

Facts & Fancies

Fairlawn Haven Care Center and West Haven Assisted Living



Celebrating July

Parks and Recreation Month

Women's Motorcycle Month

Ice Cream Month

Canada Day

July 1

Independence Day (U.S.)

July 4

Strawberry Sundae Day

July 7

Ventriloquism Week

July 18–21

Tell an Old Joke Day

July 24

**International Day
of Friendship**

July 30

The Robotic Future Is Here

Robotics and artificial intelligence (AI) are now two of the most exciting fields in science. Some say that the marriage of AI and robotics will usher in an entirely new way of life for us on Earth. Others worry that this change is going to be too dramatic. The great debate over the future of robotics will continue at the World Conference on Robotics and Artificial Intelligence in Barcelona, Spain, on July 26–27.

While some robots look like mechanical people with two arms, two legs, and a talking head, most robots look nothing like humans. Robots are usually controlled by computers, such as those found in a manufacturing facility. Artificial intelligence refers to a machine or robot that can learn from its surroundings and adapt to them.

Machines are starting to learn in similar ways to human beings. They are able to receive signals from their environment, store those signals as vital information, and modify their behaviors. Both self-driving cars and robot vacuums use this technology. Cars simultaneously sense their environment and use electronic maps and traffic data. They know when to stop and go, what route is the fastest, and what speed is the most energy efficient. The Roomba vacuum also uses sensors to know when to stop and go, which parts of the floor are dirtiest, and when cleanliness has been achieved. Additionally, the Roomba can identify whether it's vacuuming a hardwood floor or plush carpet and adjust accordingly.

Do these robots spell the end of work for cabbies and janitors? Some say that half the world's jobs will be done by robots by the middle of the century. One such robot is "Flippy," the mechanical burger flipper, which debuted at a California burger joint last March. Another is Kiva, a robot designed to retrieve goods from the vast warehouses of the online seller Amazon. Whatever your feelings for robots, in many ways they are already working among us.

Are You a Believer?



July 2 is World UFO Day. Whether you celebrate by watching reruns of *Star Trek* or hosting a sky-watching party in hopes of identifying an unidentified flying object, be sure to keep an open mind when considering that humans might not be alone in the universe.

There have been many recorded observations of strange flying objects throughout history, but it wasn't until 1947 that a UFO sighting captured the public imagination. Businessman Kenneth Arnold was flying a small plane near Mount Rainier in Washington when he spied nine objects flying together. He described them as looking "flat like a pie pan" and "saucer like." From his experience, the term *flying saucer* was born.

Did Arnold actually see an alien spaceship? The United States Air Force determined that Arnold saw a mirage. Yet in mid-1947, UFOs again captured the public's attention when a mysterious craft crash-landed at a ranch near Roswell, New Mexico. Representatives from the Roswell Army Air Field reported that the object was a high-altitude weather balloon, but the government has been accused of covering up an alien encounter ever since.

Is it just coincidence that the U.S. government began Project Sign in 1948? This project, conducted by the Air Force, was an investigation into UFO encounters in order to determine their veracity and whether or not any UFO was a threat to national security. The program lasted for 20 years and concluded that an alien UFO had never been observed. It seems that the public had to wait until 2017 before a Navy pilot, Retired Commander David Fravor, came forward with his firsthand account of what he believes was an alien UFO. Fravor was on a routine training mission off the coast of California in November of 2004 when a 40-foot-long wingless object, like a giant Tic Tac, sped past him. When asked to recall his experience, Fravor said, "I think it was not from this world."

