

The Springs Of Scottsdale
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Postage
Information

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At Your Leisure

January 1st rings in more than the new year; it's also the start of Hobby Month, so you should add practicing a new skill to your list of New Year's resolutions. One of the trendiest new hobbies is hand-lettering. This hobby might sound simple at first. You are, after all, just drawing letters as opposed to writing them. But as you let your imagination take over, you may find that your highly decorative and detailed lettering demands fine-tuned attention and a wide variety of tools: rulers, grid paper, and archival-quality pens of different weights and colors. Also in vogue is the hobby of bullet journaling. Your diary no longer desires a long and rambling narrative about your day. Instead, bullet journaling features lists and short phrases that capture your thoughts. These journals become to-do lists, sketchbooks, notebooks, diaries, and organizational systems. Of course, they can be embellished with colorful flourishes to make them as wonderfully unique as you are.

If arts and crafts aren't your thing, then there are plenty of hobbies in the kitchen. Currently, pickling and fermenting food is all the rage. To pickle something, preserve it in a salty brine or acid like vinegar or lemon juice. Fermented foods call for submerging your veggies in a brine, whey, or even a store-bought starter culture. Fermentation has one advantage over pickling: it creates beneficial bacteria that aids in digestion, preserves the vitamin content of foods, and also suppresses the growth of harmful bacteria. Another trendy hobby akin to fermentation is brewing beer at home. Whereas the by-product of fermented foods is beneficial bacteria, the by-product of fermenting water, malt, hops, yeast, and sugar is beer.

For hobbyists looking to get outdoors, flower arranging is now à la mode. Arrange flowers by color, size, height, and shape to create the perfect bouquet. The Japanese even have a name for their ancient tradition of artistic flower arrangements: *ikebana*.

Celebrating January

Polka Music Month

Change Your Stars Month

Book Blitz Month

New Years Day

January 1

Casino Arizona

January 12

Drum Circle

January 17

Mystery Scenic Drive

January 19

Nashville Standard Concert

January 20

Art All Around Us

January 24

Fort McDowell Casino

January 26

January Birthdays

In astrology, those born between January 1–19 are Capricorn's Goats. Goats are practical, determined, and focused on ambitious goals. They follow a straightforward, well-planned path and persevere with grit and honesty. Those born between January 20–31 are Water Bearers of Aquarius. Water Bearers are creative and intellectual philosophers at heart, getting to the root of problems and using their energy and passion for the benefit of others.

Jacqueline M.....1/2	Fern P.....1/18
Robert B.....1/6	Laura S.....1/18
Rita F.....1/8	Burt F.....1/19
Don O.....1/8	Mary W.....1/20
Shirley H.....1/11	Jack G.....1/24
Marie W.....1/17	Stephanie F.....1/26

Gone for Good



Every year, Lake Superior State University reveals its list of overused words or phrases that it feels *must* be banished from use forever. Which words made the cut? As you can imagine, a few choice words from the American political sphere, namely: *bigly*, meaning "a swelling or blustering manner," and *post-truth*, meaning "a society where facts matter less than impressions." There are also plenty of words related to social media and the Internet: *ghost*, which is "to abruptly end communication on social media," and *listicle*, which is "a numbered or bulleted list created to attract views over the Internet." Judges are ready to choose the worst of the lot come New Year's Day, and a likely winner (or loser?) is the word *disruption*, a term used to describe the radical change experienced as the result of a social movement or innovation.

An American Original



Stephen Foster has been called America's first pop artist, thanks to the musical artistry he put into penning some of the 19th century's most memorable songs. You may not be familiar with all 200 of his hits, but his classics "Oh! Susanna," "Camptown Races,"

"Old Folks at Home" (known as "Swanee River"), and "My Old Kentucky Home," have earned their rightful place in America's national songbook. Don't be surprised to find yourself humming some of these tunes on January 13, Stephen Foster Memorial Day.

Long before the technology was available to record music, Foster was a professional songwriter. He was born near Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, in a community of immigrants from Italy, Scotland, Ireland, and Germany. His own musical compositions would eventually reflect the influence of European musical traditions as well as church hymns. Living in an era before formal public schooling, Foster taught himself how to play the clarinet, violin, guitar, flute, and piano. He likely wrote his first hit, "Oh! Susanna," as a teenaged member of a secret society known as the "Knights of the S.T." (Square Table). "Oh! Susanna" became so popular that it was the anthem of the California Gold Rush.

Foster may today be lauded as an American icon, but in 1855 his life took a bad turn. His parents and best friend died, he separated from his wife, and he became heavily indebted to his publishers. It may come as no surprise that it was during this time in his life that he wrote "Hard Times Come Again No More." Sadly, with no copyright laws to protect his songwriting, Foster did not reap much financial reward for this or any other of his most popular compositions. By the early 1860s, his life was a daily struggle, and he was forced to move in and out of hotels in New York City. He died on January 13, 1864, with just 38 cents in his wallet. Although he died a pauper, he has achieved legendary status at the forefront of America's artistic elite.

