

MAY 2018

Park Place News

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Celebrating May

**Global Health and Fitness
Month**

Inventors Month

Gifts from the Garden Month

International Firefighters Day
May 4

Wildflower Week
May 7-13

Mother's Day
May 13

Museum Day
May 18

Ride a Unicycle Day
May 20

Memorial Day (U.S.)
May 28

Victoria, Victorious

Queen Victoria's rule over the United Kingdom was so strong that the time period under her monarchy became known as the Victorian Era. Her 63 years of rule lasted from 1837 to 1901, during which England greatly expanded its empire and became a world leader in both industry and economy. She also survived several assassination attempts and guided Britain through the Great Famine of 1845. Her most lasting contribution may have been establishing the monarchy as a mainstay of English culture. When Victoria ascended the throne at age 18, many believed that England should no longer be ruled by a king or queen. During her rule, Victoria so influenced British society that the monarchy became a permanent fixture. If you, like so many others, adore British royalty, then get ready for Victoria Day on May 22.

Victoria Day was established in Canada in 1845 as a means of unifying English and French Canadians. Both cultures understood and appreciated a monarchy, and loyalty to the queen was an important means for Canadians to distinguish themselves from the Americans to the south, who prided themselves on their revolution against a monarchy. The original date was May 24, the birthday of the queen. Other parts of England's vast Empire celebrated May 24 as Empire Day, but Canadians chose to honor Queen Victoria. She was, after all, Canada's "Mother of Confederation," the leader who urged Canadian unity and independence.

While the date of Victoria Day may have changed to the Monday nearest the queen's birthday, it is still a day to celebrate everything royal. Indeed, *anglophilia* seems to have reached an all-time high now that young royals Princes William and Harry are marrying and starting families of their own. Brits are even conquering the television with hit shows like *Downton Abbey*, *Victoria*, *The Great British Bake Off*, and *The Crown*. It's all enough to make you want to sing "God Save the Queen"!

Lei of the Land



Since May 1, 1928, Hawaii has celebrated the first of May as Lei Day. Lei—those beautiful garlands constructed of flowers, leaves, shells, seeds, nuts, feathers, and even bones and teeth are given at

birthdays, weddings, retirements, funerals, and graduations—any occasion one wishes to show honor, love, or high regard. While the lei's history dates back to the earliest Polynesian settlers of Hawaii, the holiday itself was introduced by Don Blanding, a poet from Oklahoma who had resettled in Hawaii.

The first Hawaiians adorned themselves with local flowers and vines. Certain lei flowers identified where you lived on the islands. Other lei represented your rank, wealth, or whether you were royalty. Many lei were not made of short-lived flowers or vines at all but of hardy bones and shells. In fact, lei were worn not just for celebrations or rituals but for everyday tasks by both commoners and chiefs alike.

Today, there is still a wide variety of lei, each unique to a particular occasion. The *hala* lei, made from the red fruit of the pandanus tree, is a symbol of cleansing and can be worn at funerals or for the new year. A delicate *ilima* blossom lei is the distinctive lei of royalty and is worn on special occasions. *Lehua* lei, made from blossoms associated with the fire goddess, are indicative of strength. *Pikake* is the flower of romance, worn at weddings. *Plumeria* lei are used to welcome guests but should never be given to sick people, as they are bad luck for those in ill health. Lei are woven into both the nature and mythology of Hawaii. They are not just given in love and esteem but as symbols that tell ancient and important stories.

Lei Day offers myriad opportunities to celebrate this unique form of art and culture, the greatest of which takes place in Waikiki on Oahu, where there is music, a lei competition, hula performances, craft demonstrations, and plenty of food for all.

