

Arbor House & Memory Care
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Postage
Information

April 2019

Arbor House Branch

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William's Fair Shake

Historians believe that the famous playwright William Shakespeare was born on April 23, 1564, and then died on that same date in the year 1616. Some argue that too little is known about Shakespeare to prove he was a famous writer, yet a wealth of records of his life exist.

William Shakespeare's father, John, was a prominent figure in his hometown of Stratford-upon-Avon. John was a successful glove maker, tanner, and wool dealer as well as a respected city councilman and town mayor. William Shakespeare's mother, Mary Arden, also came from a prosperous family. Her father ran a successful farm near Stratford. The Shakespeare family's wealth, sadly, did not last. By the time William was about 10 years old, his father's business had collapsed, and they were forced to mortgage even Mary's inheritance. Perhaps this is why young William attended a rather unremarkable local school and completed his education at the age of 14.

William Shakespeare desired to be more than the son of a farmer, so he left Stratford for London, where he became an actor. He progressed from acting to playwriting and eventually became the owner and manager of the very venues where his plays were performed, the Globe and Blackfriars Theatres. As Shakespeare's fame grew, he caught the notice of the noble classes. His drama company became the official troupe of both Queen Elizabeth I and King James I, and his works were regularly performed before the royal court. Shakespeare's success won him the respect of his peers and garnered him vast wealth. As a show of his success, he returned to Stratford-upon-Avon to purchase the largest house in the town. Where Shakespeare's father had lost a fortune, William had built one. Surprisingly, a definitive collection of Shakespeare's plays wasn't compiled until after his death. In 1623, two members of his troupe published the so-called *First Folio*, which remains to this day one of the most important works in the English language.

Breaking Baseball's Color Line



Each year, Major League Baseball honors Jackie Robinson by celebrating April 15 as Jackie Robinson Day. Back in 1947, April 15 was opening day, and young

Jackie Robinson made his debut for the Brooklyn Dodgers. Robinson went an unmemorable 0-3, only reaching base on a throwing error, yet he made history as the first African American to play in the big leagues. His debut ended 80 years of segregation in the game. Less than 10 years later, the percentage of black players on Major League teams matched or exceeded that of the general population. Robinson was not only a Hall-of-Fame player but an American cultural hero. Each year on April 15, players don Robinson's universally retired number 42 to honor the courageous man who broke baseball's "color line."

April Birthdays

In astrology, those born April 1-19 are Rams of Aries. Like rams, Aries charge forward with courage, confidence, and enthusiasm. They embrace action, take risks, and will fight for their goals. Those born April 20-30 are Bulls of Taurus. Bulls are stable, reliable, patient, and determined. They will work hard and finish the job no matter what gets in their way, but they expect to be rewarded!

Buddy Ebsen (actor) – April 2, 1908
Washington Irving (author) – April 3, 1783
Maya Angelou (poet) – April 4, 1928
Bette Davis (actress) – April 5, 1908
Billie Holiday (singer) – April 7, 1915
David Letterman (TV host) – April 12, 1947
Henry Mancini (composer) – April 16, 1924
John Muir (naturalist) – April 21, 1838
Glen Campbell (singer) – April 22, 1936
Ella Fitzgerald (singer) – April 25, 1917
Samuel Morse (inventor) – April 27, 1791
Harper Lee (author) – April 28, 1926
Duke Ellington (bandleader) – April 29, 1899

Celebrating April Birthdays:

Wanda Clark 4/1
Curtis Ward 4/8
Joy Scott 4/9
Kathrine Perkins 4/10
David Anderson 4/17
Paul Ferguson 4/19
Ella Smith 4/29
Mary Lumry 4/29

Staff:

Alice Malone 4/7
Crystal Green 4/12
Jon Pickett 4/17
Kizzie Kellum 4/21
Sharity Wright 4/21

Also in April:

Poetry Month
Jazz Appreciation Month
No Housework Day *April 7*
Scrabble Day *April 13*
Good Friday *April 19*
Easter Sunday *April 21*

Wet Monday

The Irish have St. Patrick's Day. Mexicans have Cinco de Mayo. Even the Italians have Columbus Day. For those of Polish descent, there is Dyngus Day, always celebrated the Monday after Easter.



Dyngus Day is a celebration tied to the end of the Lenten season, but like many modern religious holidays, it has pagan origins. Just as Easter is filled with symbolism of rebirth, so, too, is Dyngus Day. In fact,

one of the major rituals of Dyngus Day is for boys to splash water on girls. Nowadays, this is most often achieved with squirt guns, but in the past, this was done with buckets of water. For this reason, Dyngus Day is also known as Wet Monday or even Water Plunge Monday.

There are two explanations behind this wet tradition. The first harkens back many centuries to the pagan ritual of watering the Corn Mother, which was a doll woven of corn and was meant to be an icon of the goddess of fertility. Watering the Corn Mother every spring ensured a bountiful growing season. The second explanation is also a story of rebirth but not of crops. The ritual splashing of water began with the baptism of Prince Mieszko I on Easter Monday in the year 966 AD. The baptism of the prince signified the acceptance of Catholicism as the national religion of Poland. In these two ways, Dyngus Day is both a celebration of Catholicism and an homage to pagan fertility rituals. During a Dyngus Day celebration, boys often only drench those girls that they are sweet on. In many ways, Dyngus Day is a flirting festival, where young men publicly identify the women they would like to court. Young women, too, have their say. They could prevent a soaking by offering painted eggs to boys. These eggs, called *pysanky*, are magical charms said to ensure a good harvest and a large, happy family. Also, on the Tuesday following Easter Monday, women have their chance to soak the boys, or, as an alternative to water, they may throw dishes or crockery. On Dyngus Day, love is in—and sailing through—the air.

