On This Date

1291 – A pact was made to form the Swiss Confederation. The anniversary of this founding is celebrated with paper lantern parades, bonfires, and fireworks.

1834 – The Slavery Abolition Act took effect, outlawing slavery in the British Empire.

1893 – Henry Perky received a patent for a machine to make “little whole wheat mattresses,” now known worldwide as shredded wheat. In 1901, he opened a factory in Niagara Falls, New York, which is still producing the cereal today.

Humor of the Day

“It’s pretty clear now that what looked like it might have been some kind of counterculture is, in reality, just the plain old chaos of undifferentiated weirdness.”

~ Jerry Garcia

Happy Birthday!

Jerry Garcia (1942–1995) was born in San Francisco, California. He is best known for forming the group the Grateful Dead in the ’60s. With albums like American Beauty, the band toured for decades with fans known as “Deadheads” following the band on tour. In the 1970s, Garcia released numerous projects as a solo artist and with other musicians, such as his well-known Touch of Gray album.

Inventor Trivia

Marion Donovan, a post–World War II mother, invented the disposable diaper. This followed her innovative diaper cover with pinless snaps. Pampers went on the market in 1961.
On This Date

1610 – Henry Hudson sailed into what is now known as Hudson Bay, thinking he had made it through the Northwest Passage and reached the Pacific Ocean.

1909 – The first passenger flight in Canada was made in Nova Scotia. The Silver Dart airplane flew five times that day before crash landing. Both the pilot and passenger were uninjured. Today, the plane is on display at the Canada Aviation and Space Museum.

1991 – The Viking longship replica Gaia landed in Newfoundland (Vinland) for the 1,000th anniversary of Leif Eriksson’s voyage.

Daily Trivia

The extinct colossus penguin stood about 6 feet 8 inches and weighed about 250 pounds, about the same size as LeBron James.

Humor of the Day

“If it’s anything I can’t stand, it’s yes-men. When I say no, I want you to say no, too.”

~ Jack Warner

Happy Birthday!

Jack L. Warner (1892–1978), born in London, Ontario, was a co-founder and production executive for Warner Bros. Studios in Burbank, California. His career spanned some 45 years, during which he kept pace with rapid changes in the industry. His many box office hits range from The Jazz Singer (1927) to My Fair Lady (1964). Warner was known as an insensitive tyrant at the studio and often banned actors from the executive dining room, saying, “I don’t need to look at actors when I eat.”
On This Date

1492 – Christopher Columbus set sail on the Santa María. Two other ships, the Niña and Pinta, accompanied him. Columbus and crew left Spain to begin the search for a water passage to India. Instead, on October 12, they landed on an island now known as San Salvador in the Bahamas.

1933 – The Mickey Mouse watch was introduced for the price of $3.25. The watch, created by Ingersoll-Waterbury, was such a hit that it saved the Connecticut clock company from bankruptcy. More than 11,000 were sold at Macy’s in New York the first day it was released.

Did You Know?

Henry Thoreau spent nine years writing his masterpiece Walden, or Life in the Woods. Thoreau’s writings inspired John Muir, founder of the Sierra Club.

Humor of the Day

“Marriage is the alliance of two people, one of whom never remembers birthdays and the other who never forgets them.”
~ Ogden Nash

Happy Birthday!

Marcel Dionne, born in 1951, is a retired Canadian professional ice hockey centre who played 18 seasons in the National Hockey League for the Detroit Red Wings, Los Angeles Kings, and New York Rangers. He was the third of six men to reach the 700-goal plateau. He was inducted into the Hockey Hall of Fame in 1992. Dionne currently lives in Niagara Falls, Ontario, and owns Marcel Dionne Enterprises. Dionne’s younger brother, Gilbert, also played in the NHL.
On This Date

1892 – Andrew Borden and his wife, Abby, were murdered at their home in Fall River, Massachusetts. Their daughter, Lizzie, was tried but not convicted of the crime. The case was memorialized in a popular rhyme beginning with “Lizzie Borden took an axe….”

1922 – Every telephone in the U.S. and Canada went dead as AT&T and the Bell System shut down all its switchboards for one minute in memory of Alexander Graham Bell, who had died two days earlier.

1944 – Acting on a tip from a Dutch informer, the Nazi Gestapo captured 15-year-old Jewish diarist Anne Frank and her family.

Did You Know?
Alexander Graham Bell believed that his greatest invention was not the telephone but rather the photophone, which allowed for voice transmission on a beam of light. It was a precursor to modern fiber-optic communication.

Humor of the Day

“I write my own quotes. Except this one. I obviously stole this from somebody really clever.”

~ Brian Celio

Happy Birthday!

