

Scouting in America



Lord Robert Baden-Powell, British army officer and writer of military manuals, became famous for establishing the Boy Scout Association in Britain in 1907. The scouting movement crossed the Atlantic Ocean, and the Boy Scouts of America was founded by W.D. Boyce on February 8, 1910.

W.D. Boyce became personally invested in the scouting movement during a trip to London in 1909. One foggy night he became lost on a London street, and a boy came out of the gloom to guide him back to his hotel. Boyce attempted to tip the boy, but the boy refused, declaring that he was a Boy Scout and was simply doing a good deed. Boyce was so impressed with this Unknown Scout, as the boy came to be known, that he returned to London and went straight to the Scout headquarters to learn more about the scouting movement and secure a copy of Baden-Powell's *Scouting for Boys* manual.

Upon Boyce's return to America, he did not find it so easy to charter his Boy Scouts of America. Boyce was a newspaperman and entrepreneur. Rival newspaperman William Randolph Hearst attempted to beat Boyce to the punch when he founded the rival group of American Boy Scouts, an organization that would last only until 1918. It was with the help of Edgar Robinson, a YMCA organizer from New York City, that Boyce truly began the work of organizing a national scouting movement. In a flurry of meetings, Robinson convinced a variety of disparate scouting groups to band together under the banner of the Boy Scouts of America: the Woodcraft Indians of Connecticut, the Boy Scouts of the United States, the National Scouts of America, the National Highway Patrol Association Scouts, and the Boy Pioneers. When the Boy Scouts of America opened their national office in New York City in June of 1910, they had 2,500 leader applications from 44 states and over 150,000 potential scouts. Thanks to the efforts of Robinson and Boyce, the American scouting movement had finally begun in earnest.

February Birthdays

In astrology, those born between February 1–18 are the Water Bearers of Aquarius. As the water of life heals the land, so Aquarians are the humanitarians of the zodiac. Free-spirited, nonconformist, compassionate, and visionary, they support giving "power to the people." Those born between February 19 and 29 are the Fish of Pisces. Fish feel things deeply, as in under-the-sea deep. These intuitive, creative, and intelligent people have strong feelings of right and wrong and also love to help others.

Ayn Rand (author) – February 2, 1905
 Gertrude Stein (writer) – February 3, 1874
 Rosa Parks (activist) – February 4, 1913
 Laura Ingalls Wilder (writer) – February 7, 1867
 Thomas Edison (inventor) – February 11, 1847
 Galileo (astronomer) – February 15, 1564
 Michael Jordan (athlete) – February 17, 1963
 Sidney Poitier (actor) – February 20, 1927
 Nina Simone (singer) – February 21, 1933
 George Washington (president) – February 22, 1732
 Elizabeth Taylor (actress) – February 27, 1932
 Dennis Farina (actor) – February 29, 1944

Rising from the Ashes



During the mid-1820s, the U.S. government was pressuring the Cherokee people of Georgia to leave their homelands and move west of the Mississippi River.

In response to this crisis, the Cherokee Nation established a newspaper, the *Cherokee Phoenix*, with the purpose of keeping its members united and informed. Cherokee Galagina Oowatie, taking the American name Elias Boudinot, was selected as the first editor. The first issue was printed on February 21, 1828. It was the first newspaper published in a Native American language. Articles were run in both Cherokee and English, and soon the newspaper informed both Indian and white audiences. The paper was shut down in 1834 but was revived and can be read today in print and online.

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A Giant Leap for Humankind

This month we will enjoy an extra day, transforming 2020 into an extraordinary year. Every four years, an extra day, called *leap day*, is added at the end of February. This extra day is built into the year to ensure that our calendars remain aligned with Earth's movement around the sun. Our modern calendars have 365 days, but Earth takes 365.2421 days to make it all the way around the sun. The ancient Egyptians were the first civilization to calculate that our cycle of days and nights did not align perfectly with the calendar year, but it wasn't until Julius Caesar's reign during the Roman Empire that anything was done about it.

