December 2022

Golden Age Newsletter

1915 S. 18th St. Centerville, Iowa 52544 Phone 1-641-8562757

Celebrating December

Write a Friend Month

Cookie Cutter Week
December 1–7

St. Nicholas Day
December 6

Hanukkah
December 18–26

Christmas
December 25

New Year's Eve
December 31

Jack Kauzlarich 18th
John Watts 28th
Sandy Argenta 30th
Joe Argenta 30th

A Fresh Take on Peppermint

Peppermint bark. Peppermint lattes. Peppermint candy canes. There is no doubt about it—peppermint is the undisputed flavor of the winter season. Mint is full of the chemical menthol, which, when tasted, activates the same nerve sensors that allow us to feel cold. We love the refreshing, cooling sensation of mint in our mouths and are reminded of winter each time we take a taste. But there is more to the story of peppermint's hold on the winter season than its chemical composition.

Mint-flavored hard candies have been made for hundreds of years. Before the invention of air-conditioning, hard candy could be made only during the cool, dry months of winter, for heat and humidity would spoil the candy. Mint is a reliable flavoring because it does not cook off during the manufacturing process. Its flavor remains incredibly strong. For this reason, mint-flavored hard candy has always been a wintertime treat.

Legend has it that the first candy canes were invented in the 17th century by a German choirmaster who bribed his choirboys with peppermint candy sticks to keep them complacent during mass. Candy in church was not exactly solemn, so the choirmaster asked the candy maker to fashion the candy sticks into shepherds' crooks, honoring Jesus.

It wasn't until 1847 that a German Swedish immigrant to America named August Imgard used the candy cane as a Christmas decoration. He spun white hard candy into its crooked shape and hung the canes along with paper ornaments from a blue spruce. It would take a few more decades and the advent of mass production techniques for candy canes to get their red stripes. Why red? Some say this color represents the blood shed by Jesus on the cross, while others attribute it to the red berries and green garland of evergreen holly that has been associated with Yule traditions. Don't wait until December 26, Candy Cane Day, to enjoy candy canes. Most people start buying them the day after Thanksgiving.

Still Living in Infamy

U.S. President Franklin D. Roosevelt called December 7, 1941, “a date which will live in infamy.” 81 years later, we still remember the attack on Pearl Harbor and pause to honor all who were lost.

Pearl Harbor is a U.S. naval base located near Honolulu, Hawaii. It was home to the bulk of the U.S. Navy’s Pacific Fleet, hundreds of airplanes, and thousands of soldiers. American intelligence officials never expected Japanese forces to start a war with the United States with an attack on Hawaii, 4,000 miles away. For this reason, Pearl Harbor was left largely undefended on December 7, 1941. As a target, Pearl Harbor was too good of an opportunity for the Japanese to ignore.

In an audacious sneak attack, without any declaration of war, Japanese forces began their assault on Pearl Harbor at around 8 a.m. At 8:10, a 1,800-pound bomb fell through the deck of the battleship USS *Arizona* and struck an ammunition store, resulting in a massive explosion and killing thousands. After two hours of fighting, 20 American ships (including every battleship in Pearl Harbor) were crippled; 300 airplanes were destroyed; 2,403 sailors, soldiers, and civilians were killed; and a thousand more were wounded.

Luckily—amazingly—the Pacific Fleet was left intact. Despite losing its powerful battleships, the Fleet’s aircraft carriers had been off base during the attack and were safe. Pearl Harbor’s vital infrastructure, including repair shops, oil storage depots, shipyards, and submarine docks, had been largely untouched. The U.S. Navy would be able to rebuild itself for a sustained war effort.

The day following the attack, President Roosevelt declared war on Japan. And though history remembers America and its Allies as the brave victors of a long and bloody world war, scars of that war remain. Pearl Harbor Remembrance Day is a time to reflect on all that was lost and a celebration of the freedoms that were won.

Make It Count

Every year from December 14–January 5, the National Audubon Society conducts its Christmas Bird Count (CBC). During these few weeks, volunteer birders count and record bird species in an effort to monitor the health and status of bird populations across North America. Bird counts accumulate over the decades, offering scientists long-term perspectives on the continent’s bird populations.

Audubon’s CBC grew out of the Christmas “Side Hunts” of the late 19th century, when hunters would compete to bring in the largest pile of birds and animals. In 1900, ornithologist Frank Chapman proposed a new tradition, a “Christmas Bird Census,” where people would count birds instead of hunting them. These days it’s easier than ever to join a CBC. Registration for birders begins in November, with counts starting on December 14. If you choose to participate, you could join a tradition that is over a century old.