Louis Vuitton (1821–1892) walked to Paris as a teenager in search of work. He began as an apprentice trunk maker and packer, and in 1853 he was chosen to be the personal box maker for the wife of Napoleon III. His original design of a stackable rectangular canvas bag replaced the heavy, domed trunks of the day. Vuitton died in 1892, but his fashion brand continues to thrive and is known for its high-quality trunks, luggage, and handbags.
On This Date

1583 – Explorer Sir Humphrey Gilbert founded the first English colony in North America, near Saint John’s, Newfoundland. The colonists were mutinous, however, and the expedition quickly returned to England. Gilbert’s personal motto was *Quid non?* ("Why not?")

1858 – The first transatlantic telegraph cable was laid from Ireland to Newfoundland.

1928 – Bobbie Rosenfeld, Jane Bell, Ethel Smith, and Myrtle Cook won Olympic Gold in the 4x100 relay in Amsterdam.

Did You Know?


Proverb of the Day

“*The gem cannot be polished without friction, nor man perfected without trials.*”

~ Chinese proverb

Happy Birthday!

Maureen McCormick, born in 1956, is best known for her role as eldest daughter Marcia Brady in the iconic sitcom *The Brady Bunch* from 1969 to 1974. After the show ended, she had trouble finding serious acting roles and ended up acting in several Brady Bunch sequels. McCormick married Michael Cummings in 1985 and they have one daughter. In 2016, she appeared on *Dancing with the Stars*, where she was eliminated after week seven in the competition.
On This Date

1806 – The Holy Roman Empire came to an end when Francis II formally resigned as its emperor after losing territory to Napoleon.

1825 – The Republic of Bolivia was created after a 16-year struggle for independence from Spain. The nation was named after its revolutionary leader, Simón Bolívar.

1926 – Nineteen-year-old Gertrude Ederle became the first woman to swim across the English Channel. The American Olympic champion’s time was 14 hours and 31 minutes, beating the previous record (held by a man) by nearly two hours.

Celebrity Trivia

Warhol’s modest family roots influenced his work: it’s thought his mother’s choice of lunchtime staple prompted his Campbell Soup series.

Quote of the Day

“An artist is somebody who produces things that people don’t need to have.”

~ Andy Warhol

Happy Birthday!

Andy Warhol (1928–1987) was a prolific painter best known for his “pop art” images, including the iconic Campbell’s soup can. He also created portraits of some of the day’s biggest stars, like Marilyn Monroe and Mick Jagger. He enjoyed his celebrity status and was regularly seen in famous New York Night clubs like Studio 54. Warhol also dabbled in other types of art, such as sculpture and photography. His work is said to both celebrate and criticize American culture.
On This Date

1858 – Ottawa became the capital of Canada. At that time, the House of Commons and Senate were located in the Victoria Memorial Museum, currently the Canadian Museum of Nature.

1888 – Theophilus Van Kannel of Philadelphia received a patent for the revolving door. His invention was intended to replace swinging doors that let in drafts and made it difficult to control the temperature of buildings. Despite some stories to the contrary, there is no evidence that Van Kannel did not like holding doors open for women.

Daily Trivia

The fat in milk contains carotene, which gives the milk a yellowish color. That is why nonfat milk is whiter than whole milk.

Humor of the Day

“If you think you are too small to make a difference, try sleeping with a mosquito.”

~ Dalai Lama

Happy Birthday!

Carl Switzer (1927–1959) is best known for playing Alfalfa in the Our Gang short films from the 1930s. Switzer was a gifted singer and musician, though he was always typecast and did not get many serious acting roles. One of his later roles was a small part in It’s a Wonderful Life. In addition to acting, he bred and trained hunting dogs for some of the Hollywood elite, including Roy Rogers, James Stewart, and Henry Fonda.
On This Date

1907 – Bill Miner escaped from a penitentiary in British Columbia, where he was serving time for a train robbery, one of a series of robberies and escapes throughout his life. He had a ballerina tattooed on his arm that the authorities often used to identify him. The movie *The Grey Fox* was based on his life.

1942 – Six Nazi saboteurs were executed by electric chair at the Washington, DC, jail.

1975 – Hank Williams Jr. suffered major head injuries in a mountain-climbing accident. After re-learning how to speak and sing, he became a country music star. His signature look includes a beard and sunglasses that hide his facial scars.

Celebrity Trivia

Kit Kat, the chocolate-covered wafer bar, is a big hit in Japan, in part because *kit kat* translates to “You will surely win.” They are often given as good luck charms to students ahead of school exams.

Humor of the Day

“My bed is a magical place where I suddenly remember everything I forgot to do.”

~ Anonymous

Happy Birthday!

