



THE COURTYARDS

ASSISTED LIVING AND MEMORY CARE

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December 2023

Write a Letter

Celebrate National Letter Writing Day on Dec. 7. It's the perfect time of year to reach out to loved ones, and getting a handwritten letter in the mail is always a welcome surprise.

Memorable Melody: 'Let It Snow'

Would you believe that this classic carol about a frightful blizzard was written during a summer heat wave? Well, believe it! That's exactly how "Let It Snow" came to be in July 1945, when musicians Sammy Cahn and Jule Styne were motivated by record high temperatures to write a song that would cool them down. The original version was recorded by big band singer Vaughn Monroe, who took the tune to No. 1. It's since been covered by dozens of artists, with Dean Martin's smooth rendition among the most loved.

Brainteaser

Question: I beam, shine and sparkle white. I brighten the day with a single light. I charm and enchant one and all, lifting you up when spirits fall. What am I?
Answer: A smile.



Color of the Year: Viva Magenta

The color of 2023, according to the Pantone Color Institute, was Viva Magenta. This lively red hue is certainly a sight to see, but we'll leave the choice up to you: Was 2023 Viva Magenta? If not, what color would you choose to describe the year?

A Year Gone By

"How did it get so late so soon? It's night before it's afternoon. December is here before it's June. My goodness how the time has flown. How did it get so late so soon?" —Dr. Seuss

Feel-Good Foods

What's your favorite comfort food? According to recent polls, pizza is the go-to meal for Americans when they need a pick-me-up. Other comfort foods in the top 10 include ice cream, chocolate, hamburgers, and macaroni and cheese.

Stay Healthy With Hydration

We're always told that drinking plenty of fluids helps us recover from an illness. But staying hydrated also aids in avoiding sickness in the first place! Drinking water helps keep your nasal passages moist and working properly to fight viruses that enter your body.

Sparkly Snow Globes

There's something magical about shaking a snow globe and peering at the miniature scene inside as the glittery specks—known as "flitter"—fall to the bottom. These charming collectibles have been around since the late 1800s and are popular gift shop souvenirs as well as holiday décor. To prevent the water from clouding or leaking over time, store snow globes out of direct sunlight.





Trivia Whiz

Polar Opposites

Brrr! Bundle up with multiple layers of clothing, your warmest coat, a fuzzy hat and thick mittens to take an imaginary trip to the North and South Poles.

At both poles, it takes the sun three months to reach a high point in the sky and another three months to reach the horizon again—meaning there are six months of daylight and six months of night.

The North Pole is a sheet of ice floating in the middle of the Arctic Ocean, but the South Pole is located on the continent of Antarctica.

The South Pole is much colder, having never reached temperatures above zero. Mountains on the land cause higher and chillier elevations.

Monitoring wind speeds over the North Pole helps meteorologists make their weekly forecast.

'Souper' Good for You

It's soup season! This classic comfort food is brimming with more than just savory flavors and cozy vibes. Here are a few reasons why you should shift into soup mode this month.

More veggies. People of all ages may struggle to eat enough vegetables daily. But you'll usually find plenty of veggies in soup, where they provide rich flavor, color and nutrition.

Healthy hydration. Essential for good health, hydration doesn't just come from drinking water, but also from what we eat—and soup is high on the list of hydrating foods.

Symptom soother. Many people swear a bowl of chicken noodle soup can cure certain illnesses. At the very least, sipping on warm soup can soothe a sore throat, clear a stuffy nose and settle a troubled tummy.

Portion control. Because of the high water content, soup is very filling, and

the hot temperature forces us to eat it slowly and mindfully. These factors can prevent overeating and be helpful for weight management.

Bone benefits. Soups made with bone broth contain calcium, magnesium and, most importantly, collagen—a protein that promotes strong bones, muscles and joints as well as healthy hair and skin.



A Musical Treasure

A regular addition in folk and orchestra music, violins are a traditional instrument that are bursting back into pop culture. First documented in 16th-century Italy, they are diverse and unique, just like the sounds they make.

Though violins may look simple with their hourglass shape and four strings, the instrument is actually quite complex in design. The body is often made up of over 70 separate pieces of wood, including different types like

maple, spruce and ebony.

