

## Not the End of the World



In May of 1910, much of the world was in a panic. Halley's Comet—the celestial nomad that passes Earth every 76 years or so—was right on schedule to make its appearance. But its 1910 pass was forecasted to be especially close, so close that Earth would pass right through the comet's tail. Comets have long been considered harbingers of the end of the world, and 1910 was no different despite advancements in scientific thought and reason.

Much of the blame for the doomsday predictions has fallen on the French astronomer Camille Flammarion. When he spotted the comet in September of 1909, he published his observations thus: "The comet's tail is composed of deadly cyanogen and other gases, including hydrogen. If the earth should pass through his tail, either the hydrogen will ignite, blasting earth asunder in a gigantic explosion, or the comet gases will sweep aside our own atmosphere, reacting with the nitrogen to form the familiar laughing gas, nitrous oxide, and suffocating all animal life in a ghastly parody of death."

Flammarion was not alone in his dire predictions. Another astronomer worried that the comet "would cause the Pacific to change basins with the Atlantic, and the primeval forests of North and South America to be swept by the briny avalanche over the sandy plains of the Sahara, tumbling over and over with houses, ships, sharks, whales, and all sorts of living things in one heterogenous mass of chaotic confusion."

Of course, when Halley's Comet did make its closest approach to Earth between May 14 and 22, none of these fantastic catastrophes manifested. Instead, telescope sales skyrocketed, and Earthlings enjoyed spectacular views of the famous comet. One misfortune that did occur was the uncanny death of Mark Twain. Born under the appearance of Halley's Comet in 1835, he predicted his own death with the reappearance of the comet in 1910. Sadly, on April 21 of that year, his morbid prognostication came true.

## May Birthdays

### Residents

**Wanda Stadt-5/15**  
**Walter Clark-5/15**  
**Daisy Jeffery-5/25**

### Staff

**Rosemond French-5/1**  
**Danna Cooksey-5/31**



## A Revelation in Publishing

On May 8, 1373, the great pain that had long afflicted the hermit Julian of Norwich, an affliction so great she believed she would die from it, suddenly left her. Over the

next several hours, Julian had a series of visions that she believed were revealed to her by God. Once she recovered, Julian recorded her visions in a book entitled *Sixteen Revelations of God's Love*, the first-ever book authored by a woman in the history of the English language. While this feat in itself is noteworthy, so are the visions she included in her book. While many of her revelations conformed to Christian doctrine, others shocked the establishment, such as her reference to Christ as "our true mother." In her book, she also famously stated how God ensures that "All shall be well, and all shall be well and all manner of things

# Arbor House

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## Celebrating May

### Dates to Remember

**May 4<sup>th</sup>-Resident Council**

**May 5<sup>th</sup>-Cinco De Mayo  
 Margaritas with Traditions  
 Health**

**May-9<sup>th</sup>-Mother's Day**

**May 10<sup>th</sup>-Come Rock with  
 Elvis**

**May 19<sup>th</sup>-Wine/Cheese with  
 Misty and Jennifer**

**May 25<sup>th</sup>-Sand Art with Shay  
 and Sue**

**May 26<sup>th</sup>-Cook with Chef  
 Stacy**

**May 27<sup>th</sup>-Resident Birthday  
 Party**

**May 31<sup>st</sup>-Memorial Day**

## Garden of Weedin'

Weeds. The bane of every carefully manicured lawn and garden. Once weeds take hold, their removal may require hours of backbreaking, frustrating, and never-ending work. Yet some gardeners actually encourage weeds to grow amongst their prize flowers and shrubs. After all, what is considered a weed and what is considered a desirable plant all depends on your point of view. During May, Gifts from the Garden Month, consider the benefits that some weeds bestow upon your garden.

Weeds have been defined as "plants growing in the wrong place." Ralph Waldo Emerson famously stated that a weed is a "plant whose virtues have not yet been discovered." Others take a harsher tone, worrying that weeds are competitive superplants that outcompete and overwhelm the flowers or shrubs we prefer because they grow so vigorously. The truth seems to lie somewhere in the middle. Yes, weeds are aggressive. But it also turns out that some savvy gardeners have uncovered their Emersonian virtues.

Dandelions are often the first weed we learn to recognize. It is one of many weeds that are edible. The plant's leaves, flowers, and roots are not just edible; the root is also considered medicinal. Furthermore, dandelion roots loosen hard-packed soil while accumulating essential nutrients like potassium, phosphorus, and magnesium. White clover acts in a similar fashion, showing up wherever soil lacks nitrogen, a molecule necessary for plant growth. White clover transfers nitrogen from the air to the soil. The flowers of clover also attract pollinators and other insects beneficial to the garden. The broadleaf plantain weed, once called the white man's foot by Native Americans because it seemed to grow wherever European colonists stepped, also accumulates nutrients in the soil. Of course, many of these weeds produce massive amounts of seeds, so while they do benefit the garden, they may soon overrun your more desirable flowers. Weeds have benefits, but they must be managed and cared for, just like any other garden flower.

## The Hart of the West

Billy the Kid. Jesse James. Wyatt Earp. America's Wild West has plenty of memorable names, but few of those names belong to women. History has largely forgotten the name Pearl Hart, even though she staged the last stagecoach robbery of the Wild West on May 30, 1899.



Pearl Taylor was born in Ontario, Canada, to a respectable family that provided her with a good education, but not good enough to keep her from falling in love with a gambler named Frederick Hart. She ran away to marry Hart at age 17 and endured years of abuse. The couple's drinking, gambling, and joblessness drew them to the Chicago World's Fair in 1893 in search of work. Instead, Hart found Buffalo Bill's Wild West Show and was enamored of the cowboy lifestyle.