**Matthew Henson** (1886–1955) was an African American explorer who was best known for being a member of the exploration team of Commander Robert Peary. Trained as a ship’s cabin boy, Henson accompanied Peary on several Arctic expeditions, including when Peary reached the North Pole for the first time. Peary relied heavily on Henson, at one point stating, “Henson must go all the way. I can’t make it without him.” They reached the North Pole on April 6, 1909, with only six of the original 24 men; the rest had turned back.
On This Date

1930 – Canada’s Percy Williams established a world record of 10.3 seconds for the 100-metre dash at the inaugural British Empire Games. He had already won two gold medals at the 1928 Olympics.

1930 – Betty Boop made her first appearance in the cartoon *Dizzy Dishes*. The character was modeled after Helen Kane, a famous singer of the 1920s, and Clara Bow, a popular actress in the 1920s.

1971 – Leroy “Satchel” Paige, the pitching legend, was inducted into the Baseball Hall of Fame in Cooperstown, New York.

Daily Trivia

In 1965, at the age of 59, Satchel Paige pitched three scoreless innings for the Kansas City Athletics in a game against the Boston Red Sox. He gave up just one hit.

Humor of the Day

“Fine! He is being passive aggressive with me, and it’s gonna backfire; I’m gonna be active friendly.”

~ Natalya Vorobyova

Happy Birthday!

Pamela Lyndon Travers (1899–1996), born in Australia, was an actress, journalist, poet, and novelist best known as the author of *Mary Poppins* (1934) and its seven sequels. She disliked the 1964 Disney film *Mary Poppins* because she felt that the movie made the character too sweet, and she also disapproved of the animation used in the movie. She was interested in mythology and spent two summers living among the Navajo, Hopi, and Pueblo peoples studying their mythology.
On This Date

1876 – Alexander Graham Bell made the world’s first long-distance telephone call. He rang the Bell homestead in Paris, Ontario, using a 13 km-long line strung from Brantford. Soon after, Bell offered to sell the telephone patent outright to Western Union for $100,000. The president of Western Union balked, believing that the telephone was nothing but a toy. Two years later, he said he would consider it a bargain if he could get the patent for $25 million.

1966 – A daylight meteor streaked across the sky from Utah to Canada. It is the only known meteor to skip through Earth’s atmosphere and leave it again.

Did You Know?

Tootsie Rolls were introduced in 1896 by Leo Hirshfield. He named them after his daughter, whose nickname was “Tootsie.”

Humor of the Day

“I told my psychiatrist that everyone hates me. He said I was being ridiculous—everyone hasn’t met me yet.”

~ Rodney Dangerfield

Happy Birthday!

Antonio Banderas, born in 1960, is a Spanish actor who moved to the United States in the early 1990s when he began to receive international recognition for his work in Spain. He is best known in the United States for his roles in Evita and The Mask of Zorro. Banderas also portrayed the voice of “Puss in Boots” in the Shrek series of movies and in the movie Puss in Boots. He has a daughter with his former wife, actress Melanie Griffith.
On This Date

1883 – The first CPR construction train puffed into Calgary, a tent city whose only permanent structures were the barracks of the North West Mounted Police and the stores of the Hudson’s Bay and the I.G. Baker trading companies.

1901 – The first patent for instant coffee was issued to Satori Kato, a Japanese scientist. It was entitled “Coffee Concentrate and Process of Making Same.” He introduced the powdered substance to the public at the 1901 Pan American Exposition.

1909 – The steamship Arapahoe was the first ship to use the radio distress call SOS. The ship found itself in trouble off Cape Hatteras, North Carolina, and radioed for help.

Did You Know?

Morse code is still widely recognized, even if it is not as popular as it once was. It is still popular among amateur radio enthusiasts, and navies use it to communicate by signal lamps.

Humor of the Day

“If this is coffee, please bring me some tea; but if this is tea, please bring me some coffee.”
~ Abraham Lincoln

Happy Birthday!

Paul Soles, born in 1930, was one of the original hosts of the CBC’s popular TV program Take 30, which went on the air in 1962. The daytime series evolved into a showcase for serious journalism, airing documentary reports and interviews. In 2001, he played the role of Shylock in the Stratford Festival of Canada production of The Merchant of Venice. For decades, Paul Soles has been a fixture in Canadian theatre, radio, television, and film. Soles and his wife, Lucy, have several children and grandchildren.
On This Date

1865 – Dr. Joseph Lister became the first surgeon to perform an antiseptic operation using carbolic acid as a disinfectant.

1888 – Bertha Benz, wife of Karl Benz (inventor of the three-wheeler motor carriage), took the first motor trip. Without her husband’s knowledge, she borrowed one of his cars and traveled 100 kilometres to visit her mother. She was gone for five days.

1990 – Sue, the world’s largest, most complete, and best preserved Tyrannosaurus rex skeleton, was discovered in South Dakota by paleontologist Sue Hendrickson. It is now a star attraction at Chicago’s Field Museum of Natural History.

