

## Skating Through History



The first wheels, invented around 3500 B.C., were not used for transportation but as potters' wheels for molding clay. It took 300 years before wheels were used to move chariots. And it took almost another 5,000 years for someone to invent the first roller skate. Consider the colorful history of this wonderful mode of transportation during October, Roller Skating Month.

The first recorded instance of someone affixing wheels to shoes came in 1760 when John Joseph Merlin embedded metal wheels into his shoes. Merlin planned to debut his invention at a London masquerade party. He wanted to shock the party-goers by gliding into the salon while playing the violin. Unfortunately, Merlin hadn't yet perfected his skating technique and his wheels were not engineered to turn, so instead of gliding gracefully, he sped into a mirror and crashed, suffering injuries to both his body and his pride.

Over the next few decades, various designs of roller skates showed up everywhere from Germany to France and Sweden and London, but they all suffered the same design flaw: the fixed wheels made it almost impossible to turn. Finally, in New York City in 1863, James Leonard Plimpton invented his "quad skates" or "rocker skates." His skates consisted of four wheels attached to springy rubber cushions that allowed wearers to easily turn by shifting their weight from side to side. Plimpton capitalized on his invention by establishing the first roller rink at his New York City furniture business. He also organized the first roller skating club, the New York Roller Skating Association, to both promote his new sport and sell his skates.

By the 1880s, roller skates were a booming industry. Rinks opened across America and all around the world. By the 1950s, food was being delivered to cars by roller-skating "carhops" at drive-ins. And by the 1970s, the roller revolution reached its height. It was no surprise when, in 1983, President Ronald Reagan declared October Roller Skating Month.

## October Birthdays

In astrology, Libras are those born between October 1–22. Libras, symbolized by the scales, strive for balance, avoid conflict, and desire fairness for everyone. To achieve this, they are sociable, strategic, charming, and diplomatic. Those born between October 23–31 are Scorpios. Scorpios are passionate and deep, qualities that help them counsel others in meaningful ways. Resourceful and determined, Scorpios make good managers.

### Residents Birthdays

10/2 Anidelle F.  
10/9 Georgia E. & Shirley J.  
10/11 Nolan D.  
10/13 Ron R.  
10/14 Corinne P.  
10/16 Martha D.  
10/22 Gene D.  
10/24 Len K.  
10/28 Jackie M.  
10/29 Cal H. & Barbara G.

### Almond Joy Award Winner- September



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 Meena Vednaigam. Thank you Meena for your dedication to our residents!



# Almond Heights Post

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## Jack of the Lantern

Every October, once pumpkins have grown fat and orange, these gorgeous gourds are picked and used in a wide variety of ritual activities from baking pumpkin pie to carving jack-o'-lanterns for Halloween. But there's no need to wait until October 26, Pumpkin Day, to make the most of your favorite pumpkin traditions.

Pumpkins have been grown in North America for 5,000 years. While these gourds are native to Central America and Mexico, the tradition of carving pumpkins began across the Atlantic Ocean in Ireland. The practice of carving "jack-o'-lanterns" began with an Irish folktale about a man named "Stingy Jack."

The legend says that Stingy Jack invited the Devil to have a drink, but then the tightfisted fellow did not want to pay. Jack tricked the Devil into transforming himself into a coin he could use to buy the drinks, but Jack put the coin into his pocket next to a silver cross. The Devil, so near a cross, could not change back into his devilish self. Jack made the Devil promise not to claim his soul should he die. The Devil had no choice but to agree. However, when Jack did die, God would not allow someone who caroused with the Devil into heaven. In the end, Jack was sent into the dark of night with nothing but a lamp fashioned from a carved-out turnip, lit with a lump of glowing coal. For this reason, the Irish have long carved images of "Jack of the Lantern" from turnips and, later, potatoes or beets. The scary, glowing faces were used to frighten away Stingy Jack and any other evil spirits.

When Irish immigrants came to North America, they discovered a new medium for their jack-o'-lanterns: pumpkins. With their hollow centers and wide, thick, orange shells, these gourds were a perfect vessel. Today, pumpkins are grown on every continent except Antarctica, and people around the world use them to carve jack-o'-lanterns.

## Celebrating October

### Country Music Month

### Positive Attitude Month

### Popcorn Poppin' Month

### Spinning and Weaving Week

*October 1–7*

### Guardian Angels Day

*October 2*

### International Top Spinning Day

*October 14*

### Mulligan Day

*October 17*

### International Artists Day

*October 25*

### All Hallows' Eve

*October 31*



## Shootout at the O.K. Corral



On October 26, 1881, a shootout between Wild West lawman Wyatt Earp and the Clanton-McLaury gang at the O.K. Corral in Tombstone, Arizona, lasted a mere 30 seconds.

The gunfight's legend would grow through the decades, enshrining the names Wyatt Earp and Doc Holliday in western lore and spawning countless books and movies.

Thanks to the discovery of silver, Tombstone, Arizona, became a mining boomtown, attracting hardworking miners and outlaws alike. Defending the town's law and order fell to the Earps: Virgil, the town marshal, and his brothers Morgan and the now-famous Wyatt, a former gambler, saloon keeper, gunslinger, and police officer. The Clantons and McLaurys, a gang of cattle rustlers and thieves, owned a cattle ranch outside of town. The Earps and the Clanton-McLaury gang represented the two sides of power in Tombstone, and on October 26 their violent power struggle ended in bloodshed.

