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February Birthdays

In astrology, those born between February 1st and 18th are Water Bearers of Aquarius. Aquarians may be shy and quiet, but they are energetic, unique, and independent visionaries. Those born between February 19th and 28th are Pisces. Fish are compassionate, gentle, intuitive, and artistic. Known for their wisdom, Pisces are not judgmental and are very forgiving.

Betty Lou Cox	February 26th
Edna Mae Everitt	February 28th

A Season of Fasting cont. from pg. 1

The Lenten season is also a period of fasting. The term *Carnival* derives from the words *carne levare*, meaning “to remove meat,” signaling this traditional Lenten dietary prohibition. Most people are familiar with the term *Mardi Gras*, meaning “Fat Tuesday,” which falls the day before Ash Wednesday, the first day of Lent. Few are familiar with another name for this day, Shrove Tuesday. Some also refer to it as Pancake Tuesday. As the last day before the fasting season of Lent, Shrove Tuesday is the traditional day to gorge oneself on the rich and fatty foods forbidden during Lent, such as pancakes. Spain calls this day the *dia de la tortilla*, or omelet day, and many celebrate by eating omelets made with sausage and pork fat. Of course, all indulgences come to an end on Ash Wednesday, when Lent, fasting, and penance begin in earnest.



Mend a Broken Heart Month

Spunky Old Broads Month

Candy-Making Day
February 1

Ice Cream for Breakfast Day
February 4

Weatherman's Day
February 5

Celebration of Love Week
February 12–18

Valentine's Day
February 14

Diesel Engine Day
February 23

For Pete's Sake Day
February 26

Renaissance Terrace

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A Season of Fasting and Forgiveness

February is an important month in the religious calendar. February 12 brings Septuagesima Sunday, the start of the pre-Lenten season. The word *Septuagesima* derives from the Latin word meaning “seventieth,” which marks the 70 days before Easter. In many countries around the world, this day heralds the start of modern-day Carnival. Yet before the wild and costumed revelry of Carnival became commonplace, this long period leading

up to Lent and Easter was called Shrovetide.

The term *Shrovetide* comes from the term *shrive*, which means “to hear confessions.” During the days of Lent leading up to Easter, people are supposed to go to confession, where the priests shrive—or listen to—the confessors, forgive them their sins, and offer penance. In many ways, it makes sense that Carnival grew from the Shrovetide traditions. After all, Carnival is a

time of wild and reckless merrymaking, with many revelers accumulating sins. Revelers could then confess their accumulated sins and be forgiven in time for Lent.

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Galentine's Day

The sitcom *Seinfeld* gave us the fictional holiday *Festivus* as a comedic alternative to Christmas. Now the sitcom *Parks and Recreation* has given us an alternative to Valentine's Day, *Galentine's Day*. The episode aired before Valentine's Day on February 11, 2010, and it seemed to capture the

angst and pressure many feel to celebrate this amorous holiday. According to the show, Galentine's Day falls on February 13, and women leave their boyfriends and husbands behind to share a breakfast celebrating friendship, complete with waffles and frittatas. Since the episode aired in 2010,

women all over have been celebrating Galentine's Day. Some stores have even begun stocking Galentine's Day gifts and greeting cards. And why shouldn't women celebrate their friendships with other women? Galentine's Day might even inspire guys to create their own holiday and celebrate Dudentine's Day.

Life Lived to Its Fullest

Jeanne Louise Calment was born in Arles, in the south of France, on February 21, 1875. Her life was fairly unremarkable, except for her birth date, which was recorded in the Arles birth register. When Calment died in 1997 at 122 years old, she became the world's longest-living person.

Theories abound about Calment's extraordinary longevity. Did she live so long because she ate two pounds of chocolate a week, rode a bicycle until she was 100, drank a daily glass of port wine, or had a great sense of humor? It certainly wasn't because she gave up smoking at age 120. Jean-Marie Rabine, researcher and author of a book about Calment, credits her long life to her "immunity to stress." Calment married into money and

Tale of the Tooth

Rosemary Wells is a professor of dentistry and perhaps the foremost expert on the tooth fairy, so any questions regarding Tooth Fairy Day, February 28, should be forwarded to her. Wells discovered that the mythological fairy is an American invention. Throughout history, different cultures have had different rituals for disposing of baby teeth, such as throwing them

did not have to work. She spent much of her time playing tennis, roller-skating, and swimming. But will any of us be so lucky as to live such long, full lives?

