

Lighting the Way to Summer



On April 30, the eve of May Day, the city of Edinburgh, Scotland, comes alive with fire for the modern-day celebration of the ancient ritual of Beltane, the Celtic holiday heralding the arrival of summer.

Beltane translates from the Gaelic as “the fires of Bel,” in reference to Belenus, the Celtic god of the sun. In ancient times, May Day welcomed back the warmth of the sun and the renewed fertility of the land. It was, and in many places still is, traditional to dance around a maypole and perform other rituals associated with fertility and abundance. But before May Day, there is Beltane, a night of roaring bonfires.

Fire is considered the ultimate purifying force. Perhaps this stems from fire’s ability to cleanse the land. After a forest fire, it is common for new growth to flourish. In olden days, on Beltane, all hearth fires were extinguished and a new *neid fire*, or “sacred fire,” was lit. Everyone in the community relit their hearths from this new fire, symbolizing the unification of the community.

Twin bonfires were also lit, and it was common for farmers to lead their livestock between the two, to cleanse and protect the animals before they were set free to pasture. Humans, too, dared to leap and run between the fires as a way to purify and heal themselves.

In Edinburgh, Beltane begins with a procession to Calton Hill. It is led by a May Queen, embodying strength, purity, and the potential for growth, and the Green Man, symbolizing the life that grows on Earth. Neither can exist without the other. The couple arrives at an outdoor stage, where performance and dancing culminate with the lighting of the bonfire. As the fire leaps higher, food and drink are passed around, and the performers and audience become one large celebratory crowd. Just as the *neid fire* of old joined the community together, so does Edinburgh’s large bonfire.

April Birthdays

In astrology, those born from April 1–19 are Aries’ Rams. Rams are headstrong, charging forward into adventures with confidence and ambition. Aries’ charisma and confidence make them effective leaders. Those born from April 20–30 are Taurus’ Bulls. Bulls are reliable workers who take a slow-and-steady approach to finishing tasks. They do expect a reward for their hard work and love little indulgences.

- Francis Yanez – April 3
- Mary Falke – April 8
- Virginia McCullough – April 11
- Rita Rojas – April 11
- Betty Schubert – April 17
- Diane Brown – April 24
- Pat Kenealy – April 28
- Debbie Crain – April 30

A Beautiful Find



On April 8, 1820, a Greek farmer named Yorgos Kentrotas was searching for stones to rebuild a wall in a field on the island of Milos. The field was the scene of a ruined and ancient theater, and rubble littered the ground.

A French naval officer named Olivier Voutier watched Kentrotas as he heaved up a stone and curiously peered into a hole beneath. Voutier approached and saw that Kentrotas had unearthed a ruined statue—armless, cracked, and dirty, but remarkable. The farmer had discovered the *Venus de Milo*. While many historians believe the statue depicts Aphrodite, the Greek goddess of love and beauty (known as Venus to the Romans), her true identity is unknown. Another guess is that she is actually Amphitrite, goddess of the sea and wife of Poseidon. Her beauty, though, is undisputed, and she is considered one of the Louvre museum’s most precious treasures.

Our Lady of Mercy

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Celebrating April

Jazz Appreciation Month

Humor Month

Kite Month

April Fools’ Day

April 1

World Party Day

April 3

Passover

April 5–13

Easter

April 9

Scrabble Day

April 13

Earth Day

April 22

Sky Awareness Week

April 23–29

Gathering of Nations

Pow Wow

April 27–29

Arbor Day

April 28

Evolution of Dance

April 29 is International Dancing Day, a day that will be greeted with enthusiasm by those who love to dance and perhaps with dread by those with two left feet. The date commemorates the birthday of Jean-Georges Noverre, the French dancer who is credited with creating ballet during the 18th century. While ballet might be considered the ultimate expression of modern dance, dancing has been a part of humanity since the prehistoric era.

Dancing is a pastime of every human society on Earth. Its ubiquity has led scientists to ask whether dancing is more than just an entertaining diversion. Does dancing play a role in our survival as a species? Neuroscientists have mapped the regions of the brain that are activated when we dance. Unsurprisingly, various parts of our brains associated with locomotion and coordination are involved. Perhaps more surprisingly, dance activates areas associated with emotions, memory, and social interaction. This has led evolutionary scientists to suggest that dancing has long played a vital role in social cohesion and group dynamics.

