
The Parma Post

August 2010



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Celebrating August

Catfish Month

Golf Month

Watermelon Day

August 3

Elvis Week

August 10-16

Relaxation Day

August 15

Weird Contest Week

August 15-20

Radio Day

August 20

Be An Angel Day

August 22

Second Hand Wardrobe Day

August 25

Women's Equality Day

August 26

Toasted Marshmallow Day

August 30

Scouting Sweeps the Globe

At the turn of the twentieth century, a British Army officer named Robert Baden-Powell was stationed in India when he noticed that many of his soldiers did not know basic first aid or survival skills. His solution was to write a handbook called *Aids to Scouting*, which detailed qualities of leadership and self-reliance. When Baden-Powell returned to England he discovered that boys all across the country were using his handbook to play scouting games. Baden-Powell had a flash of inspiration. In August of 1907, he took twenty-two boys to a camp on Brownsea Island off of England's southern coast. For twelve glorious days they hiked, went on patrols, learned to cook outdoors, and practiced skills necessary to survive in the backcountry. On that island, scouting began and Baden-Powell's concept soon swept across the globe.

In order for scouting to reach America, an American businessman had to get lost in the fog in England. William D. Boyce was stumbling through a thick fog when a young boy miraculously appeared and offered to guide him. After they had made their way through the fog, Boyce attempted to tip the boy, but the boy refused and explained that he was a scout and scouts never accepted payment in return for a "good turn." Boyce listened in awe as the boy explained the principles of scouting. Boyce even met with Baden-Powell himself. By the time he boarded his ocean liner back to America, he had an entire suitcase filled with handbooks and ideas about scouting. The "unknown scout" who helped Boyce through the fog was never identified, but thanks to his "good turn," Boyce created the Boy Scouts of America in 1910.

Baden-Powell was named Chief Scout of the World and after his death a letter was found in his desk that read: "Try and leave the world a little better than you found it." Fitting words from a man who has inspired millions of children worldwide to act with honor and good character.

Unbelievable Discoveries

On August 25, 1835, the residents of New York opened the *Sun* newspaper to read about a miraculous discovery. The eminent British astronomer Sir John Herschel was testing a powerful new telescope on the Cape of Good Hope in southern Africa. Looking through his telescope at the moon he was able to identify oceans and beaches, trees and plants, bison and goats, blue unicorns, and a race of upright walking beavers that lived in huts. Most astounding of all, Herschel had observed a civilization of tiny, furry men with bat-like wings. The *Vespertilio-homo*, or “man-bat,” even



worshipped at the Temple of the Moon, a beautiful golden-roofed structure built of sapphire. When the article appeared in the *New York Sun*, the newspaper became the most-read newspaper in the world.

Other newspapers frantically rushed to cover the extraordinary story, and some even pretended to acquire the original scientific report so they could publish copies of the *New York Sun*'s article. The article, of course, was a hoax, but it was not discovered as such until many weeks later. Herschel himself did not know that the discoveries had been attributed to him, and was quite amused when he found out. Edgar Allan Poe, too, was amused by the story. He had recently published the short story “The Unparalleled Adventure of One Hans Pfall,” where a man voyages to the moon in a hot air balloon. Poe was allegedly working on a follow-up to the story when the newspaper article broke, and he abandoned his work because he felt that he could not compete with the fantastic fictional reporting.

The *New York Sun* never issued an apology or admission that the article was a fake, and thanks to the Great Moon Hoax it remained one of the world's most popular newspapers.

Living Long and Prospering

On August 5, join Trekkies from around the world as they boldly go to Las Vegas for the Star Trek Convention. *Star Trek*'s creator, Gene Roddenberry, originally pitched his television series in 1966 as “Horatio Hornblower in space.” Today, the characters of Captain Kirk and Spock are icons of a multi-billion dollar franchise. As the number one cult TV show of all time, *Star Trek* has amassed millions of devoted followers worldwide, and the convention is a major event. Test your *Star Trek* knowledge with this quiz:

1. What was the name of the space ship made famous on *Star Trek*?
2. What alien race was the crew's science officer, Mr. Spock?
3. What is the name of the school where space pilots such as Capt. Kirk received their training?
4. Finish the *Star Trek* tagline: “To boldly go...”

Answers: 1. USS Enterprise; 2. Vulcan; 3. Starfleet Academy; 4. “...where no man has gone before.”

Bog Snorkeling

In 1976, at a pub in Wales, England, called The Neuadd Arms, two men struck up a conversation about snorkeling in the mucky peat bogs of central Wales. Perhaps against their better judgment, bog snorkeling was born, and each August hundreds of locals gather at the Waen Rhydd peat bog in Llanwrtyd Wells, Wales, to swim underwater through the mud and muck.



A peat bog is a unique wetland habitat, akin to a swamp but much colder, often with a thick, foul-smelling blanket of decaying plant matter, or peat, skimming the surface. These conditions make it the least likely place for an enjoyable afternoon of snorkeling.

Playing with Fire



On the last day in August, the people of Nejapa, El Salvador, pay bizarre tribute to their patron saint, Geronimo, by throwing balls of fire at each other in the streets. This state-sanctioned mayhem is over one hundred years old and commemorates the devastating eruption of the volcano El Playon in 1658, which forced the entire town to evacuate and move location. Legend tells that the eruption was the work of the devil, and Saint Geronimo fought back with his own balls of fire, saving the inhabitants of the town.

