

JULY 2017



# Paintbrush<sup>®</sup>

## *Assisted Living & Memory Care*

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### **Celebrating July**

**Blueberries Month**

**Women's Motorcycle Month**

**Grilling Month**

**Be Nice to New Jersey Week**

*July 2-8*

**Independence Day (U.S.)**

*July 4*

**Give Something Away Day**

*July 15*

**Scrabble Week**

*July 22-27*

**Merry-Go-Round Day**

*July 25*

**Talk in an Elevator Day**

*July 28*

**International Day  
of Friendship**

*July 30*

### **Anything but Conventional**

It's the ultimate event for any fan of comics and entertainment, costume parties and celebrity sightings: July 19-23 is 2017's Comic-Con International. This fan convention is the biggest of its kind in the world, and in many ways the fans provide the biggest show. People are encouraged to show up wearing elaborate costumes of their favorite comic book, television, film, or book characters. You'll likely see the Incredible Hulk mingling with Jedi Knights, Harry Potter, and characters from the sitcom *The Big Bang Theory*. This eclectic mix is Comic-Con's signature achievement, bringing fans of all ages and interests together to "geek out" over their favorite popular entertainment.

Self-described "geeks" have been flocking to San Diego for Comic-Con since 1970, when Shel Dorf, Richard Alf, Ken Krueger, Marvin Nelson, Mike Towry, Barry Alphonso, Bob Sourk, and Greg Bear founded the Golden State Comic Book Convention. The original event drew only 300 people, but it was a mecca for all things comic related. Over the years, the scope of the production grew along with the size of the convention crowds. While comic books still take center stage, the convention also features science fiction and fantasy film and television, video games, collectible card games, and cartoons. The spectacle of the convention now draws crowds as large as 167,000.

Attendees don't just come to admire each other's costumes; they attend seminars and panels featuring their favorite writers and artists. Comic book professionals offer hands-on workshops. Scholars present critical studies of the effect of comics on culture. Video game and entertainment companies show sneak previews of upcoming projects, often accompanied by big-name celebrities. Evenings feature awards ceremonies and a masquerade ball. For anyone interested in comic culture, Comic-Con is the event of the year, where attendees go "to see and be seen" in the getups of their favorite characters.

## Beach Bombshell



At the turn of the 20th century, female beachgoers took great pains to show modesty and cover themselves up. They wore long beach gowns fitted with weights at the

hems to keep the billowing edges underwater. When French designers first introduced the bikini to the world on July 5, 1946, scandal erupted across the beaches of the Riviera.

The concept of the bikini was designed in France during the first war-free summer after the end of World War II. With Europe liberated, designers strove to liberate beach fashion. Designer Jacques Heim conceived his scandalous “atom,” which he billed as “the world’s smallest bathing suit.” However, it is Louis Réard who cleverly dubbed his suit the *bikini*, after the infamous Bikini Atoll, the Pacific island site where America conducted its test of the atomic bomb. In a time when gorgeous women were referred to as “bombshells,” Réard wanted his skimpy new bathing suit design to explode the world of fashion. And explode it did. Models refused to wear it. Réard was forced to employ the services of Micheline Bernardini, an exotic dancer from the Casino de Paris. It was Bernardini who modeled the first bikini on July 5, 1946, at the Piscine Molitor. Over the next few years, the bikini became the trendy new look along the French Riviera, although Spain and Italy banned it from their beaches. America took an even harder line, formally charging women with indecency if they dared to wear the revealing suits in public.

As the '50s wore on and families began their push into the suburbs, owning homes with private pools, women began to test bikinis in their own backyards. By the '60s, spurred on by popular culture icons like Annette Funicello, the Beach Boys, and James Bond, the bikini had become both fashionable and a mode of liberation for women. While today the bikini may not be the bombshell it once was, it still holds more than a small note of scandal.

## Walking Tall

Stand tall on July 27, Walk on Stilts Day. While stilt walking has long been associated with parades and circus clowns, stilts have more working-class origins. Fruit pickers, window washers, and drywallers all wear stilts on the job. In Sri Lanka, there are stilt fishermen. Men sit far from shore atop long sticks, dangling fishing lines into the water. While they do not make much money from their catch, they do make reasonable sums from the tourists who watch them fish in this curious manner. In the French village of Landes during the 19th century, shepherds used stilts to follow their flocks of sheep over swampy fields. In 1891, a Landes shepherd named Sylvain Dornon stilt walked from Paris to Moscow in 58 days, ringing in an entirely new sport of stilt marathoning. Other stilt sports exist. In Belgium, locals have been stilt jousting in a tournament known as the Golden Stilt for 600 years. After a bout of jostling, prodding, butting, and knocking, the last person standing on stilts is declared the winner.

## Underwater Music



Head south to the Florida Keys on July 7–8 for the annual Underwater Music Festival. Hundreds of boats converge at Looe Key for a sub-sea concert—the only one of its kind in the world.

The lone living coral barrier reef in the United States is located there, and it is protected as part of the Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary. Attendees dress in costume and lug their instruments to the sandy seafloor for a jam session, although the real music is piped underwater from boats at the surface via specially designed underwater speakers. While the concert is held in the name of big fun, the real takeaway is an appreciation of the Keys’ precious marine reefs. The bizarre event is designed to make lasting impressions of the reef and impart eco-sensitive diving practices.

## Emojis for Everyone



If panned letters have become obsolete thanks to e-mail, will using words to send text messages

become obsolete thanks to emoji? These playful little pictures, sent in place of words via messaging, are the current trend in digital communication. Enjoy this crash course in emojis in preparation for World Emoji Day on July 17.

The word *emoji* is a combination of two Japanese words: *e*, for “picture,” and *moji*, for “character.” This term existed long before cellular phones. During Japan’s Edo period, emoji were used to teach prayers to those who could not read and write.

