

The Rambling Reader

Rambling Oaks Courtyard 12310 S. Western Ave. Oklahoma City, Oklahoma 73170 (405) 691-6555



Celebrating January Birthdays

Joyce Abshire 12th

Ray Winnard 13th

Lucille Mc Entire 13th

Illa Marie Hall 18th

Joyce Smith 24th

Edna Gifford 29th

Fresh Squeezed Juice Week

January 17–23

Disc Jockey Day

January 20

Belly Laugh Day

January 24

Curmudgeons Day

January 29

A New Day in History

The first recorded celebration of the new year was in Mesopotamia in mid-March 2000 BC—the beginning of spring during the vernal equinox. The early Romans, whose calendar had just 10 months (March through December), also picked March as the start of the new year. However, ancient cultures such as the Egyptians, Phoenicians, and Persians commemorated the new year with the autumnal equinox in mid-September. And the Greeks chose the winter solstice, in mid-December, for their New Year’s celebration.

Around 700 BC, the second king of Rome, Numa Pompilius, added the months of January and February to the Roman lunar calendar. But it wasn’t until about 153 BC that January 1 was celebrated as the first day of the new year. Historians say this was because January 1 was the day that newly elected Roman consuls began their one-year term in office. However, many people throughout the Roman Empire continued to mark March as the start of the new year.

Finally, in 1582, Pope Gregory XIII reworked the calendar again, and January 1 officially became New Year’s Day. Most Catholic countries adopted the Gregorian calendar right away, but not everyone was quick to jump on the change. Protestant countries such as Great Britain, for example, did not adopt the reformed calendar until 1752. Until then, the British Empire—and its American colonies—still celebrated the new year in March.

For many people these days, the new year begins when the lighted metal ball on the roof of New York City’s One Times Square —drop’ down a flagpole. The ball drop countdown begins at 11:59 p.m. and ends at exactly 12 a.m. on January 1. Nearly a million people gather around Times Square to watch it happen, and as many as a billion more watch it on television. America isn’t alone in its New Year’s celebrations. People worldwide gather the evening of December 31 and continue celebrating through the night into New Year’s Day.

Welcome to 2016!

Here are some memories from 2015.
Oh the fun we have had, the places we
have been and the friends we have made.
We hope that 2016 brings us just as many
memories and more!



The Children of Invention



January 17 is the day of the K.I.D.—that's Kid Inventors' Day for short. This special day honors Benjamin Franklin's birthday on January 17. While most people know Franklin to be the inventor of bifocals and an experimenter with electricity, what many don't know is that at age 11 he also invented swim flippers that attached to the hands.

But he's not the only kid inventor. Perhaps the following inventions by kids will inspire you to take your own unique product from idea to —patent pending" (through the federal Patent Office) someday soon.

In 1905, an 11-year-old kid from San Francisco named Frank Epperson stirred some sugary soda powder with water and left the mix outside all night. He awoke to discover it had frozen solid in the cold. When he licked it straight from the wooden stirrer, he knew he had accidentally made something delicious. The —Epsicle," as he called it, was the first Popsicle.

On the last day of middle school, Sarah Buckel watched as a friend struggled to scrape the glue used to stick posters and other décor to the locker wall. Over the summer break, Buckel came up with a solution: magnetic wallpaper. Fortunately, Buckel's father ran a magnet manufacturing company. In no time, her decorative magnetic wallpaper could be found at Staples, Target, and other huge chains. Since 2009, sales of her simple product have totaled more than a million dollars.

Want more examples? Chester Greenwood invented earmuffs at age 15. Louis Braille invented braille, the alphabet for the blind using raised dots, at age 15. Hart Main, 13, conceived a line of candles for men called —Man Cans," offering manly scents like sawdust. Param Jaggi, at 15, conceived the idea to insert algae into a car's muffler to eat up carbon dioxide before it entered the atmosphere. And Mattie Knight, dubbed —Lady Edison" by fans, developed a safety device at age 12 that became a standard fixture on looms. How's that for ingenuity?

The Legend of Toad Hollow

While records of a man named Ralph C. Morrison—sometimes known as —The Peddler of Encouragement"—exist, little is known of the holiday he founded, the Toad Hollow Day of Encouragement, said to be celebrated January 26. Morrison was an educator and storyteller in Kalamazoo, Michigan. One day he came across a newspaper article detailing the childhood of one of his older students, a woman named Eunice. Eunice had once attended Toad Hollow Country School. The name of that place, Toad Hollow, stuck in the imagination of the storyteller, and he crafted many delightful tales about the place. So many tales, in fact, that Toad Hollow became a place of legend.

Kalamazoo County eventually offered Morrison a local park to do his storytelling. He accepted and soon formed a volunteer group dedicated to maintaining and refurbishing the park, complete with an 1800s-era, water-wheel-powered gristmill. These volunteers, or so-called *voluntoads*, embodied kindness, dedication, and selflessness—all characteristics celebrated during the Toad Hollow Day of Encouragement.

Gone to Seed



Each year, eager gardeners await the last Saturday in January, Seed Swap Day. It's a chance to connect those with excess seeds to those searching for the perfect additions to their gardens.

Washington Gardener magazine, which organized the first seed exchange in 2006, explains that seed swapping is a fundamental part of the history of human society; seeds were some of the first commodities valued and exchanged among humans. Be they seeds for crops or flowers, a vibrant exchange promotes plant biodiversity. American president and avid gardener Thomas Jefferson once said, —The greatest service which can be rendered any country is to add a useful plant to its culture."

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Last Shall Be First



On the first day of the year, the last shall be first. This is the philosophy behind Z Day, a day when all those whose name begins with the letter Z will flaunt alphabetical order and put Z first. It's an order that affects us all—from seats in school, to places in line, to the order of phone books and directories.

Just where did alphabetical order come from? It's a 3,500-year-old mystery that social scientist William Watt believes he has solved. The English alphabet, or at least letters A through T, were ordered by a Semitic scribe living in modern day Lebanon or Syria around the year 1500 BC. He believes the letters were arranged according to where the sounds are made in the mouth. Similar sounding letters were separated so that children would not become confused in their learning. Adding the letters U and W in the 16th century meant more bad news for Zach and Zoe. As usual, they had to wait for their final place in history.

January Birthdays

In astrology, if you were born between January 1st and 19th, you are a Goat of Capricorn. Goats are the most stable and sure-footed of astrological signs. Reliable, economical, practical, and organized, they make good multi-taskers and politicians. Those born between January 20th and 31st are Aquarian Water Bearers. Aquarians have attractive personalities, vivid imaginations, strong intuition, and a thirst for knowledge. They also share a strong desire to help humanity and create unity. Some of note:

J.R.R. Tolkien (writer) – Jan. 3, 1892
Soupy Sales (comedian) – Jan. 8, 1926
Robert Stack (actor) – Jan. 13, 1919
Rakesh Sharma (cosmonaut) – Jan. 13, 1949
Ethel Merman (singer) – Jan. 16, 1908
Oliver Hardy (comedian) – Jan. 18, 1892
Dolly Parton (singer) – Jan. 19, 1946
Neil Diamond (singer) – Jan. 24, 1941
Oprah Winfrey (host) – Jan. 29, 1954
Jackie Robinson (ballplayer) – Jan. 31, 1919