

The Timeless Tale of Qixi



On the seventh day of the seventh lunar month, which this year is August 29 on the Western calendar, the Chinese celebrate Qixi —also known as the Double Seventh Festival. It’s a holiday born of the myth of two lovers: Zhinü the weaver maid (a fairy runaway from heaven) and Niulang the cowherd.

Niulang was a kindhearted cowherd who, after losing his parents, lived with his cruel brother and sister-in-law. His sister-in-law demanded that Niulang bring nine cows to pasture and return home with 10. Forlorn, Niulang set off on his impossible task and met an old man who assured him that he could find a sick ox beyond the mountain. After searching for weeks, Niulang finally found the ox, which he restored to health. Imagine Niulang’s surprise when he discovered that the ox was actually a supernatural being from heaven. The ox was so thankful that it introduced Niulang to a beautiful fairy. The fairy’s name was Zhinü.



Zhinü was the seventh daughter of a goddess. Bored with heaven, she descended to Earth, where she married Niulang. The two were very happy, but when Zhinü’s mother discovered that her daughter had married a mortal, she became enraged and returned Zhinü to heaven. With the help of his ox, Niulang chased after his wife. When

the goddess found out, however, she created a huge river between the lovers, separating them forever. Niulang and Zhinü’s heartbreak so moved the hearts of all the magpies of the world that the birds created a bridge over the river. On the seventh day of the seventh month, the mother goddess allows Niulang and Zhinü to meet. For this reason, Qixi is considered China’s Valentine’s Day.

August Birthdays

In astrology, those born between August 1 and August 22 take on the lion star sign of Leo. Leos are dignified, strong, and powerful, making good leaders and honorable friends. They’re also ambitious—reaching for the stars, working hard, and accomplishing their goals. Those born between August 23 and August 31 are Virgos, known for being industrious and efficient. They pay close attention to details and get the job done right on the first try. Here are a few celebrities born in August:

- P. D. James (writer) – August 3, 1920
- Mata Hari (spy) – August 7, 1876
- Alfred Hitchcock (director) – August 13, 1899
- Julia Child (chef) – August 15, 1912
- Connie Chung (journalist) – August 20, 1946
- Cal Ripken Jr. (ballplayer) – August 24, 1960
- Mother Teresa (nun) – August 26, 1910
- Ingrid Bergman (actress) – August 29, 1915
- Buddy Hackett (comedian) – August 31, 1924

Heartthrob of the Silent Screen



He was born Rodolfo Alfonso Raffaello Pierre Filibert Guglielmi di Valentina d’Antonguolla, but his devoted fans knew him as Rudolph Valentino. Valentino was one

of Hollywood’s earliest stars of the silent era. He was tall, dark, and handsome—a perfect on-screen hunk. After dancing a tango in *The Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse*, he became a national sensation. His sudden death on August 23, 1926, threw his legions of fans into hysteria. Some even attempted suicide. A reported 100,000 mourners lined up outside the church where services were held. By train, Valentino’s body made its last trip to Hollywood for a final silent goodbye.

Meadowview Monthly



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Happy Birthday!

- Richard A. – 8/3
- Jan H. – 8/4
- Sue W. – 8/5
- Judy S. – 8/8
- Mary P. – 8/12
- Joani M. – 8/18
- Beth S. – 8/20
- Barb B. – 8/24
- Sharon H. 8/24
- Betty H. – 8/28
- Janice W. – 8/28

Welcome to Meadowview!

- Dick G.
- Dave P
- Faye K.
- Joyce B
- Kathy L.
- Mary U.
- Sandy B.
- Shirley K.
- Wayne D.

Journey Back to Oz

August marks a celebration for fans of *The Wizard of Oz*—the 86th anniversary of the beloved film’s release on August 25, 1939. In addition, the 125th birthday of the classic book, first published in May 1900, was celebrated earlier this year. Whether you first met Dorothy and Toto on the page or the silver screen, their journey down the Yellow Brick Road continues to charm audiences of all ages.

L. Frank Baum’s *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz* was a sensation from the start, quickly becoming a staple in American children’s literature. Over the decades, the story has inspired sequels, stage plays, and, most famously, the 1939 MGM film starring Judy Garland as Dorothy. The film dazzled audiences with its Technicolor magic, memorable songs, and a cast of unforgettable characters: Scarecrow, Tin Man, Cowardly Lion, and, of course, Toto (who was played by a female Cairn terrier named Terry).

The book and the movie differ in small ways—Dorothy’s slippers are silver in the book but ruby red in the film, for example—but both deliver the same heartwarming message about friendship, courage, and finding your way home. The story’s appeal has lasted in part because it offers both adventure and comfort. As author Ray Bradbury once said, “Oz is what we would hope and like to be,” a place where villains aren’t so villainous and hope always wins out.

The Wizard himself is a memorable figure, too. When his secret is revealed, he admits, “I’m really a very good man, but I am a very bad wizard,” reminding us all that sometimes, good intentions matter more than magical powers.

So this August, why not revisit Oz? Dust off the book, queue up the movie, or share the story with a grandchild or other young friend. After all, as Dorothy reminds us, “There’s no place like home”—and for many, Oz will always feel a little like home, too.

Pawsitive Days of August



Dog Star, Sirius, was most visible in the night sky during this steamy season.