The first modern emoji were developed in 1999 by Shigetaku Kurita, a young engineer at a Japanese telephone company. Kurita was charged with the task of creating a set of pictures that could be sent on what were the first Internet-connected mobile devices. The screens on these devices were very cheap and could display only a limited number of characters, making it difficult to send accurate messages using only words. Pictures could greatly enhance the phone’s ability to communicate. Kurita developed an original set of 176 icons, including a sun, a cloud, an umbrella for the weather, a martini glass for a bar, a lightbulb for a good idea, a bathroom sign, a “no smoking” sign, and a red circle with three lines for “hot spring.” All of these symbols were created with a mere grid of 12X12 pixels. These original emoji may look as foreign as Egyptian hieroglyphics today.

Today there are almost 2,000 different emojis available on cell phones and social media sites like Twitter and Facebook. Why are they so beloved? Because they put personality on a message. Scientists explain that people react to emoji the same way they react to a human face—with empathy. In this way, it seems we are hardwired for emoji. On World Emoji Day, celebrate the power of the emoji by sending your favorite icon, whether it is a yellow smiley face, heart, unicorn, or thumbs-up.

## City of the Sun

On July 24, 1911, American explorer Hiram Bingham was led by an 11-year-old boy into the Andes mountains of Peru to discover the Incan city known as Machu Picchu, meaning “Old Peak.” Nestled at almost 8,000 feet above sea level in the clouds, this small city was built by hand around 1450 under the command of the Inca emperor Pachacuti. Bingham believed this to be the “Lost City of the Incas,” a refuge hidden from Spanish invaders who desired to wipe out the Inca civilization. Studies now show that Machu Picchu was not a hidden city at all, but a private summer estate of the emperor, and perhaps a religious pilgrimage destination for Incas believing it to be the twin birthplace of the sun and all of Inca civilization. Even if it is not the famed “Lost City,” Machu Picchu remains spectacular for its 200 stone structures linked by 3,000 stone steps over multiple levels. It remains one of the most awe-inspiring human achievements and draws 300,000 visitors each year. Interestingly, Vilcabamba, the true Lost City of the Incas and the last refuge of the Inca empire until 1572, was not discovered until 1976 and is considerably lesser known.

## The Sound of Silence



July 10 is a holiday that does not require any hullabaloo or merrymaking, for it is Silence Day. On July 10, 1925, the Indian spiritual leader Meher

Baba began his 45-year-long vow of silence. On this day, we are challenged to maintain 24 hours of silence. Meher Baba believed that humankind had become deaf to God’s teachings of humility, purity, and truth. His life of silence was a powerful reminder to all to remember God’s teachings. Meher Baba himself believed that he was the Avatar, or God in human form. He practiced his spirituality by silently praying, fasting, and working with lepers, the poor, and the mentally ill. Meher Baba, through silence, left a loud and clear message about the importance of goodwill and peace toward all.

## Hot Diggity Dog



Estimates suggest that over seven billion hot dogs are eaten between Memorial Day and Labor Day, with prime hot dog eating taking place

smack dab in the middle of summer. No wonder July has been declared Hot Dog Month.

The hot dog may be more American than apple pie, but its origins are distinctly German and Austrian, hence the names *frankfurter*, after the German city of Frankfurt, and *weiner*, for the Austrian city of Vienna. Immigrant butchers from these two countries made their own sausages, and vendors hawked the meats from carts along busy city sidewalks. When exactly did the term *hot dog* replace *frankfurter* and *weiner*? No one knows for sure. According to some reports, it was common slang for college students to use the term *dog* to describe sausage meat of uncertain origin. It was less than complimentary to call a hot sausage a *hot dog*, but the name stuck.

When exactly did the hot dog become America's iconic food, synonymous with summer, baseball games, and the everyman? Historians look to Coney Island, the so-called "working man's Riviera," for the answer. At the turn of the 20th century, Coney Island had it all: a racetrack, the beach, amusement parks, music, glittering lights... and Nathan Handwerker. A Polish immigrant, Handwerker saved up enough money to open his own hot dog stand. When a newly constructed subway increased traffic to Coney Island, Handwerker was ready to cater to the thousands of visitors with his low-cost hot dogs. His stand, *Nathan's*, sold 50,000 dogs each day and grew into a massive hot dog empire. The hot dog is such an icon of American culinary history that different parts of the country lay claim to unique dogs, but the Chicago dog reigns supreme: an all-beef dog topped with minced raw onion, relish, pickled peppers, a spear of pickle, sliced tomatoes, celery salt, and yellow mustard on a poppy seed bun. This July, no matter how you eat it, take a bite of an American tradition.

## July Birthdays

**Lavetta E. (Louise)**

**July 2<sup>nd</sup>**

**Hilda H. July 9<sup>th</sup>**

**Ann Elizabeth July 11<sup>th</sup>**

**Frank L. July 18<sup>th</sup>**

**Ramona July 23<sup>rd</sup>**

**Dorthea July 23<sup>rd</sup>**



## Feeling Bullish

Most everyone has heard of Pamplona's notorious *Encerrio*, or "Running of the Bulls." Lesser known is the Running of the Bulls in New Orleans on July 8. As in Pamplona, brave souls

wearing white shirts and red bandanas run through the streets, but instead of bulls, they are pursued by the RollerBulls, roller derby skaters with horned helmets and plastic bats. Around 400 skaters from roller derby teams from across the world chase 18,000 joyous runners down Convention Boulevard. The festival concludes the next day with a Hemingway-themed celebration featuring readings, skits, and a look-alike contest. This is all courtesy of Hemingway's 1926 novel *The Sun Also Rises*, which famously depicts Pamplona's Running of the Bulls.