The Ballad of John Parker

On April 19, 1775, a farmer and mechanic named John Parker rallied his militia of farmers against a battalion of 700 British troops. The British were on the march to Concord, Massachusetts, in search of weapons and supplies hidden by the American colonists. As the “red coats” approached, Parker's men stood their ground in Lexington, on the road to Concord. They were under Parker's strict orders not to shoot. After all, the Revolutionary War had not started yet. Alas, a fateful shot was fired, the now-famous “shot heard round the world,” and the American War for Independence began. No one knows who fired first, but in that first skirmish, eight militiamen were killed and 10 wounded. On the British side, only one was wounded. Today, a statue known as *The Lexington Minuteman* stands on the Lexington Battle Green. It represents John Parker and every other brave soldier who fought for American independence.

Hula Is Life



From April 21–27, the greatest hula dancers in the world will converge on Hilo, Hawaii, for the annual Merrie Monarch Festival. The festival celebrates the ideals of King Kalakaua, the last King of Hawaii, known as the “Merrie Monarch,” and an ambassador

of Hawaiian culture all around the world. The hula dance, once banned in public, was put on full display at his coronation. Hula dates back to ancient Hawaii. When written language did not exist, history and stories were preserved and passed from generation to generation in song and dance. Every movement—a hand gesture, a swaying hip, a stepping foot—told part of the story. When missionaries arrived, Hawaiian language and music were discouraged; even the hula was banned. The Merrie Monarch changed all that, and today, hula is a quintessential part of Hawaiian culture. Hula festivals abound throughout the year in Hawaii, but the best of the best of hula comes every April in honor of the Merrie Monarch.

Singing Machine



The fourth week in April is Karaoke Week! So grab a microphone and belt out your favorite song. If you're looking for an audience, then you're in luck. Bars and clubs all over the world will be hosting karaoke contests and competitions. If you're feeling a bit shy, then perhaps the story of karaoke's inventor will help you find the confidence to come out of your shell.

Karaoke was invented in Japan. The word *karaoke* is actually a combination of two Japanese terms: *kara*, meaning “empty,” and *oke*, which is the shortened form of *okesutora*, meaning “orchestra.” What is an “empty orchestra”? This is another way of describing an orchestra that has a lead part missing, and that lead part is the all-important voice of the singer. Sing-alongs have been an important part of Japanese get-togethers for centuries. But it wasn't until 1971 that musician Daisuke Inoue invented a machine that could do the work of an entire band.

Inoue was a drummer and not a very good one at that. When he couldn't make it in a band, he found work playing drums for Japanese businessmen who liked to sing during amateur nights. When one businessman asked Inoue to play backup at another event, Inoue declined the invitation but came up with another idea. Inoue taped his drum solo so that the singer could play the tape and sing along in his absence. It wasn't long before Inoue realized the genius of this idea and invented a machine fitted with amplifiers and background music that allowed singers to perform without a full band. Inoue leased his machines to local bars, where they were an instant hit. Karaoke was born. By the 1980s, it seemed that every bar in Japan had a karaoke machine. Unfortunately for Inoue, he never patented his invention and so never earned a cent. It was a Filipino inventor named Roberto del Rosario who claimed that honor. However, Inoue's name has entered the history books for his efforts. In 2004, he even was awarded a mock “Peace Prize” for inventing a machine that brings people together.

Get Things Rolling

On Monday, April 22, Americans will enjoy an annual Easter tradition by rolling Easter eggs on the South Lawn of the White House. The Easter egg roll is one of the White House's oldest annual events. While informal egg-rolling parties may have been held at the White House as far back as Abraham Lincoln's administration, it was Dolley Madison who first suggested a public egg roll, not at the White House but at the U.S Capitol in 1872. Landscaping concerns led Congress to ban the practice in 1878, but legend has it that angry citizens stormed the White House gates and demanded that children be allowed to roll their eggs. President Rutherford B. Hayes had little choice but to open the South Lawn of the White House, and the event has taken place there ever since. The celebration has evolved over the years. Egg croquet was once popular, and John Phillip Sousa once played for the crowd. In 1933, Eleanor Roosevelt greeted rollers over a national radio broadcast, and in 1974, the egg-rolling race was initiated, with contestants using spoons from the White House kitchen. While the event has been canceled due to inclement weather or even in times of war, Americans may rest assured that come Easter Monday, eggs will roll at the White House.

Wild Guesswork



There may be no prize for guessing what holiday falls on April 15, but you'd be right if you guessed Take a Wild Guess Day. It is no fluke that this holiday coincides with Tax Day in the United States. Take a Wild Guess Day inventor Jim Barber wanted to celebrate the random nature of wild guessing in contrast to the exact science of filing taxes. It turns out that this is the perfect day to follow hunches, leap to conclusions, and not listen to reason. You can celebrate by filling a jar with jelly beans and guessing the amount. After all, what's the worst that can happen if you take a wild guess? A wild guess may be better than no guess at all. Jim Barber acted on a hunch that his holiday would be a hit. Guess what? He was right.