you can find the stuff of legends.



The numerals of Griffon Tower

Photo by Ivan

Courtesy photo

Camp

Cont’d. from page two

Church, though young people of any religious persuasion, or none at all, are welcome and encouraged to join the organization.” First of all, there is some planning that needs to be done before the realization of the camp, such as knowing the date, choosing and visiting the camp site (campground), knowing how you will be able to get there (transportation), who is going there (number of staff and kids), determining the budget, the menu and the materials (like tent, utensils and food, just to mention a few), and arranging the time of departure and return.

Last July, there were over 150 other clubs at camp for a total of some 35,000 participants over eight days of fun and training. We had 60 people from our club that participated in the camp (40 kids, 15 staff, and 5 parents that helped with the food). It took us two buses and 17 hours to get to the Campgrounds in Oshkosh, Wisconsin. The camp was called “Forever Faithful” (International Camporee 2014 Oshkosh).

Once we got there we started to put the tents up and we announced how things were going to be—in other words, a schedule for the day. This is how it went: set some time for worship, activities, games, get to know other clubs that were there. Some of the activities were first aid, drilling and marching, and knot tying. For games or fun, we had swimming, football and rope climbing. On Saturday, the day before the last day, we organized a parade with the drum corps and the pathfinders. Meals were given much thought, with cereal, fruit, milk and pancakes for breakfast, macaroni and cheese and salad for lunch, and dinner specials like vegan meat and rice. The kids, of course, loved the cookies—chocolate chip, oatmeal, vanilla, you name it.

All in all, we can say that the camp was enjoyable to the staff and the kids were happy. The staff reached their objective of meeting with all the other pathfinders from other clubs. This is how we planned the camp of leisure and training for the pathfinder club.



Anise applauding the camp activities

Photo byYves

Times Square Never Gets Old!

BY XIMENA VÉLEZ (COLOMBIA)

TIMES SQUARE truly never gets old! There’s no way to tell whether tourists revisit Times Square a second time, but there is a good chance they do. With each change of seasons in the northeastern United States, it remains an ever popular destination for a picture or the famous #selfie year round.

People from all over take photos in Times Square, not only because it is an iconic location in New York City, but also because it is one of the most recognizable tourist centers in the world. Additionally, it’s the first sight more than 4.2 million people wake up to watching the TV show *Good Morning America*.

Times Square, formerly called Longacre Square, was renamed in 1904 in honor of the *New York Times*. It is estimated Times Square has captured the eyes of at least 50 million tourists who have visited New York City since that time. The area even has fans on social media, who post photos daily with many different hashtags, displaying all types of emotions, mainly love. The hashtag #timessquare currently has 144,000 posts and counting. Other famous related hashtags include #timessquarekiss and #timessquarebillboards.

The gaudy neon lights and billboard advertisements in a rainbow of colors are on display every day. New and potential Hollywood blockbusters are displayed and advertised on many of them. The area itself has been featured in literature, TV, video games, music videos and in various scenes of movies such as *Godzilla*, *Captain America: The First Avenger*, *Transformers: Revenge of the Fallen*, *Legend* and *Spiderman*.

Five things everyone should know about it are the following:

The original name was "Longacre Square" after a residential and commercial district in London and the center of trade for horses and carriages. Renamed in April 1904 after the *New York Times* moved its headquarters there, today, this neighborhood



The neon lights are bright on Broadway.

Photo by Ximena

around the building is also known as “The Crossroads of the World,” “The Center of the Universe,” or “The Great White Way.”

In 1917, the first bright signs were designed and installed. According to the *Wall Street Journal*, it costs anywhere between \$1.1 million and \$4 million a year to buy or rent the flashy digital neon billboards, which supply perpetual light to the city that never sleeps.

Approximately 335,000 people pass by Times Square daily. Families find the curious characters entertaining, such as the famous “Naked Cowboy,” who wears only short shorts and a hat while playing a guitar in the middle of Broadway. On the crowded sidewalks, visitors can find costumed superheroes willing to strike an attitude for photos in exchange for a few dollars.

As population growth continued in New York City, Times Square quickly became a central and cultural hub of theaters, music halls, and hotels. It is the ideal place for tourists and residents to do fun things like pose in front of the famous Macy’s kiss camera. Perhaps the most famous kiss in Times Square happened in August 1945, when *Life* magazine photographer Alfred Eisenstaedt captured an American soldier passionately kissing a woman in a white dress to celebrate Japan’s surrender in World War II.

The joyful atmosphere makes it a perfect place for couples to celebrate Valentine’s Day. There are food festivals, a Planet Fitness gym, comedy shows each night, and people can also view the solstice from there. Undoubtedly, the New Year’s Eve celebration has been the most familiar and biggest annual event in New York City since 1907.

Finally, you can also find time to fall in love.