October 2026

Pleasant Valley Views

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Celebrating October

Italian-American Heritage Month

Popcorn Poppin' Month

Computer Learning Month

International Frugal Fun Day
October 3

Do Something Nice Day
October 5

Random Acts of Poetry Day
October 7

International Skeptics Day
October 13

Dictionary Day
October 16

Back to the Future Day
October 21

World Pasta Day
October 25

Wild Foods Day
October 28

Halloween
October 31

Badges and Beyond

October shines a spotlight on scouting, a movement that has introduced millions of young people to leadership, service, and the great outdoors. October is National Scouting Month, and on the 31st, Girl Scout Founder's Day honors Juliette Gordon Low, who founded the Girl Scouts in 1912.

Scouting began in the early 1900s when British army officer Robert Baden-Powell started an organization that taught outdoor skills, teamwork, and self-reliance. The idea quickly spread around the world. Today, scouting organizations serve millions of members in more than 170 countries.

Service to others has always been at the heart of scouting. Scouts regularly collect food for pantries, clean parks and trails, plant trees, and assist with community events. Many of the movement's highest honors require significant service projects. To earn the rank of Eagle Scout, for example, participants must plan and lead a community service project that benefits a school, religious institution, or nonprofit organization.

Badges are another important part of the scouting experience. Merit badges and achievement patches recognize progress and encourage members to explore new interests. Topics range from camping and first aid to astronomy, engineering, and environmental science. For many scouts, badges become milestones that mark personal growth and achievement.

Outdoor adventure is also a hallmark of scouting. Camping trips, hikes, canoeing expeditions, and nature studies teach practical skills while encouraging an appreciation for the natural world. Studies have found that participation in scouting can help young people develop confidence, leadership abilities, and a strong sense of civic responsibility.

More than a century after its beginnings, scouting continues to inspire new generations. Whether building a campfire, earning a badge, or leading a community project, scouts discover lessons that often last a lifetime. October's observances are a reminder that the values of helping others, developing skills, and exploring the outdoors remain as relevant today as ever.

From Flop to Fame

Behind almost every great success story is a story of failure. Even American musical icon Bob Dylan once got booted from a high school talent competition for playing too loudly. Success should never be a foregone conclusion, and for this reason, we celebrate International Day for Failure on October 13.

Bill Gates is one of the world's most successful billionaires, but that wasn't always so. Before Microsoft, Gates and Microsoft partner Paul Allen founded a company called Traf-O-Data, which attempted to analyze traffic flows. The company and the computer designed to record traffic were failures, but the venture was an important stepping stone to what would become Microsoft.

The name George Steinbrenner is synonymous with the World Champion New York Yankees teams from 1996 to 2003. Before taking the helm of the Yankees, Steinbrenner owned the Cleveland Pipers basketball team. Steinbrenner's sometimes rash decision-making—including trading a player to the opposing team during halftime—contributed to a turbulent tenure with the Pipers, who ceased operations after two years amid the collapse of the American Basketball League. Steinbrenner personally lost two million dollars.

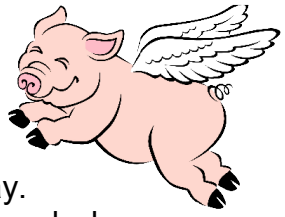
Oprah Winfrey is one of the world's most recognizable public figures and a self-made billionaire. But early in her career, struggling in the world of Baltimore television news, one of her bosses told her she was too emotional and "unfit for television news." She went on to host *The Oprah Winfrey Show* for 25 seasons.

The list of successful failures goes on and on: Steve Jobs was once fired from Apple; Walt Disney was told he wasn't creative enough; J. K. Rowling was fired from her job as a researcher; Julia Child was fired as a clerical worker for "gross insubordination"; Jerry Seinfeld was fired from a sitcom. Take it from Oprah, failure is often a gift leading to "life-changing opportunity."