Did You Know?

The 52 cards in a deck represent the 52 weeks in a year. The four suits represent the seasons.

Humor of the Day

“There is nothing so useless as doing efficiently that which should not be done at all.”

~ Peter Drucker

Happy Birthday!

Francois Hollande, born in 1954, was the 24th president of France and a member of the French Socialist Party. He was born in Rouen and entered politics as a town councilman in 1983. He also served as Mayor of Tulle and as a member of the National Assembly. Hollande was a supporter of equality for all and is quoted as having said, “Each country has a soul, and France’s soul is equality.” Hollande left office in 2017 and is a supporter of the current president.
On This Date

1930 – Ontario native Guy Lombardo and his band the Royal Canadians recorded their hit “Go Home and Tell Your Mother.”

1961 – Construction began on the Berlin Wall. East Germany built it to prevent a “brain drain” of educated young people to the west. The wall stood as a symbol of oppression until November 1989.

1980 – The sunken merchant ship HMS Breadalbane was discovered in the Northwest Passage near Beechey Island. She had been crushed by polar ice and submerged in 1853. The well-preserved vessel is the world’s northernmost found shipwreck.

Cinema Trivia

The motion picture Psycho (1960) is now regarded as one of Alfred Hitchcock’s best efforts, but initially it received very mixed reviews. Walt Disney so detested the film that he banned Hitchcock from entering Disneyland.

Humor of the Day

“I ain’t afraid to love a man. I ain’t afraid to shoot him either.”
~ Annie Oakley

Happy Birthday!

Annie Oakley (1860–1926) was born Phoebe Ann Mosey to poor parents in rural Ohio. She learned to shoot at an early age to help support her family. After winning a contest against a traveling sharpshooter, she joined his traveling show, and the two became both an act and a couple. The name Oakley came from the Cincinnati neighborhood where she and her husband lived. She joined the Buffalo Bill Wild West Show and continued her shooting career well into her 60s. She won her last award in 1924.
On This Date

1880 – The Cologne Cathedral was completed 632 years after building began in 1248. It was badly damaged during World War II but later repaired. The church is the largest gothic cathedral in northern Europe.

1932 – The Philips Radio Company made its one-millionth radio. Philips began operations in 1891 producing lightbulbs and then diversified into radios in 1927.

1953 – The Wiffle ball, a ball that curves when it is thrown, was invented by David Mullany. He made it for his 13-year-old son. Back then, when you struck out, you “whiffed,” hence the name.

An Apple a Day Keeps the Doctor Away

The earliest version of this phrase is a Pembrokeshire proverb dating to the 1860s: “Eat an apple on going to bed, and you’ll keep the doctor from earning his bread.”

Quote of the Day

“Magic is who I am on the basketball court. Earvin is who I am.”

~ Ervin “Magic” Johnson

Happy Birthday!

Earvin “Magic” Johnson, born in 1959, is a retired basketball player. After being the number one pick in the 1979 NBA draft, he played point guard for the Los Angeles Lakers for 13 seasons. Johnson was a member of the gold medal-winning “Dream Team” at the 1992 Olympics. He announced that he had HIV in 1991 and briefly left the NBA but returned to play 32 games for the Lakers in 1996. Johnson has become a successful businessman and an advocate for HIV/AIDS prevention.
On This Date

1057 – In events later used in one of Shakespeare’s greatest tragedies, the Scottish king Macbeth was killed by Malcolm Canmore, son of King Duncan I, whom Macbeth had murdered 17 years before.

1877 – Thomas Edison decided that hello would be a more appropriate greeting when answering the phone than ahoy, as suggested by Alexander Graham Bell.

1945 – Japanese Emperor Hirohito announced to his people that he had accepted the terms of surrender demanded by the allies, effectively ending World War II.

Celebrity Trivia

Ben Affleck and actor Matt Damon have known each other since childhood. Affleck encouraged Damon to try acting, and they pooled their money to pay for audition expenses.

Quote of the Day

“The person, be it gentleman or lady, who has not pleasure in a good novel, must be intolerably stupid.”

~ Jane Austen

Happy Birthday!

Ben Affleck, born in 1972, is an American actor, writer, and director who has starred in a number of hit movies. You may know him from Good Will Hunting, Pearl Harbor, and Armageddon. Affleck was married to actress Jennifer Garner from 2005 through 2017. In addition to his work in Hollywood, he has also been active in charity work for a number of causes, including childhood hunger and stem cell research. He is an avid poker player who has won several tournaments.
On This Date

1812 – Facing what he incorrectly believed to be superior forces, American General William Hull surrendered Fort Detroit without a fight to the British Army.

1829 – The original Siamese twins, Chang and Eng Bunker, arrived in Boston. They were born to Chinese parents in Siam (Thailand). Experts still disagree on whether they could have survived a separation.

