

## The Spirit of Nachi



High in the Kumano region of Japan's Kii Mountains lies Nachi, a sacred site in the Shinto religion, and the Great Waterfall of Nachi, a dazzling rush of water that cascades 133 meters. *Kumano* means "holy ground where the gods dwell," and the primeval mountain range is filled with

many religious sites and pilgrimage routes. On July 14, thousands of pilgrims and tourists climb to the beautiful waterfall for the Nachi Fire Festival, a celebration of water and fire.

According to Shinto religious beliefs, a powerful spirit, or *kami*, lives within the Nachi waterfall. Pilgrims first pay homage to the spirit with a blessing of fire. Men in white robes carry massive torches weighing over 100 pounds up and down the 133 steps (one for each meter of the waterfall's height) that lead to the sacred Nachi shrine. Fire has long been considered a purifying force, and once the steps are purified, more pilgrims robed in blue descend the stairs carrying 12 *Mikoshi*. The *Mikoshi* are 20-foot-tall vermilion shrines decorated with fans and mirrors to mimic the beauty of the waterfall. The 12 shrines symbolize the 12 Shinto deities and the 12 months of the year. These shrines are considered resting places for the spirits. Not only do the pilgrims honor the gods but the gods show them favor by blessing the pilgrims.

The Kumano region has been considered a place of healing for thousands of years. The Nachi shrine is just one of three major Shinto shrines in the area. Also close to the Nachi shrine is another sacred site, an 850-year-old camphor tree wrapped ceremoniously in straw rope and paper flags. Like the Nachi waterfall, this tree is also believed to house a Shinto *kami* spirit. A giant opening in the tree's trunk allows visitors to enter the tree and make offerings at a small altar. It is said that once inside, one can hear the beating of the tree's heart, a moving and transcendent experience.

## July Birthdays

In astrology, those born between July 1–22 are Crabs of Cancer. Kind and protective, Crabs love to nurture others. While they may be emotional, they are never soft. Cancers are tenacious in their pursuit of domestic harmony. Those born between July 23–31 are Leo's Lions. Mixing strength, ambition, creativity, and a flair for the dramatic, it is no wonder that the king of the jungle is a Leo's mascot. Whether it's in Hollywood or in the home, Leos accomplish their goals.

Richard Petty (race-car driver) – July 2, 1937  
 Ringo Starr (Beatle) – July 7, 1940  
 Tom Hanks (actor) – July 9, 1956  
 Arthur Ashe (tennis pro) – July 10, 1943  
 Woody Guthrie (folk singer) – July 14, 1912  
 Ginger Rogers (dancer) – July 16, 1911  
 Janet Reno (attorney general) – July 21, 1938  
 Lynda Carter (actress) – July 24, 1951  
 Gracie Allen (comedian) – July 26, 1895

## Night of Nights



Morse code, that method of communicating letters using long and short signals of sound or light, seems old fashioned. After all, commercial Morse radio stations have been defunct for almost three decades. The last U.S. transmission went out on July 12, 1999, and read, "What hath God wrought"—which is also the first message sent by Samuel Morse in 1844. It was a sad night for those who had used Morse code throughout their lives. The abandoned station was filled with old rotary phones, manual typewriters, teletype machines, and telegraphy keys, some dating back to the time of Samuel Morse. What a pleasant surprise when the airwaves sprang to life again with buzzing and beeping on July 12, 2000. This was the first "Night of Nights," when for one night, an old maritime radio station on the coast of northern California sent out Morse transmissions. The tradition has been carried on ever since.

# Meadowview Monthly

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## Happy Birthday!

**Wanda G. – 7/2**

**Larry C. – 7/8**

**Jan W. – 7/10**

**Roma B. – 7/14**

**Faye K. – 7/22**

**Dudley T. – 7/28**

## Welcoming to Meadowview!

**Barb & Dave W.**

## Celebrating!

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

*July 4*

**Blueberry Day**

*July 8*

**Nelson Mandela International Day**

*July 18*

## The Rhythm of Early America

In 2026, the United States marks the 250th anniversary of 1776—a milestone that invites reflection, not just on historic events but on the texture of everyday life in colonial times. Long before modern conveniences, daily routines were shaped by necessity, skill, and close-knit communities.

Food, for example, was seasonal and local by default. Families relied on what they could grow, hunt, or trade. Cornmeal, beans, and salted meats were staples, while gardens supplied herbs and vegetables. Preserving food—through drying, smoking, or pickling—was essential for surviving the winter. Meals were simple but sustaining, and little went to waste.

Craftsmanship was equally central to daily life. Many households produced what they needed, from clothing to tools. Spinning wool, weaving fabric, and sewing garments were common skills, as were woodworking and blacksmithing. Objects were made to last, repaired when broken, and valued for their function as much as their form.

Community ties helped hold everything together. Neighbors shared labor during harvests, barn raisings, and other large tasks. Churches, markets, and town gatherings provided structure and connection. In a world without instant communication, relationships were built face-to-face and maintained through mutual reliance.

The rhythms of life 250 years ago highlight a kind of resilience that feels both distant and familiar. Colonists adapted constantly—to weather, to shortages, to uncertainty. Their resourcefulness wasn't a choice; it was a requirement. This anniversary offers a chance to consider what endures. Skills like making, mending, and sharing haven't disappeared—they've simply changed form. The same is true of community and adaptability. While the tools and technologies of daily life have evolved, the underlying values—resourcefulness, cooperation, and persistence—remain recognizable.

## Knead to Relax



Tired? Stressed? Sore? Perhaps you need a massage. Massage is no longer limited to fancy spas or luxury health clubs. Massages are now offered in the workplace, at the mall, and even in airports. If you've never tried a massage, perhaps you should between July 12 and 18, Everybody

Deserves a Massage Week.