The Dirt on Farming

January 10–13 brings No-Tillage Week, an awareness campaign aimed at spreading the word about the benefits of no-till farming. Farmers have tilled soil for thousands of years, agitating and turning over dirt in preparation for planting. This practice, however common, may not create the healthiest soil. By leaving soil untilled, it absorbs more water, retains the organic matter of previously planted crops, improves the cycling of nutrients, retains beneficial microorganisms in the soil, and reduces erosion and runoff. No-tillage also reduces labor, fuel, irrigation, and machinery costs, while reaping comparable harvests. In this way, no-till farming has been shown to be very profitable, if managed correctly. As in all things, change comes slowly. Transforming a farm from till to no-till is a daunting task. The promise of higher yields, drought-resistance, and lower costs need to be proven before farmers hop on the no-tillage bandwagon, and that is what this week is all about.

Totally Tubular



Spend January 3 celebrating the totally tubular invention of the drinking straw. On this day in 1888, Marvin Stone was issued the patent for his paper drinking straw. Prior to Stone's invention, people used straws made from blades of rye grass, but the rye imparted a grassy taste to the drink. His invention was a welcome improvement, but hardly original. Drinking straws were in use 5,000 years ago by the Sumerians, who employed straws that doubled as sieves. These drinking tubes were used to drink beer and would filter out solid particulates that were the by-product of fermentation. A gold straw inlaid with blue jewels was even discovered in a Sumerian tomb. Of course, most straws today are made of plastic, but the careless tossing of these single-use straws into the garbage has created an environmental mess. It seems that Stone's patent of a recyclable paper straw is more important than ever.

The Twelfth Day of Christmas



The last day of the Twelve Days of Christmas falls on January 6, and in Ireland it doesn't end with twelve drummers drumming, but with *Nollaig na mBan*, or Women's Christmas, or Little Christmas, as it's also known. This is the day the Christmas decorations come down and (finally) the women of the house get a much-deserved rest after catering to guests during the busy holiday season. In 1998, an article published in the *Irish Times* newspaper noted that while even God rested on the seventh day, Irish women didn't get to rest until the twelfth!

The holiday is especially common in southern Ireland's counties of Cork and Kerry, where families celebrate a yearly reminder of the strength and importance of Irish women, especially mothers, who have long been considered the backbone of the Irish family. In Ireland's olden times, the women would save the turf, cut the hay, and paint the barn, all while raising the children and feeding the family—no small task considering how large traditional Irish families were. While a woman's role in Irish society has evolved over the years—they have moved far beyond the boundaries of the home and into the community, business, and politics—women are no less revered.

On January 6, it is common for children to give their mothers and grandmothers presents or cook them breakfast. The men take over the household duties for the day while women gather socially in the pubs and restaurants for a little well-deserved girl time. In fact, it is the one time of year when restaurants and bars are filled entirely with women.

Luckily, the notion of Women's Christmas is becoming popular for Irish women beyond Cork and Kerry. And the celebration is becoming more than just a night out at the pubs. Modern Women's Christmas celebrations are including discussions about women's health, political involvement, and most any other women's issues: less food, and more food for thought.

Flying High

Save the eagles! You'll get your chance on January 10, Save the Eagles Day. There are more than 70 species of eagles around the world, some of which are listed as endangered species, but fortunately most of these majestic birds are large and powerful enough to survive in most any condition. Eagles may not be the fastest or most agile of raptors, but compared to hawks and falcons, they stand out as the largest. Stellar's sea eagle from the northeastern coast of Asia is the heaviest at 20 pounds, but the Philippine eagle, at 3.35 feet tall and with a more than seven-foot wingspan, is considered the largest. This eagle, the national bird of the Philippines, is the world's rarest and most powerful eagle. At the other end of the spectrum is the South Nicobar serpent eagle, considered the world's smallest. Found only on India's Great Nicobar Island, this eagle is barely 1.5 feet tall and, as the name suggests, eats mainly snakes and lizards. Eagles tend to be loners and fly at high altitudes, sometimes up to 10,000 feet. They can hunt from such high altitudes because they can see clearly up to 50 miles away with their "eagle eyes."

Little Man with Big Success



Charles Sherwood Stratton was born on January 4, 1838, as a large baby, at 9 pounds 8 ounces, but by six months of age, he had largely stopped growing. In 1842, legendary showman P.T. Barnum stopped in Stratton's

hometown and discovered the two-foot-tall four-year-old boy. Barnum hired the child and made Stratton an international star, impersonating Napoleon Bonaparte and performing as Cupid. Renamed as General Tom Thumb, Stratton traveled to England and won an appearance before Queen Victoria. When Tom Thumb married a woman of similar restricted growth, he made the cover of the *New York Times*, beating out coverage of America's Civil War. Indeed, even President Abraham Lincoln hosted their honeymoon.