1969 – The first Canada Summer Games opened in Halifax-Dartmouth. The games are held once every two years and alternate between winter and summer games.

1989 – A solar flare created a geomagnetic storm that disrupted power throughout most of Quebec and caused auroras as far south as Texas. It even led to a halt of all trading on Toronto’s stock market.

Did You Know?

The Venus flytrap feeds primarily on ants, not flies.

Quote of the Day

“The magic doesn’t come from within the director’s mind, it comes from within the hearts of the actors.”

~ James Cameron

Happy Birthday!

James Cameron, born in 1954, is a screenwriter, producer/director who developed an interest in movies early. He wrote the screenplay for his movie The Abyss during his high school biology class. He has written, produced or directed many of the box office hits of the past 30 years, including The Terminator, Aliens, The Abyss, True Lies, Titanic, and Avatar. He married Suzy Amis in 2000, and they have one son and two daughters. He also has a daughter from a previous marriage.
On This Date

1835 – Solymon Merrick patented the first wrench, a tool for tightening bolts and nuts.

1896 – Gold was discovered in Bonanza Creek in the Klondike region of Canada’s Yukon Territory. A gold rush began the following year.

1939 – *The Wizard of Oz* premiered in New York City. It was the first movie to use the combination of color and black and white film. Judy Garland and Mickey Rooney actually appeared onstage for 30-minute song and dance routines between showings of the film.

**Daily Trivia**

The tombstone of Mel Blanc, the famed voice of cartoon characters Bugs Bunny, Sylvester the Cat, Tweety Bird, and Porky Pig, reads:

“That’s all folks.”

Quote of the Day

“Personality is the glitter that sends your little gleam across the footlights and the orchestra pit into that big black space where the audience is.”

~ Mae West

Happy Birthday!

**Mae West** (1893–1980) was an actress, singer, and comedian. She began performing as a child, and her career continued until the late 1970s. West was known for writing a 1928 play called *Diamond Lil* about a smart and easygoing woman from the 1890s. The character was a hit, and West revived it many times throughout her career. She was known for saying, “You only live once, but if you do it right, once is enough.”
On This Date

1227 – Genghis Khan, the Mongol leader who forged an empire, died in camp. He may have succumbed to injuries incurred during a fall from a horse in the previous year.

1587 – Virginia Dare, granddaughter of Governor John White of the Colony of Roanoke, became the first English child born in the Americas.

1957 – The U.S. military detonated a nuclear device at its Nevada Test Site. Patrons at Las Vegas hotels watched the mushroom cloud while they drank cocktails. The test was part of Operation Plumbbob, the most controversial test series in the continental United States.

What Big Eyes You Have

Giant squids have the largest eyes in the world, the size of soccer balls. Deep in the ocean those large eyes are useful in spotting their predator, the sperm whale.

Humor of the Day

“Whenever you want to marry someone, go have lunch with his ex-wife.”

~ Shelley Winters

Happy Birthday!

Shelley Winters (1920–2006) was an American actress who appeared on stage and screen. She was known for her roles in The Great Gatsby, A Place in the Sun, and The Diary of Anne Frank, the last winning her an Oscar for best supporting actress. Winters was politically minded, briefly addressing the marchers outside Selma, Alabama, during the march there for civil rights. She was married four times, including to long-time companion Gerry DeFord, whom she married hours before her death.
On This Date

1812 – “Old Ironsides” (the USS Constitution) won a battle against the British frigate HMS Guerrière off the coast of Nova Scotia.

1839 – Louis Daguerre’s photographic technique was introduced. It needed only 20 to 30 minutes of exposure compared to a previous eight-hour requirement.

1914 – Quebec offered Belgium four million pounds of cheese as a form of wartime support.

1919 – The Kingdom of Kabul gained its independence and changed its name to Afghanistan.

Inventor’s Quiz

Q: Which was invented first: the Band-Aid, the teabag, or bubble gum?

A: The teabag was invented in 1908. The Band-Aid was invented in 1920, and bubble gum in 1928.

Quote of the Day

“Dress shabbily and they remember the dress; dress impeccably and they remember the woman.”

~ Coco Chanel

Happy Birthday!

Coco Chanel (1883–1971) was a French fashion designer. She was raised in a convent, where she learned to sew. Chanel was among the first to create fashionable clothing that did not require a corset. She designed her famed interlocking CC monogram in the 1920s. Chanel also developed the iconic Chanel No. 5 perfume. Her earnings made her one of the wealthiest women in the world. Although linked with many influential men, she never married.
On This Date

1944 – Major David Currie’s squadron captured the French village of St. Lambert, thereby blocking a vital German escape route from France. Major Currie became the only Canadian to receive the Victoria Cross for action in Normandy who did not die in the process of earning it.