Give a Little, Get a Lot

Most people live with a certain amount of clutter in their lives. July 15, Give Something Away Day, is the perfect opportunity to repurpose some of your clutter by giving it away to those in need. Philosophers and holy people have long contended that giving is beneficial not just to the receiver of gifts but also to the giver. Scientists now have proof. Scans of the brain show that acting charitably toward others stimulates our brain's reward system. This shows that humans are biologically hard-wired to give to others rather than to act selfishly, perhaps due to our highly social natures. After all, our large society requires cooperation and mutual aid. Better yet, other studies show that when helping others, the helpers heal both emotionally and physically. Somehow, giving not only makes us feel good but actually makes our lives healthier. St. Francis of Assisi was right when he said, "For it is in giving that we receive."

Fried, but Not French



July 13 is French Fries Day, but are these delicious fried potatoes actually French? Potatoes did not originate in Europe, but in South America. Spanish explorers brought them back to Europe, where they became beloved for their versatility, especially in France. Fried potatoes became a common street food in Paris—sold not as long fries but in chunks. It is said that Thomas Jefferson grew so fond of the food while acting as ambassador to France that he introduced fries to America via his kitchen in Monticello. It is in Belgium, however, that the history of *frites* began a century before France's fried potatoes. Frites (pronounced *FREETTS*) are so dear a food to Belgium that in 2014 the country petitioned UNESCO to make the frite the official symbol of its cultural heritage. So when did Belgian frites become French fries? The story goes that American soldiers marching through French-speaking Belgium during World War I discovered the fried potatoes. In the Americans' confusion, they dubbed the newfound food *French fries*.

A Tale of Two Sherwoods



For 700 years, stories have been told of the outlaw Robin Hood stealing from the rich to give to the poor. While the legend of Robin Hood was born in Sherwood Forest, Nottinghamshire, England, each July the town of Sherwood, Oregon, celebrates its Robin Hood Festival.

Was there a real Robin Hood? As early as the 15th century, it was common for May Day revelers in England to act out plays starring Robin Hood. A hundred years before these celebrations, peasant farmers told grim tales of Robin Hood, who murdered government emissaries and rich landowners. Scholars have traced the earliest mentions of the name Robin Hood to 13th-century legal records. In these records, it was common to list criminals with the name *Robehod* or *Rabunhod*, variations on the name Robin Hood. Alas, there is no way of knowing whether these names are attributed to any real individual. What scholars do know is that starting in the 14th century, Robin Hood was first mentioned in writing as a common man living with his band in Sherwood Forest and fighting the Sheriff of Nottingham.

A visit to Sherwood Forest in Nottinghamshire may turn you into a believer that Robin Hood did exist. After all, you can visit the Major Oak tree, which is believed to have been one of Robin Hood's hideouts. Robin Hood's Well is considered the spot where Robin Hood married his love Maid Marian. And then there is Nottingham Castle, where the Sheriff of Nottingham would have jailed Robin Hood and where the Merry Men would have staged his fabulous escapes. Oregon's town of Sherwood may lack historical sites, but it has plenty of enthusiasm. Residents have celebrated their Robin Hood Festival since 1954, and since 1956, Sherwood, Oregon, has hosted an International Archery Tournament against archers from Nottingham, England. This international celebration is testament to the enduring appeal of England's favorite outlaw.

Can't Buck the Truth

Rugged men wearing chaps and cowboy hats with six-shooters on their hips, sitting high in the saddle, driving cattle across wild landscapes—it is an image as American as apple pie but also one perpetuated by Hollywood. Enjoy these interesting cowboy facts for the Day of the Cowboy on July 28.

Cowboys actually did not originate in America at all, but in Mexico. Two hundred years before the first American set foot out west, Mexican *vaqueros* were honing their roping, riding, and herding talents and becoming expert ranchers. When Americans ventured westward, they modeled their habits and dress on the *vaqueros* found in modern-day Texas, New Mexico, and Arizona. The Wild West also wasn't as wild as the movies lead us to believe. Bank robberies were uncommon. Settlers did not circle their wagons and were not under constant threat of attack from Native Americans. And half of all cowboys were either Mexican *vaqueros* or former slaves. In fact, many believe that the character of the Lone Ranger was based on Bass Reeves, a former slave from Arkansas turned U.S. marshal. On the Day of the Cowboy, take in a Hollywood western, but also celebrate the real Wild West.