For millennia, calendars were loosely based on human observations of the lunar cycle. Extra days, weeks, and even months were added at random to make up for seasonal discrepancies. Julius Caesar was fed up with the inadequacies of such calendars based upon a 10-month solar year. In 46 BC, he enlisted astronomer Sosigenes to modify the calendar to include 12 months and 365 days. January and February were added as the final two months of the calendar, with the leap day added as the final day of the last month of February once every four years. Julius Caesar named this the *Julian calendar* after himself.

The Julian calendar was hailed as a tremendous improvement, but it was still not perfect. The solar year is only .2421 days longer than the calendar year, not .25. Adding an entire day every four years added 11 extra minutes to each year! After hundreds of years, the Julian calendar veered weeks from the solar year. Like Caesar before him, Pope Gregory XIII decided to fix this problem. In 1582, the Pope created his *Gregorian calendar*. It was still a 12-month, 365-day calendar with an added leap day every four years, but the Pope went further. He decreed that leap years would not occur on years evenly divisible by 100, excepting those divisible by 400. For example, the years 1700, 1800, and 1900 were not leap years, but the year 2000 was. Pope Gregory XIII's calendar is still in use today, but it is still not perfect. Mathematicians note that after another 10,000 years, someone will have to create a new calendar once again.

Celebrating February

Black History Month

Groundhog Day

February 2

Valentine's Day

February 14

Presidents' Day: U.S.

February 17

Mardi Gras

February 25

Leap Year Day

February 29



2/14 - VALENTINE'S DAY SWEETHEART
ICE CREAM SOCIAL AT 2PM

2/16 - BLOOD DRIVE AT THE SAFETY
COMPLEX

2/26 - MONTHLY BIRTHDAY PARTY W/
DON S. AT 2PM

Dior's "New Look"



A casualty of World War II was fashion. With the rationing of materials and anxiety over radicalism, civilian clothing styles became austere, utilitarian, and practical. Women no longer wore silk or other fancy fabrics, and they gave up accessories like boning for corsets and zippers. For the first time, women wore trousers! The British government went so far as to pass austerity regulations. Footwear, textiles, and clothing brandished the CC41 logo, signifying that it conformed to 1941 regulations for "Controlled Commodities." Perhaps no city suffered more than Paris, the world's fashion capital. Not only was it occupied by the Germans but fashion houses were forced to shut their doors. So, on February 12, 1947, when French designer Christian Dior debuted his "New Look" line at the Paris fashion show, he both saved Parisian fashion and brought femininity into style again.

Dior's New Look silhouette was both old and new all at the same time. It offered a return to pre-war femininity and yet presented a new, modern woman. The line did away with trousers, boxy shoulders, and civilian androgyny and returned to the small waists and hourglass figures of the pre-war era. Dior focused on soft, rounded shoulders, tight-fitting jackets, and spreading, padded skirts. Essential to the New Look was his corset, known as the *Waspie*, which narrowed the waist and accentuated the bustline. As a child, Dior grew up wandering the flower gardens of his home. Those flowers heavily influenced his notions of femininity. He rejected austerity and let fabric flow freely from his garments, like an abundance of petals. Some critics decried the designs as wasteful or extravagant, while others found them to be affronts to the newfound independence enjoyed by women who had taken over the jobs of men in offices and factories. But many women embraced the New Look as a welcome alternative to the ugly practicality of the war years. In many ways, the New Look was a rejection of the war itself and a return to the nostalgia of the pre-war years, where women were once again expected to be feminine.

Welcome Stranger

On February 12, 1851, a prospector in New South Wales, Australia, discovered flecks of gold in a local waterhole. Within a year, over 500,000 "diggers" from all over the world rushed to Australia with the hope of striking it rich. This Australian Gold Rush transformed the cultural fabric of Australia. What began as a penal colony and a distant backwater soon grew into a booming multicultural metropolis. The immigrant influx grew the economy as demand for products and services grew. Diggers united in what was termed "mateship," helping each other in the outback and banding together against the authorities. The rush reached a fever pitch on February 5, 1869, when two miners discovered a massive nugget tangled in the roots of a tree just below the surface. This nugget, dubbed "Welcome Stranger," was the largest ever found in the world. It measured 24 inches across and weighed 158 pounds, and it instantly made the diggers rich. It was worth \$3–4 million in today's Australian dollars. Not all diggers struck it rich, but many chose to remain in Australia and start new lives.