In the 1800s, sociologist Émile Durkheim coined the term “collective effervescence,” the feeling that an individual is a part of something larger than themselves. Amongst our prehistoric ancestors, dancing may very well have been a source of collective effervescence. Anthropologists assert that groups that danced well together formed lasting bonds and alliances. Dancing could even have been a show of power or influence. Group dancing also imparts psychological benefits. When we dance, our brains release endorphins. These feel-good chemicals boost our moods and create a stronger sense of social bonding. A society that dances together is quite likely to be considered stronger than one that does not dance. In this way, dancing could have been advantageous to a society’s survival. The next time you hit the dance floor, your survival may not depend on it, but you are participating in a ritual that has been performed by humans since the dawn of civilization.

Quite a Pickle

The fastest-growing sport in America already has its own commemorative month. That's right, April is Pickleball Month. What is the source of the sport's cultlike appeal? Perhaps it's the fact that almost everyone can play.



According to the USA Pickleball Association, over half of all regular pickleball players are over age 55, a fact that speaks to the sport's accessibility. Pickleball is a hybrid of tennis, badminton, and table tennis, but it is easier to play than all of them. It's played on a small, tennis-like court where a hard, plastic, wiffle-like ball is batted with short, light paddles. Balls are served underhand, which makes them easier to volley. The court is smaller, which makes ground easier to cover. Paddles are also smaller and lighter, which makes them easier to handle. The game gets even easier when you play doubles. And yet, despite its ease of play, pickleball still offers a good full-body cardiovascular workout.

Not everyone has gotten on the pickleball bandwagon. As the sport has grown at a breakneck pace, communities all over the country are suffering from pickleball-related controversies. Neighbors of parks and courts are getting sick and tired of the endless plastic *thwack* of the pickleball. Some communities are going so far as to call the sound noise pollution. In communities with no dedicated pickleball courts, local parks have become the scene of turf wars. Tennis and basketball players cry foul when their courts are overrun by pickleballers who arrive en masse with their portable nets and painter's tape, monopolizing the courts for hours on end.

Pickleball's international and national governing bodies are also fighting amongst themselves, jostling for control of tournaments, players, and the money that these events bring. Rapid growth of the sport has brought plenty of growing pains, but still pickleball endures. Despite controversy, people love to play the game. Wherever there is a hard court, people arrive undaunted with nets and paddles, eager to play their new favorite game.

Poetic License

ROBINS

Why do robins sing in the spring, is it because they are happy or looking for love?

He's at the top of the tree so all can see.
She can't miss him as she looks for him.

They get together and build a nest, for as she lays her four blue eggs and he rests.

Soon there are small peeps coming and need to be fed.

They both work together to feed their brood who fly away soon to empty the nest.

It sets there all winter and waits for spring, to hear robins began singing and singing again.

Don Binggeli
April 25, 2020

The Healing Foods



APPLES

We've all heard the famous saying, "An Apple a day keeps doctor away", but did you ever wonder why eating an apple is so beneficial to your health? Many of the health benefits are due to the fact that apples are a rich source of phytochemicals, including quercetin, catechin, phloridzin and chlorogenic acid, all of which are strong antioxidants. These antioxidants help to break down and neutralize harmful free radical compounds within our body. Free radicals can rise due to many things such as exposure to polluted air and simply the aging process. Incorporating antioxidant rich foods, like apples, in your daily meal plan, can ward off the free radicals that build up to promote better health.

The Last Laugh

Remember to laugh out loud on April 14, International Moment of Laughter Day. Is laughing always the best medicine?



Research shows that laughter does impart several health benefits. When we laugh, we inhale more air and oxygen, stimulating the heart, lungs, muscles, and brain. A good laugh also stimulates the body's stress response and then deactivates it, causing heart rates to rise and fall, leaving us with satisfied, relaxed feelings. Laughter not only improves mood, but it encourages the positive thoughts that release *neuropeptides*, chemicals that fight stress and boost our immune systems. Laughter also stimulates chemicals that act as natural painkillers for our bodies. With laughter providing so many health benefits, communities are starting to form various laughter clubs in an effort to laugh more regularly.