Today, locals prepare for the holiday by soaking balled up rags tied with wire in kerosene for one month. Once ignited, they easily burn, and when thrown, they spit bursts of flame through the air. The event looks like the game of dodge ball, except instead of balls the teams hurl fire at each other. (Naturally, they wear gloves.)

After night falls, opposing teams face off in the street with a crowd looking on. City officials start the fun by lighting fireworks, and then the two teams light their fireballs and, wearing thick protective gloves, throw hundreds of them at each other. In most cases, fireballs strike opposing team members, and the splashing kerosene explodes in a burst of fire. The streets surge with excitement and suspense, while onlookers shriek with glee and horror. Orange streaks arc through the air and flaming balls litter the street. As participants pick up fireballs with their gloved hands and throw them, it is easy to imagine Saint Geronimo battling the devil.

Understandably, slight injuries are common. Fire engines and ambulances line the streets in case things get out of hand. As the night wears on, the rules relax, participants get bold, and errant fireballs may leave the street and land in the crowd, but it's all part of the fun and excitement. Great balls of fire!

Italy's Flawed Tower

Construction of Italy's famous Leaning Tower of Pisa began on August 9, 1173. It is the freestanding bell tower to the neighboring cathedral, and, of course, was never meant to lean. The tower first began to tilt in 1178. Its design was flawed from the beginning due to a shallow foundation set in weak and uneven soil. In 1272, engineers tried to compensate for the lean by building upper floors with one side taller than the other, but this caused the tower to lean in the other direction.

Multiple methods have been employed to fix the tower's lean, including the addition of lead counterweights and anchor cables. Finally, in 2008, soil was removed from its base and the tower stopped moving for the first time in its history, preserving its famous angle of 3.97 degrees.

Boop-Oop-a-Doop

Betty Boop made her cartoon debut on August 9, 1930. The creation of animator Grim Natwick, Betty Boop was originally a French poodle. She didn't become fully human until 1932, when her poodle ears became hoop earrings and her voice adopted her trademark Brooklyn accent.



Although she was a star of the Depression Era, she embodied the carefree flapper girls of the Jazz Age. She earned an adult audience due to her cute and flirtatious personality. Oftentimes, the teenage Betty Boop was depicted defying her parents. She was a modern young woman who got herself in and out of trouble.

Betty Boop's popularity still continues today. She has made cameo appearances in modern newspaper cartoon strips as well as animated films. A Betty Boop musical is even in development on Broadway.

Mysteries of the Deep



Who knows what monsters roam the uncharted depths of the world's oceans? For as long as humans have sailed the seas, they have told stories of mythical underwater sea serpents.

On August 7, Sea Serpent Day, these tales may make you think twice about visiting the local beach:

A 1555 report from Norway tells of "a serpent of fearsome size...it has long hair hanging from its neck, sharp black scales, and flaming red eyes. It attacks vessels, grabs and swallows people, and lifts itself up like a column from the water."

In 1734, the crew on board a ship sailing past Greenland "saw a most terrible creature, resembling nothing they saw before. The monster lifted its head so high that it seemed to be higher than the crow's nest on the mainmast. The monster was longer than our whole ship."

In August of 1848, the crew of the HMS Daedalus sighted a serpent in the South Atlantic that was at least sixty feet long with a maned head above the water.

In 1905, off the coast of Brazil, the crew of the ship Valhalla, including two scientists, spied a long-necked, turtle-headed creature with a massive dorsal fin.

As recently as 1983, a construction crew working near the Golden Gate Bridge in San Francisco witnessed a one hundred foot creature underwater speeding towards land. Using binoculars, they watched it make coils in the sea.

Sea serpent sightings continue today, especially along the coast of America's Pacific Northwest. What makes these sightings so compelling are that entire crews, not just individuals, witness the same sea serpent. Are they myth or reality?

August Birthdays

If you were born from July 23-August 22, you are a Leo, the lion. If you were born from August 23-September 22, you are a Virgo, the virgin. Leos are creative, enthusiastic, generous, and extroverted. Nothing can stop these charismatic and ambitious leaders. Virgos are modest, intelligent, reliable, practical, and able to clearly analyze the most complex of problems.

Yves Saint Laurent (designer)	Aug. 1, 1936
Barack Obama (president)	Aug. 4, 1961
John Huston (filmmaker)	Aug. 5, 1906
Lucille Ball (comedian)	Aug. 6, 1911
Rhonda Fleming (actress)	Aug. 10, 1923
Cecil B. DeMille (director)	Aug. 12, 1881
Annie Oakley (sharpshooter)	Aug. 13, 1860
Mae West (vamp)	Aug. 17, 1893
H.P. Lovecraft (writer)	Aug. 20, 1890
Usain Bolt (world's fastest man)	Aug. 21, 1986
Claudia Schiffer (supermodel)	Aug. 25, 1970
Buddy Hackett (actor)	Aug. 31, 1924

Happy August Birthdays!

Fuel of the Future?

Biodiesel has been trumpeted as cleaner, more environmentally-friendly, and more economical than petroleum-based fuels. In an effort to spread awareness of this energy source, countries around the world have named August 10 International Biodiesel Day.



Biodiesel is an alternative fuel that utilizes natural oils from soybeans, peanuts, sunflowers, coconuts, palms, rapeseeds, old coffee grounds, and even algae. While biodiesel's greatest benefits may be yet to come, it was used as fuel in the 1800s. Rudolf Diesel himself, the inventor of the diesel engine, ran his first engine on peanut oil on August 10, 1893.