



**Notable Quotable**

“Gold is good in its place; but loving, brave, patriotic men are better than gold.”

~ Abraham Lincoln, 16th president of the United States



**February Horoscopes and Birthdays**

In astrology, those born between February 1–18 are the Water Bearers of Aquarius. As the water of life heals the land, so Aquarians are the humanitarians of the zodiac. Free-spirited and compassionate, they give “power to the people.” Those born between February 19 and 29 are the Fish of Pisces. Fish feel things deeply. These intuitive, creative, and intelligent people have strong feelings of right and wrong.

- Sherman Hemsley – Feb. 1, 1938
- Ayn Rand – Feb. 2, 1905
- Gertrude Stein – Feb. 3, 1874
- Rosa Parks – February 4, 1913
- Laura Ingalls Wilder – Feb. 7, 1867
- Thomas Edison – Feb. 11, 1847
- Galileo – Feb. 15, 1564
- Michael Jordan – Feb. 17, 1963
- Sidney Poitier – Feb. 20, 1927
- Nina Simone – Feb. 21, 1933
- George Washington – Feb. 22, 1732
- Elizabeth Taylor – Feb. 27, 1932
- Dennis Farina – Feb. 29, 1944

**A Giant Leap** *cont. from pg. 1*

as the final two months of the calendar, with the leap day added as the final day of the last month of February once every four years. Julius Caesar named this the *Julian calendar* after himself.

The Julian calendar was hailed as a tremendous improvement, but it was still not perfect. The solar year is only .2421 days longer than the calendar year, not .25. Adding an entire day every four years added 11 extra minutes

to each year! After hundreds of years, the Julian calendar veered weeks from the solar year. In 1582, Pope Gregory XIII created his *Gregorian calendar*. He included a leap day but went further and decreed that leap years would not occur on years evenly divisible by 100, excepting those divisible by 400. The Gregorian calendar is still in use today, but in another 10,000 years, someone will have to create a new calendar once again.

**Welcome Stranger**

On February 12, 1851, a prospector in New South Wales, Australia, discovered flecks of gold in a local waterhole. Within a year, over 500,000 “diggers” from all over the world rushed to Australia with the hope of striking it rich. This Australian Gold Rush transformed the cultural fabric of Australia. What began as a penal colony and a distant backwater soon grew into a booming multicultural metropolis. The immigrant influx grew the economy as demand for products and services grew. Diggers united

in what was termed “mateship,” helping each other in the harsh outback. The rush reached a fever pitch on February 5, 1869, when two miners discovered a massive nugget tangled in the roots of a tree. This gold nugget, dubbed “Welcome Stranger,” was the largest ever found in the world. It measured 24 inches across, weighed 158 pounds, and was worth \$3–4 million in today’s Australian dollars. Not all diggers struck it rich, but many chose to remain in Australia and start new lives as Australians.

**AgeCare Harmony Court**

**February 2020**



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Recreation: 604-527-3328  
 1st Floor Nursing Station: 604-527-3320  
 2nd Floor Nursing Station: 604-527-3302

**Celebrating February**

**Library Lovers Month**

**Mend a Broken Heart Month**

**Black History Month**

**Groundhog Day**  
*February 2*

**Westminster Dog Show**  
*February 10–11*

**Valentine’s Day**  
*February 14*

**Presidents’ Day: U.S.**  
*February 17*

**Mardi Gras**  
*February 25*

**Leap Year Day**  
*February 29*

**A Giant Leap for Humankind**

This month we will enjoy an extra day, transforming 2020 into an extraordinary year. Every four years, an extra day, called *leap day*, is added at the end of February. This extra day is built into the year to ensure that our calendars remain aligned with Earth’s movement around the sun. Our modern calendars have 365 days, but Earth takes 365.2421 days to make it all the way around the sun. The ancient Egyptians were the first to calculate that our cycle of days and nights did not align perfectly with the calendar year, but it wasn’t until Julius Caesar’s reign during the Roman Empire that anything was done about it.

For millennia, calendars were loosely based on human observations of the lunar cycle. Extra days, weeks, and even months were added at random to make up for seasonal discrepancies. Julius Caesar was fed up with the inadequacies of such calendars based upon a 10-month solar year. In 46 BC, he enlisted astronomer Sosigenes to modify the calendar to include 12 months and 365 days. January and February were added

*cont. on pg. 4*



**When Cows Fly**

On February 18, 1930, a cow known as Elm Farm Ollie won the distinction of becoming the first cow ever to be milked while flying in an airplane, ushering in the very first Cow Milked While Flying in an Airplane Day. The circumstances of the flight are well-recorded, as Elm Farm Ollie was part of the International Air Exposition in St. Louis, Missouri. Researchers were apparently

eager to observe the effects of flight on livestock. Elm Farm Ollie was an unusually productive Guernsey. She needed milking three times a day. During her flight, she produced 24 quarts of milk. Wisconsin native Elsworth Bunce had the honor of milking her. The milk was sealed in paper cartons and parachuted to the crowds below, where Charles Lindbergh purportedly took a sip.