Antagonism between the two factions escalated on October 25, when the Clanton-McLaury gang double-crossed Wyatt Earp over the spoils of a stagecoach robbery. By the next day, news of the tussle had spread, and other members of the gang vowed revenge against the Earps. But the Earps and their friend Doc Holliday were ready. The Clanton-McLaury gang was caught mustering in a vacant lot behind the O.K. Corral, and Virgil Earp wasted no time firing the first shot. Over the next 30 seconds, 30 shots were fired, and when the dust cleared, Virgil and Morgan Earp and Doc Holliday were wounded. Wyatt was unscathed. All but two members of the Clanton-McLaury gang were dead, and the two survivors had fled into the hills. It is mostly forgotten that there was another man present: Cochise County Sheriff John Behan. The sheriff charged both the Earps and Holliday with murder, but a Tombstone judge later declared the men not guilty, a judgment that likely helped to glorify Wyatt Earp and his famous Shootout at the O.K. Corral.

## The Golden Ticket

The first day of October brings International Willy Wonka Day, in honor of the fictional candy-maker who first appeared in Roald Dahl's children's book *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory*. The holiday does not commemorate the popular book but rather the 1971 film adaptation, *Willy Wonka & the Chocolate Factory*. One of the differences between the book and the movie is important to note, for it explains why Willy Wonka Day is celebrated on October 1. In the book, young Charlie Bucket wins a Golden Ticket that entitles him to enter Willy Wonka's chocolate factory on February 1. However, in the movie version, Charlie Bucket's Golden Ticket directs Charlie to the chocolate factory on "the first day of October." Why the difference? The movie was filmed in Munich, Germany, during the autumn, between August and November. The weather at the location simply did not look like a February winter, so the date on the ticket was changed to October 1.

## What's a Frappe?



October 7 is Frappe Day, and for many people this begs the question, "What is a frappe?" Denizens of America's northeast corner, known as New Englanders, know that a *frappe* is a milkshake blended with ice cream. But wait a minute—isn't a milkshake a blended drink made of milk, ice cream, and syrup? Not

in New England. Up there, milkshakes don't include ice cream but only contain milk and syrup. To further confuse matters, travel to Rhode Island, where you'll likely find *cabinet* on the menu. A cabinet is a frappe uniquely made with coffee ice cream, coffee syrup, and milk. Why is this regional drink called a cabinet? One story suggests that soda jerks once kept coffee syrup in wooden cabinets behind the counter. Menus might also list *tonic floats*. In New England, tonic refers to most any carbonated beverage. Consider a tonic float similar to a root beer float, except you can substitute any flavor of tonic for the root beer and top it off with a scoop of ice cream.

## The Wonders of Yosemite



The natural wonders of Yosemite Valley, located within California's Sierra Nevada mountain range, are easy to observe: the famous Half Dome, the granite cliffs of El Capitan, the giant sequoia trees, the delicate waterfalls. While the valley's scenic natural beauty brings peace to its visitors, its journey to becoming a national park in October of 1890 was anything but peaceful.

The Yosemite Valley had been inhabited for 3,000 years by Native American tribes, most recently the Ahwahnechee, a band that did not hesitate to fight off other tribes and invaders to their territory. A neighboring tribe, the Miwok, called the Ahwahnechee *Yos s e'meti*, a word meaning "those who kill." It is from this word that Yosemite valley got its name. This word, it seems, could also refer to the white European settlers in the region. Once gold was struck in California in the mid-19th century, white Europeans overran the valley. A California State militia, led by Army Major Jim Savage, was eventually tasked with clearing Yosemite of the Ahwahnechee. As news of California's gold spread, more settlers arrived, and in 1864, President Abraham Lincoln moved to preserve seven square miles of the valley and the Mariposa Grove of sequoia trees as a public trust of California, marking the first time the U.S. government set aside land for public enjoyment.

It wasn't until 1889 that naturalist John Muir ventured into Yosemite. He was awed by its beauty and also worried that the vast meadows surrounding Yosemite valley were unprotected. Sheep, which Muir called "hoofed locusts," were grazing the land into destruction. Muir solicited the help of Washington, D.C., magazine editor Robert Underwood Johnson to lobby Congress to protect Yosemite as a national park. On October 1, 1890, Congress set aside over 1,500 square miles of land, almost the size of Rhode Island, as Yosemite National Park, America's third such federally protected land after Yellowstone and Sequoia. Today, more than 4 million people visit Yosemite each year.

## Intuitive Magic

On October 31, Halloween, strange things may go bump in the night. Perhaps this is why this date is also Increase Your Psychic Powers Day. Psychic powers derive from extrasensory perception (ESP), senses beyond our physical five senses. Although there is no scientific evidence to confirm the existence of psychic powers, clairvoyants believe in abilities such as reading minds, divining the future, and communicating without speaking. Perhaps another way of looking at psychic ability is by redefining it as *intuition*. Hindus believe in the third-eye *chakra*, an energy center located between the eyes that is the center of our power of intuition, or inner knowledge, guided by a sixth sense. So even if you do not believe in psychic ability, consider October 31 an opportune time to open yourself up to new and wondrous possibilities.

## Bottled Art



Artisans have been creating miniature models of fully rigged ships inside bottles for centuries. Perhaps you, too, could master this secret

art on October 4, Ship in a Bottle Day. The first mention of putting objects, including ships, in bottles dates back to 1719, when the art was popularized by a German named Matthias Buchinger. What made the feat even more spectacular was that Buchinger was born without hands or legs and grew to only 29 inches tall. Despite these handicaps, Buchinger earned renown throughout Europe as an artist, magician, musician, marksman, calligrapher, and performer. From 1719, it became a common German folk art form to place objects in bottles, mainly depictions of saints. The oldest surviving ship in a bottle dates back to 1784. The three-masted Portuguese warship resides in a closed egg-shaped bottle. Ships in bottles were not only made by sailors to pass time on a long journey or to give as gifts, but historians think that many ships in bottles were created by lighthouse keepers, who had both the time and access to materials for creating these maritime models.