While you are probably familiar with yoga, the ancient Indian practice of stretching, breathing, and meditation, are you familiar with laughter yoga? Laughter yoga draws upon many of yoga's foundational principles, such as its deep diaphragmatic breathing. Laughing produces full inhaled and exhaled. While the laughter is simulated at first, the giggles soon become contagious and real. And we shouldn't overlook the human connections forged by sharing laughter. After a laughing yoga session, participants report feeling their spirits lifted and a greater sense of community.

But fake laughter? Research shows that even fake laughs and forced smiling are enough to boost our moods. While our brains know that we're faking it, our bodies do not. Once the brain sends the signal to the body to laugh, all of the associated physiological actions follow: the relaxation, the mood boost, and the increased energy. Perhaps this is the lesson of the old Chinese proverb: "A hearty laugh makes you ten years younger." Even if you're faking it.

Walk on the Wild Side

The first Saturday in April, which this year coincides with April Fools' Day, is International Firewalk Day. Is walking on burning embers for real or an April Fools' trick? Firewalking, the test of walking over embers barefoot, is a religious ritual that dates back to 1200 BC. Its practice was first recorded in India, where two Brahmin priests challenged each other to walk over fire, with the one who walked the farthest winning the competition. Firewalking is not limited to India, however. It is practiced in cultures of Japan, China, Polynesia, amongst Native American tribes, and the !Kung people of the Kalahari. It caught on in America after an article detailing the ritual was published in *Scientific American* magazine in the 1970s. The Firewalk Institute of Research and Education (FIRE) exists today to train instructors in the practice. But the question remains: Is firewalking safe? Research suggests that it is possible to walk safely over hot embers because they are cool enough to not instantly burn the soles of the feet. In addition, firewalkers move rapidly enough to prevent serious burns.

Keeping Busy



April 7 brings International Beaver Day, a day to appreciate this industrious aquatic mammal. Millions of beavers once resided in every stream in North America. After

American colonization, the demand for their pelts resulted in hunting and trapping that pushed the beaver to the brink of extinction. Today, the animals are making a comeback, and scientists are learning that their value to ecosystems is unequalled in nature. Beavers, by nature, cut trees, build dams, carve canals, and flood rivers. This process creates invaluable wetland habitat that boosts biodiversity. The land stores more water, which decreases flooding, restores habitats, and filters and cleans water. Beavers are truly nature's best environmental engineers.

Sunday

Monday

Tuesday

Wednesday

Thursday

Friday

Saturday

APRIL 2023



1
1:30- Movies w/ Kathy **(GR)**

April Fools' Day

2
10:00- Bethany **(TH)**
10:30- Rosary **(C)**
11:00- Palm Sunday Mass **(C)**

Palm Sunday

3
9:00- One on Ones
10:15- Mass **(C)**
11:00- Exercise **(AR)**
1:00 - RCF Scenic Drive
1:30- Money Bingo **(GR)**
3:00- Paint by #s **(AR)**
3:00- Apartment Scenic Drive

4
10:15- Mass **(C)**
1:00- Exercise **(AR)**
1:30- Balloon Volleyball **(RCF)**
2:00- Protestant Service **(C)**
3:00- Nail Salon **(AR)**
6:30- Card Games

5
9:00- Walmart Run
10:15- Mass **(C)**
11:00- Lunch-Antiquing
1:00-Brain Fitness
1:30- Money Bingo **(GR)**
3:00- Trivia Wednesday
5:30-Pinochle
Passover Begins

6
9:30- Sewing Club
11:00- Core Strengthening
1:30- Crafts **(AR)**
2:00- Pitch w/ Betty
3:00- Corn Hole **(RCF)**
4:00- Holy Thursday Mass **(C)**

7
10:15- Mass **(C)**
11:00- Exercise **(AR)**
1:30- Prize Bingo **(GR)**
2:00- Bible Study
3:00- Way of the Cross **(C)**
4:00- Good Friday Mass **(C)**

