



PLUSH MILLS

A SAGE SENIOR LIVING COMMUNITY

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Days of December

December brings the arrival of winter, the holiday season, and the eve of the new year. Enjoy this exciting time!

Flickering Festivity

On Dec. 24, 1966, a New York City TV station first aired "The Yule Log," a continuous video of a crackling fireplace scene accompanied by a festive soundtrack. People tuned in each year for the three-hour holiday scene, but the rising costs of the commercial-free program doused the fake flames in the '90s. Thanks to viewer demand, "The Yule Log" was rekindled in 2001, and now the cozy broadcast—as well as numerous copycats—can be seen on stations and streaming services nationwide.

Remember When: Wooden Sleds

For generations of children, the combination of a winter snowfall and a nearby hill made for a day of sledding fun. One of the most popular means of riding the snowy slopes was aboard a Flexible Flyer. The iconic wooden sled with its eagle logo, red metal runners and hardwood seat slats was famous for a revolutionary feature—a flexible front-end steering bar that allowed the rider to control their course. Created in 1899 by a New Jersey manufacturer, millions of the sleds were sold up until the 1980s.

Staying Active With Arthritis

Doctors say light exercise can help manage arthritic joint pain, especially in the winter. Indoor walking and swimming, riding a stationary bike, yoga and tai chi are all good options.

December 2024



Handcrafted Happiness

Knitting, drawing and woodworking are just some of the handicrafts that can amp up your happiness. Experts studying the benefits of these pursuits say making something with your hands fosters creative thought, which can produce moments of joy. Crafters also report feeling more energetic and enthusiastic not only while working on a project, but also after completing it.

Hazelnuts for Health

Whether you know them as hazelnuts, filberts or cobnuts, these sweet-tasting little nuts are packed with fiber, antioxidants and healthy fats. Like other tree nuts, raw or roasted hazelnuts can be a heart-healthy snack option.

Frosty and Festive

"Winter is not a season, it's a celebration."
—Anamika Mishra

Cosmic Odds and Ends

Besides planets, moons and stars, what else is floating out there in space? Asteroids, comets and meteors, to name a few billion. Learn the differences between these celestial wonders:

- Made of rock, metal and other minerals, asteroids are sometimes called “minor planets.”
- Most asteroids are located between Mars and Jupiter, in a region called the asteroid belt.
- Comets are known as “dirty snowballs” because they’re formed of frozen gases, rock and dust. As they approach the sun, the heat causes them to glow, and solar winds blow the gas and dust into long tails.
- A comet’s tail can stretch for millions of miles. However, the particles that form the tail are spaced so far apart from each other that other objects—including Earth—can safely pass through the tail’s path.
- Meteoroids are crumbs that break off from a comet or asteroid. Once they enter the Earth’s atmosphere, they’re called meteors, or “shooting stars.”
- Meteors that survive the heat of the atmosphere and land on Earth are called meteorites. Studying meteorites has revealed information about the universe’s history.



Reap the Rewards of Classical Music

From Bach to Beethoven, Mozart to Mendelssohn, classical music is admired by many—and research shows that listening to this genre can result in a symphony of health benefits!

Improves memory and focus. An optimal soundtrack for studying and reading, classical music helps the brain absorb and retain new information.

Reduces stress. Listening to classical music lowers the body’s levels of cortisol, the stress hormone, while also boosting dopamine, one of the brain’s “feel-good” hormones.

Lowers blood pressure. Multiple studies show that classical music’s calming properties significantly lower blood pressure and heart rate, decreasing the risk of heart attack, stroke and other conditions.

Promotes healing. Classical music helps ICU patients recover more quickly from trauma by stabilizing heart rate and breathing, as well as reducing instances of delirium. Rehab programs for stroke and brain injury patients incorporate classical music to improve cognitive functions.

Foul-Weather Games

In snow, sleet, fog and rain ... dedicated athletes continue to play! Intense weather conditions can transform already exciting sports events into legendary moments. Maybe Mother Nature wanted to get in on the action in these high-stakes games:

Dec. 31, 1967: Known as the “Ice Bowl,” this championship game between the Green Bay Packers and the Dallas Cowboys remains the coldest game in NFL history, at minus 15 degrees and a wind chill of minus 48 degrees. The Packers’ home turf, Lambeau Field, froze solid when the heating system failed, and officials’ whistles stuck to their lips.

Oct. 22, 1997: According to sportscaster Bob Costas, Game 4 of the 1997 World Series had “ideal conditions for baseball—if you happen to be a penguin.” Snow flurries and a wind chill of 18 degrees inspired the nickname “Snow Globe Game.”

