

Prairie Rose Center



Celebrating October

Country Music Month

**Global Diversity
Awareness Month**

Emotional Wellness Month

World Smile Day
October 2

World Teachers Day
October 5

Indigenous Peoples Day
October 12

Character Counts Week
October 18–24

International Chefs Day
October 20

International Artist Day
October 25

Halloween
October 31

October Is a Hoot

In October, the black of night is deep and dark. Chill winds blow away the veil of clouds shrouding the crescent moon so that it casts faint shadows in the forest. A deep hoot echoes, sending a shiver down your spine. October is considered Owl Month for good reason. This is the time of year that many great horned owls are active. They begin to set up territory and look for a mate. Hooting, screeching, and other vocalizations are integral to these rituals. For this reason, October is sometimes called the hooting season.

For millennia, humankind has shared myths that depict owls as emissaries of doom, death, and evil magic. The ancient Greeks and Romans believed that witches could transform themselves into owls. The Hopis of North America believe that burrowing owls, which nest and roost underground, are associated with Maasaw, the god of the dead and the night. During the Gaelic festival of Samhain, which takes place on the night of October 31, the barrier between the living and the dead thins so that the spirits of deceased relatives can find their way home. Owls, it was believed, could snatch those wandering souls and eat them. Is it any wonder then that owls, with their midnight hooting and hunting on silent wings, are associated with Halloween? As creatures of the night, they are the perfect symbols for a festival that reveres all things spooky.

Not all cultures have feared the owl. The Greek goddess Athena, fed up with the trickster crow, adopted the owl as her companion animal thanks to its perceived wisdom and seriousness. Some Australian aboriginal groups believe that owls are the sacred spirits of women and are revered. In Afghanistan, it is said that the owl brought humans the gifts of flint and iron, tools to make fire. In return, humans gave owls their feathers. Owls are unique amongst birds. Their unusual characteristics—nocturnal nature, hooting calls, large eyes, and their uncanny ability to rotate their necks—all have captured our imaginations and, in many ways, let our fears get the better of us. Thankfully, most cultures have learned to share these myths while preserving the species, ensuring the survival of these magnificent animals for generations to come.

Marshall's Legal Legacy



On October 2, 1967, Thurgood Marshall was sworn in as the first black Supreme Court justice. Marshall was no stranger to the Supreme Court. As chief counsel for the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), he had argued 32 cases before the Supreme Court, winning 29 of them, a record-setting achievement at that time. After a long and contentious debate in the Senate, Marshall's nomination was confirmed by a vote of 69–11. President Lyndon Johnson was confident in his selection, saying that it was “the right thing to do, the right time to do it, and the right man and the right place.”

Marshall was born in Baltimore, Maryland, in 1908, the great-grandson of slaves. He was rejected from the University of Maryland's law school because of his skin color, so he enrolled in Howard University in Washington, DC. There he studied under the civil rights lawyer Charles Houston, who was a major figure in the dismantling of Jim Crow laws. Marshall graduated first in his class in 1933, and three years later, he joined the legal team at the NAACP, where Houston was the director. In just two years, Marshall took over this top legal job and went on to argue many cases before the Supreme Court. They were cases that would reshape the legal landscape for minorities and usher in the Civil Rights Era.

Marshall's most notable case was *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka*. He argued that “separate educational facilities were inherently unequal” and therefore violated the “equal protection clause” of the Fourteenth Amendment of the Constitution. The high court unanimously agreed with Marshall, ending segregation in schools.

Marshall's contributions as a Supreme Court justice were no less momentous. His decisions helped expand civil rights, challenged discrimination based on race and sex, and questioned inequities in the criminal justice system. Marshall spent his career as a tireless advocate for the betterment of all Americans.

Pasta's Path to Italy

Pasta is a food beloved by cultures all over the world. While many associate this pantry staple with Italy (thanks to gorgeous visions of spaghetti mounds topped with meatballs), nearly every country has its own version of noodles made from flour, water, and eggs. On October 25, World Pasta Day, enjoy spaghetti from Italy, lo mein from China, ramen from Japan, orzo from Greece, or spaetzle from Germany.