Violins are most commonly played by drawing a bow across the strings, but for a different sound, they can also be plucked. Dramatic effect is added by striking the strings with the bow's hard back. Violins are the highest-pitched instrument in their family, hitting notes that some say remind them of birdsong.

The sound of a violin triggers many emotions. Long, elegant, soaring notes can create heartache or peace among listeners, but quick, short sounds provide enthusiastic and fun energy that can enliven a crowd.

Some well-known violin artists from the past and present include Antonio Vivaldi, Niccolò Paganini, Yehudi Menuhin, Hilary Hahn, Lindsey Stirling and Itzhak Perlman.



A Friend in Red

What is the most common state bird? Hint: The males have recognizable red plumage, a dark mask and a tall crest on their head. It's the northern cardinal! Read on for more about this special bird.

Cardinals reside in the eastern half of the U.S., as well as parts of Canada and Mexico, throughout the year. Since they don't migrate, they're often associated with winter, when their vibrant red feathers are easily spotted amongst bare branches. This distinct color comes from carotenoids in their food, particularly berries. Although females have patches of the iconic scarlet hue, they are mostly tan. Unlike many other bird species, both male and female cardinals sing, often letting out a metallic chirp, a clear whistled melody or a "What cheer! What cheer!"

Cardinals are very territorial and are even known to fight their reflections for hours at a time. This fierce defense has made them a popular pick for sport mascots, most notably the St. Louis MLB team and the Arizona NFL team.

A Model Hobby

Seeing the words "some assembly required" on a new toy or gadget can make some people sigh. But in the world of model-building, the assembly is the fun part!

The hobby of building plastic models from a kit began in the 1930s, the golden age of aviation—so it's no wonder that the first kits were of airplanes. Following World War II, society's interest in military machines and the availability of plastics opened the activity to more people. Hobbyists could build miniature versions of the aircraft, ships and tanks used in the war.

In the following decades, model builders delighted in recreating even more items. Trains, planes and automobiles may be common, but models exist for practically anything you can think of, including nature, architecture, animals and pop culture. This expansion in the variety of subjects was—and still is—a large draw to the hobby.

Another reason model kits remain a popular pastime today is the attention to detail. Putting the parts together requires concentration and patience, and the payoff of the finished product brings immense satisfaction. Joy can be found not only in the careful, calm process but also in marveling at the model's resemblance to its real-life counterpart when finished.

Often seen as a solo activity, model kits can also help you bond with others, either by working on a project together or by simply discussing the craft.



Wit & Wisdom

"When you hear the bell, you feel a tug at your heart."
—Vera Nazarian

"Life's not always going to be bells and whistles ... the only thing you can control is your attitude."
—Gary Woodland

"Bells are music's laughter."
—Thomas Hood

"Those evening bells!
Those evening bells!
How many a tale their music tells ..."
—Thomas Moore

"Don't bother to ring a bell in the ear that doesn't listen."
—Michael Bassey Johnson

"Ring in the old,
ring in the new,
Ring, happy bells,
across the snow:
The year is going,
let him go;
Ring out the false,
ring in the true."
—Alfred Lord Tennyson

December 2023

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
December					1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8 	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18 	19	20	21	22	23
24/31	Christmas 25	26	27	28	29	30

“This Month In History”

DECEMBER

1913: Making production easier, the first moving assembly line is unveiled! With the invention, Henry Ford shaved off more than 12 hours of work from the time spent building just one vehicle.

1941: Civil Air Patrol, a nonprofit civilian auxiliary of the U.S. Air Force, is established. With duties that include rescue missions and disaster relief, the organization is credited with saving 100 lives per year.

1954: Fast-food chain Burger King is first opened in Miami, Fla. The restaurant’s signature sandwich, the flame-broiled

Whopper hamburger, is able to be customized in 200,000 unique variations. Have it your way!

1964: The first TV special of “Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer” airs on NBC. The classic character, “the most famous reindeer of all,” shines bright during the holiday season.

1973: The Endangered Species Act is made official, establishing protection for fish, wildlife and plants that are threatened or endangered. Environmental efforts based on the legislation have led to the recovery of species such as the bald eagle and gray wolf.

1998: The first mission for assembly of the International Space Station is launched on orbiter Endeavour. This connected the Russian and American station modules using the “Unity” segment.

2012: The music video for “Gangnam Style,” by Korean rapper Psy, becomes the first YouTube video to hit 1 billion views.