Do a Grouch a Favor



You probably know someone who is a grouch. Maybe it's your friend, neighbor, parent, or even spouse! February 16 is the day to forgive them for their sullen and grumpy attitudes and do something nice, for it is Do a Grouch a Favor Day. What favors could possibly satisfy the irritable nature of a grouch? Psychologists believe that the most common sources of irritability are often little things throughout the day, small annoyances that come with everyday tasks such as driving or shopping at the grocery store. Compassion, they say, is necessary for forgiving those around us for their minor transgressions and annoyances. So perhaps the biggest favor we can do for a grouch is to show them compassion. Understanding others' emotions is the first step we can take toward alleviating their suffering and dispelling loneliness.

From Your Valentine

On February 14 each year, sweethearts celebrate Valentine's Day by exchanging cards, chocolates, and other tokens of love. But do these sweethearts know who they are celebrating? The true identity of St. Valentine is murky and there are differing stories detailing his role in the church and the acts that inspired the popular holiday bearing his name.



Competing stories depict St. Valentinus (the Latin version of the name) as either a priest from Rome or the Bishop of Terni during the reign of Emperor Claudius II. Legend has it that Valentinus aided Christians who were persecuted under Claudius II's reign. Eventually, Valentinus, too, was put under house arrest at the home of Judge Asterius. It so happened that Asterius had a blind daughter. The judge asked Valentinus to prove the power of Christ by restoring the girl's sight. When Valentinus performed the miracle, the judge thanked him by freeing him and all the Christians he had imprisoned. But Valentinus did not remain free for long. He was again arrested and brought before Emperor Claudius II himself. When Valentinus attempted to convert Claudius to Christianity, he was executed on February 14, AD 270, but before his martyrdom, he is said to have written a note to the daughter of Asterius, which he signed "From your Valentine."

Another story details how Claudius II outlawed marriage for young men in the belief that single men made better soldiers than those with wives and families. Valentine defied Claudius and performed marriages in secret, purportedly cutting hearts of parchment and gifting them to the couples as a sign of God's eternal love. When Valentine's secret was discovered, Claudius executed him.

These stories are different yet they both illustrate Valentine's devotion to his faith and his people. As these legends spread, so did Valentine's reputation for heroic love and devotion, inspiring a holiday dedicated to the ideals he died for.

The Bean-Throwing Festival

In Japan, springtime festivals begin as early as February, and February 3 brings *Setsubun*, a sort of new year's celebration where people drive away evil spirits so that they may start the new year on the right foot. How do the Japanese ward off these evil influences? By throwing beans, of course. And not just any old bean. They use roasted soybeans known as *fuku mame*, or "fortune beans." Often, the oldest male member of the family will don a mask to look like a demon or evil spirit. The demon then hovers just outside the family's door. Then the entire family scoops handfuls of beans and tosses them at the demon, scaring it away. This ensures that no one in the family will suffer sickness or other ill fortune. Some cities even hold Setsubun parades in which beans are thrown to crowds that shout, "Get out demons!" and "Welcome happiness!" People jostle to scoop up the beans and eat them, for eating them is considered good luck. After the fervor of the bean throwing, many families visit local shrines to pray for the health and happiness of their loved ones.

When Cows Fly



On February 18, 1930, a cow known as Elm Farm Ollie won the unique distinction of becoming the first cow ever to be milked while flying in an airplane, ushering in the very first Cow Milked While Flying in an Airplane Day. The circumstances of the flight are well-recorded, as Elm Farm Ollie was part of the International Air Exposition in St. Louis, Missouri. Researchers were apparently eager to observe the effects of flight on livestock. Elm Farm Ollie was an unusually productive Guernsey. She needed milking three times a day. During her flight, she produced 24 quarts of milk. Wisconsin native Elsworth Bunce had the honor of milking her, consequently becoming the first man ever to milk a cow in an airplane. The milk was sealed in paper cartons and parachuted to the crowds below, where it is said that Charles Lindbergh took a drink.