



24 Hour Emergency Service

Water Remediation

Sewage Remediation

Fire & Smoke Clean-up

Groundhog Day: February 2nd



Groundhog Day is an annual holiday celebrated on February 2nd in both the US and in Canada. According to folklore, if a groundhog emerging from its burrow on this day fails to see its shadow, it will leave the burrow, thus signifying that winter will soon end. If on the other hand, the groundhog sees its shadow, it will supposedly retreat into its burrow and winter will continue for six more weeks.

The holiday, which began as a Pennsylvania German custom in the 18th century, has its origins in ancient European weather lore, wherein a badger (or “sacred bear”) is the prognosticator as opposed to the groundhog. The holiday also bears some similarities to the medieval Catholic holiday of *Candlemas*, as well as the Pagan festival of *Imbolc*, the seasonal turning point of the Celtic calendar, which was celebrated on February 1st and also involved weather prognostication.

In southeast Pennsylvania, Groundhog Lodges celebrate the holiday with special social events in which food is served, speeches are made, and one or more skits are performed for entertainment. The Pennsylvania German dialect is the only language spoken at the event, and those who speak English pay a penalty, usually in the form of a nickel, dime or quarter per word spoken, put into a bowl in the center of the table.

Mardi Gras – Fat Tuesday – is February 16th

The term “Mardi Gras” refers to the events of the Carnival celebrations, ending on the day before Ash Wednesday. From the French term “Mardi Gras” (literally “Fat Tuesday”), the season is often designated by the year, as in “Mardi Gras 2010.”

The time varies from city to city, as some traditions consider Mardi Gras as the Carnival period between Epiphany (or Twelfth Night) and Ash Wednesday. Others treat the final three-day period as being Mardi Gras. In Mobile, Alabama, Mardi Gras events begin in November, followed by mystic society balls on Thanksgiving, then New Year’s Eve, with parades on New Year’s Day, followed by more parades and balls throughout January and February, continuing up to midnight before Ash Wednesday. Other cities famous for their Mardi Gras celebrations include Rio de Janeiro in Brazil, Quebec City, Quebec in Canada, and New Orleans, Louisiana in the US.

Carnival is also an important celebration in most of Europe – except in Ireland and the UK, where the festival is called “Shrovetide”, ending in Shrove Tuesday, with pancakes being the traditional fare.



*Keep your faith in beautiful things;
In the sun when it is hidden,
In the Spring when it is gone.*

Roy R. Gibson

February’s Birthstone: the Amethyst

The name **Amethyst** comes from the Ancient Greek *a-* (“not”) and *methustos* (“intoxicated”), a reference to the belief that the stone protected its owner from drunkenness. The ancient Greeks and Romans wore amethyst and made drinking vessels of it in the belief that it would prevent intoxication.

Up to the late 18th century, amethyst was included among the cardinal gemstones, along with diamonds, sapphires, rubies and emeralds. However, since the discovery of extensive deposits in locations such as Brazil, it has lost a significant portion of its value.

Collectors now look for depth of color, possibly with red flashes if cut conventionally. The highest grade of amethyst – called “Deep Russian” – is exceptionally rare, and therefore its value is dependent upon the demand of the collectors when one is found. It is still orders of magnitude lower than the highest grade sapphires or rubies.

Recipe Corner!

Mexican Lasagna

Ingredients

12 oz cooked chicken or ground beef
1 - 4oz can chopped green chilies
¼ C chopped onion
¼ C chopped fresh cilantro
1 t ground chili powder
½ t cayenne pepper
Salt and pepper to taste
8 - 6" corn tortillas, cut into 6 wedges
1 C mild, medium or hot salsa
2 C Taco Shredded Cheese
1 C sour cream

Directions

Coat an 11x7" baking pan with cooking spray.
Cook onion, cilantro, meat, chilies and seasonings. Arrange half of the tortilla pieces in the bottom of prepared pan, overlapping pieces slightly to cover the surface. Top w/ the heated meat mixture, heated salsa and layer with cheese, continue this arrangement until there is no more. Final layer should be all cheese.
Bake in 350° oven for 15-20 minutes till cheese is golden and bubbly.

Abraham Lincoln Quotes:

*Am I not destroying my enemies
when I make friends of them?*

*As I would not be a slave, so I would
not be a master. This expresses my
idea of democracy.*

*Better to remain silent and be
thought a fool than to speak out
and remove all doubt.*

*Don't worry when you are not
recognized, but strive to be
worthy of recognition.*

*Everyone desires to live long,
but no one would be old.*

See Insert This Issue:



**DON'T Wait
Until Spring
To Clean Your
Carpets!**

Women's Heart Week

The first week of February is Women's Heart Week. It began as an effort to bring awareness to how heart disease affects women; heart disease accounts for a third of all deaths in women each year. The focus of the week is on prevention, education, symptom awareness and early intervention.

It is important to learn about the signs and symptoms of heart disease, which include chest pains, shortness of breath and nausea. The more you know of the symptoms, the more likely you'll be to recognize them.

Lowering your risks:

- **Stop Smoking.** And encourage other women to stop smoking as well. Smoking is a high risk factor for heart disease. Speak with your doctor about starting an exercise program. Walking is an excellent choice; there are walks you can participate in to promote Women's Heart Week.
- **Review your diet.** High levels of saturated and hydrogenated or partially hydrogenated fats will greatly increase the risks of developing heart disease. These levels should be reduced where possible. Also, be aware of the salt content in the foods you eat, and strive to maintain a healthy weight. These are all risk factors that you can control.
- **Manage your stress levels.** While eliminating daily stress is not practical, steps can be taken to greatly reduce it. Suggestions include exercise and meditation. Controlling your stress levels is important in lowering risk.
- **Schedule your annual screening.** There are organizations that provide free women's heart screenings this week.