Mole Goals

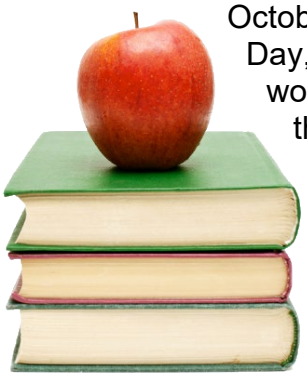
What holiday is celebrated on October 23 from 6:02 a.m. until 6:02 p.m.? Mole Day! That's not the burrowing garden pest we're talking about but rather the chemistry term. A mole measures the number of atoms or molecules in any given chemical sample. One mole is equal to 6.02×10^{23}. (Note the 6.02 and the 10/23!) This number is known as Avogadro's number, thanks to chemist Amedeo Avogadro, who discovered this measure in the 1800s. Avogadro called his number a mole as a shortened version of *molecule*. So, how big is a mole? 602,214,130,000,000,000,000,000 particles, to be exact. Just think, when you drink a glass of water, you've just taken in 13 moles of water molecules. Feel full yet? While chemists may celebrate the day measuring molecules, we can celebrate by eating avocados (in honor of Avogadro) and making a Mexican mole sauce.

Say It Silly



Sometimes we say the silliest things, but feel free on October 13 to use as many silly sayings as you want, for it's Silly Saying Day. "When pigs fly" is a saying used when you mention something that will never happen, just like a pig flying. Did you ever stop to "chew the fat" with a friend? This means to chat or gossip, but it's a nautical expression from early sailors who, when work was slow, would talk while chewing on a snack of salt-hardened fat. You've likely never used the expression "enough to cobble dogs with," which means that you have a lot of something, as though a shoe cobbler had so much leather he could make many tiny shoes for all of our four-legged friends. And there you have it, "Bob's your uncle." Don't know that one? It means everything is all right, done, and successful, sort of like saying, "And that's that." No word, though, on who Bob was or why things always worked out so well for him.

Lessons in Appreciation



October 5 is World Teachers' Day, and people all over the world will be turning their thoughts to that special teacher in their life who offered them guidance or support. But are happy memories enough to honor these unsung community heroes? Many believe that education is one of the most important gifts we can give our children and the best way to ensure they grow up to have a better life, but which countries do the best job of honoring teachers?

According to a study compiled by Professor Peter Dolton of England's University of Sussex, no place in the world respects its teachers more than China. There is a high level of respect for learning in China, and teachers are revered by parents and students alike. Teachers in China are even traditionally honored with gifts and public expressions of gratitude.

Interestingly, though, the highest performing students are not from China but from Finland. Finnish students consistently outperform other countries in international tests of reading, math, and science. Yet when it comes to respecting teachers, Finland lies in the bottom half of the worldwide ratings.

Perhaps another good measure of teacher appreciation is salary. In that case, Luxembourg leads the pack, with experienced teachers among the highest paid in the world. But when it comes to compensation, one American educator recently received a remarkable show of thanks. In 2025, educator and humanitarian Mansour Al Mansour of Saudi Arabia won the Global Teacher Prize, an annual award that recognizes exceptional educators from around the world. Often called the "Nobel Prize for teachers," the winner is awarded one million dollars. Now that's teacher appreciation!

In Praise of Pizzazz

Delve deep into your closet and find something gaudy to wear on October 17, Wear Something Gaudy Day. *Gaudy* typically refers to clothing or accessories that are flashy, ostentatious, and unfashionable. But even fashion experts wonder, "Is gaudy ever good?" Sometimes wearing a little bit of flash makes you feel fabulous. To many people, gaudy isn't a fashion mistake—it's fashion with attitude. Fashion experts assert that clothes often reflect how we feel about ourselves and can even boost our moods to make us feel better, smarter, and more empowered. So, if your style is one with a bit of flash and pizzazz, then perhaps that's just a reflection of your confidence and self-assuredness.

A Squirrel's Tale

Some think of squirrels as small pests, adept at infiltrating your home or invading your bird feeders, but they are nature's most nimble and adaptable creatures. Squirrels are extremely active in October, burying nuts and storing food for the long, cold winter. For this reason, October is Squirrel Awareness Month.

