

February 2019

Stone Crest

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Once Upon a Time

Once upon a time, it was decreed that February 26 would forevermore be Fairy Tale Day. Whether you fancy woodland sprites, fire-breathing dragons, princesses locked in high towers, or talking animals, fairy tales and the lessons they impart are integral parts of every culture.

Scientists have traced the first fairy tales back to an era before the written word. An old folktale entitled "The Smith and the Devil," which is about a blacksmith selling his soul to the devil in order to gain magical abilities, dates back to the Bronze Age—6,000 years ago. Researchers from the New University of Lisbon in Portugal believe that this ancient tale was shared orally in a language that does not exist today. It is no surprise that fairy tales are so old. The purpose of these stories, after all, is to teach children clear distinctions between good and evil and right and wrong. Fairy tales are, in essence, morality tales filled with magic and wonder as a means to attract the attention of a young audience. Yet, adults are no less in need of morality tales.

The brothers Wilhelm and Jakob Grimm, famous for their collection of fairy tales, also believed that many of the stories they found had existed for centuries before they wrote them down. They listened to old-timers tell the beloved tales "Little Red Riding Hood," "Cinderella," "Hansel and Gretel," and "Snow White" and then transcribed their versions of the tales into print. The Brothers Grimm were the first scientists of folklore. They even took positions as librarians and historians at the University of Göttingen in Germany.

It would be wise on Fairy Tale Day to choose a story collected by Wilhelm Grimm, for this brother's birthday falls on February 24. If you've grown tired of the same old tales, then perhaps you can read a new tale, such as "The King of the Golden Mountain," "Hans My Hedgehog" or "Cat and Mouse in Partnership."

14 VALENTINE'S DAY FUN FACTS

While we know Valentine's Day is the most romantic day of the year, there is plenty more to the holiday than just that. After the Roman Emperor Claudius II outlawed marriage, Saint Valentine continued to marry men and women in secret. Even then, it was traditional for men and women to exchange flowers on their wedding day, as a sign of good luck and the start of a "blooming" relationship. Today, we continue to celebrate love on February 14th, the day Saint Valentine died, by exchanging flowers, and the more modern chocolates and teddy bears. But just how many flowers, candy and teddy bears is it really? Whether you're single and ready to mingle or coupled up for Valentine's Day, here are a few fun facts about our most beloved holiday.

Flower Facts:

It's estimated that the U.S. alone is going to spend \$3.3 billion on flowers for loved ones this year.

The only other day that beats Valentine's Day in floral sales is Mother's Day.

Of the 124.6 million households in the U.S. it's predicted that 43 million of them will purchase flowers.

And the most likely flower to be purchased? Red roses of course!

Would you believe that young people are leading the trend in floral sales? In 2016, 63% of floral-buying households were under the age of 35.

Who says you can't be your own Valentine? In 2015, 18% of women sent themselves flowers.

Ordering a bouquet? Have it tied in lace. The word "lace" comes from the Latin *laques*, meaning "to snare or net," as in to catch a person's heart.

Valentine's Day Facts:

Every year, more than 36 million heart shaped boxes of chocolates are sold across the country.

Sorry men, it looks like you'll be spending twice as much as women this year on gifts.

The average man spends \$130 on Valentine's Day, while women spend about \$70.

February 14th is the second largest card giving day of the year, just after Christmas. This year, it's expected that 1 billion cards will be exchanged around the world.

Teachers receive the most Valentine's Day cards, followed by kids, mothers, wives and girlfriends.

Hallmark was one of the first to mass produce a Valentine's Day card, all the way back in 1913

More than one-third of men are comfortable not receiving anything from a lover on Valentine's Day.



Trivia Time answers:

1. B 2. C 3. B 4. B

GROUNDHOG DAY, FEBRUARY 2ND

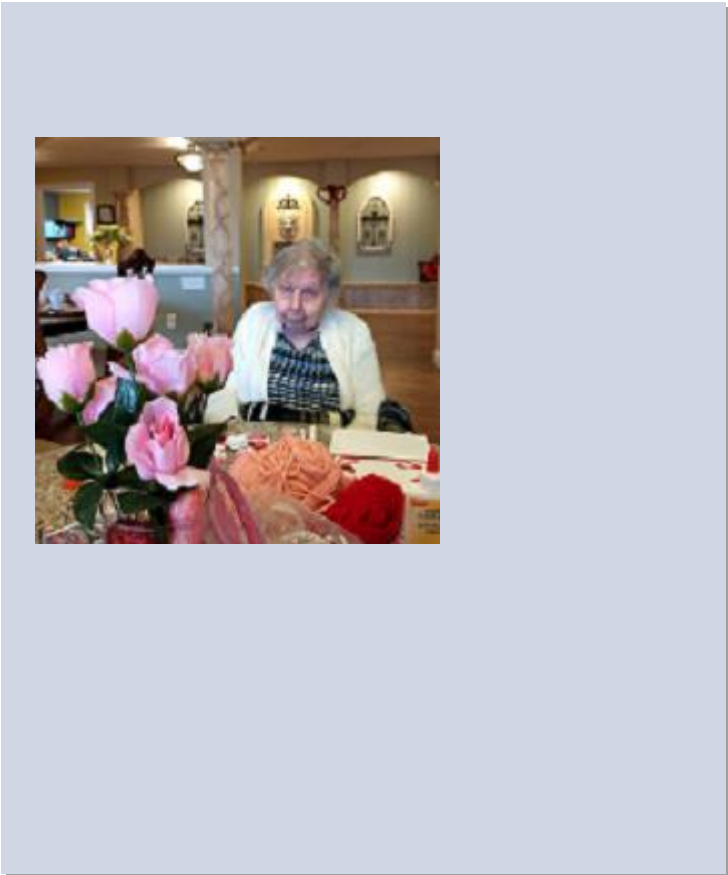
A Popular Tradition

A popular tradition in the United States, Groundhog Day is also a legend that traverses centuries, its origins clouded in the mists of time with ethnic cultures and animals awakening on specific dates. Myths such as this tie our present to the distant past when nature did, indeed, influence our lives. It is the day that the Groundhog comes out of his hole after a long winter sleep to look for his shadow.

If he sees it, he regards it as an omen of six more weeks of bad weather and returns to his hole.

If the day is cloudy and, hence, shadowless, he takes it as a sign of spring and stays above ground.

The groundhog tradition stems from similar beliefs associated with Candlemas Day and the days of early Christians in Europe, and for centuries the custom was to have the clergy bless candles and distribute them to the people. Even then, it marked a milestone in the winter and the weather that day was important.



Laissez Le Bon Temps Rouler

It's Mardi Gras! The annual bacchanalia that caps off weeks of Carnival festivals is in full swing. Take a moment to brush up on your Mardi Gras history with our easy primer. And don't forget: Let the good times roll! The start of Carnival goes all the way back to 1582, when Pope Gregory XIII made it an official holiday. When the weather's chilly and people have nothing but Lent to look forward to, they need a way to cut loose, right? That's what Mardi Gras is all about. New Orleans started celebrating almost as soon as it was established. By the 19th century, Carnival balls and parties were major events. By 1838, parades were introduced as well, as the Times Picayune explains. Mardi Gras itself means "Fat Tuesday" and is always the day before Ash Wednesday, the official start of Lent. "Fat" in this case means jolly and indulgent - but there's plenty of king cake around to help out as well. King cake? It's one of many Mardi Gras necessities. King cake is a tradition for several Christian celebrations, but in New Orleans it's all about Carnival. The gooey, sugary treat holds a surprise: a plastic baby. Depending on who you ask, the baby is a symbol of good luck or a sign that you're the one buying the next cake. When picking your favorite Mardi Gras parade, make sure you're looking for "Krewes," not crews. New Orleans is eccentric if nothing else. The first Krewe was Comus in 1857. The second Krewe didn't come along until 1870, but today there are more than 50. Don't worry if your Cajun French is rusty: "laissez les bon temps rouler" (pronounced "Lay-say le bon tom roo-lay") just means "let the good times roll." Now you know.

Mardi Gras Traditions

Mardi Gras is about music, parades, picnics, floats and excitement. It's one big holiday in New Orleans!

Revelers know to wear costumes or at least dress in purple, green, and gold, and adorn themselves with long beads caught from the floats of previous parades. You'll see a lot of crazy costumes, kids with their families are everywhere, and both locals and visitors having a great time. Parade goers will sit on the ground, throw balls, play music, eat great food and watch the crowds walk by between parades. On Mardi Gras day, the majority of non-essential businesses are shut down because of the celebration.

Experienced revelers know to bring a large bag with them so they can haul away all the beads and trinkets they will catch from the parades!

Trivia Time (Answers on page 2)

1. What famous baseball player married Marilyn Monroe in 1954?
A. Babe Ruth B. Joe DiMaggio C. Mel Ott
2. What piece of women's clothing, named after a dog, became popular in the 1950s?
A. Beagle Blouse B. Collie Cape
C. Poodle Skirt
3. What type of hat/cap did both Davy Crockett and Daniel Boone wear on TV in the 50s?
A. Beaver hat B. Coonskin Cap
C. Deerstalker
4. Which aspiring rock-and-roll singer appeared on the Ed Sullivan Show in 1956, but could only be shown from the waist up?
A. Fats Domino B. Elvis Presley
C. Chubby Checker