To Kiss or Not to Kiss?



Is there any act more romantic than a kiss? World Kiss Day may fall on July 6, but not everyone around the world believes that a kiss is an expression of love or friendship. Americans reserve kisses for special loved ones, but in Europe it is common for friends to greet each other with kisses on the cheek. Researchers have also found kissing to be common in both the Middle East and Asia. However, in Central America, kissing has no place in romance. Similarly, kissing is not common in sub-Saharan Africa, and in some parts of Brazil kissing is considered just plain gross. It seems that kissing is not a universally accepted human practice, so be careful where and how you celebrate World Kiss Day.

Cleri-who?



The cleriheW may not be the most well-known form of poetry, but it does enjoy its own holiday on July 10, Clerihew Day. Edmund Clerihew Bentley, English writer and humorist born on July 10, 1875, invented the cleriheW in 1905 when his first book of poetry

was published. What is a cleriheW? It's a short, four-line poem, made up of two rhyming couplets. What makes the cleriheW so popular is that its subject is often a whimsical take on a celebrity. What inspired E.C. Bentley to invent the cleriheW? Rumor has it that he wrote his first as a teenager in high school:

Sir Humphrey Davy
Abominated gravy.
He lived in the odium
Of having discovered sodium.

Where most kids would be content to doodle in the margins of their notebooks during a boring chemistry lecture, Bentley instead invented an art form. His success may have been helped by his close friendship with the renowned British author, philosopher, and poet G.K. Chesterton, who helped popularize the cleriheW. Other famous writers also experimented with the form, including poet W.H. Auden, but the beauty of the cleriheW lies in the fact that anyone can write one. All you have to do is choose a famous person and rhyme the first and last two lines, like this:

Cher
(To compare)
Has more money
Than Sonny.

While Bentley is remembered for the cleriheW, he should also be given his due as a crime novelist. His mystery *Trent's Last Case*, published in 1931, is widely considered the first modern mystery. This original cleriheW is for him:

Trent's Last Case was a mystery
That made literary history.
But we remember Bentley's cleriheW
More than his tales of derring-do.

July Birthdays

In astrology, those born between July 1–21 are Crabs of Cancer. Guided by their hearts, Crabs are deeply emotional and nurturing. They create deep bonds and comfortable homes and are always willing to welcome people into their circle. Those born between July 22–31 are Lions of Leo. Leos are natural-born leaders: confident, charismatic, creative, and warmhearted. Leos also use their humor and loyalty to bring people together to work for a common cause.

Carl Lewis (Olympian) – July 1, 1961
Ann Landers (advice columnist) – July 4, 1918
Ed Ames (singer) – July 9, 1927
E. B. White (author) – July 11, 1899
Woody Guthrie (folk singer) – July 14, 1912
Ginger Rogers (actress) – July 16, 1911
John Glenn (astronaut) – July 18, 1921
Ernest Hemingway (writer) – July 21, 1899
Don Drysdale (ballplayer) – July 23, 1936
Mick Jagger (singer) – July 26, 1943
Beatrix Potter (author) – July 28, 1866
J. K. Rowling (author) – July 31, 1965

The World in Watercolor



July is World Watercolor Month in appreciation of this wonderful art form. In watercolor painting, colored pigments are suspended in water. Watercolor painting may be the first type of painting ever done by humans on cave walls. Watercolor was also used in East Asia, the Middle East, ancient Egypt, Italy, and Ethiopia. Watercolor techniques were initially used for mere sketches or copies. Oil was considered a superior medium. However, as the technique was perfected by masters of the Renaissance and beyond, watercolor became a renowned and complicated medium. While it appears to be an easy method of painting, it takes years to become accomplished. Luckily, the low cost of watercolors allows most anyone the chance to paint with this enduring art form.