

APRIL 2018

Reflections in the Park

Menorah Park of CNY • Hodes Way 4101 E. Genesee St., Syracuse, NY 13214 • (315) 446-9111



Celebrating April

Car Care Month

Jazz Appreciation Month

Physical Wellness Month

Easter

April 1

World Party Day

April 3

Barbershop Quartet Day

April 11

National Coin Week

April 15–21

Earth Day

April 22

Richter Scale Day

April 26

Frogs of the Amazon

Most people know that the Amazon is the world's largest rain forest. It covers 2.72 million square miles—almost the size of the 48 contiguous United States—and touches the countries of Brazil, Peru, Colombia, Venezuela, Ecuador, Bolivia, Guyana, Suriname, and French Guiana. The Amazon represents more than half of the world's remaining rain forest, home to an estimated 390 billion individual trees. It is within this magnificent forest that we find another of nature's marvelous animals: the frog. Scientists are not sure how many frog species inhabit the Amazon, but every year they are finding more. The latest estimate stands at 1,000 different frogs, toads, and tree frogs, which give us 1,000 reasons to celebrate April as Frog Month.

Perhaps the best recognized frog of the Amazon is the poison dart frog, the brilliant celebrity of the rain forest. These amphibians get their name from the indigenous tribes of the Amazon who dip their darts in the frog's poison to kill their prey. Another poisonous frog from the Peruvian Amazon is making headlines for its healing properties. Local tribespeople burn a small part of their skin and apply the toxin so that it is quickly absorbed into the bloodstream. After a few moments of serenity, the poison causes sensations of suffering, which leads to vomiting. Practitioners claim that the experience cures everything from depression to drug addiction and high blood pressure.

Researchers continue to add more frogs to this list of amazing creatures. Nearly one year ago, scientists discovered two new clown frog species, quite a surprise considering that only two species were known to exist. Researchers also found a new transparent *yaku* frog in Ecuador, named for its transparent abdominal skin, which reveals its heart. As recently as last November, researchers came upon the jaguar-snouted tree frog in the middle of an abandoned road, a new species that may already be endangered. This is some food for thought on April 28, Save the Frogs Day.

A Bell Cast into History



Big Ben, the famous bell housed in the Clock Tower of London's Palace of Westminster, is a British icon. Tourists flock to the place so they can hear it ring out. Big Ben has rung even during the worst of times, such as the Blitz, Germany's eight-month bombardment of London during World War II. On April 10, Big Ben will ring out still another milestone, for it will turn 160 years old.

The story of Big Ben begins on October 16, 1834, when fire destroyed the Palace of Westminster, the seat of Britain's government. While the palace was being rebuilt, it was decided that it needed a clock tower. The tower's design fell to George Airy, Astronomer Royal, and Edmund Beckett Denison, a lawyer and self-described expert on clocks and bells. Denison designed the first bell for the tower, including its unique shape and the metal with which it was cast. The 16-ton behemoth did not last long: it cracked under its first test. It was then that Denison turned to Whitechapel Bell Foundry to cast a new bell.

George Mears was the master bellfounder who undertook the re-casting of Big Ben. It took one week to break up the old bell and repurpose its metal. Three furnaces were used to melt the metal. It took 20 minutes to fill the mold and another 20 days for the metal to cool and harden. Mears tested the bell in every way possible before Denison allowed it to leave the foundry, and it left for the Palace of Westminster with great fanfare, pulled by 16 horses along decorated streets with cheering crowds. Big Ben would not ring out until a year later on May 31, 1859. Sir Benjamin Hall, known as "Big Ben," gave a long speech during a debate about what to call the bell. When at last he sat down, members shouted out that the bell be dubbed "Big Ben." Just two months later, Big Ben cracked, the result of a hammer more than twice the necessary weight designed by Denison. Big Ben was simply turned, and the sound we hear today is that distinct, less-than-perfect tone.

A Pocketful of Poetry

If you are unsure of how to celebrate Poetry Month in April, then just wait until April 26, Poem in Your Pocket Day. On this day, choose a poem and carry it with you all day to work, to school, out shopping, or anywhere you may go. You may choose to share it with others or keep it to yourself, but the power of the poem will be with you all day. Perhaps you will choose a celebration of life, such as Walt Whitman's *Full Of Life, Now*, a hymn to nature, such as John Clare's *All Nature Has a Feeling*; a poem about poetry like Archie MacLeish's *Ars Poetica*; or a unique take on love, such as *Heart to Heart* by Rita Dove. Perhaps you won't choose a poem at all but your favorite song lyrics, which you can sing to everyone you meet. Remember, poems, like songs, are meant to be heard, so do not shy away from the wonder of sharing your special poem with those around you.