1977 – NASA launched Voyager 2, an unmanned spacecraft, toward Jupiter, Saturn, Uranus, and Neptune, and then on toward interstellar space. It carries a 12-inch copper phonograph record containing greetings in dozens of languages, samples of music, and sounds of nature. The spacecraft has now been operational and in contact with Earth for 45 years.

Did You Know?

Elephants in Myanmar (formerly Burma) have been known to silence bells hung around their necks by clogging them with mud so they will not be heard when stealing bananas.

Proverb of the Day

“Judge not your beauty by the number of people who look at you, but rather by the number of people who smile at you.”

~ African proverb

Happy Birthday!

Cynthia Nicholas (1957–2016) achieved fame at the age of 16 when she swam across Lake Ontario in 15 hours and 10 minutes. She went on to swim the English Channel a total of 19 times, including five two-way trips. She was inducted into the International Swimming Hall of Fame in 2005 and served in the Ontario legislature from 1987 to 1990. She practiced law in Scarborough, Ontario, and was parliamentary assistant to Ontario’s solicitor general from 1989 to 1990.
On This Date

1919 – Edward, Prince of Wales (later Edward VIII and Duke of Windsor), arrived in Quebec to officially open the Quebec cantilever bridge over the St. Lawrence River. The bridge had suffered two major collapses, in 1907 and 1916, killing 88 people. The new design was hailed as a marvel of engineering. The Quebec bridge was designated a National Historic Site of Canada in 1995.

1961 – Country music singer Patsy Cline recorded the vocals to Willie Nelson’s Crazy. It became her signature song.

Daily Quiz

The “night parrot” of Australia is considered one of the most elusive birds on Earth. Fewer people alive today have seen one with their own eyes than have ever walked on the moon.

Quote of the Day

“Nobody roots for Goliath.”

~ Wilt Chamberlain

Happy Birthday!

Wilt Chamberlain (1936–1999) was a professional basketball player who played for the Warriors, 76ers, and Lakers. At 7'1" and 275 pounds, he was known by the nickname “The Big Dipper” since he had to dip his head through doorways. During his playing days, he earned many accolades, including four MVP awards. He is the only player to score 100 points in a single NBA game. After he retired from the league, he would sometimes perform with the Harlem Globetrotters in exhibition games.
On This Date

1902 – The Cadillac Automobile Company was formed. It was named after the French explorer who founded Detroit in 1701.

1938 – Fred Astaire and Ginger Rogers appeared on the cover of LIFE magazine. The glamorous couple offered people an escape from the dreariness of the Great Depression.

1964 – The Beatles gave their first Canadian concert in Vancouver. They played songs from their new album, Something New. The top ticket price was $5.25.

Daily Trivia

Henri Cartier-Bresson started a tradition of testing new camera lenses by taking photographs of ducks in urban parks. He never published the images but referred to them as “my only superstition” as he considered it a “baptism” of the lens.

Humor of the Day

“If they can make penicillin out of moldy bread, they can sure make something out of you.”

~ Muhammad Ali

Happy Birthday!

Henri Cartier-Bresson (1908–2004) was a French humanist photographer who pioneered street photography. He had an innate ability to capture the decisive moment that made a great candid shot. Cartier-Bresson studied art, literature, and English at the University of Cambridge and then traveled the world taking pictures. He became famous for his photos of Gandhi’s funeral in 1948 and his coverage of the end of the Chinese Civil War in 1949.
On This Date

1541 – Jacques Cartier arrived at the Iroquois village of Stadacona during his third trip to Canada and began to build Charlesbourg-Royal. Located at the western tip of Cape Diamond, it was the first French fort in Canada and first French settlement in North America.

1917 – The city of Berlin was allowed to change its name to Kitchener due to wartime anti-German sentiment.

1943 – Trans Canada Airlines (TCA) began transatlantic military passenger and postal delivery service.

1967 – The Anglican Church of Canada voted to allow divorced persons to remarry.

I Dream of Jeannie Trivia

Barbara Eden’s midriff-baring costume was a big hit, but she was covered up for the first 10 episodes. It was not censorship but rather because she was pregnant.

Happy Birthday!

Barbara Eden, born in 1931, is an American actress best known for her iconic role in the TV sitcom I Dream of Jeannie. She studied acting in school and played a number of roles in TV and film before being cast as Jeannie in 1965. The show ran for five years and was a runaway success. Eden’s career continued afterward, and she made appearances in movies and TV shows up until 2016. She also wrote a memoir of her life entitled Jeannie Out of the Bottle, which debuted on the New York Times bestseller list.

Quote of the Day

“Intense feeling too often obscures the truth.”

