

August 2020

Tidbits Around Here

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Keeping Our Cool

The so-called “dog days” of summer stretch from mid-July into mid-August. Today, many people believe that we call these the dog days because we all feel as hot as a dog, or that the heat of the day is enough to make a dog go crazy. But to discover the real explanation behind the dog days, look to the night sky. This period earned its canine moniker during the age of ancient Greece. Mid-July coincided with the rise of the constellation Canis Major, the Greater Dog, which features the brightest star in the night sky, Sirius, also known as the Dog Star. During this time, Sirius rises just before the sun. No wonder the word *sirius* means “scorching” in Greek. The Dog Star was believed to be a harbinger of drought, plague, lethargy, fever, thunderstorms, and bad luck. Lucky for us, modern technologies have given us plenty of ways to beat the heat. Perhaps the Greeks and Romans would have thought differently about Sirius if they had air conditioning?

It is no coincidence that Air Conditioning Appreciation Days overlap with the dog days of summer, because for many this invention is the greatest source of relief from the oppressive heat. It was during the dog days of 1902 that Willis Carrier invented the first air conditioner. He did not set out to create artificial cooling but rather a machine that could lower humidity. A printing company came to Carrier with a problem. During summer, high humidity would wreak havoc with their color printing. Carrier designed a system of chilled coils, fans, ducts, heaters, and temperature controls that not only lowered the humidity inside the printing plant but created cool artificial breezes! Carrier's new industry changed the world.

Air conditioners did not become widely available to the public until the 1960s, but once they became common in homes, heat-related deaths decreased by 80%. Talk about life-changing! Air-conditioning cools more than air; it cools our tempers, too. Research shows that heat increases aggression, while air-conditioning actually helps calm us down. It may be much easier to enjoy Relaxation Day on August 15 with the air-conditioning on!

Celebrating August

Happiness Happens Month

International Clown Week

August 1–7

Tony Bennett Day brings Entertainment at 10AM

August 3

Elvis Week

August 8–16

Creamsicle Day

August 14

Birthday Celebration with Last two Standing at 11AM

**for: Sandra B. 8-19
Eugene H. 8-28**

August 21

National Park Service Day

August 25

Matchmaker Day with Talia's Jazz Standards at 10AM!

August 31

FROM THE DESK OF SANDY.....

Just a reminder we are closer and closer to fire season and possible safety Power Outages. While we hope we continue to be on the grid that will not experience outages, it's best for us to be prepared. Your emergency email contacts will help us reach out if we have a power emergency, or any other type of emergency.

I know we are all becoming a bit COVID weary or COVID fatigue. I know I am experiencing this weariness! The first death in El Dorado County (of a 65+ year old South Lake Tahoe resident) on June 18th, is a reminder that we cannot let down our guard. If we do, and the virus comes to campus, all this sacrifice this past four months will be for nothing! I'm asking our residents, staff, and families to please continue to shelter in place as much as you/they can. Wash your hands constantly! WEAR YOUR MASK except when with your family that lives with you. And avoid visiting our campus (or inviting folks to come to campus). I know we are anxious to get life back to normal; believe me I know!! But stay the course and we'll all be safer!

We continue to discourage campus visiting, even window visits that bring folks on campus that could be "carrying" the virus. **If you must have a window visit, make an appointment and the precaution measures must be upheld for the full visit.** This virus is easy to pass on to our most vulnerable. Thank you for your understanding, your patience, and your sacrifice!

WE will post updates on our FACEBOOK PAGE when emergencies like a power outage happens. Please LIKE our FB page! Need help connecting, please email us at goldcountry@rhf.org. You may also share this address with family and friends as a general (not private) email to message your family members on campus. We print them out and deliver them to your resident (Please remember we have 246 grandma's and grandpa's – we need their other name and unit number if you know it (Otherwise full first and last name)).

In the Good Old Days of August

In August 1932, the average annual income was \$1,652. A new house cost \$6,515, and a new car was \$610. A gallon of milk cost 43 cents, but you could get a gallon of gasoline for only 10 cents. In August 1990, the average annual income was \$14,777. A new house cost \$128,732, and a new car was \$9,437. A gallon of milk cost \$2.15, but a gallon of gasoline was \$1.08.

What's Lucky in August?

Lucky Color: Teal **Lucky Animal:** Rabbit
Lucky Letters: B and C
Lucky Day: Sunday
Lucky Plant: Goldenrod

Remember, our activity departments can help arrange an internet visit – so please call for an appointment! We can do FaceTime, Zoom, and possibly Skype. Please call Activities if you wish to connect via internet services. We can also deliver goodies, mail, snacks, and supplies to your resident. Please come by during lobby hours to bring your resident these items. We will hand deliver them.

Please do not make this delivery yourself if you feel you have been exposed. While our baseline testing showed everyone (staff and residents' negative) we know that if we get it on campus it will come from staff or a lobby visitor spreading it. **Have a thought, question or suggestion on how we can be even better? Feel free to call me at (530) 621-1100, or email me at sandy.haskins@rhf.org**

Only You

During World War II, Japanese submarines bombed a California oil field and nearly triggered a massive forest fire. This prompted the Forest Service to run ads in conjunction with the War Advertising Council that read, “Another Enemy to Conquer: Forest Fires” and “Careless Matches Aid the Axis.” Disney had just released the hit *Bambi* and allowed the young animated deer to be used as a mascot. Then, on August 9, 1944, the U.S. Forest Service retired Bambi and adopted Smokey Bear as its new mascot, wearing his trademark Ranger’s hat and blue jeans and carrying a shovel. Soon, every camper in America knew about Smokey and his mission to prevent forest fires.