Squirrels inhabit every continent except Australia and Antarctica. There are 265 different species but three basic kinds: tree squirrels, ground squirrels, and flying squirrels. They come in all different sizes, from the mouse-sized African pygmy squirrel, which is only three inches long, to the Indian giant squirrel, which grows up to three feet in length. Squirrels are very cunning, often pretending to bury nuts in order to fool other spying squirrels. But they sometimes forget where they buried the real nuts! As a result, you may spy new trees in your yard come springtime. Perhaps we should consider ourselves lucky to live in such close quarters with these amazing little critters

Programming the Future

Ada Byron was born in 1815, the daughter of famed English poet Lord Byron and Anne Isabella Milbanke, but the girl never met her father, for her parents separated just a month after she was born. Four short months later, Lord Byron died in Greece. Ada's childhood was shaped by illness, isolation, and a highly structured education. Her mother, Lady Byron, wanted Ada to be wholly different from her father. Instead of poetry, Ada was tutored in mathematics. The fruits of her education were apparent early in her life when at age 12 she designed a flying machine. Her skill and contributions in her field earned Ada her own holiday—Ada Lovelace Day, celebrated this year on October 13—a day to celebrate all women in the fields of science, technology, engineering, and mathematics.

Lady Byron raised Ada in high society, where many wealthy and privileged men dabbled in scientific pursuits like botany, astronomy, and geology. There weren't professional scientists at that time, so any scientific pursuit was purely a hobby or pastime. When Ada grew up, she befriended one of these curious-minded men, a scientist named Charles Babbage, who studied mathematics. The two wrote to each other often, deeply discussing topics of math and logic.

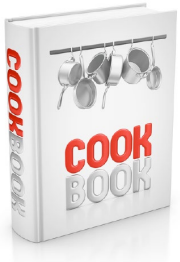
Ada became known as Ada, Countess of Lovelace, in 1835, after marrying William King, Earl of Lovelace. Not long after her marriage, Ada's old friend Charles Babbage asked her for help with his newest invention, a calculating machine he called an "analytical engine." This was a precursor to modern-day computers, earning Babbage the nickname "father of the computer." Ada, working on the machine, called herself an analyst. She predicted that such machines would not just crunch numbers but incorporate text, pictures, and music. Historians now call her the world's first computer programmer. Babbage, although not a poet like Ada's father, bestowed on his protégé an even better title: "Enchantress of Numbers."

October Birthdays

In astrology, those born October 1–22 balance the scales of Libra. Libras seek equality, justice, and harmony. Eager to cooperate, Libras are charming diplomats who seek compromise and goodwill. Those born between October 23–31 are Scorpios. Scorpios are passionate and assertive leaders who value honesty and fairness above all—but betray a Scorpio and suffer the scorpion sting. Befriend a Scorpio and you will have not just a friend for life, but an advocate and confidant.

Buster Keaton (comedian) – October 4, 1895
Thor Heyerdahl (explorer) – October 6, 1914
Jesse Jackson (civic leader) – October 8, 1941
Henry J. Heinz (magnate) – October 11, 1844
Ralph Lauren (designer) – October 14, 1939
Emeril Lagasse (chef) – October 15, 1959
Annette Funicello (actress) – October 22, 1942
Michael Crichton (writer) – October 23, 1942
Dylan Thomas (poet) – October 27, 1914

A Recipe for Success



If you've got an idea for a cookbook, October 12, Cookbook Launch Day, may be the time to publish it. Remember, the cookbook industry is competitive, and you need an original idea. Take, for example, the cookbook *Manifold Destiny,* which includes recipes for cooking on your car engine. Preparing for the end of the world? *The Art of Eating Through the Zombie Apocalypse* offers recipes for surviving a fictional zombie outbreak. *Mini-Mart à la Carte* is a cookbook for people who do their shopping at gas stations. And of course there are cookbooks not for humans, but for pampered pets, like *Barkcuterie* and *Bone Appétit*. It seems that even the most outlandish cookbook ideas can be appetizing. A more traditional route might be to gather your friends and compile a homemade cookbook of all your favorite recipes.