

# The Reminisce News

Arbor House Reminisce - 151 Ave SW 48<sup>th</sup> Norman Ok, 73072 - (405) 310-2499



## Celebrating October

### Our Staff

**Katherine Chadrick**  
Executive Director

**Cristen Willoughby**  
Director of Nursing

**Shelly Jones**  
Regional Nurse

**DeAndra Downer**  
Admissions/Marketing

**Kim Vincent**  
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**Joe McIntosh**  
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## The Big History of Small Toys

Few toys can light up a child's face like a dollhouse, complete with its rooms full of miniature furniture and housewares. This October, Dollhouse and Miniature Month, we look at the evolution of dollhouses from ostentatious displays of wealth to mini classrooms of domestic chores, from children's toys to adult hobbies.

The very first dollhouses, engineered in Germany, Holland, and England in the 17th century, were designed for one audience: adults. These "cabinet houses" were elaborate displays of wealth. Cabinet doors opened to reveal tiny rooms outfitted with priceless little trinkets and objects. In the late 17th century, designs moved away from display and toward pedagogy. Miniature "Nuremberg kitchens" contained tiny pots, brooms, and other domestic tools. Such displays taught girls their domestic duties. These dollhouses even contained miniature people so that girls could also learn how to direct servants.

In the 18th century, England saw the creation of "Baby houses," so-called because they were miniature versions of real-life dwellings. Rather than display expensive trinkets, the houses boasted miniature replicas of all the home's wares: grandfather clocks, rugs, wallpapers. Today, visitors to the Art Institute of Chicago enjoy similar reproductions in the Thorne Miniature Rooms, tiny models of European and American interiors from the 13th to 17th centuries.

Attitudes about childhood and play evolved during the 19th century, and so the importance of toys was elevated, and dollhouses became playthings. Thanks to the industrial revolution and advent of mass production, dollhouses were made on a massive scale, reducing costs and widening availability. A growing middle class hungered for the toys. Dollhouses have returned as an adult pastime, allowing grownups to live out interior design and architecture fantasies in expensive and custom-made miniatures. These high-end toys don't come cheap and cost thousands.



## The Funny Pages



Be sure to pick up a newspaper on October 18 so that you can celebrate Newspaper Comic Strip Appreciation Day. The very first comic strips appeared in the giant rivals of New York's newspaper industry during the 19th century. Joseph Pulitzer's

*New York World* featured the first comic strip in 1894, *The Yellow Kid*, about a down-on-his-luck boy who hung out in Hogan's Alley. Two short years later, William Randolph Hearst's *Morning Journal* jumped on the comic strip bandwagon and introduced a weekly full-color comic strip supplement. Hearst even went so far as to lure *The Yellow Kid* and his creator Richard Outcault away from the *New York World*.

By 1897, comics were in high demand, and Hearst meant to capitalize on the phenomenon. He called upon Rudolph Dirks to create a new strip for the Sunday edition of his *New York Journal*. The strip followed two boys, Hans and Fritz, who were constantly running into trouble with their parents and schoolteachers. *The Katzenjammer Kids*, which ran continuously from 1897 to 2006, remains the longest-running comic strip in history.

Soon, all newspapers wanted in on the comic strip act. In 1915, the *San Francisco Chronicle* debuted the first daily black-and-white comic, Bud Fisher's *Mr. A. Mutt*, which would later become *Mutt and Jeff*. Classics like *Gasoline Alley*, *Popeye*, *Krazy Kat*, *Dick Tracy*, *Li'l Abner*, and *Blondie* began to appear all across the country thanks to syndication. It was only a matter of time before publishers realized that they could create entire books from comics. *Detective Comics* and *Action Comics* soon spawned enduring heroes like Batman and Superman. Even Walt Disney, that beloved master of on-screen animation, started serving audiences a *Mickey Mouse* daily comic strip in 1930. Lucky for us all, comic strips endure with an almost unlimited variety. All we have to do is pick up any newspaper to find our favorite comic characters.



## The Gift of Liberty

On October 28, 1886, France gave the United States a gift to commemorate the nation's first 100 years as a democracy and the alliance between France and the United States that had won America its independence during the Revolutionary War. That gift was a massive statue entitled *Liberty Enlightening the World*, but it is better known worldwide as the *Statue of Liberty*.



Such a gift was the idea of Edouard de Laboulaye, a French intellectual and political theorist. It was 1865, U.S. President Abraham Lincoln had just been assassinated, and France itself was politically divided between

those who supported the monarchy and those who craved liberty. Laboulaye hoped that such a gift would not only honor the late President Lincoln, but also spark a desire for freedom and democracy in France. Laboulaye sought the help of the French artist and sculptor Frederic Bartholdi, who shared the same political visions.

Inspiration for *Lady Liberty* first struck Bartholdi while traveling in Egypt to see the construction of the Suez Canal. At the canal's entrance, he envisioned an enormous lighthouse in the shape of a robed peasant carrying a torch. He even suggested this idea to Egypt's leaders, but they did not have the money for such a statue. Bartholdi re-envisioned such a beacon of light and hope for the United States. On the day of its commemoration, a million people lined the streets of New York City for a parade, where traders first threw ticker tape from the windows of the New York Stock Exchange.

The Statue of Liberty originally acted as a lighthouse for New York Harbor until 1902, and it even housed a lighthouse keeper. But it is best known as a beacon of freedom for the millions of immigrants entering America after their trans-Atlantic crossing. Her inscription boasts a monumental welcome: "Give me your tired, your poor, your huddled masses yearning to be free."

**HAPPY BIRTHDAY  
To our Residents**

**Pat Foley  
10/11**

**Sammy O'Neal  
10/23**

**Randell Benson  
10/23**

**LaFern Bond  
10/31**

**Happy Birthday  
From all of us at Arbor House**

HAPPY BIRTHDAY  
Arbor House Carefriends

Shiann Norton  
10/25

