

Where Music Meets Medicine



You may have heard of the healing power of music, but have you heard of sound healing? This is the belief that sound, music, and chants can heal the sick. Skeptical? Try listening to the beats for yourself on February 14, the 16th annual World Sound Healing Day.

People have relaxed to soothing sounds for a long time. Falling rain, wind blowing through trees, and singing crickets are easy to summon on bedside clocks and electronic devices. But true sound healing is an ancient form of medicine. Many different cultures have used the power of sound to restore health and relieve pain. Chanting, the deep vibrations of an Aboriginal didgeridoo, gongs, Tibetan singing bowls, tuning forks—all of these tools produce deep, resonant sounds typical of a sound healing, or sound therapy, session. But do they really work?

While music is a known de-stressor, there are no studies that demonstrate definite health benefits of sound therapy. But patients who feel a release from both physical pain and emotional stress beg to differ, as do sound healers. Some healers explain that sound vibrations are not just heard but felt in ways that lower heart rate, relax brain wave patterns, and reduce respiratory rates. Other healers claim that they can tune instruments such as gongs to the vibration of planet Earth and other celestial bodies. A good gong emits a healing energy wave that can stimulate all the cells and nerves in the body. If sickness is due to the body's frequencies being out of tune, healing vibrations restore these frequencies to balance. Still others explain that, like acupuncture, sound therapy unblocks and redirects the energy throughout the body.

When it comes to the power of sound healing, theories abound. Perhaps the best way to think about sound healing is that it is akin to the power of prayer. Jonathan Goldman, director of the Sound Healers Association, believes that vocalizing what you want a sound to accomplish can help you heal yourself and others.

February Birthdays

In astrology, those born between February 1–18 are Water Bearers of Aquarius. They are creative and intellectual philosophers at heart, getting to the root of problems and using their energy and passion for the benefit of others. Those born between February 19–28 are born under Pisces. Friendly and selfless, they are always willing to help others with their hearts on their sleeves. Thanks to an intuitive understanding of life, Pisces make deep connections with other living beings.

Residents Birthdays-

2/1 Shirley L.
2/6 Elba V.
2/7 Luce J.
2/15 Ken H.
2/18 Sandy R.
2/19 Barbara M.

Almond Joy Winner for January



The dedicated staff here at Almond Heights Senior Living are always striving to provide the best service to our residents and families. The Almond Joy Award is one way we reward those who have gone above and beyond. This month's winner is Putu Kun.

Thank you Putu for your dedication to our residents!

Almond Heights Post

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Celebrating February

Library Lovers Month

Bird-Feeding Month

Spunky Old BROADS Month

Groundhog Day
February 2

Weatherman's Day
February 5

XXIII Winter Olympics
February 9–25

Valentine's Day
February 14

Curling Is Cool Day
February 23

International Sword Swallowers Day
February 24

XXIII Winter Olympics

From February 9–25, the world's greatest athletes will compete for gold medals and glory at the XXIII Winter Olympics. South Korea will host the winter games in Pyeongchang, a city in Gangwon Province, high in the Taebaek Mountains of the north.

Chief among the battles to play out on snow and ice will be the contest for men's hockey gold. For the past five Winter Olympics, players from the National Hockey League have participated in the Olympics. This year the NHL is not building a break into its schedule to allow players to compete in the Olympics, a matter that is not sitting well with the athletes. The USA hopes to compete with Russia, Canada, Sweden, and Finland for the coveted medal.

Elsewhere on the ice, Russia's 17-year-old Evgenia Medvedeva is favored for gold in women's figure skating, but 17-year-old American Karen Chen is an up-and-coming phenom who might surprise the world. On the men's side, American Nathan Chen could take gold if he continues to impress with innovative new jumps.

On the slopes, Americans Lindsey Vonn and Mikaela Shiffrin are poised to make a run for gold in downhill skiing. Shaun White, red-haired maestro of the snowboard half-pipe, has been a fan favorite since he took gold in 2006.

Canada took gold in men's and women's curling in 2014. Will they repeat? While Germany swept all luge events in the Sochi Olympics, the Austrians will provide stiff competition this time. In bobsleigh, Nigeria will attempt to field its first-ever team as three former women's track stars introduce the cool sport to the African continent. And beyond sports, South Korea is introducing innovative technological advances to the Olympics—virtual reality will change the way we watch the games. These Winter Games are sure to offer both sport and spectacle.

Walk Amongst the Stars



On February 8, 1960, Hollywood, California, revealed an innovative new marketing technique designed to memorialize the glitz and glamour of Hollywood: the Walk of Fame. E.M. Stuart of Hollywood's Chamber of Commerce pitched the idea for a star-studded walk in 1953. By 1956, the coral-and-charcoal-colored star design was approved, and two years later, in 1958, committees representing motion pictures, television, music, and radio had chosen 1,558 names to honor. Construction began in earnest in 1958, but two lawsuits delayed the project for two years.

In truth, eight temporary stars were laid at the corner of Hollywood Boulevard and Highland Avenue throughout the legal battles as a way to market the venture and demonstrate to the public how the Walk of Fame would look. These eight names were picked at random from the group of 1,558 and included: Joanne Woodward, Olive Borden, Ronald Colman, Louise Fazenda, Preston Foster, Burt Lancaster, Edward Sedgwick, and Ernest Torrence. The first permanent star wasn't affixed until March of 1960 after the legal disputes had been settled. It honored director Stanley Kramer. The remaining 1,557 were laid soon after.