~ Harry Truman

THURSDAY, AUGUST 23, 2018
On This Date

79 – Mt. Vesuvius erupted for the first time in recorded history, destroying southern Italy’s cities of Pompeii, Stabiae, and Herculaneum. The volcano exploded without warning, covering Pompeii in a layer of ash nearly 13 feet deep. The other two cities were buried under mud and debris. Archaeologists have uncovered what life was like in Roman times from the volcanic ash-preserved remains of the cities. Vesuvius is still active.

Humor of the Day

“It’s just a job. Grass grows, birds fly, waves pound the sand. I beat people up.”

~ Muhammad Ali

Happy Birthday!

William Wilberforce (1759–1833) was an English politician best known for his work to abolish slavery. Wilberforce believed in the importance of religion, morality, and education, and his work directly contributed to the passing of the Slavery Abolition Act of 1833, which outlawed slavery in the British Empire. He was also one of the founders of the Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals. A movie about his life starring Benedict Cumberbatch was released in 2007.

Why Didn’t I Think of That?

Mr. Bernard Sadow reinvented the suitcase by adding wheels in 1972. He met strong resistance on early sales calls, when he was told that men would not accept suitcases with wheels.
On This Date

1835 – The *New York Sun* perpetrated “The Great Moon Hoax,” a series of articles about the supposed discovery of life on the moon. The articles described fantastic creatures, including unicorns and humanoids. The reports were meant as satire, but the public swallowed the story.

1937 – The Ontario Legislative Assembly at Queen’s Park, Toronto, announced a delay of school openings due to a polio epidemic sweeping southern Ontario.

1944 – The German garrison in Paris surrendered to Allied forces. To his credit, the German commander General Dietrich von Choltitz disobeyed Hitler’s orders to destroy the city.

Daily Trivia

Von Choltitz’s defiance of Hitler was portrayed in the 1966 movie *Is Paris Burning?* and also a 1965 book by the same title.

Quote of the Day

“To achieve great things, two things are needed; a plan, and not quite enough time.”

~ Leonard Bernstein

Happy Birthday!

Leonard Bernstein (1918–1990) was a composer, conductor, author, music lecturer, and pianist. In addition to being the longtime director of the New York Philharmonic, he also wrote the music for many popular shows, including *West Side Story*, *Peter Pan*, and *On the Waterfront*. He won eight Grammy Awards for his music as well as a Grammy for Lifetime Achievement. His musical score for *West Side Story* is credited for helping bridge the gap between classical and popular music.
On This Date

1498 – The master artist Michelangelo was commissioned to carve the Pietà. This work has interested historians for centuries because the sculpture does not feature the perfect human proportions that are the hallmark of Michelangelo’s work.

1883 – Mount Krakatoa, an island volcano in the Dutch Indies (now Indonesia), erupted with violent explosions that destroyed two-thirds of the island and killed about 36,000 people.

1946 – Animal Farm, by George Orwell, was published in the U.S. The allegory is based on totalitarianism and injustice taking place in the Soviet Union. It is included in the list of Great Books of the Western World.

Happy Birthday!

Mother Teresa (1910–1997) was an Albanian-Indian Catholic nun. She joined the Sisters of Loreto at age 18 and took her religious vows three years later. She is internationally known for her work with India’s poor and campaigned throughout her life for the most marginalized in Indian society. She was fluent in five languages and occasionally traveled outside India for humanitarian reasons. She was canonized by the Catholic Church in 2016 and is recognized by the Church as Saint Teresa of Calcutta.

Quote of the Day

“If we have no peace, it is because we have forgotten that we belong to each other.”

~ Mother Teresa

Daily Trivia

The full moon always rises at sunset and sets at sunrise.
On This Date

1660 – John Milton’s books were burned in London because of the author’s attacks on King Charles II. Milton is best known for his epic poem *Paradise Lost*.

1938 – At a poetry reading given by Archibald MacLeish, another poet set fire to some papers in a fit of jealousy in order to disrupt the recital. That jealous poet was Robert Frost.

1939 – Luftwaffe pilot Erich Warsitz flew the world’s first practical jet-powered airplane, the *Heinkel He 178*. It remained airborne for seven minutes.

Humor of the Day

“A man who writes for a living does not have to go anywhere in particular, and he could rarely afford to if he wanted.”

~ C.S. Forester

Weather Trivia

A *virga* is an observable streak of rain that falls from a cloud but evaporates before reaching the ground. In North America, it is commonly seen in the western United States and the Canadian prairies.

Happy Birthday!

C. S. Forester (1899–1966) was an English novelist best known for his *Horatio Hornblower* novel series. Forester wrote over 30 novels, plus plays and short stories. He also wrote children’s books to encourage his youngest son to finish his meals. Some of his works were used in films, such as *The African Queen*. Unable to join the military for health reasons, during World War II, Forester wrote propaganda for the Allied Powers.
On This Date

1937 – The Toyota Motor Company was founded by Kiichiro Toyoda. Today, it is the largest company in Japan, with about 350,000 employees.

