

Liberty Letter



Celebrating March

**Irish American
Heritage Month**

Mad for Plaid Month

Women's History Month

**Employee Appreciation
Day**

March 6

Iditarod Begins

March 7

**Daylight Saving Time
Begins**

March 8

Plant a Flower Day

March 12

St. Patrick's Day

March 17

World Poetry Day

March 21

**International Hug a
Medievalist Day**

March 31

A Broadway Classic Turns 70

Seventy years ago, on March 15, 1956, *My Fair Lady* opened on Broadway and quickly became one of the most celebrated productions in musical theater history. Its premiere at the Mark Hellinger Theatre marked the beginning of a record-setting run that helped define a golden era for the American stage.

Set in 1912 London, the story follows Eliza Doolittle's transformation from a struggling flower seller into someone confident enough to challenge the expectations placed on her. Although the original production reflected mid-20th-century attitudes, many modern viewers see Eliza's arc as a useful lens on empowerment—an idea that aligns neatly with March's Women's History Month. Her pushback against Professor Higgins feels more relevant now than ever.

The musical also offers a snapshot of a changing era. London in 1912 balanced Edwardian elegance with social tension. Suffrage activism was gaining momentum, fashion was beginning to loosen from restrictive styles, and the traditional class structure faced increasing scrutiny. While *My Fair Lady* presents these shifts with wit and charm, its backdrop hints at the larger societal forces shaping the characters' world.

Over the decades, the show's score has played a major role in its longevity. Songs like "I Could Have Danced All Night" and "Wouldn't It Be Lovely" became standards, recorded by a wide range of performers and woven into popular culture. The familiarity of the music keeps the show accessible, even for those who haven't seen a full production in years.

The anniversary arrives just ahead of World Theatre Day on March 27, a reminder of how live performance continues to bridge generations. Few shows have matched the musical's staying power; its songs and characters have been reinvented through revivals, films, and countless stagings across the globe. *My Fair Lady* still invites audiences to reflect on identity, opportunity, and the ways people reinvent themselves. For a production rooted in another century, its voice remains remarkably current—and still worth hearing.

A Legacy of Laughs



Funny how men often think themselves funnier than women. Studies on humor between the genders have found that men's jokes are sometimes rated slightly funnier—but often it's other men who are laughing. Women, meanwhile, may quietly have the last laugh

on March 31, She's Funny That Way Day, a day celebrating comedians past and present.

Carole Lombard was a leading lady of old Hollywood, a natural beauty whose charm and comedic timing shone even when she took the occasional pie in the face. Barbara Stanwyck could play any role: glamorous dame, femme fatale, tough feminist, and yes, the madcap comedian. Both women were nominated for Oscars yet never won.

Any discussion of funny women must include Lucille Ball, often called the Queen of Comedy. Ball once told a *Rolling Stone* reporter, "I am not funny," though her millions of fans would beg to differ. Not only was she hilarious, she mentored another extraordinary comedian, Carol Burnett.

Many of these performers also changed the business behind the scenes. They pushed for better roles, wrote their own material, and shaped shows that reflected their voices rather than someone else's idea of what women should be. Their influence extends well beyond their punchlines, reminding us that real comedic power comes from having the freedom to tell your own story.

Like many of the men who came before them, no topic is too bold for these daring women. From Phyllis Diller to Joan Rivers to Whoopi Goldberg, to modern comedians such as Tina Fey, Kristen Wiig, Melissa McCarthy, Sarah Silverman, Mindy Kaling, Amy Poehler, Wanda Sykes, and Maya Rudolph, the list of talented women is truly endless—and so are the laughs.

The Curious Case of Whuppity Scoorie

The ancient ritual of Whuppity Scoorie is undertaken in Lanark, Scotland, with dead seriousness every first day of March. At the ringing of the "wee bell," the children of Lanark race counterclockwise three times around the village church, or *kirk*, swinging balls of paper tied to lengths of string. A local Lanarkian, as reported in *The Scotsman* news, explained the ritual as a means of chasing bad spirits away to the next village. The Lanark Community Council's historical records offer a more sinister origin. Boys, armed with rolled-up caps or stones, once marched at the sound of the bell to the neighboring village to fight a rival gang. Once police got wise, they guarded the local road and have ever since. To this day, most Lanarkians are unsure of the point of Whuppity Scoorie, but that doesn't stop the annual event.

Stitched Across the World



Quilters all around the world will be piecing together fabric into wonderful creations on March 21, Worldwide Quilting Day.

During its heyday in the American mid-19th century, quilting was a utilitarian craft. According to Emporia State University's Center for Great Plains Studies, westward homesteaders, inheritors of many great European quilting traditions, fashioned blankets, door and window covers, and play mats for children out of whatever scraps of fabric they could find. Quilters learned to arrange fabric to make wonderful works of art. And because blankets were always needed to protect against the elements, quilting never went out of style.

A number of quilting bees will no doubt be held on March 21, so be ready to cut your favorite patterns—Irish Chain, Log Cabin, Bear's Paw, or Tree of Paradise.

Courtesy Counts



Many lament that common courtesy is not so common anymore. If someone you know is acting less than civil, March 21, Common Courtesy Day, is the perfect opportunity to tactfully share a few tips and reminders on how to treat others with respect.

Some point to technology as a major culprit in the decline of courtesy, especially as we've grown more tethered to our screens. Others see a broader cultural shift: When people feel rushed, stressed, or isolated, empathy tends to shrink. Researchers continue to note that young adults report feeling more pressure and less connection than in previous generations. Etiquette experts also observe that norms have loosened over time, sometimes in ways that make everyday interactions feel less considerate.