## Dior's "New Look"



*Before becoming a fashion designer, Christian Dior studied architecture.*

A casualty of World War II was fashion. With the rationing of materials and anxiety over radicalism, civilian clothing styles became austere, utilitarian, and practical. Women no longer wore silk or other fancy fabrics, and they gave up accessories like boning for corsets and zippers. For the first time, women wore trousers! The British government went so far as to pass austerity regulations. Footwear, textiles, and clothing brandished the CC41 logo, signifying that it conformed to 1941 regulations for "Controlled Commodities." Perhaps no city suffered more than Paris, the world's fashion capital. Not only was it occupied by the Germans, but fashion houses were forced to shut their doors. So, on February 12, 1947, when French designer Christian Dior debuted his "New Look" line at the Paris fashion show, he both saved Parisian fashion and femininity.

Dior's New Look silhouette was both old and new all at the same time. It offered a return to pre-war femininity and yet presented a new, modern woman. The line did away with trousers, boxy shoulders, and civilian androgyny and returned to the small waists and hourglass figures of the pre-war era. Dior focused on soft, rounded shoulders, tight-fitting jackets, and spreading, padded skirts. Essential to the New Look was his corset, known as the *Waspie*, which narrowed the waist and accentuated the bustline. He rejected austerity and let fabric flow freely from his garments. Some critics decried the designs as wasteful or extravagant, while others found them to be affronts to the newfound independence enjoyed by women. For many women, the New Look was a rejection of the war itself and a return to the nostalgia of the pre-war years.

## The Bean-Throwing Festival



*Before the tradition of bean throwing, evil spirits were banished by the harsh smoke of burning dried sardine heads.*

In Japan, springtime festivals begin as early as February, and February 3 brings *Setsubun*, a sort of new year's celebration where people drive away evil spirits so that they may start the new year on the right foot. How do the Japanese ward off these evil influences? By throwing beans, of course. And not just any old bean. They use roasted soybeans known as *fuku mame*, or "fortune beans." Often, the oldest male member of the family will don a mask to look

like a demon or evil spirit. The demon then hovers just outside the family's door. Then the entire family scoops handfuls of beans and tosses them at the demon, scaring it away. This ensures that no one in the family will suffer sickness or other ill fortune. Some cities even hold *Setsubun* parades in which beans are thrown to crowds that shout, "Get out demons!" and "Welcome happiness!" People jostle to scoop up the beans and eat them for good luck.

## Do a Grouch a Favor



*Even Sesame Street's Oscar the Grouch is known as a good and understanding friend.*

You probably know someone who is a grouch. Maybe it's your friend, neighbor, parent, or even spouse! February 16 is the day to forgive them for their sullen and grumpy attitudes and do something nice, for it is Do a Grouch a Favor Day. What favors could possibly satisfy the irritable nature of a grouch? Psychologists believe that the most common sources of

irritability are often little things throughout the day, small annoyances that come with everyday tasks such as driving or shopping. Compassion, they say, is necessary for forgiving those around us for their minor transgressions and petty annoyances. So perhaps the biggest favor we can do for a grouch today is to show them the warmth of compassion.

## From Your Valentine

On February 14 each year, sweethearts celebrate Valentine's Day by exchanging cards, chocolates, and other tokens of love. But do these sweethearts know who they are celebrating? The true identity of St. Valentine is murky and there are differing stories detailing his role in the church and the acts that inspired the popular holiday bearing his name.

Competing stories depict St. Valentine (the Latin version of the name) as either a priest from Rome or the Bishop of Terni during the reign of Emperor Claudius II. Valentine aided Christians who were persecuted under Claudius II's reign until he, too, was put under house arrest at the home of Judge Asterius. It so happened that Asterius had a blind daughter. The judge asked Valentine to prove the power of Christ by restoring the girl's sight. When Valentine performed the miracle, the judge thanked him by freeing him and all the Christians he had imprisoned. But Valentine

did not remain free for long. He was again arrested and brought before Emperor Claudius II himself. When Valentinus attempted to convert Claudius to Christianity, he was executed on February 14, AD 270. Before his martyrdom, he is said to have written a note to the daughter of Asterius, which he signed "From your Valentine."

Another story details how Claudius II outlawed marriage for young men in the belief that single men made better soldiers than those with families. Valentine defied Claudius and performed marriages in secret, purportedly cutting hearts of parchment and gifting them to the couples as a sign of God's eternal love. When Valentine's secret was discovered, Claudius executed him.

These legends illustrate Valentine's devotion to his faith and his love for his people, and inspire a holiday dedicated to the ideals he died for.



*St. Valentine is the patron saint of lovers, epileptics, and beekeepers.*