Many myths describe how pasta was brought from China to Italy during the 13th century by explorer and merchant Marco Polo. Historians believe it is more likely that noodles originated in central Asia thousands of years prior. Noodles reached East Asia and even moved westward to Europe long before the triumphant return of Marco Polo. Yet none can dispute that in Italy pasta was transformed and refined, thanks to the cultivation of durum wheat, which is high in gluten and long-lasting on the shelf. The Mediterranean climate was suited to growing vegetables and herbs, which led to the development of the many tomato-based sauces that are today synonymous with pasta.

Bald Is Beautiful



Sometimes by choice but most often by necessity, people go bald. October 14, Be Bald and Be Free Day, is a day to honor the bald pate and the integrity of those who dare to bare it all.

Baldness is often caused by genetics or hormonal changes. It may also be the result of an autoimmune disorder, where the body attacks its hair follicles. Some people may use wigs to cover their heads or rely on treatments such as Minoxidil, but October 14 is an opportunity to bare your baldness with pride. Baldness is so prevalent in cultures around the world that geneticists believe it is a beneficial trait that projects intelligence, honesty, helpfulness, and social maturity.

Max for the Mini



October 30, 1965, was the day of the Melbourne Cup Carnival at the Flemington Racecourse in Melbourne, Australia. It was a day of horse races, entertainment, fashion, food, and culture, but the attention was not on the racehorses. Twenty-two-year-old English supermodel Jean Shrimpton, known as “the most beautiful girl in the world,” had arrived wearing a simple white shift dress, yet there was nothing simple about the fact that the hem of the little minidress ended four inches above her knees. Moreover, she wore no hat, gloves, or stockings. The Melbourne Cup may have been known as “the race that stops a nation,” but Shrimpton’s skimpy attire had stopped the nation’s heart. Australia was scandalized, and the supermodel had single-handedly launched a fashion revolution.

Was Shrimpton’s shocking choice intentional? She had been hired by Dupont to promote its new Orlon fabric and had been sent rolls of the stuff prior to Derby Day. Shrimpton and London dressmaker Colin Rolfe went to work crafting a dress, but Rolfe soon discovered that he did not have enough Orlon to finish his design. Shrimpton advised him to settle on the modern and minuscule white shift. Miniskirts were in vogue amongst the youth of London, largely thanks to the work of fashion designer Mary Quant, so the decision must have seemed a natural one to Shrimpton. It was not deemed acceptable by mainstream Australian society.

The newspapers chided her for her poor taste. Dupont immediately found a Melbourne designer to design more appropriate clothes for Shrimpton’s subsequent Derby appearances. Shrimpton wore the new conservative clothes, but she could not escape the scandal of her white minidress. By the end of the Carnival, she had unapologetically returned to her modern look, saying, “I feel Melbourne isn’t ready for me yet.” By the next year’s Carnival, Melbourne designers had copied Shrimpton’s look. Any hemline below the knee was now old-fashioned.

A Home for the “Gentle Giants”

The massive redwood trees have graced the coast of California for thousands of years, yet it wasn’t until October 2, 1968, that Redwood National Park was founded to protect these “gentle giants” as national treasures. After the discovery of gold along the Trinity River in 1850, Northern California experienced a mini-gold rush, and many miners turned to logging, which decimated the redwood population. Various conservation groups attempted to save the old-growth forests, and many stands of trees were saved. The outbreak of World War II led to a construction boom, and once again the trees were eyed as a rich source of lumber. It was not easy for President Lyndon Johnson to sign legislation establishing Redwood National Park, especially in the face of opposition from timber companies. But thankfully, 58,000 acres of forest were set aside for preservation. Today that number has grown to over 130,000 acres, providing a vast coastal shelter for the tallest trees in the world. Nurtured by the dense fog of the coast, some of these trees soar more than 300 feet into the sky. Even the smallest specimens are wondrous to behold.