Plunge in Head-First

One of December’s strangest holidays falls on December 18. It’s Wear a Plunger on Your Head Day. An internet search will tell you that an ex-bounty hunter named Vern Halsey might be the only person in the world who celebrates this holiday along with his pet Komodo dragon Felix, of course. If you’d like to keep Vern and Felix company this December 18, here’s a tip: Make sure you wear the correct type of plunger on your head. Plungers often come in two designs. Those that narrow at the bottom are specifically designed to fit into a toilet and are called flange plungers, while plungers designed for the sink and shower are flat and are known as cup plungers. If you’re keen on celebrating, a new, clean, store-bought cup plunger is the way to go. Happy Wear a Plunger on Your Head Day!

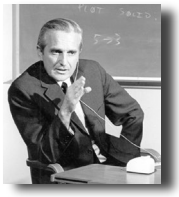
Sweater Weather

Sweater weather is finally here, and there are plenty of holidays to prove it. The International Sweater Vestival, a day that encourages you to rock a sweater vest, falls on December 3, and Ugly Sweater Day follows on December 16. So dig deep into the moth-ball-ridden corners of your closet and sport that sweater you promised yourself you'd never wear again.

Sweater weather describes that slightly chilly time of year when the weather is perfect for a sweater but not yet cold enough to require a coat. But a sleeveless sweater vest? You can wear one of those anytime! Or does keeping the torso warm and the arms cold mean that such a garment is useless no matter the season? Utilitarian questions aside, the sweater vest has been shunned for decades as an uncool garment. They were originally donned by rowers in 1882, who wore them to promote sweating and weight loss. Sweater vests hit the mainstream in 1907 when the University of Michigan football team wore them in lieu of sleeved sweaters as the team uniform. Even Presidents Woodrow Wilson and Herbert Hoover sported them, perhaps solidifying their status as uncool. But like so many trends, uncool is becoming cool again. And besides, the founders of the International Sweater Vestival don't care whether you wear your sweater vest in earnest or ironically.

When it comes to ugly sweaters, many will point the blame to *The Cosby Show*'s Cliff Huxtable, the undisputed king of ugly '80s sweaters. But the first ugly sweater party was held at the Commodore Ballroom in Vancouver, British Columbia, in 2002, hosted by Chris Boyd and Jordan Birch. Since then, ugly sweaters worn for both Christmas and Hanukkah have become a holiday tradition all their own. High fashion has caught on, with designers selling high-end ugly sweaters for hundreds, even thousands of dollars. Sleeved or sleeveless, ironic or earnest, ugly or tasteful—no matter what style you choose, sweater weather is here.

Digital Revolution



On December 9, 1968, inventor and computer engineer Douglas Engelbart gave what is now known as "The Mother of All Demos" at a computer conference in San Francisco. Engelbart's 90-minute presentation introduced a number of computing innovations that we take for granted today: windows, hypertext, graphics, word processing, video conferencing, collaborative editing of documents in real-time, and the computer mouse. Demonstrating all of these innovations on a single personal computer system in 1968 was groundbreaking. Engelbart's demo was the result of years of work at his Augmentation Research Center at Stanford University. He wanted to free computers from mere number crunching and turn them into tools for communication and information sharing.

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Postage Information

Our Family Christmas Pot-Luck will be held on Saturday, December 10th at Noon. The resident gift opening will be at 2:00 P.M. We ask that you please R.S.V.P. by December 5th as to how many will be coming and if you will be bringing a gift for your loved one. You may bring the gifts in early, and we can keep them in my office.

Golden Age will provide chili, potato soup, cornbread, and sandwiches.

We ask that you please bring a side dish or dessert. If You have any questions, please contact Korie

December Birthdays

In astrology, those born from December 1–21 are Archers of Sagittarius. These Archers are philosophical seekers of knowledge who love traveling to new places to absorb new cultures. Those born from December 22–31 are Capricorn's Goats. Patience, perseverance, and dedication help Goats climb to the highest of heights. Their drive to the top makes them excellent partners and collaborators.

Sarah Silverman (actress) – Dec. 1, 1970
Tyra Banks (model) – Dec. 4, 1973
Little Richard (musician) – Dec. 5, 1932
Eli Wallach (actor) – Dec. 7, 1915
Rita Moreno (actress) – Dec. 11, 1931
Dionne Warwick (singer) – Dec. 12, 1940
Jamie Foxx (actor) – Dec. 13, 1967
Pope Francis (Pope) – Dec. 17, 1936
Steven Spielberg (director) – Dec. 18, 1946
Samuel L. Jackson (actor) – Dec. 21, 1948
Humphrey Bogart (actor) – Dec. 25, 1899
Denzel Washington (actor) – Dec. 28, 1954