1963 – Civil rights leader Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. delivered his “I Have a Dream” speech. He originally prepared a short speech about the sufferings of African Americans attempting to realize their freedom in a society of discrimination. He was about to sit down when gospel singer Mahalia Jackson called out, “Tell them about your dream, Martin!”

Flower Trivia

Most varieties of hydrangeas produce pink flowers in alkaline soil and blue ones in acidic soil. White hydrangea flowers do not change their color.

Quote of the Day

“Life is a blank canvas, and you need to throw all the paint on it you can.”

~ Danny Kaye

Happy Birthday!

Nancy Kulp (1921–1991) was an American actress best known for her role as Miss Jane Hathaway on the TV show The Beverly Hillbillies. Kulp only got into acting by coincidence. She was working for the publicity department at MGM and one of the directors convinced her to take up acting. She soon began landing small roles in film and TV. She was nominated for an Outstanding Supporting Actress in Comedy Emmy award for her role as Miss Hathaway.
On This Date

1966 – After two years as a star on the show, Mia Farrow withdrew from the cast of the prime-time TV drama *Peyton Place* at the urging of her husband, Frank Sinatra.

1991 – The Supreme Soviet, the parliament of the U.S.S.R., suspended all activities of the Communist Party. This marked the end of the party’s 75-year controlling regime in the Soviet Union.

2005 – Hurricane Katrina’s storm surge caused 53 different levee breaches in greater New Orleans, submerging 80% of the city.

Geography Trivia

The Atacama Desert is the driest place in the world. Some parts of it have not received rainfall in more than 400 years. It is located in the rain shadow of the Andes Mountains in South America.

Quote of the Day

“There are things I want to say: They are very important to me, and, not being a writer, I do it through movies.”

~ Richard Attenborough

Happy Birthday!

Richard Attenborough (1923–2014) was an English actor, filmmaker, and politician. He is famous for many films, including *The Great Escape* (1963), *Miracle on 34th Street* (1994), *Jurassic Park* (1993), and *Gandhi* (1982), which won two Academy Awards, for Best Picture and Best Director. Attenborough served in the film unit of the Royal Air Force during World War II. He was a Member of Parliament from 1993 until his death in 2014.
On This Date

1146 – A conference of European leaders outlawed the crossbow. By banning such an effective weapon, the leaders believed that they had ended wars for all time.

1682 – William Penn sailed from England on this day and went on to establish the colony of Pennsylvania. A 37-foot bronze statue of him has stood atop City Hall in Philadelphia since 1894.

Penn Statue Trivia

A gentlemen’s agreement that no structure should rise above the Penn statue was violated in 1986 when a taller building was erected, bringing about a supposed curse on local sports teams. The curse ended in 2008 when the Phillies won the World Series, just 16 months after a small Penn statuette had been affixed to the top of the new Comcast Center.

Humor of the Day

“Normal is nothing more than a cycle on a washing machine.”

~ Whoopi Goldberg

Happy Birthday!

Mary Shelley (1797–1851) was an English novelist, biographer, and travel writer who is best known for her book *Frankenstein*. Shelley conceived the story during a summer in Switzerland with her husband, Percy Bysshe Shelley. He collaborated with Mary on the novel, and historians still debate how much of the work was his. Shelley was a feminist ahead of her time and strongly believed that women were capable of being intellectual equals.
On This Date

1527 – John Rut wrote to King Henry VIII noting that there were 14 French and Portuguese fishing vessels in the harbor. It was the first recorded letter written from Canada.

1897 – Thomas A. Edison received a U.S. patent for his kinetoscope, a device for producing moving pictures.

1997 – Princess Diana of England died along with her companion, department store heir Dodi Fayed, when their car crashed in Paris while trying to evade the paparazzi.

A Deep Thought

Challenger Deep in the Mariana Trench is the deepest known point in Earth’s oceans. The bottom is 10,924 meters (35,840 feet) below sea level. In 1960, it was visited by the manned bathyscaphe Trieste. If Mount Everest, the highest mountain on Earth, were placed at this location, it would be covered by more than one mile of water.

Humor of the Day

“For fast-acting relief, try slowing down.”
~ Lily Tomlin

Happy Birthday!

James Coburn (1928–2002), in a career spanning 45 years, made over 70 film and 100 television appearances. His breakthrough role was as the knife-wielding Britt in The Magnificent Seven (1960). A capable, rough-hewn leading man, his lanky physique made him a perfect tough guy in numerous roles in westerns and action films, such as The Magnificent Seven, Hell Is for Heroes, and The Great Escape. Coburn was also interested in fast cars and is credited with introducing Steve McQueen to Ferrari cars.