



Random Thoughts

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DID U KNOW?

Green is associated with St. Patrick's Day because it is the color of spring, Ireland and the shamrock.

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On March 31, 1889, The Eiffel Tower opened. The blueprints for the Eiffel Tower covered more than 14,000 square feet of drafting paper. Alexandre Gustave Eiffel, the man who designed the Eiffel Tower, also designed the inner structure of the Statue of Liberty in New York Harbor.

CELEBRATING THE GREEN

St. Patrick's Day is bursting with folklore; from the shamrock to the leprechaun and to pinching those that are not wearing green. St. Patrick's Day is celebrated by people of all backgrounds in the United States, Canada, and Australia. Although North America is home to the largest productions, St. Patrick's Day has been celebrated in other locations far from Ireland, including Japan, Singapore, and Russia. In modern-day Ireland, St. Patrick's Day has traditionally been a religious occasion. In fact, up until the 1970s, Irish laws mandated that pubs be closed on March 17. Beginning in 1995, however, the Irish government began a national campaign to use St. Patrick's Day as an opportunity to drive tourism and showcase Ireland to the rest of the world. Last year, close to one million people took part in Ireland's St. Patrick's Festival in Dublin, a multi-day celebration featuring parades, concerts, outdoor theater productions, and fireworks shows.

The Shamrock

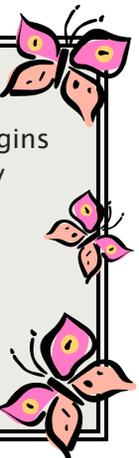


The shamrock, which was also called the "seamroy" by the Celts, was a sacred plant in ancient Ireland because it symbolized the rebirth of spring. By the seventeenth century, the shamrock had become a symbol of emerging Irish nationalism. As the English began to seize Irish land and make laws against the use of the Irish language and the practice of Catholicism, many Irish began to wear the shamrock as a symbol of their pride in their heritage and their displeasure with English rule.

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MARCH EVENTS

- March 8 Daylight Savings Begins
- March 12 Girl Scout's Birthday
- March 16 Palm Sunday
- March 17 St. Patrick's Day
- March 20 Earth Day
- March 20 Spring Equinox
- March 21 Good Friday
- March 23 Easter Sunday





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THE LEPRECHAUN

The original Irish name for these figures of folklore is "lobaircin," meaning "small-bodied fellow."

Belief in leprechauns probably stems from Celtic belief in fairies, tiny men and women who could use their magical powers to serve good or evil. In Celtic folktales, leprechauns were cranky souls, responsible for mending the shoes of the other fairies. Though only minor figures in Celtic folklore, leprechauns were known for their trickery, which they often used to protect their much-fabled treasure.

Leprechauns had nothing to do with St. Patrick or the celebration of St. Patrick's Day, a Catholic holy day. In 1959, Walt Disney released a film called *Darby O'Gill & the Little People*, which introduced America to a very different sort of leprechaun than the cantankerous little man of Irish folklore. This cheerful, friendly leprechaun is a purely American invention, but has quickly evolved into an easily recognizable symbol of both St. Patrick's Day and Ireland in general.

?! BRAIN TEASER !?

What can go up a chimney down, but can't go down a chimney up? (Hint... chim chimney)

Answers on page 3

Canned herring were dubbed "sardines" because the canning process was first developed in Sardinia, Italy.



Babe Ruth hit his first professional home run March 7, 1914 in Fayetteville, North Carolina. When Babe Ruth hit 60 home runs in 1927, he hit 14 percent of all home runs in his league that year. For a player to hit 14 percent of all home runs today, he would have to hit over 300 home runs in one season.

In July 1934, Babe Ruth paid a fan \$20 dollars for the return of the baseball he hit for his 700th career home run. Babe Ruth is credited with the invention of the modern baseball bat. He was the first player to order a bat with a knob on the end of the handle. Louisville Slugger produced the bat with which he hit 29 home runs in 1919. Babe Ruth named his bats "Black Betsy" and "Beautiful Bella."



In the early 1940s, Swiss inventor George de Mestral went on a walk with his dog. Upon returning home, he noticed that his dog's coat and his pants were covered with cockleburs. His inventor's curiosity led him to study the burrs under a microscope, where he discovered its natural hook-like shape. This was to become the basis for a unique, two-sided fastener: one side with stiff "hooks" like the burrs and the other side with the soft "loops" like the fabric of his pants. The result was VELCRO® brand hook and loop fasteners, named for the French words "velour" and "crochet."

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#7

RUBBER DUCKY...

In 1992, 29000 rubber ducks fell off a Chinese freight ship in the Pacific Ocean. Thousands of them washed up on the shores of eastern Asia and Australia. Some even made it as far as the western shores of North & South America. But some have travelled even further; after a few years at sea they floated north into the Bering Strait where they became trapped in the polar ice cap. The ducks and the ice then migrated east. A few years ago they emerged from the ice in the northern Atlantic. From there they traveled down the eastern Canadian & US coastline before being swept into the Gulf Stream. Eventually they headed toward England where they landed in the summer of 2007.



The Mona Lisa has no eyebrows. It was the fashion in Renaissance Florence to shave them off.

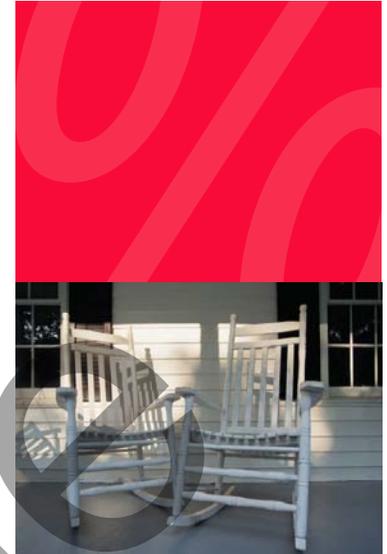
It took a tense 1 hour and 45 minutes each day to apply actor Jack Haley's silver and black makeup for his signature role as the Tin Man in the 1939 classic *The Wizard of Oz*. Ray Bolger, as the Scarecrow, sat in the makeup chair for 2 hours each day. Bert Lahr, as the Cowardly Lion, had the worst time of it. Once his lion's mouth and nose prostheses were glued to his face, he couldn't open his own mouth wide enough to chew. His lunch was whatever he could sip through a straw. His fur-covered lion costume, complete with fur mittens, was so heavy and hot, Lahr had to take the suit off completely after each shot, and would be dripping wet.

*Humpty Dumpty sat on a wall.
Humpty Dumpty had a great fall. All
the king's horses and all the king's
men Couldn't put Humpty together
again!*

History: "Humpty Dumpty was a powerful cannon during the English Civil War (1642-49).

It was mounted on top of the St Mary's at the Wall Church in Colchester defending the city against siege in the summer of 1648. (Although Colchester was a Parliamentary stronghold, it had been captured by the Royalists and they held it for 11 weeks.) The church tower was hit by the enemy and the top of the tower was blown off, sending "Humpty" tumbling to the ground. Naturally the King's men* tried to mend him but in vain."

* NB: The "men" would have been infantry, and "horses" the cavalry troops.



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Brain Teaser Answer: An Umbrella.

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RANDOM THOUGHTS

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MARCH 2008



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