

GOOD Life News

at Alamos West Health & Rehabilitation

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Bursting With Spring Blossoms

This month, cities around the country are celebrating the bursting colors of spring blossoms with festivals dedicated to regional flora.

Skagit Valley Tulip Festival — Tulip farms scattered throughout Washington state's Skagit Valley begin blooming in April, and that's when thousands of visitors crowd area roads for a scenic driving tour of the spectacular fields of flowers.

North Carolina Azalea Festival — The port city of Wilmington, N.C. draws more than 200,000 people to a week-long celebration of the millions of lush, showy shrubs that come alive with blooms of pink, purple and red.

Atlanta Dogwood Festival — Flowering dogwood trees provide a beautiful backdrop for this Georgia tradition that dates back to 1936.

Meriden Daffodil Festival — During the last two weekends in April, thousands of people gather in this Connecticut city to view a sea of 650,000 sunny yellow and white daffodils in bloom.



Our Talk. Our Walk. Every Day!

Our Platinum Service[®] program is the centerpiece of our promise to each of our residents, families and all those we serve to deliver the highest quality of service on a legendary scale. At The Goodman Group, this program transcends everything we do. It is intrinsic to our culture and woven into the fabric of who we are. We respect our residents and guests and promise to create a positive and enriching experience to gain lifetime loyalty.

Our Platinum Service[®] Pledge

"Providing unparalleled service is the focus of our team efforts and my main personal role. I am committed to following and supporting our service philosophy."

A Hobby to Strike Your Fancy

Back in the day, a common sight at restaurants, hotels and other businesses was a free book of matches, offered to patrons in need of a light. But for many people, much more intriguing than the matchbook's practical use was the design on the cover. This fascination sparked an interest in collecting matchbooks, a hobby called phillumeny. Safety matches were invented in 1844, but matchbooks were not created until the late 1800s. Soon after, the Diamond Match Company purchased the two patents for the thick, bendable paper booklets in which matches were stapled. Businesses realized the books were blank canvases for advertising, and brands from every industry soon struck on the idea. Supermarkets, gas stations and banks gave away matchbooks featuring their business names and products. Personalized matchbooks for weddings and other social events were also popular. From the 1930s to the 1970s, collecting matchbooks was a popular hobby. For many, the books served as souvenirs from places they'd been. Digging through a bowl of matchbooks was a way to revisit the past.



Classic Ballpark Foods

Baseball fans can choose from a menu of unique snack options at MLB stadiums across the country, but these classic ballpark foods remain favorites:



Hot dogs — Whether they are eaten plain, topped with mustard and relish, or piled with chili and cheese, hot dogs go hand in hand with baseball. Fans eat about 19 million of them each season!

Peanuts — In 1895, a peanut company paid for advertising space on baseball scorecards with peanuts, which were then sold at ballparks. Roasted in-shell, peanuts have been a staple at games ever since.

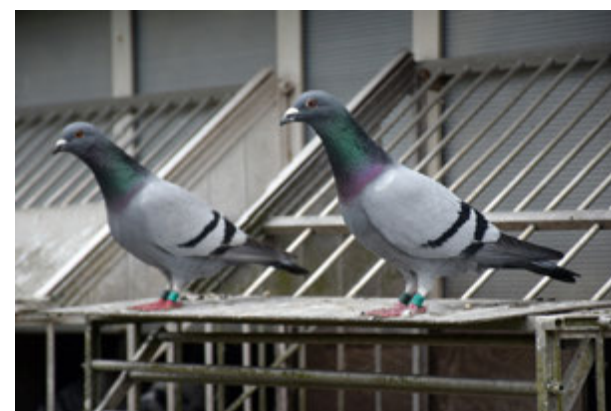
Cracker Jack — In the late 1800s, two brothers jazzed up plain popcorn by adding peanuts and a molasses coating. The sweet-and-salty treat became a hit at stadiums after it was immortalized in the 1908 song "Take Me Out to the Ball Game."

Pretzels — Soft, chewy pretzels, sprinkled with salt and often dipped in mustard or cheese sauce, have American roots in Philadelphia, where vendors sold them on street corners and then at baseball games.

