

September 2023

West Bloomfield Health and Rehabilitation Center

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Celebrating September

Classical Music Month

Sewing Month

World Alzheimer's Month

Nutrition Week

September 1–7

Victory Over Japan Day

September 2

Labor Day (U.S.)

September 4

**International Day
of Charity**

September 5

Grandparents Day

September 10

Patriot Day (U.S.)

September 11

Rosh Hashanah

September 15–17

Yom Kippur

September 24–25

World Tourism Day

September 27

The Most Fashionable Month

The month of September brings a string of fashion weeks from the industry's most influential designers in some of the world's most fabulous cities. New York, London, and Milan all host runway shows debuting the hottest trends for 2024. This monthlong fashion celebration culminates in Paris, where top designers, celebrities, and fashionistas gather to show off their newest fashion creations. September just might be the most fashionable month of the entire year.

New York, London, Milan, and Paris are known as the "Big Four" fashion cities of the world. Typically, each city hosts its own nation's designers. Donna Karan, Michael Kors, and Thom Browne call New York home; Burberry, JW Anderson, and Simone Rocha rock the runways of London; Italian greats Fendi, Gucci, and Prada strut in Milan; while French fashion houses Chanel, Givenchy, and Dior display their elegance in Paris. While there are plenty of fashion labels in Spain, Japan, Turkey, and elsewhere, fashion houses large and small flock to these four cities, where journalists and celebrities exert tremendous influence over which trends will dominate the next season.

The very first fashion shows were held in Paris. Nineteenth-century designer Charles Frederick Worth and his marketing team replaced fashion dolls with live women to parade new designs in public places like racetracks and beauty salons. During the first two decades of the 20th century, both designers and department stores began staging their own "fashion shows," or fashion parades, to lure middle-class women into stores. It wasn't until 1943, amid World War II, that New York held its first official fashion week, which it dubbed "Press Week." With fashion industry moguls and media unable to fly to Paris, New York decided to hold its own fashion event. American designers could now give buyers alternatives to French fashion. Paris soon established its own regular couture shows in 1945. Our global devotion to fashion trends had finally begun.

Living a Fantasy



For those unfamiliar with the literary works of J.R.R. Tolkien, the word *hobbit* and the celebration of Hobbit Day on September 22 might sound like utter nonsense. But for those well-versed in Tolkien's great works of high fantasy *The Hobbit* and *The Lord of the Rings*, this day is not just a celebration of the birthdays of the fictional characters Bilbo and Frodo Baggins but a day to honor all the contributions Tolkien has made to the fantasy genre.

In many ways, Tolkien single-handedly created the genre of epic fantasy that is filled with magic, mages, wizards, elves, and orcs. Fantasy as a genre existed and even thrived before Tolkien, but this early fantasy consisted of formulaic fairy tales and fantastic medieval romance. Many of the stories predating Tolkien were meant for children and filled with whimsy, such as L. Frank Baum's *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz*, Lewis Carroll's *Alice in Wonderland*, and J. M. Barrie's *Peter Pan*. Tolkien, while fighting as a British soldier in the trenches during World War I, began to formulate not just a novel but an entirely new world and mythology filled with its own gods, goddesses, races, and continents. Moreover, the conflicts found in these novels were not whimsical but were dark and foreboding.

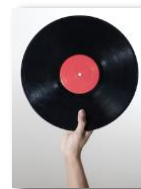
Much of Tolkien's inspiration came from Norse mythology. He was profoundly influenced by the Old English epic poem *Beowulf*, within which we can find templates for Tolkien's giants, elves, orcs, and dragons. As a linguist, Tolkien found many of the names for his fantastic creatures in Old English manuscripts like the *Codex Junius*. Tolkien was also a devout Roman Catholic. There is no denying the influence of Catholicism on his writings, from the creation of his fantastic universe harkening to Genesis, to the conflict of good and evil between God and Satan, to the fall of humankind reminiscent of the Garden of Eden. Whatever Tolkien's influences, what remains are novels that have profoundly influenced not just fantasy but pop culture all around the world.