Pampered and Purposeful



April 27 is Little Pampered Dog Day, but before you poo-poo the notion of honoring little lap dogs, bear in mind that humans lived with lap-sized canines 15,000 years ago. Scientists have traced our history with small dogs to France, where our cave-dwelling ancestors may have used the dogs to both keep them warm and assist them in the hunt. Wild canines called *dholes* grew to less than 17 inches tall, about the size of a beagle or cocker spaniel. Many small dog breeds today bear similarities to these ancient companions: they are tenacious hunters of small ground-dwelling prey animals, they are alert watchdogs that let out loud warnings when intruders are near, and yes, during the Renaissance, miniature poodles were used by nobility as handwarmers. The small dogs were put inside sleeves of shirts, becoming known as "sleeve dogs." Others were used to warm laps in damp castles or on chilly carriage rides. All of these are good reasons to pamper the little dog in your life.

The Son of Music



Mariachi music is an enduring musical tradition in Mexico, played wherever celebrations take place. There will certainly be plenty of mariachi music to enjoy at the Tucson Mariachi

Conference from April 25 to 28. Mariachi's roots go back hundreds of years, to the arrival of Spanish Conquistador Hernán Cortés in Mexico in 1519. Indigenous music, played as part of a religious ceremony, was played with rattles, drums, flutes, and conch shells. The Spanish brought with them harps, guitars, violins, and brass horns, instruments that were played during Catholic mass but quickly became popular outside of church services. Natives created a new type of music, incorporating the new instruments with local musical styles and African musical influences that arrived via the slave trade. Many identify the west Mexican state of Jalisco as the center of this new folk music style known simply as *son*, or *sound*. It was from the *son* of Jalisco that modern mariachi developed.

In the late 1800s and 1900s, the biggest form of entertainment was listening to radio and records. This is when the first modern mariachi bands formed. Violins and trumpets were added to musical orchestras featuring harps, guitars, and woodwinds. These bands became popular, and the music made its way into the rural countrysides. Mariachi was played at parties, on holidays, and in church, and the sound accompanied dances as varied as foxtrots, waltzes, pasodobles, fandangos, pokes, and jarabes. During the Mexican Revolution, many Spanish haciendas had to let workers go, including mariachi musicians. These mariachis wandered and played everywhere they could, and the new Mexican government, eager to promote a unified Mexican identity separate from their Spanish colonizers, presented mariachi as the national music for their young country. While Jalisco may be the "birthplace of mariachi," the reach of this music is now global, with mariachi bands playing as far away as Sweden, Egypt, and Croatia.

Visit our very own Bistro at Menorah Park!

The Jim & Arlene Gerber Bistro in the Abraham Shankman Wellness Pavillion at Menorah Park is now open for Kosher breakfast, lunch, and dinner for residents, families, visitors, and the public.

Come and enjoy our meal and a la carte selections, as well as refreshing drinks at Fox's Den Sports Bar.

**Hours of Operation:
Monday-Thursday 8a-10a
Sunday-Friday 11a-2p
Sunday-Thursday 4p-7p
Closed-Saturday**

Happy Hour for residents is every Tuesday and Thursday at 3:30. Please join your loved one for a drink, music and socializing.

Time for a Change



Times Square is one of New York City's most famous landmarks, but many don't know where it got its name. Before it was Times Square, the intersection was known as Longacre Square, named after London's Long Acre Square. Both places were hubs for horse carriages, brothels, and saloons. When Adolph Ochs acquired *The New York Times* newspaper in 1896, he sought a part of town far from City Hall and "Newspaper Row" for his growing news empire. He found his spot in Longacre Square, which the mayor renamed Times Square for the newspaper's offices on April 8, 1904.

Menorah Park of CNY
Hodes Way
4101 E. Genesee St.
Syracuse, NY, 13214

Postage
Information

Menorah Park April Birthdays

Happy birthday to the following residents born in April:

Evelyn F. 4/2
Douglas B. 4/4
Patricia G. 4/13
Phyllis R. 4/15
William J. 4/17
Eva H. 4/21
Rose D. 4/23
Jane E. 4/26

**It takes a long
time to become
young.
— Pablo Picasso**

Famous April Birthdays

In astrology, those born between April 1–19 are Aries' Rams. As the first sign of the zodiac, Aries are energetic and assertive initiators. With bravery, zeal, and speed, they jump headfirst into life, confident they can navigate any challenges. Those born between April 20–30 are Taurus' Bulls. Bulls are hardworking, ambitious, honest, and dedicated to finishing tasks with a dogged persistence. And once the work is done, a Taurus expects to enjoy the fruits of their labor.

Marlon Brando (actor) – April 3, 1924
Spencer Tracy (actor) – April 5, 1900
Francis Ford Coppola (director) – April 7, 1939
Betty Ford (first lady) – April 8, 1918
David Letterman (TV host) – April 12, 1947
Loretta Lynn (singer) – April 14, 1932
William Shakespeare (writer) – c. April 23, 1564
Barbra Streisand (singer) – April 24, 1942
Ella Fitzgerald (singer) – April 25, 1917
Carol Burnett (comedienne) – April 26, 1933
Jerry Seinfeld (comedian) – April 29, 1954