Across many countries, parents and teachers are trying to balance freedom with guidance, and the line can get blurry. When expectations around behavior become too vague, kids can miss out on learning how their actions affect others. The result can be the same everywhere: a little more self-focus, a little less awareness. Renewed interest in teaching social skills and emotional literacy suggests that people are recognizing the need to rebuild those habits.

If we don't practice empathy every day, we may have to rely on others to pass laws of courtesy for us. Restaurants declare "No Cell Phone Zones." Sports stadiums regulate fan conduct. New York City even imposes a fine on those who prop their feet on a subway train seat. Psychologist Marie Hartwell-Walker believes that even "faked" manners can teach empathy, that cornerstone of courtesy. Simple acts such as holding doors open, returning phone calls, treating clerks and cashiers with respect, and saying *please* and *thank you*—these daily reminders to consider others' feelings lay a foundation for building empathy.

Mid-March Mood Swing

Mid-March sends us on quite a roller-coaster ride. On the 15th, we may be filled with doubt on Everything You Think Is Wrong Day. But have no fear, for on the 16th comes Everything You Do Is Right Day. Does this mean we should act without thinking? Some call this being impulsive. Strategic thinking expert Greg Githens understands that impulsivity can be a sign of spontaneity, playfulness, and humor—all valuable qualities. If impulsivity, however, leads to bad habits and selfishness, it is nothing more than mindlessness. So play it safe on Everything You Do Is Right Day because you don't want your actions to lead you to celebrate Awkward Moments Day on March 18.

Webs of Wonder

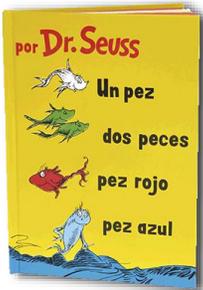
For many, the first reaction to seeing a spider is to squash it. Spider advocates celebrating Save a Spider Day on March 14 want you to think before you squish, and they have some pretty compelling reasons.



Lots of folks, experts and novices alike, think spiders are just plain cool. The Goliath bird-eating tarantula fits in your palm and was named by an explorer who saw it eating a hummingbird. The pinktoe tarantula, named for its pink-tipped legs, can climb trees and swim. Not impressed? Another reason not to squash spiders is that many of them carry their newly hatched babies on their backs. One whack can disperse hundreds of tiny spiderlings. Still not convinced? Spiders benefit humans in many ways. They eat lots of bugs. Their venom can be used for making medicine. Spider silk, which is stronger than steel, inspires technological innovation. So before your arachnophobia takes over, think twice about squishing a spider on March 14.

Blast the Birthday Horn

On March 2, don't just wish Dr. Seuss a happy birthday. Do as they do in Dr. Seuss' fictional land of Katroo and let loose a "big blast on the big Birthday Horn!"



Theodor Seuss Geisel, known as Dr. Seuss, was never a doctor of anything. He called himself "doctor" because his father wanted him to study medicine. Thankfully, he pursued children's literature and in 1937 wrote his first book, *And to Think That I Saw It on Mulberry*

Street, debuting the pen name Dr. Seuss. The idea for the book struck Geisel while on an ocean voyage. The rhythm of the ship's engines inspired him to write the lines:

*And that is a story that no one can beat.
And to think that I saw it on Mulberry Street.*

No fewer than 20 publishers rejected the book before Geisel showed it to an old college classmate, who was editor of children's books at the publishing house Vanguard Press. Dr. Seuss went on to write over 60 children's books (including some under the name Theo LeSieg), selling over 600 million copies in over 20 different languages.

What makes Dr. Seuss' books so enduring? Children's literature expert Ann Neely believes it is the books' readability. "Children can read Dr. Seuss books many, many times without tiring of the rhythms, the plot, or the art." Furthermore, Seuss' moral lessons appeal to young and old alike. Journalist Melissa Breyer believes adults have plenty to learn from Dr. Seuss. *Did I Ever Tell You How Lucky You Are?* teaches us that self-pity is an unnecessary indulgence. *The Lorax* reminds us that it's up to us to give a voice to the voiceless. Truly, Dr. Seuss' children's books may be more valuable to adults than his odd adult work, a humorous, slightly scandalous take on the legend of Lady Godiva, full of illustrations of the seven nudist Godiva sisters. That book, perhaps understandably, was Seuss' only major flop.

March Birthdays

In astrology, those born between March 1–20 are Pisces. These Fish are spiritual types who feel comfortable in their introspective natures. As passionate, romantic, creative dreamers, they are charitable helpers who "go with the flow." Those born between March 21–31 are Rams of Aries. As the first sign of the zodiac, Arians charge out of the gate with energy, confidence, power, and zeal. As pioneers, Arians are unafraid of the unknown. For these eternal optimists, no odds are ever considered insurmountable.

Lou Costello (comedian) – March 6, 1906
Liza Minnelli (entertainer) – March 12, 1946
Ozzie Nelson (TV dad) – March 20, 1906
Fred Rogers (TV host) – March 20, 1928
Marcel Marceau (mime) – March 22, 1923
Fannie Farmer (cook) – March 23, 1857
Walt Frazier (athlete) – March 29, 1945
Vincent van Gogh (painter) – March 30, 1853
Shirley Jones (actress) – March 31, 1934

Last Call for Landlines

After a long lifetime, more than 100 years, America's telephone infrastructure is showing its age. Disappearing, too, are the engineers and technicians who maintain traditional landline service, according to professor of telecommunications Rob Frieden. Not so fast, say those who celebrate Landline Telephone Day on March 10. Consumer Reports still recommends keeping a landline: sound quality is often better, and because numbers are directly linked to a home address, emergency calls from landlines remain highly reliable. When power goes out, some landlines continue to work, thanks to backup batteries, though these are becoming less common. Telephone companies, however, are shifting to digital networks that are cheaper to maintain. So enjoy landlines while you can—before they disappear.