Begging the Question

Ask a Stupid Question Day on September 28 prompts us to wonder what happens if you ask a stupid question. Will you get a stupid answer? Or, as the other saying goes, is there really no such thing as a stupid question? This holiday was invented by teachers in the 1980s as a way to get children to be fearless when it comes to asking questions. The notion is that if students feel comfortable asking stupid questions, they will feel more confident asking questions in general.

Questions are the cornerstone of learning. This was understood by Socrates back in ancient Greece when he developed his own questioning methods. Over the millennia, questioning has allowed us to explore complex ideas, clarify meanings, provide evidence, explore consequences, and challenge assumptions. Without questions, there is no learning! So yes, ask questions even if they are stupid! Even if they reveal obvious truths, truths in the open are better than truths hidden.

Hit Parade



If you had only one chance for greatness, would you really make it count? September 25, One-Hit Wonder Day, honors those artists who took their one chance and made a lasting musical impression on popular culture. In 1957, Dale Hawkins wrote the rockabilly hit "Suzy Q," a one-hit wonder that was remade into a hit by Creedence Clearwater Revival in 1968. In 1969, Norman Greenbaum was inspired to write a gospel song, so he penned "Spirit in the Sky" in 15 minutes. The ode to Jesus became a massive hit despite Greenbaum being Jewish. The single went gold, selling two million copies. It wasn't the first one-hit wonder to go gold. In 1966, "96 Tears" by ? [Question Mark] and the Mysterians hit No. 1 on the pop charts and went gold. Frontman Rudy "Question Mark" Martinez never questioned the song's mysterious popularity.

Making History in Venice

As if the Grand Canal of Venice isn't romantic enough, each September it hosts an event that charms both locals and tourists alike—the Regata Storica. Venice is famous for its traditional gondolas, but this regatta takes Venice's love of rowing to grand new heights.



The Regata Storica is a historical reenactment, an opportunity for Venetians to display their Serenissima heritage to the world. In 1489, Caterina Cornaro, queen of Cyprus, returned to Venice in an elaborate procession over

water. Cornaro was from a powerful Venetian family and had been given in marriage to the king of Cyprus. Upon the king's premature death, Cornaro maintained control over the island for 16 years until she was forced to abdicate the throne and hand the island of Cyprus over to the powerful Venetians.

The Regatta Storica is a reenactment of the queen's return. Renaissance-era boats parade along the Grand Canal powered by rowers in period costumes. *Bissone*, the long, snake-like boats reminiscent of ancient warships, glide alongside the Bucintoro, a replica of the doge's luxurious galley. Other smaller boats swarm about these larger barges, creating joyous chaos on the water for all to enjoy. Once the historical procession has ended, the boat races begin.

There are four races, all showcasing different traditional boats. The first race involves the *pupparini*, small, swift crafts that were once used to cruise the canals and train would-be gondoliers. The *mascarete* boats come next, oared exclusively by women. The third race features the wide *caorline* boats, traditionally used for fishing and for transporting fruits and vegetables. These large, heavy boats require six oars and are often steered by men who sometimes struggle to control the boats' sheer heft. Last come the *gondolini*, gondolas modified for racing. These light, fast boats offer an exciting finale to a momentous day.

Podcast Popularity

Podcasts, those instantly accessible online audio series, are among the most popular forms of modern entertainment. They are so popular, in fact, that they enjoy their own holiday on September 30, International Podcast Day.

The allure of podcasts lies in their variety and availability. You can listen to stories about just about anything: cooking, home renovation, celebrities, hard news stories, pop culture, and more. And thanks to smartphones, you can listen whenever and wherever you want: on a walk, at the gym, at home, in the car. While many podcasts are deeply researched and professionally produced, even hosted by established radio and television personalities, it is still possible to record your own podcast about whatever topic you like in your basement. In many ways, the medium is surprisingly free, both in terms of cost to stream and in terms of creativity. Neither internet nor media companies control content. If you love listening to the radio, podcasts are its modern extension. Why not try them?