In 1950, a manmade fire swept through Lincoln National Forest in New Mexico. While trapped by the flames, twenty-four firefighters found a lone black bear cub clinging to a smoldering tree. All survived, and the rescued cub was named Smokey. He was moved to the National Zoo in Washington, D.C., where visitors could meet the real-life Smokey Bear, learn his story of survival, and understand the horrible dangers forest fires pose to both wildlife and society.

Over the decades, Smokey’s message has sunk into the consciousness of America. The average amount of forest consumed by fire fell steadily each year, from 22 million acres in 1944 to 6.6 million in 2011. Americans understood the dangers and destructiveness of forest fires and that fires could often be prevented.

But has all this fire suppression been counterproductive? Some argue that fire suppression has led to a buildup of dead trees and dried underbrush, creating a fuel to feed catastrophic blazes. We now know fires are a natural part of a forest’s life cycle, important for its growth and renewal. What does this mean for Smokey Bear and his messaging? Perhaps it means that the best way to help our forests is to keep learning about them.

Flower Power

August 28 is Daffodil Day, a day celebrating this beautiful flower. The ancient Greeks, who called the flower a narcissus, acknowledged its beauty in their myths. A man named Narcissus was so taken with his own beauty that, after seeing his reflection in a pool of water, he stopped to admire himself. He was so obsessed with his beauty that he could not pull himself away from his own reflection. Alas, he died at the waterside, and in his place grew the first daffodil. It is from this myth that we get both the flower’s name and the word *narcissist*, a word for those who admire themselves too much. But why shouldn’t daffodils admire themselves? They are beautiful, after all. And because they are some of the first flowers to bloom in the spring, they are also associated with rebirth, renewal, new beginnings, and hope. For this reason, daffodils have become a potent symbol of hope in the fight against cancer. Cancer councils around the world use Daffodil Day to raise funds to support life-saving cancer research.



King's Inspirational "Dream"

On August 28, 1963, before a crowd of 250,000 Americans, Martin Luther King Jr. gave his "I Have a Dream" speech at the Lincoln Memorial in Washington, D.C. The speech remains one of the most memorable ever made, ranking alongside Lincoln's "Gettysburg Address" as one of the most moving and most analyzed in American history. King's mention of his "dream" was not in his prepared remarks. Gospel singer Mahalia Jackson prompted King to "tell them about the dream," and so King improvised the most famous part of his speech on the spot.



King and his thousands of followers had come to the capital for their March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom. The march was attended by civil rights leaders, the United Auto Workers Union, and the American Jewish

Congress, all of which were united in their calls for desegregating public schools, expanding federal works programs to train workers, and addressing violations of citizens' constitutional rights. The march was not strictly business. Musicians such as Joan Baez, Bob Dylan, and Mahalia Jackson were scheduled to perform. Jackson, especially, was a mainstay at King's rallies. Their relationship was such that she had no qualms in interrupting King during his remarks and suggesting that he "tell them about the dream."

For many attendees of the march and many in the media, King's speech was the highlight. The fact that it was televised also helped the civil rights movement gain mainstream acceptance. Indeed, King's triumphant speech at the feet of Lincoln helped secure the passage of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and paved the way for the passage of the Voting Rights Act of 1965. Both the image of King at the podium and his refrain of "I have a dream" have become defining moments of the civil rights era. Not only was King's speech added to the Library of Congress' National Recording Registry in 2002, but its words were forever etched into the marble steps of the Lincoln Memorial in the exact place where King stood on August 28, 1963.

The Road to Success

The road trip—more specifically the cross-country road trip—is considered an American rite of passage. The automobile itself encapsulates American notions of personal freedom, adventure, and self-sufficiency. The road trip even figures prominently in some of America's greatest novels, such as Jack Kerouac's *On the Road* and John Steinbeck's *Travels with Charley: In Search of America*. Yet before road trips became an American obsession, Bertha Benz, wife and business partner of the German automobile inventor Karl Benz, became the first person in the world to complete one.

Karl was a brilliant engineer, as evidenced by the invention of his three-wheeled "horseless carriage." It was Bertha, however, who saw the need to publicize her husband's automobile, especially in light of the work of Gottlieb Daimler, who was perfecting his four-wheeled automobile. So, in early August of 1888, Bertha gathered her two teenage sons and hit the road to visit her mother in Pforzheim, 65 miles away. Bertha, setting out on the world's first road trip, acted as both driver and mechanic. Stories tell of how she repaired a broken ignition with her garter and unclogged a fuel line with a hatpin. When the wooden brakes wore thin, she implored a cobbler to install leather soles as the world's first brake pads. With each town she passed, both Bertha's fame and the publicity for the Benz auto grew. Smartly, Bertha returned home via a different route, further spreading the fame of the Benz auto and the ingenious woman who drove it. By the time Bertha arrived home, auto orders were pouring in and Benz was birthing an industry. Just over 20 years later, another woman would make driving history. Twenty-two-year-old Alice Ramsey became the first woman to drive across America, from New York to San Francisco. Like Bertha had, Ramsey faced poor roads and made many ingenious repairs to her 1909 Maxwell DA, but on August 7, 1909,



after 59 days and 3,800 miles, she became the first female driver to complete that transcontinental rite of passage.