Pleasure in the Post



The first full week of October brings International Postcard Week. Experienced *deltiologists* (the official term for postcard collectors) value postcards for their rarity, beauty, and condition, yet anyone can collect postcards as a fun and enjoyable hobby. Postcards are often set into two categories: those depicting topographical and social history, such as photos or illustrations of historical scenes; and subject or “topical” cards created by notable artists. Of course, International Postcard Week is not just for collectors. Many people celebrate by creating their own postcards and mailing them to someone they love. You never know, your postcard could end up in a deltiologist’s collection someday.

Life Is a Cabaret

On October 6, 1889, the *Moulin Rouge* cabaret opened in the Montmartre section of Paris. Europe was in the midst of an economic and social reawakening after the horrors of the Franco-Prussian War. Europeans attempted to heal the scars of the recent past by diving headfirst into a period of carefree frivolity. For those seeking fun, freedom, and *joie de vivre* during this *Belle Epoque*, there was no better refuge than the bohemian haven of Montmartre.



Savvy businessmen Joseph Oller and Charles Zidler enjoyed instant success after the opening of their cabaret. They gave Parisians what they wanted, an atmosphere of decadence and glamour replete with dancing girls in suggestive costumes and free-flowing libations. The well-to-do came to enjoy nights of debauchery. Artists soaked up the atmosphere as inspiration. Even humble laborers could afford to buy a drink, watch a show, and marvel at the glittering chandeliers and mirrored walls. No one could miss the massive red windmill standing outside—an homage to earlier windmills of Montmartre that had been converted to drinking establishments—or the colossal model elephant in the adjoining garden, a prop left over from the Universal Exhibition of 1889. Everything at the Moulin Rouge was larger than life.

The fame of the Moulin Rouge spread, thanks largely to its reputation for the French cancan. The scandalous dance featured a chorus line of high-kicking dancing girls who felt no shame in revealing black stockings, garters, lace, and anything else underneath their frilly skirts. The cancan may not have been invented in Paris, but it was certainly made famous thanks to the talents of *La Goulue*, *Nini pattes-en-l'air*, and Miss Jenny, the most notable cancan dancers of the time. Even the great French painter Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec was drawn to the cabaret, and he captured the frenetic excitement of the Moulin Rouge in his most famous works. Visitors still flock to the iconic red windmill, and after 130 years it remains as alluring as ever.

October Birthdays

In astrology, those born between October 1–22 balance the scales of Libra. Libras have strong intellects and keen minds and so need constant stimulation. Libras are also masters of compromise and diplomacy, acting as wise mediators between friends and colleagues. Those born from October 23–31 are Scorpio's scorpions. Scorpions are passionate and intense, yet you may never know given their calm demeanors. They value truth, loyalty, and justice in friends and family.

Julie Andrews (actress) – October 1, 1935
Desmond Tutu (cleric) – October 7, 1931
Chevy Chase (comedian) – October 8, 1943
Dick Gregory (comedian) – October 12, 1932
Mae Jemison (astronaut) – October 17, 1956
Chuck Berry (musician) – October 18, 1926
Dizzy Gillespie (musician) – October 21, 1917
Pelé (soccer star) – October 23, 1940
Mahalia Jackson (singer) – October 26, 1911
Bill Gates (engineer) – October 28, 1955

Catalan's Towering Culture



Every two years for the past two centuries, the first weekend in October has brought the *Concurs de Castells*, or Human Tower Competition, in Tarragona, in the Catalonia region of Spain. In a stadium filled with 6,000 spectators, 25 teams compete to see who can build the most elaborate human tower. Teammates dressed in colorful costumes climb atop one another's shoulders, building tier upon tier, rising as high as 40 feet above the ground. The building is not complete until a child ascends to the summit and raises their hand. The tradition is a fierce source of regional pride and a central aspect of Catalan culture. Building human towers is a tradition that dates back to the *Balls de Valencians* of the 15th century, dances that incorporated the building of human towers. The event is so spectacular that UNESCO has preserved it as a unique cultural heritage.