Popcorn — Buttery, salty popcorn is a classic snack for kids and adults alike, making it one of the most popular ballpark offerings.

Winged Wartime Heroes

As part of the U.S. Army Pigeon Service, homing pigeons provided a vital service during World War I and World War II. These specially trained messengers took on lofty missions and saved thousands of lives. Their intelligence, speed and homing ability made carrier pigeons a proven communication tool. During World War I, 600 of the birds were used and over 90 percent of the messages sent by pigeons were received. World War II saw the peak of the winged force, with 56,000 pigeons managed by 150 officers and 3,000 enlisted men. The birds were bred and trained to travel far and fast, flying up to 600 miles at about 40 m.p.h., even under fire, at night and over open water. They couriered messages encased in small tubes on their legs or pouches looped over their backs. They also parachuted with troops. With colorful names such as GI Joe, Cher Ami and Thunderbird, several pigeons became famous for their heroics and were awarded medals for valor.



Healthy Reasons to Laugh

Kidding around has some serious benefits — and not just for your funny bone! Here's how laughter can improve your life:

Provides a workout — A bout of boisterous laughter is like a mild workout. Your heart starts beating faster, sending oxygen throughout your body and stimulating muscles. Giggling for 10 to 15 minutes can burn as much as 50 calories.

Boosts your immune system — Laughs produce positive thoughts, which prompt your body to release antibodies that help fight illness.

Lifts your spirits — Laughing boosts the brain's levels of dopamine and serotonin, chemicals that can improve mood and may help lessen depression. Often, people who embrace laughter find it easier to cope with difficult situations and let go of stress and anger.

Keeps you connected — Laughter is contagious. One researcher estimates we are 30 times more likely to laugh with others than when we're alone. Spending time with people can help you laugh more and improve your quality of life. Laughing together is also a common way to bond with loved ones as well as make new friends.



Sweet Harmonies

With their sentimental tunes and close harmonies, barbershop quartets embody a unique American sound that has mesmerized audiences for more than 150 years.



In the 1800s, barbershops served as social hubs for men, who sometimes harmonized familiar songs while at these and other gathering spots. A new style of music emerged, characterized by four men singing a cappella. While a lead tenor sang the melody, another tenor, a bass and a baritone crooned the harmonies. The availability of published sheet music during the era helped popularize barbershop music.

By the turn of the century, many vaudeville shows featured barbershop quartets. The foursomes often donned straw boaters and matching striped vests or jackets. Their unified look complemented their tight vocals, and the groups were a hit with audiences.

The popularity of the barbershop style of singing faded in the 1920s due to competition from radio. Preservation efforts beginning in the late '30s revived the genre, which continues to be performed nationally and abroad.

Barbershop music is also performed by female quartets — most notably groups that are part of the Sweet Adelines organization — as well as large choruses.

Tree Trivia

Trees are among the planet's most fascinating organisms and their importance is celebrated each April on Earth Day and Arbor Day. Branch out with these unbe-leaf-able tree facts:

- The Earth is home to about 3 trillion trees.
- Scientists have determined there are more than 60,000 tree species.
- Trees are the longest living organisms. The world's oldest known individual tree is a bristlecone pine in California that is 5,062 years old.
- It's estimated that a fully grown, leafy tree can produce a year's supply of oxygen for as many as 10 people.
- The world's largest living tree is General Sherman, a giant sequoia in California's Sequoia National Park. The volume of its trunk is 52,513 cubic feet.
- In 1971, the Apollo 14 astronauts took hundreds of tree seeds on their mission to the moon so scientists could study the effects of gravity on germination. These "moon trees" were later planted all over the United States.
- Being around trees has been shown to make people feel calmer and happier.





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Books on Wheels

For many, the ability to visit a local library is routine; but for some, it is a luxury. Fortunately, the creation of bookmobiles made library books more accessible and helped spread the joy of



reading. At the turn of the twentieth century, a Maryland librarian named Mary Titcomb wanted to provide reading materials to communities without a nearby library.



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