8
1:30- Movies w/ Kathy **(GR)**
7:00- Square Dancing **(TH)**

9
10:00- Bethany **(TH)**
10:30- Rosary **(C)**
11:00- Easter Mass **(C)**

Easter Sunday

10
10:15- Mass **(C)**
11:00- Exercise **(AR)**
1:30- Money Bingo **(GR)**
3:00- Paint by #s **(AR)**

11
10:15- Mass **(C)**
11:00- Exercise **(AR)**
1:30-Reminiscing **(AR)**
2:00- Protestant Service **(C)**
3:00- Nail Salon **(AR)**
6:30- Card Games

12
9:00- Walmart Run
10:15- Mass **(C)**
11:00- Lunch-Thrift Store
1:00-Brain Fitness
1:30- Money Bingo **(GR)**
3:00- Book Club **(L)**
5:30-Pinochle

13
9:30- Sewing Club
10:15- Mass **(C)**
11:00- Core Strengthening
1:30- Crafts **(AR)**
2:00- Pitch w/ Betty
3:00- Spelling Bee **(RCF2)**

14
10:15- Mass **(C)**
11:00- Exercise **(AR)**
11:00 - Lunch @ Stroud's
1:30- Prize Bingo **(GR)**
2:00- Bible Study
3:00- Happy Hour **(GR)**

15
1:30- Movies w/ Kathy **(GR)**

16
10:00- Bethany **(TH)**
10:30- Rosary **(C)**
11:00- Mass **(C)**

17
10:15- Mass **(C)**
11:00- Exercise **(AR)**
1:30- Money Bingo **(GR)**
3:00- Paint by #s **(AR)**

18
10:15- Mass **(C)**
11:00- Exercise **(AR)**
2:00- Protestant Service **(C)**
3:00- Nail Salon **(AR)**
3:00- Apartment Meeting **(TH)**
6:30- Card Games

19
9:00- Walmart Run
10:15- Mass **(C)**
11:00- Lunch-Pedicure
11:30-Auxilliary **(TH)**
1:00-Brain Fitness **(AR)**
1:30- Money Bingo **(GR)**
3:00- 2RCF Meeting
3:30- 3RCF Meeting
5:30-Pinochle

20
9:30- Sewing Club
10:15- Mass **(C)**
11:00- Core Strengthening
1:30- Crafts **(AR)**
2:00- Pitch w/ Betty

21
10:15- Mass **(C)**
11:00- Exercise **(AR)**
1:30- Prize Bingo **(GR)**
2:00- Bible Study
2:30- Singing in the Rain Party **(TH)**

22
1:30- Movies w/ Kathy **(GR)**

Earth Day

23
10:00- Bethany **(TH)**
10:30- Rosary **(C)**
1:00- Mass **(C)**

24
10:15- Mass **(C)**
11:00- Exercise **(AR)**
1:30- Money Bingo **(GR)**
3:00- Tea Party/Incontinence by Legacy **(AR)**

25
10:15- Mass **(C)**
11:00- Exercise **(AR)**
1:30- Reminiscing **(AR)**
2:00- Protestant Service **(C)**
3:00- Nail Salon **(AR)**
6:30- Card Games

26
9:00- Walmart Run
10:15- Mass **(C)**
11:00-Lunch-Library
1:00-Brain Fitness
1:30- Money Bingo **(GR)**
3:00- Book Club **(L)**
5:30-Pinochle
Administrative Professionals Day

27
9:30- Sewing Club
10:15- Mass **(C)**
11:00- Core Strengthening
1:30- Crafts **(AR)**
2:00- Pitch w/ Betty

28
10:15- Mass **(C)**
11:00- Exercise **(AR)**
1:30- Prize Bingo **(GR)**
2:00- Bible Study
3:00- Happy Hour **(GR)**

Arbor Day

29
1:30- Movies w/ Kathy **(GR)**

30
10:00- Bethany **(TH)**
10:30- Rosary **(C)**
1:00- Mass **(C)**

Codes:
AR --Activity Room 2nd Floor
C-- Chapel 3rd Floor
CR-- Craft Room 1st Floor
GR--Game Room 1st Floor
L--Library 1st Floor
TH-- Tighe Hall 1st Floor
2RCF--RCF 2nd Floor

Activity Room Open 24/7