What we know of Hart's life is spotty, but sometime after her experience in Chicago, she ended up in the mining town of Globe, Arizona, where she met another drifter, named Joe Boot. Hart and Boot were both broke, so they decided to rob the Globe-to-Florence stagecoach. Armed with a .38 revolver and dressed like a man, she made off with \$431, after returning one dollar to each traveler so they could buy something to eat once they reached Florence.

After her capture, Hart regaled reporters with a dramatic retelling of her exploits. Her fans begged for autographs, and she obliged them, signing as the "Bandit Queen." Hart was sent to Yuma, the nearest city with jailing facilities for women, but it took just a few days for her to sweet-talk some accomplices into helping her escape. Hart was later found in New Mexico and returned to the Yuma prison. When she became pregnant a year later, Hart was released with a pardon from the Arizona governor, who hoped to avoid a scandal. The rest of Hart's life is a mystery. Some say she may have joined the vaudeville circuit. Others say she settled down with a rancher and lived out her days as a law-abiding citizen. Either way, Hart's wild life story has earned her a place in the fabled history of America's West.

## Better Nature

May 28 is Bermuda Day, a celebration to encourage civic and cultural pride in Bermudian ways of life. Bermuda Day marks the unofficial beginning of summer and is celebrated with parades featuring decorated floats, a half-marathon, and plenty of music and dancing.

Bermuda Day also marks the start of Bermuda shorts season. Is there anything more symbolic of Bermuda than Bermuda shorts? They are the official national dress for men, worn three inches above the knee with knee socks, tasseled loafers, a jacket, and tie. They are worn as business attire, evening wear, and are even part of Bermuda's police uniform. The shorts originated with the British Royal Navy. Soldiers working desk jobs in the tropics were issued lightweight shorts and knee socks. Civilians in Bermuda first started copying the military style in the 1920s. Unfortunately for businessmen beyond Bermuda, the shorts never caught on as business attire. But for casual occasions, like celebrating Bermuda Day on May 28, Bermuda shorts are a must.

## Fee Parking



Inventor Carl Magee filed the patent for the world's first parking meter, which he called the Park-o-Meter, on May 13, 1935. With automobile ownership reaching all-time highs, many urban areas were suddenly battling a new scourge—the lack of parking! When the first meters were installed in downtown Oklahoma City, drivers were not too keen on their installation. Some outraged citizens found them un-American and likened the nickel-an-hour fee to an unlawful tax. Businesses, however, loved the meters, as they encouraged the turnover of motorists, which meant a steady stream of new customers. By 1940, more than 140,000 parking meters lined American streets.

## Blasting Off in May

Each May, just before the onset of the rainy season, villages across Thailand celebrate the Bun Bang Fai Rocket Festival, a ceremonial festival that has roots in millennia-old rites.

Anthropologists believe that long before the introduction of gunpowder in the ninth century, it was common for villages to welcome the arrival of the rainy season with rites and rituals. Legend tells of how the god of rain, Phaya Thaen, grew upset and withheld rain for seven years. The Toad King, a mythological spirit, went to war against Phaya Thaen, and the rains returned only with his victory. In the town of Nai Mueang, a gargantuan five-story toad statue overlooks the Chi River. It is not just a statue but inside is a museum dedicated to Thai folklore, and its open mouth acts as a viewing platform so that visitors can watch the many rockets that the festival is named for.



The festival's rockets are absolutely massive, with some measuring up to 30 feet long and weighing over 200 pounds. Traditional rockets are made from hollow stalks of bamboo filled with black powder, but PVC piping

is also common. The rockets are ornately decorated and paraded through the streets on large floats while local musicians play folk music and lead dances in traditional costumes. Some men even cover their bodies in white powder and wear frog masks to honor the Toad King.

At last, the moment arrives to launch the rockets into the heavens, an annual reminder to Phaya Thaen to bless the earth with nourishing rain. The higher the rockets fly, the more auspicious the weather will be for the coming farming season. Betting often accompanies the launches, with locals placing wagers on which rockets they think will reach the highest heights. Losers (and sometimes innocent bystanders) are thrown into giant puddles of mud. There are often so many rockets that the launches last all day, leaving ears ringing from the massive booms, a visceral reminder of the age-old ritual.

## The Old Ball Game

On May 2, 1908, songwriters Albert von Tilzer and Jack Norworth submitted their song "Take Me Out to the Ball Game" to the United States copyright office, unaware it would come to be called America's second national anthem. Even though the song's chorus is sung by millions, few know the rest of the lyrics or their feminist inspiration: the celebrity vaudeville star and outspoken suffragette Trixie Friganza.

Norworth was dating Friganza when he wrote the lyrics. While riding the New York City subway, he saw a sign that read "Baseball Today—Polo Grounds." Inspiration so overwhelmed Norworth that he scribbled the lyrics on the back of an envelope that is now on display at the Baseball Hall of Fame in Cooperstown, New York. The star of Norworth's tune is a woman named Katie Casey, a baseball superfan who "Saw all the games / Knew all the players by their first names." She even "Told the umpire he was wrong, / All along, / Good and strong." This outspoken female fan in the song was undoubtedly modeled after his progressive girlfriend, the indomitable Trixie Friganza.

## Honoring Mother Ocean



Good sons and daughters will remember that May 9 is Mother's Day, a day to shower mom with love and appreciation. But will we also remember that May 10 is

Mother Ocean Day? Just as our mothers gave us life and nurtured us, so too do our oceans sustain life on planet Earth. Oceans produce half of all the world's oxygen and absorb massive amounts of carbon dioxide. Covering 70% of Earth's surface, our oceans are also responsible for regulating climate and weather patterns. Preserving the health of our oceans is our first line of defense against a rapidly warming planet. On this day, perhaps you can visit the beach for a local cleanup or watch a documentary about undersea life.