

A Common Tongue

It was on July 26, 1887, that Polish linguist and ophthalmologist L.L. Zamenhof introduced his newly invented language to the world. He called it Esperanto, which in his new language meant “one who hopes,” reflecting his earnest desires for both his language to catch on and his hopes for a more peaceful world.



Zamenhof was born in Belostock, a multi-ethnic and multi-lingual city that was part of the Russian Empire at the time. Languages came naturally to young Zamenhof. As a Jew living in Russia, he spoke both Yiddish and Russian. His father was a teacher of French. On city streets, he heard Polish, German, and Belarusian. But he also saw clashes between these disparate groups, clashes that he believed were due to the lack of a common language.

While in secondary school, Zamenhof attempted to create a neutral language that was simple in grammar but could convey complex ideas. Zamenhof was not the first person to attempt to invent a new language. A German Catholic priest named Johann Martin Schleyer, after having a dream in which God directed him to invent a language, created Volapük in 1880. Zamenhof himself learned the language, and by 1889 it was popular enough to have one million speakers around the world. But the number of Volapük speakers did not grow, largely due to the rising popularity of Zamenhof’s Esperanto.

Zamenhof felt an urgency when it came to creating Esperanto. The world that he knew was dramatically changing. Like the internet today, the invention of the telegraph had sped up communication all over the globe. More disconcerting were the pogroms against Jews that were spreading throughout Russia and into Poland. A common language, Zamenhof felt, could heal divisions of religion and ethnicity. While Esperanto never became the everyday language that Zamenhof hoped it would, it is spoken by millions today. More importantly, Zamenhof’s message of world harmony endures.

July Birthdays

In astrology, those born July 1–22 are Cancer’s Crabs. Crabs like to retreat into their “shells” and enjoy being surrounded by loved ones at home. They nurture deep relationships and become loyal friends. Those born July 23–31 are Leo’s Lions. These “kings of the savanna” are natural-born leaders, full of creativity, confidence, and charisma. Leos use their generosity and sense of humor to unite different groups into a common cause.

- Thurgood Marshall (justice) – July 2, 1908
- Frida Kahlo (artist) – July 6, 1907
- Satchel Paige (ballplayer) – July 7, 1906
- Tom Hanks (actor) – July 9, 1956
- Henry David Thoreau (writer) – July 12, 1817
- Harrison Ford (actor) – July 13, 1942
- Regina Belle (singer) – July 17, 1963
- Carlos Santana (guitarist) – July 20, 1947
- Ernest Hemingway (writer) – July 21, 1899
- Amelia Earhart (pilot) – July 24, 1897
- Vivica A. Fox (actress) – July 30, 1964

Celebrating July

Women’s Motorcycle Month

World Watercolor Month

Canada Day July 1

Roswell UFO Days July 1–3

Independence Day (U.S.) July 4

Bastille Day (France) July 14

“Wrong Way” Corrigan Day July 17

World Chess Day July 20

Day of the Cowboy July 24

World Lumberjack Championships July 29–31

World Ranger Day July 31

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National Treasures

Since 1985, America has celebrated July as Park and Recreation Month, but America’s dedication to preserving the nation’s wild places goes back much further. It was in 1872 that President Teddy Roosevelt designated Yellowstone as America’s first national park, and he would go on to protect over 230 million acres of land as national forests, monuments, and wildlife refuges.

As a child growing up in New York City, Roosevelt spent much of his time indoors, surrounded by concrete and steel and struggling for breath, due to debilitating asthma. It seems logical that Roosevelt would later prioritize the protection of nature. He escaped to the wilderness for fresh air and strengthened himself by trekking primeval forests and snow-covered peaks. Just as nature strengthened and inspired Roosevelt, he hoped that nature would do the same for his fellow Americans.

By every measure, Americans have fulfilled Roosevelt’s dream. Each year, over 300 million people visit America’s national parks. Since the creation of Yellowstone, the national park system has grown to 423 protected areas in every state, from the coast of Acadia in Maine to the redwoods of northern California, from the cliff dwellings of Colorado’s Mesa Verde to the glacier-carved valleys of Alaska’s Gates of the Arctic. And the park system continues to grow. At the start of the year, New River Gorge in West Virginia became America’s 63rd national park. But while national parks enshrine and preserve America’s rich natural legacy, Park and Recreation Month is meant to celebrate parks of all kinds.

National parks make dramatic backdrops for family vacations, but local parks are where we find daily respite and rejuvenation. They are perfect places to enjoy the shade of a tree and listen to the song of a bird. What is more, local parks provide us with opportunities to continue Roosevelt’s legacy of conservation by volunteering to plant a tree or clean up a river. Roosevelt’s message was not just one of enjoying nature but of protecting and nurturing it for future generations.

Annie Menefee 1st

Paula Crosby 1st

Eva Filby 4th

Augusta Suttles 4th

Eric Bowes 6th

John Tucker 6th

Nancy Haarbarger 9th

Doris Ivey 11th

Lynnette Jackson 16th

Isabella Fedele 21st

Found in Translation

In July of 1798, Napoleon Bonaparte led 35,000 French soldiers into Egypt with visions of a conquest that would make him the next Alexander the Great. Napoleon's military campaign in Egypt may have ended in failure, but the French emperor had a second, nonmilitary objective. Napoleon had brought an army of scholars, scientists, and artists to Egypt to rediscover the region's great ancient culture.



When French forces took over a run-down fort near the port city of Rosetta on July 19, 1799, officer and engineer Pierre Bouchard was put in charge of its reconstruction. While overseeing the repair of the fort's defenses, Bouchard discovered a massive basalt slab built into a wall. It was four feet long, two-and-a-half feet wide, and covered in writing. Over the centuries, much of the fort had been reconstructed with stone looted from nearby sites, and many of these stones were covered in hieroglyphics, but Bouchard immediately recognized that this particular slab was unique. He had discovered the Rosetta Stone.