Dreaming of a White Christmas

Bing Crosby had no idea that on May 29, 1942, his recording of Irving Berlin's "White Christmas" would become the world's most popular song. The recording took Crosby just 18 minutes, as part of an album for the movie musical *Holiday Inn*, and neither he nor Berlin thought the song was a hit. However, it went on to win the Academy Award for Best Original Song, and it hit number one on the pop charts in October of 1942, two months before Christmas. Irving Berlin, as a Jewish-American, did not celebrate Christmas, but he sure knew how to write a hit song, even one without any mention of magical characters or religion. The song's slow and melancholy longing for the cozy holidays of yesteryear was what audiences craved. What really propelled the song to superstardom was its inclusion on Armed Forces Radio. GIs fighting overseas during World War II loved the song, and Crosby performed it regularly for them. Audiences still love "White Christmas." With over 100 million copies sold worldwide, it remains the best-selling song of all time.

Everything Old Is New Again



Mending clothes is a lost art. Rather than patch holes or sew popped seams, Americans prefer to buy entirely new garments. The average American throws

out 81 pounds of clothes each year, leading to 13 million tons of textiles sitting in our landfills. I Need a Patch for That Day, on May 21, is a day to reverse this trend. Recycled clothing is suddenly trendy. Outdoor clothing manufacturer *Patagonia* has been a leader in the sustainable clothing movement, making fleece out of plastic bottles and asking customers to buy fewer of their clothes. When garments get worn, they provide mending services in their repair shop, even reselling used clothing via their website. The Seattle company *Evrnu* has taken recycled clothing a step further. They take old garments, break down the fibers to the molecular level, and spin brand new fibers to make new clothes. Who needs a patch with technology like this?

Man's Best Friends



May 6–12 is Pet Week, a week to honor our nonhuman companions. Pets have been shown to make us more empathetic and even interact more with others. Pets also offer many health benefits, too, such as lower stress, sharper executive function, even a reduction in physical pain. Moreover, people who own pets get more exercise, both physically and mentally.

In many ways, our pets do much more than just act as companions. Three-year old Alida Knobloch of Georgia is literally attached to her pet goldendoodle, Mr. Gibbs. That's because Mr. Gibbs carries her heavy oxygen tank. Alida suffers from a rare form of lung disease that makes it difficult for her to breathe without assistance. With Mr. Gibbs by her side and an oxygen tank carried on the dog's back, Alida is able to run and play. Alida's family is so grateful that they call Mr. Gibbs Alida's "four-legged lifeline."

When a wildlife park became overcrowded with animals, Casey Anderson stepped in to save a baby grizzly bear. Little did Anderson know that the bear, named Brutus, would grow to be one of his best friends and even be the best man at his wedding! Anderson's love of grizzlies led him to found the Montana Grizzly Encounter sanctuary. When Brutus isn't roaming the park, he may be found cuddling with Anderson or eating at the dining room table.

An eight-year-old girl from Seattle befriended an entire flock of crows. As a four-year-old, she often spilled food in her yard, attracting the birds. Over the years she began to intentionally feed them. The crows, one of nature's cleverest animals, were so grateful that they began to bring her gifts in return: buttons, toys, dead fish, rocks, even a plastic heart, which, the girl says, proves "how much they love me." Animals may not be human, but they often bring out the best in us, so during Pet Week make sure you do your part to thank the animal that has given you so much.

Any Way the Wind Blows

The Netherlands is famous for its windmills, which are celebrated on May 12, Windmill Day. As part of Europe's "Low Countries" (so named because of their location below sea level), the Netherlands was prone to flooding. Dutch windmills were created to drain the water from the land. At one point, 10,000 windmills were in operation across the country. Today, windmills in the form of massive wind turbines are making a comeback as generators of electricity.

Wind turbines are often grouped in "wind farms," or arrays of windmills strategically placed in windy areas such as hilltops, open plains, or even offshore. As the wind turns the blades, a rotor spins a generator, which creates electricity. The major advantage of this type of electricity is that there is no dangerous waste created as a byproduct. The main disadvantage, of course, is that these windmills create energy only when the wind blows. However, advancements in technology are creating batteries that can store power for later use. Windmills, it seems, are not merely for tourists anymore but will become part of the power grids of the future.