Hollywood Boulevard suffered decline throughout the '60s, and another star, this one for producer Richard Zanuck, wasn't laid until 1968. Stars have been added continuously since, and today there are more than 2,600. Getting a star isn't easy... or cheap. Extensive applications must be filed on behalf of nominees, and nominators must pay a \$40,000 construction and maintenance fee per star. Put that way, it costs a small fortune to maintain all of Gene Autry's five stars (one for each category, plus one for the additional category of theater and live performance, added in 1984). For some, a star is a dubious honor. Both Julia Roberts and Clint Eastwood have respectfully declined their nominations. But this doesn't stop 10 million fans a year from visiting.

Stick to Your Chops

Put away the forks and spoons—February 6 is Chopsticks Day. Today, over a quarter of the world's population uses these utensils for eating, but 5,000 years ago the first chopsticks were developed in China as a cooking tool. It was Confucius who said, "The honorable and upright man keeps well away from both the slaughterhouse and the kitchen. And he allows no knives at the table." This alone may have made chopsticks the preferred utensil in China. By the year AD 500, chopsticks had spread to Vietnam, Korea, and Japan, although in Japan chopsticks were originally used strictly in religious ceremonies. To the uninitiated, the use of chopsticks can be fraught with peril. One should never stand their chopsticks up in a bowl of rice, for it looks like the way rice is offered during a funeral ceremony. And never rest your chopsticks sideways across the top of a dish—use chopsticks holders!

Tip the Scales for Pangolins



February 17 is World Pangolin Day. What is a pangolin, you ask? It's one of the world's most unique animals. They are found in

Africa, India, and across Asia. Covered in scales resembling a pinecone, the pangolin looks like a cross between an armadillo and an opossum. When threatened, the pangolin curls up into a ball, gaining protection and defense from the hard, sharp scales. They even spray a noxious smell similar to a skunk. Like anteaters, these animals eat insects with long tongues that are longer than the pangolin's body when fully extended. Sadly, these unique qualities have made it highly desirable; it is the most illegally trafficked animal in the world. Poachers hunt and sell pangolins for their scales, skin, and meat. Efforts to save them often fall flat because pangolins are secretive and elusive animals with very specific needs. Perhaps one of the best ways to help save pangolins is to learn more about them. Once people meet these creatures, they can't help but love them.

February's Feathered Friends



February is Bird-Feeding Month. During the cold, harsh winter, it is especially difficult for wild birds to find food, so everyone is encouraged to provide food, water, and shelter

to help birds survive, and birds do need our help. One-third of the North American overwintering bird population has declined since 1966. And one-third of all North American bird species are at risk of extinction, with birds in arid, grassland, and coastal climates at greatest risk. A little bit of winter seed to augment their daily catch of insects could be enough to get them to springtime nesting season.

Not only can you help birds by feeding them this February but simple observations conducted during the Great Backyard Bird Count (GBBC) from February 16 to 19 can inform scientists about winter bird populations. During this four-day event, participants can spend as little as 15 minutes per day identifying birds in their own backyards and submitting that list to scientists via birdcount.org. Last year, 160,000 birders participated, from amateurs to experts, creating a global snapshot of world bird populations. Since birds are always on the move, such counts are important for scientists to see where populations come and go, where certain species congregate, whether diseases are affecting birds in specific regions, how species are coping with habitat loss and pollution, and how weather changes are affecting populations.

Citizen science—the practice of regular citizens aiding scientists in their research—is an important part of ornithology. The more people who participate, the more data is gathered, and the more accurate a picture of bird health. Citizen science birding projects are not limited to February. From November through April, birders can participate in Project FeederWatch. Every fall, people gather in the mountains and hills to count migrating hawks and raptors. Journey North is an annual count of migrating hummingbirds during the spring. So grab your binoculars and field guide and get counting!

A Penny for Your Thoughts

A penny may be worth only one cent, but after a lifetime of finding lost pennies, you could amass a small treasure. Consider the value of the cent on February 12, Lost Penny Day. Technically speaking, it costs 2.41 cents to mint one new penny. In 2013, the U.S. government spent \$169 million to put \$70 million worth of pennies in circulation. Some retail outlets have decided to do away with the penny altogether by rounding prices down to the nearest nickel.

In 2012, Canada decided to nip the problem in the bud and eliminate their penny, joining Britain, France, Israel, Spain, Australia, Denmark, Sweden, and New Zealand in phasing out their smallest denominations of coins. The truth is, once a small coin can no longer be used to purchase items but is only used to make change, it becomes more trouble than it's worth. So on February 12, the question remains, "Should I bother to pick up that lost penny?" It depends on whether you can buy anything with it, or whether you're the superstitious sort who is simply looking for some extra luck.

Making Hearts Whole



February is Mend-a-Broken-Heart Month, and scientists are quick to argue that hearts can really be broken as a result of extreme grief or social rejection. Brain studies

show a direct connection between emotions and physical health. But the good news is that both can be mended. Heartbreak is often the result of feelings of loss after a breakup. Psychologists explain that spending time with a romantic partner causes your identities to become intertwined. Losing or being rejected by that partner, therefore, leads to feelings of confusion due to a loss of your sense of self. The best way to mend your heart is to become yourself again: exercise, try new hobbies, socialize with other people. All of these things will challenge you to rediscover your joys and fall in love with yourself all over again in the process.