The message written into the stone was less important than the fact that the message was translated into three different languages: Egyptian hieroglyphs, Egyptian demotic, and ancient Greek. Scientists immediately realized that this single slab was the key to deciphering hieroglyphics, Egypt's ancient language that had been dead for 2,000 years.

Napoleon may have suffered defeat in Egypt, but his Egyptian campaign had stirred a French fascination with Egypt. Soon, an international race was on to decipher Egyptian hieroglyphs. The British intellectual Thomas Young and the French child prodigy-turned-Egyptologist Jean-Francois Champollion would spend many years as rivals making sense of the ancient markings. In 1823, Young finally offered public congratulations to Champollion for his deciphering of hieroglyphics. At last, the language, culture, and history of ancient Egypt were open to scientists as they had never been before.

Big Day for Mini Golf

It's a big deal that World Miniature Golf Day is on July 11. Mini golf, like full-sized golf, was invented in Scotland at the famous St. Andrew's golf course. The first miniature course was a putting green set up for the wives of golfers to amuse themselves while their husbands played 18 holes. But this course, called the Ladies' Putting Club, with its lush, rolling greens, bears no resemblance to the tacky miniature courses we have come to love with their rotating windmills, waterfalls, and all manner of gimmicks and obstacles.

The rightful inventor of these beloved mini-golf courses was Garnet Carter, owner of the Fairyland Inn hotel outside of Chattanooga, Tennessee. In the late 1920s, Carter created a tiny course that matched his whimsical hotel theme. He called it *Tom Thumb Golf* and littered the course with fairyland statues, hollow logs, sewer pipes, and other fanciful obstacles. By 1930, 25,000 mini-golf courses had appeared across America, each one just as fanciful as Carter's.

The Science of Sunsets



The third week in July is Capture the Sunset Week, a week to appreciate the gorgeous hues of the setting sun. The colors of a sunset are the result of a process called scattering. Particles in the atmosphere alter the direction of sunlight. When the sun is low on the horizon, such as at sunset, light has farther to travel and more opportunities to scatter. Sometimes, short-wavelength light that produces blue or violet colors is so scattered that it is lost altogether, leaving only warmer light colors such as brilliant reds and oranges. These are the dramatic colors we love in a sunset. Dust, pollution, moisture, wind, and clouds often scatter the entire spectrum of light, causing colors to dull. Clean air is the best ingredient for beautiful sunsets.

For Whom the Bar Tolls

For 40 years, Sloppy Joe's bar in Key West, Florida, has been holding its annual Ernest Hemingway look-alike contest in July. Dozens of white-bearded "Papa" Hemingway look-alikes gather in fisherman sweaters and khaki shirts to compete for the honor.



Sloppy Joe's may have officially opened as a bar on December 5, 1933 (the very day Prohibition was repealed), but Hemingway was a customer long before this date, frequently buying illicit alcohol from owner Joe Russell, who operated the place as a speakeasy. Despite subsequent changes of address, Hemingway would remain a longtime customer of Sloppy Joe's and a good friend of Joe Russell. Today, admirers of Hemingway make the trek down to Key West to walk in Hemingway's footsteps. Not only do visitors stop in for a drink (or several) at Sloppy Joe's, but they make the pilgrimage to the Hemingway House and Museum in Old Town, where the author wrote many of his most influential novels.

The Spanish colonial house was gifted to Hemingway and his wife Pauline from Pauline's uncle. When the Hemingways arrived in Key West, they underwent a massive restoration and remodeling of the home, including the construction of the property's famous (and massively expensive) in-ground pool, the first ever built in Key West. Visitors can see the very desk where Hemingway worked and stroll the grounds, which are famously inhabited by 40–50 cats, many of which are polydactyl, meaning they have extra toes.

These cats are believed to be the descendants of one polydactyl ancestor named Snow White. Local legend states that one night, while drinking at Sloppy Joe's, Hemingway met a sea captain who gifted Hemingway a multi-toed cat off his ship. Eventually, Hemingway would have nearly 70 cats living on the property. Some of Hemingway's look-alikes have even shown up at Sloppy Joe's with cats in their hands.

Welcome to New Jersey

Residents of New Jersey may be quick to remind you that the first full week in July is Be Nice to New Jersey Week. When did New Jersey become the butt of so many jokes? Some say it started in the 1970s when the New York City-based comedy show *Saturday Night Live* began to relentlessly poke fun of its neighbor across the Hudson. Others maintain its moniker as the "Armpit of America" is due to its many smelly refineries. Still others claim that New Jersey has been belittled since the colonial era, suffering insults from none other than Ben Franklin. Despite this long and painful history, New Jersey has plenty to be proud of!

First are foremost, the world has New Jersey to thank for the invention of air-conditioning. Willis Carrier operated his Carrier Engineering Corporation in Newark. And where would music be without New Jersey? Frank Sinatra, Bruce Springsteen, and Whitney Houston all hail from the Garden State. From its beaches and colleges to its history and culture, New Jersey is chock full of culture, history, and unabashed pride.

Carving Out a Place in History



On July 14, 1943, George Washington Carver National Monument was dedicated in Missouri, near the birthplace and childhood home of the famed scientist, educator, and humanitarian. This was the first time in American history that a birthplace site was designated as a national monument for someone other than a president and the first national monument to commemorate an African American. Carver's contributions to agricultural science revolutionized farming in America. He innovated crop rotation and learned to replenish soil nutrients by planting nitrogen fixers such as peanuts, which led him to develop countless peanut-based products, work for which he earned renown as "The Peanut Man."