Lucky Lindy



On May 20, 1927, Charles Lindbergh pointed his *Spirit of St. Louis* airplane down the runway of Roosevelt Field, Long Island, and 33 1/2 hours later he landed in Paris, France. A crowd of 100,000 greeted him as a hero. Lindbergh had become the first person to fly solo across the Atlantic Ocean. Before becoming a national hero, Lindbergh was a mail pilot. He had heard of a promotion, offered by a New York hotelier: the first person to fly from New York to Paris would be awarded a prize of \$25,000. Many attempted the flight and failed, but Lindbergh would succeed. He supervised the building of a custom plane. With four sandwiches, two canteens of water, and 451 gallons of gas, he made the flight and etched his name into the history books.

Mother May I?



Sunday, May 13 is Mother's Day in the United States, Australia, and Canada. In Mexico, *Día de las Madres* is Thursday, May 10. In France, *La Fête des Mères* is Sunday, May 27. After Christmas and Easter, Mother's Day is the

third-most celebrated holiday in the world, but the way mothers are honored differs from place to place.

In the United States, the most typical gift given to mom is a Mother's Day card and flowers. It may come as no surprise that the vast majority of Mother's Day cards—80% in fact—are not bought by men but by women. A mother's job is never done, it seems, not even on Mother's Day.

Mother's Day wasn't always celebrated by buying cards, flowers, chocolates, and jewelry. It was Anna Jarvis who fought to establish the national holiday. Jarvis was inspired largely by her own mother, who had organized "Mother's Day work clubs," where women would tend to soldiers wounded during the Civil War and tackle problems that led to infant mortality. Indeed, Jarvis proposed Mother's Day as a day to honor women like her mother, who had played greater political roles for the benefit of society. She was disgusted when her holiday turned into a commercial bonanza for those hawking flowers and candy. Jarvis spent her life fighting what Mother's Day had become.

In most countries these days, Mother's Day is celebrated by showering gifts and attention on mom. In Mexico, it is tradition on *Día de las Madres* to serenade mom in the morning before church and then prepare dinner for her. France's *La Fête des Mères* originated as a way for the French government to honor the mothers of large families with a gold medal. It was a means to encourage French women to have more children and repopulate the country after World War I. By the 1950s, consumer appeal and a rising birth rate transformed the holiday into one more commercially aligned with the United States. And why not take one day out of the year to recognize their vital importance?

May Birthdays

In astrology, those born between May 1–20 are Taurus' Bulls. Bulls are hardworking, ambitious, honest, and dedicated to finishing tasks with a dogged persistence. Once the work is done, a Taurus expects to enjoy the fruits of their labor. Those born between May 21–31 are Gemini's Twins. They have two distinct and alluring sides to their personality: sociable and ready for fun, or serious and thoughtful. Sometimes they feel as if one half is missing, so they forever seek new friends.

Benjamin Spock (pediatrician) – May 2, 1903
Sugar Ray Robinson (boxer) – May 3, 1921
Sigmund Freud (psychoanalyst) – May 6, 1856
Fred Astaire (entertainer) – May 10, 1899
Yogi Berra (ballplayer) – May 12, 1925
George Lucas (film maker) – May 14, 1944
Adrienne Rich (poet) – May 16, 1929
Cher (singer) – May 20, 1946
Sir Arthur Conan Doyle (writer) – May 22, 1859
Bob Dylan (songwriter) – May 24, 1941
Jim Thorpe (athlete) – May 28, 1887
Walt Whitman (poet) – May 31, 1819

A Long Time Ago...



"May the Fourth be with you." So say the millions of *Star Wars* fans who will celebrate Intergalactic *Star Wars* Day on May 4.

What has made *Star Wars* one of the most beloved and successful film franchises in history? When it was released on May 25, 1977, it blew audiences away. In the middle of an era when dark and brooding films were all the rage, this space adventure with cutting-edge special effects, wild aliens, strange other worlds, funny banter, and an amazing musical score was a breath of fresh air. *Star Wars* creator George Lucas had mined both high- and low-brow sources for his space opera, paying homage to the filmmakers he had studied during his film school years. What grew out of that first film is a media empire as far-reaching as the evil Empire itself.