It makes perfect sense, then, that August 3–9 is Assistance Dog Week, a week honoring canines that help humans with disabilities. Guide, hearing, and medical-alert dogs are specially trained to accompany their owners anywhere and everywhere. “Detection dogs” sniff out everything from bedbugs to forest truffles to cancer.

In addition, August 5 is Work Like a Dog Day, a day for all those dogs who put in a hard day of work. Search-and-rescue, police, therapy, herding, hunting, tracking, guard, and sled dogs are not merely pets but are integral partners in working endeavors. For example, no other dog can compete with the bloodhound’s sense of smell, which is so reliable that it’s admissible as evidence in a courtroom. Bloodhounds can track a smell more than 300 hours old and trails more than 130 miles (209 km) long.

The Doberman pinscher was bred by a German tax collector named Karl Friedrich Louis Dobermann as a protective companion to assist him on his daily rounds. Not only is the Doberman a tough guard dog but also it’s one of the smartest dog breeds in the world.

German shepherds are renowned Hollywood actors as well as police and therapy dogs. The breed’s courage may be rivaled only by their charisma. When Rin Tin Tin debuted on the silver screen, he received more than 10,000 pieces of fan mail per week.

While we’ve all heard the saying “work like a dog,” these industrious canines give the phrase new meaning.

Wrap Trap

Sometimes opening a bottle of aspirin is so difficult that you need an aspirin just to relieve the pain. Equally frustrating is having something as tiny as a keychain mailed in a box the size of a small child. If you’ve encountered such preposterous packaging, you may be a fan of Particularly Preposterous Packaging Day on August 7.

Products are artfully packaged to look larger and more desirable, sometimes regardless of how difficult the package is to open. The term *wrap rage* has been coined to describe the frustration many feel when a package is all but impossible to unwrap. Furthermore, overpackaged products lead to waste. Studies show that a third of all household waste comes from packaging, which often ends up in landfills. Some places in Great Britain and elsewhere have even begun issuing packaging laws to reduce the amount of trash. The next time you tangle with a package, keep August 7 in mind.

Lefties Take the Lead



Left Handers Day on August 13.

Left Handers Day is about more than just advocating for left-handed products, like scissors, pens, and can openers. It’s about creating “Lefty Zones,” where right-handed people attempt tasks using their left hands. For one day, the proverbial shoe will be on the other foot, with righties struggling to use tools unfit for their right-handedness. It’s a day when all lefties will fight for their, um... rights.

Did you hear the one about the inventor who developed a left-handed hammer? It didn’t sell. He forgot to invent left-handed nails! But if he had, they likely would have been sold by the Left Handers Club, which celebrates International

When Tomatoes Fly



The story goes that during Buñol’s traditional parade featuring Giants and Big-Heads figures (costumed characters prominent in Spanish festivals, dating back to the 16th century), a playful scuffle broke out among some young people. When a participant lost his temper and started hitting things, nearby vegetable stalls became the battleground. Tomatoes flew, and a chaotic food fight erupted, which police had to stop. The following year, the youngsters deliberately brought their own tomatoes to recreate the fun, and La Tomatina was born.

Though the festival was banned in the early 1950s by the Spanish government for lacking religious significance, the locals protested passionately. In 1957, they held a “tomato funeral,” carrying a coffin with a giant tomato through the streets accompanied by funeral music. This clever demonstration convinced the authorities to allow the festival again, and it officially became part of Buñol’s annual festivities.

Today, La Tomatina, the last Wednesday in August, attracts over 20,000 participants from around the world. The event kicks off with a slippery pole climb called *palo jabón*, followed by an hour-long tomato battle where trucks unload around 150,000 overripe tomatoes onto the streets. Participants gleefully throw the squishy fruits at each other, turning the town square into a red, messy playground.

More than just a food fight, La Tomatina celebrates community spirit, spontaneity, and fun. It has grown from a local prank into an internationally famous festival, recognized as a Fiesta of International Tourist Interest. Whether you’re young or young at heart, La Tomatina is a joyful reminder that sometimes it’s good to let loose and enjoy a little harmless mess.

Cents and Sensibility

It’s one of those things you don’t appreciate until it’s not there—the Take a Penny/Leave a Penny Tray. What luck when the tray is there, brimming with shiny pennies so you don’t have to pocket a handful of change. Do your part and keep those penny trays filled on August 8—Take a Penny, Leave a Penny Day.

There are many who deem the lowly penny a useless denomination of currency. In the United States, it costs 3.7¢ to make one penny. In 2012, Canada decided a penny wasn’t even worth minting. Their lowest denomination of currency is now 5¢. Such a change in currency won’t help the U.S., however, where it costs a whopping 13.8¢ to mint one nickel. Why does it cost so much to make these coins? It all depends on the price of copper, a component in coins. Even when the price of copper fell in 2014—saving the U.S. Mint \$29 million in overall production costs—it still lost money minting pennies and nickels. It seems that coins are becoming more of a financial burden than a practical currency in today’s economy.

Black Cats in a New Light



Does a shiver run down your spine when a black cat crosses your path? Do you instantly think of witches on broomsticks when you see one? Black Cat Appreciation Day on August 17 is your chance to revise your superstitious notions. For example, in Scotland, Great Britain, and Japan, black cats are considered good luck and signs of prosperity. Some even believe that a woman who owns a black cat will have many suitors. Long ago, sailors would choose a black cat as their ship’s cat to protect their ship and bring good fortune. Shelters offer another reason to appreciate (and adopt) black cats: they go well with any outfit.