Scientists believe that humans have largely reached the upper limits of our life spans, and that limit is 115 years. While the improvements of modern life increase our chances of living longer, no matter how many health breakthroughs humankind uncovers, we cannot live forever. And scientists are quick to remind us that we do not want to. After all, a full life is better than a long life. A social network, a healthy diet and exercise, getting enough sleep, and having a sense of a higher purpose—these are the hallmarks of long, full lives.

to the sun or in the fire, or even placing them in a mouse hole near the hearth. In many countries, children still exchange their teeth with mice for gifts. America's tooth fairy is a cross between the gifting mouse and the fairies of so many European folktales. The concept of the fairy comforts children, and the gift of money symbolizes their transition to adulthood.

Real-Life Robinson Crusoe

The golden age of piracy was anything but golden for the pirates who suffered to sail the seas. Scottish sailor Alexander Selkirk understood the hardship all too well. Stuck aboard a leaky ship 400 miles off the coast of Chile, he demanded of his captain to be abandoned on a large island. Selkirk survived alone for four years and four months there. On February 2, 1709, two ships led by Captain Woodes Rogers appeared off the shore of Selkirk's island to find the castaway running barefoot up the hills, catching goats for food. So amazing was Selkirk's tale of survival that author Daniel Defoe was inspired to write the story of *Robinson Crusoe*.



Notable Quotable

"I never wear mascara. I laugh until I cry too often."

~ Jeanne Louise Calment



To Pluto and Beyond

Pluto was snubbed as the ninth planet of our solar system, but let us not snub Pluto Day on February 18. On this day in 1930, astronomer Clyde Tombaugh spied the distant planet from the Lowell Observatory in Flagstaff, Arizona.

The name Pluto was offered by 11-year-old Venetia Burney. She named the cold and distant planet—with temperatures of -360° Fahrenheit and located four billion miles from the sun—after the Roman god of the harsh and cold underworld. Astronomers liked the

name because it included the letters *P* and *L*, the initials of astronomer Percival Lowell, both the namesake of Flagstaff's observatory and the scientist who first guessed the planet even existed.

Pluto's fans were famously disappointed in August of 2006, when the International Astronomical Union redefined what constitutes a planet and stripped Pluto of its planet status. Because Pluto does not stand alone as a planetary mass—it is merely the

largest object in the Kuiper Belt, a grouping of many objects that swirl beyond Neptune—it was demoted.

But Pluto fans may have reason to cheer. Observations conducted from high atop Hawaii's Mauna Kea mountain suggest that Pluto isn't alone in the nether reaches of our solar system. Another dwarf planet in the Kuiper Belt was discovered in February 2016. Discoveries such as these show that there are far more surprises out there in the universe than disappointments.



Notable Quotable

"Gratitude makes sense of our past, brings peace for today, and creates a vision for tomorrow."

~ Melody Beattie, author and self-help guru

Big Facts of the Dwarf Planet

- Pluto orbits the sun once every 248 years; that's longer than the history of the United States.
- Pluto is so small it could fit between Washington, DC, and Denver, CO.
- Charon, Pluto's moon, is half the size of Pluto, which makes it the biggest moon relative to its planet in our solar system.
- It takes a radio wave four hours to reach Pluto from Earth.

Eternal Peace

The peace symbol is universally recognized today, but it was a shocking new design when Gerald Herbert Holtom first presented it on February 21, 1958. Holtom was a member of the Direct Action Committee Against Nuclear War and

wished to use his symbol in his crusade for peace. Holtom's design, he explained, was modeled on himself. He drew himself as a long thin line within a circle, with his arms stretched outward and downward, with palms up, in

despair. Later in life, Holtom expressed how he wanted the symbol to be turned upside down, with the arms lifted to the sky in joy. Holtom continued to draw his peace sign this way until he finally found his own eternal peace.