Jan. 1, 2011: It wasn’t cold weather that caused the 2011 NHL Winter Classic to be delayed by seven hours, but thunderstorms paired with unseasonably warm temps in the 40s. These conditions meant the outdoor ice rink was at risk of flooding, and although the late start time prevented that from happening, players still encountered puddles caused by intermittent rain.



History of the Halcyon Days

Ahh, the halcyon days. You've likely heard this phrase used as a reference to the past, particularly a time marked by peace and happiness. But the halcyon days also refer to a period in mid-December and has origins in Greek mythology.

The story begins with Alcyone and Ceyx, a mythological queen

and king in ancient Greece. After Ceyx was killed in a shipwreck, a distraught Alcyone threw herself into the sea. The gods, filled with compassion, transformed the couple into "halcyon birds," or kingfishers, so they could be together. Aeolus, Alcyone's father and king of the winds, calmed the weather for several days, allowing the birds to build nests and lay their eggs in peace.

The halcyon days came to be known as the two-week period surrounding the winter solstice, when the weather—at least in Greece!—tends to be calm and mild. However, the figurative meaning of halcyon days, marked by nostalgia for better times, is more widespread.

'Sing' In the New Year

Pull out your party hat and warm up your vocal cords—it's almost time to ring in the new year with some celebratory singing! Add these treasured favorites to your NYE playlist:

"Let's Start the New Year Right." Crooned by Bing Crosby in the 1942 classic film "Holiday Inn," this sweet jazzy tune promises high hopes in the year to come.

"Bringing In a Brand New Year." Pianist and blues singer Charles Brown penned this catchy bop, perfect for tapping your toes while you wait for midnight.

"It's Just Another New Year's Eve." Barry Manilow often

performed this 1977 ballad on "Dick Clark's New Year's Rockin' Eve" TV special, reminding audiences that the upcoming year is full of second chances.

"Auld Lang Syne." The ultimate New Year's Eve anthem, "Auld Lang Syne" is mostly attributed to a 1788 poem by Robert Burns and set to traditional Scottish music. With an emphasis on friendship and fond memories, singing the song in a circle is a wonderful way to cap off the night's festivities.



Wit & Wisdom

"The more positivity, love and light you reflect, the more light is mirrored your way."

—Suzy Kassem

"Reflection is one of the most underused yet powerful tools for success."

—Richard Carlson

"The journey into self-love and self-acceptance must begin with self-examination ... until you take the journey of self-reflection, it is almost impossible to grow or learn in life."

—Iyanla Vanzant

"The moon is the reflection of your heart and moonlight is the twinkle of your love."

—Debasish Mridha

"Self-reflection is an important stage to diagnose, develop and strengthen your creativity."

—Pearl Zhu

"Art is not a reflection of reality, it is the reality of a reflection."

—Jean-Luc Godard

"Reflection is the lamp of the heart. If it departs, the heart will have no light."
—Abdallah ibn Alawi al-Haddad

"Let go of rejections and focus on self-reflection. For it is within that you will find the light you seek."

—Amy Leigh Mercree



America's Official Poets

Each year, the Library of Congress names a poet laureate of the United States to promote the reading and writing of poetry. Find inspiration in the works of these poets of the nation.

<u>Year Appointed</u>	<u>Poet Laureate</u>
1937	Joseph Auslander
1945	Louise Bogan
1958	Robert Frost
1968	William Jay Smith
1976	Robert Hayden
1985	Gwendolyn Brooks
1993	Rita Dove
2000	Stanley Kunitz
2015	Juan Felipe Herrera
2022	Ada Limón

"This Month In History"

DECEMBER

1901: With a goal of setting rules and safety standards, representatives from over 60 universities meet to form the Intercollegiate Athletic Association of the United States. In 1910, the organization was renamed the NCAA.

1924: At age 2, Judy Garland makes her stage debut at her father's movie theater in Grand Rapids, Minn.

1948: The United Nations General Assembly adopts the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Defining

fundamental freedoms of all human beings, the document has been translated into more than 500 languages.

1973: Astronauts on NASA's Skylab 4 mission take a 7-hour spacewalk, the longest at the time.

1987: Ron Hextall of the Philadelphia Flyers becomes the first NHL goalie to score a goal by intentionally firing the puck into the other team's net.

2001: "The Lord of the Rings: The Fellowship of the Ring" premieres. It was the first film in the trilogy based on author J.R.R. Tolkien's fantasy series.

2007: At 81, Queen Elizabeth II becomes the oldest ever monarch of the U.K., surpassing her great-great-grandmother, Queen Victoria.

2016: Global retailer Amazon makes its first delivery by drone. The package arrived at its destination 13 minutes after it was ordered.