Not all massages are the same. The most well-known type is Swedish massage. It is the gentle kneading of muscles, tendons, ligaments, and skin that brings deep relaxation. Deep-tissue massage uses slower, more forceful strokes to reach deeper muscles and relieve pain or injury. Shiatsu is a Japanese style that uses light finger pressure on pressure points to stimulate energy and regain balance. Sometimes massage therapists incorporate pleasing aromas, hot stones, or warm pads into the treatment to increase comfort and relaxation.

Relaxation, though, is not the only benefit of massage. While studies show that massage can reduce pain, stress, and muscle tension, it has also been shown to decrease anxiety, relieve headaches, combat insomnia, boost the immune system, and even relieve some digestive disorders. While massage is certainly not a substitute for regular medical care, many believe that it is an effective form of alternative medicine.

If you've been putting off a massage because you're wary of a stranger's touch, it may be helpful to remember that massage therapists are trained experts in anatomy, physiology, kinesiology, pathology, and ethics. There is no reason to be squeamish or self-conscious in the presence of these medical service providers. Communication is also key. A massage is for your benefit. You have to tell the massage therapist where you need work and whether you like more or less pressure. After all, a massage should be an enjoyable indulgence!

## Frontier Fever

Visitors strike gold each mid-July in Fairbanks, Alaska, during the Golden Days festival. The weeklong affair honors Felix Pedro, the young Italian immigrant who, on July 22, 1902, discovered gold in Tanana Hills, just northwest of Fairbanks. By 1908, so many prospectors, outfitters, and businesspeople had ventured to Fairbanks that it became the largest city in Alaska. Today, visitors can find a monument to Felix Pedro, donated by the Italian government, along the Steese Highway, which runs through the Tanana Hills by Pedro Creek.

Felix Pedro is such a hometown hero that during the festival you might even catch a glimpse of him with his dark moustache, flannel shirt, and wide-brimmed hat. It's more likely you've found the Felix Pedro look-alike contest. And don't miss the Grizzly Alaskan contest, awarding honors to the man with the hairiest beard, chest, and legs and the ugliest "frontier feet." The Golden Days festival offers authentic Alaskan charm worth its weight in gold.

## The Great Jump

On July 20, 2006, German professor Hans Peter Niesward from the Institute for Gravitational Physics in Munich claimed that he had convinced 600 million people in the western hemisphere to celebrate



World Jump Day. Everyone would jump at the same time and knock Earth into a new orbit. The result? Extended daylight hours. A more uniform climate around the world. The end of global warming. And a great big laugh. It turns out the entire holiday was a hoax. Professor Niesward was actually German artist Torsten Lauschmann. Of course, this hasn't stopped people from jumping on July 20. Not to fear, scientists have done the math, and 600 million jumping humans could not affect the axis or orbit of Earth, which has a mass of a whopping 13 septillion pounds.

## A Better Bag

All around the world, more and more communities are considering bans on single-use plastic bags or even charging five cents for each bag used. Why is there such an outcry against using these bags so commonly found at supermarkets and convenience stores? Sadly, while a plastic bag may be used for mere minutes, it takes hundreds of years to disintegrate. The truth is that plastic bags have become one of the biggest sources of pollution in the world. With one million bags in use around the world every minute, it's no wonder that a raft of plastic garbage known as the Great Pacific Garbage Patch is drifting in the northern Pacific Ocean.



On July 3, people around the world will celebrate International Plastic Bag-Free Day by opting not to use plastic bags. So what are some alternatives to plastic? The most common solution is to carry your own reusable canvas bags when you go shopping. Many stores have made it easy on customers by selling cheap and reusable tote bags in the checkout line or even offering free cardboard boxes.

Perhaps the most enraging solution has been to charge five cents for the use of a plastic bag. While many customers have shown deep dissatisfaction with the policy of paying for bags at checkout, the system has been shown to decrease the use of plastic bags. Studies of Ireland's plastic bag levy, introduced in 2002, found that usage dropped by more than 90 percent almost immediately. Similar results have been seen in California, where statewide restrictions and fees led to sharp declines in single-use plastic bag consumption. By asking customers during checkout whether they have bags or would like to buy some, shoppers are less able to ignore the problems caused by plastic waste. They are reminded of their environmental impact each time they shop, and many choose to bring reusable bags.

## Redefining Beauty

Everybody knows we should respect our elders, but it's just as important to recognize their beauty—on their own terms. That's the spirit behind Gorgeous Grandma Day on July 23. Today, the idea of "aging beautifully" looks a little different than it once did. It's less about chasing youth and more about confidence, presence, and self-acceptance.

Scroll through social media and you'll find grandmothers with large followings who share style, skincare, and lifestyle tips—not to turn back the clock but to feel good in the skin they're in. Some embrace gray hair, others bold fashion, others a bare face. There's no single formula anymore.

Even in industries once dominated by youth, older women are claiming space and redefining what beauty looks like. They're not "still beautiful despite their age"—they're just beautiful. The message has shifted from resisting age to standing comfortably within it. And that confidence? It's something no cream or routine can replicate.

## Guardians of the Wild



One hundred years ago, 100,000 tigers roamed Asia, but now only 4,500 to 5,500 live in the wild. Observers of International Tiger Day on July 29 hope to reverse that trend and save one of our planet's most majestic beasts.

Though they invoke fear in many, tigers rarely target people. Rather, they play a vital role in sustaining healthy ecosystems. The survival of tigers is directly linked to the health of the land that they live on. Protecting tiger habitats ensures healthy forests that provide clean water to the human populations who share their land with tigers.