Project Stormfury



From 1962 to 1983, the United States government engaged in an ambitious scientific project known as Project Stormfury, the manipulation of hurricanes.

Aircraft would fly into hurricanes and drop silver iodide, turning supercooled water inside the storm to ice, a process known as "seeding." This would, theoretically, disrupt the storm structure and cause the hurricane to weaken. Over the years, Project Stormfury identified hurricanes to target and attempted to seed them, often with inconclusive results. On September 30, 1971, an attempt was made to seed Hurricane Ginger as it lashed the North Carolina coast. It was not successful. Although "seeding" was never proven effective, invaluable hurricane research was conducted.

The Space Race



On September 12, 1962, President John F. Kennedy was at Rice University in Houston, Texas, and his mission was clear: deliver a speech that would get the nation excited about sending a man to the moon.

This speech stands as a seminal moment in the Space Race between the United States and the Soviet Union.

The Soviet Union struck first in the Space Race, launching the world's first satellite, Sputnik 1, in October 1957. Then, in April 1961, Russian cosmonaut Yuri Gagarin became the first person in space. By the time Kennedy became president, the United States' space efforts seemed woefully behind the Soviets. And after the Bay of Pigs disaster in April of 1961, America's reputation as a world power was severely tarnished.

Kennedy needed a win, an achievement that would demonstrate American superiority over the Soviets. Could the Americans beat the Russians in launching a space station? Orbiting a man around the moon? Landing a man on the moon? NASA administrator James E. Webb identified landing a man on the moon as the most feasible—but also the most expensive—option.

In May of 1961, Kennedy asked Congress for billions in funding for a space program called Apollo that would land a man on the moon. Not everyone was impressed. Polls showed that 58 percent of Americans were opposed to the idea. But Kennedy moved forward, spending billions to build a new Manned Spacecraft Center in Houston, Texas.

In September 1962, Kennedy toured the new facility. He met astronaut John Glenn and reviewed models of the Apollo spacecraft. Then, before a crowd of 40,000 at Rice University, he delivered his speech, famously saying: "We choose to go to the moon in this decade and do the other things, not because they are easy, but because they are hard." The speech was a great success, and Kennedy finally had the public support he needed for his ambitious and history-making initiative.

September Birthdays

In astrology, those born from September 1–22 are Virgins of Virgo. Virgos, associated with the goddess of the earth, are rooted in the material world. They are considered practical, organized, and detail-oriented. Those born from September 23–30 balance the scales of Libra. Libras strive to find equilibrium and fight for equality and justice. They use their sharp minds to de-escalate conflicts and find peace.

Keanu Reeves (actor) – September 2, 1964

Beyonce (singer) – September 4, 1981

Idris Elba (actor) – September 6, 1972

Otis Redding (singer) – September 9, 1941

Tyler Perry (filmmaker) – September 13, 1969

Lauren Bacall (actress) – September 16, 1924

Frankie Avalon (singer) – September 18, 1940

Dorothy Vaughan (programmer) – September 20, 1910

Mark Hamill (actor) – September 25, 1951

Serena Williams (athlete) – September 26, 1981

Gene Autry (cowboy) – September 29, 1907

Something Borrowed



Since 1987, September has been celebrated as Library Card Sign-Up Month. While this is a time to remind children about the value of libraries, people of any age are encouraged to get a library card

and explore the wonderful world of borrowing books for free. America's first lending library was founded in Franklin, Massachusetts, in 1778. When Founding Father Ben Franklin was asked to donate a bell to the town, he instead donated a set of books, which became the library's first collection. The oldest known library in the world dates back to the seventh century BC. Located in Nineveh, in modern-day Iraq, it was a private library built for the Assyrian ruler Ashurbanipal. It did not house books but rather 30,000 cuneiform tablets, including the 4,000-year-old *Epic of Gilgamesh*. It wasn't until the 19th century that public lending libraries became popular and the first library membership "card" systems were devised.