The Beatles' First U.S. Concert was Feb 9, 1964



When the Beatles left the UK on February 7th, 1964, an estimated 4,000 fans gathered at Heathrow, waving and screaming as the aircraft took off. "*I Want To Hold Your Hand*" had sold 2.6 million copies in the US over the previous two weeks, but the group was still nervous about how they would be received.

At New York's JFK Airport, they were greeted by another vociferous crowd, estimated at about 3,000 people. They gave their first live US television performance two days later on *The Ed Sullivan Show*, watched by approximately 74 million viewers – over 40% of the US population.

The next morning, one newspaper wrote that The Beatles "could not carry a tune across the Atlantic", but a day later, their first US concert saw Beatlemania erupt at Washington Coliseum. Back in New York the following day, they met with another strong reception at Carnegie Hall. The band appeared on *The Ed Sullivan Show* a second time before returning to the UK on February 22nd. During the week of April 4th, The Beatles held twelve positions on the *Billboard Hot 100* singles chart, including the top five. That same week, a third American LP joined the two already in circulation – all three reached the first or second spot on the US album chart.

February 14th is Ferris Wheel Day

The original Ferris Wheel, sometimes also referred to as the Chicago Wheel, opened to the public on June 21, 1893, at the World Expo in Chicago, Illinois. Intended to rival the 1,060 foot Eiffel Tower, which was the centerpiece of the 1889 Paris Expo, it was World Expo's largest attraction, with a final height of 264 feet.

It was designed and constructed by George Washington Gale Ferris, Jr., a Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania bridge builder. The wheel rotated on a 71-ton, 45.5-foot axel comprising what was, at the time, the world's largest hollow forging, manufactured in Pittsburgh by the Bethlehem Iron Company and weighing 89,320 pounds, together with two 16-foot diameter cast-iron spiders weighing 53,031 pounds.



There were 36 cars, each fitted with 40 revolving chairs and able to accommodate up to 60 people, giving a total capacity of 2,160. It took 20 minutes for the wheel to make two revolutions, the first involving six stops to allow passengers to exit and enter, and the second a nine-minute non-stop rotation, for which the ticket holder paid 50 cents.

The Expo ended in October 1893, and the wheel closed in April 1894 and was dismantled and stored until the following year. It was then rebuilt on Chicago's north side, near Lincoln Park, next to an exclusive neighborhood. This prompted William D. Boyce, then a local resident, to file a Circuit Court action against the owners of the wheel to have it removed, but without success. It operated there from October 1895 until 1903, when it was again dismantled and transported by rail to St. Louis for the 1904 World's Fair. It was finally destroyed by controlled demolition using dynamite on May 11, 1906.

Thank You!

Thanks to YOU the word is spreading! Thanks to all of my wonderful clients and friends who graciously referred me to their friends and neighbors last month!

My business runs on the positive comments and referrals from people just like you! I couldn't do it without you!

Safe Ways to Kill Germs in the Bathroom

Even if you wear gloves when cleaning the toilet or bathtub, it is a good idea to wash your hands afterward. This eliminates bacteria from water that may get on your hands as you take off the gloves. *Also:*

- **Clean the bathtub** at least once weekly with scouring powder or a solution made with one-half cup of bleach and one gallon of water.
- **Sweep the bathroom floor at least once weekly** and clean with a basic cleaner, such as Lysol, or a solution made with one gallon of hot water, two tablespoons of borax, one teaspoon of dish detergent and five drops each of patchouli and lavender essential oils. These oils contain effective natural disinfectants.
- **Wipe bathroom sink and counters after every use.** Once a week, use a disinfectant made with one-quarter cup distilled white vinegar and one-half teaspoon of dish detergent in two cups of warm water. The bathroom sink is a bacterial hot spot because germs on your hands can spread to faucets.
- **Disinfect the toilet bowl, seat and outer surfaces weekly** with a commercial cleaner or with a solution made with one-half cup of baking soda, one-half cup of borax, one-quarter cup of distilled white vinegar, one teaspoon of dish detergent, three drops of sweet orange essential oil, and two drops of patchouli oil. Let it soak for an hour, scrub, then flush. Wipe and disinfect the handle daily because it's frequently touched by unwashed hands.
- **Close the toilet lid when you flush.** During flushing, bacteria disperse into the air and can land on any surface that is within six feet, including toothbrushes. – *K.M. Thompson ScD*



*Happy
Valentine's
Day*

February 14th

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Your New Issue Has Arrived!

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Amazing Money-Saving
Tips and More!*

February 1st is National Freedom Day

National Freedom Day is a United States observance on February 1 honoring the signing by Abraham Lincoln of a joint House and Senate resolution that later became the 13th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution. President Lincoln signed the Amendment outlawing slavery on February 1, 1865, although it was not ratified by the states until later.

Major Richard Robert Wright Sr., a former slave, believed that there should be a day when freedom for all Americans is celebrated. While living in Philadelphia towards the end of his life, he invited local and national leaders to meet to organize a movement for a national holiday to commemorate Lincoln's signing of the 13th Amendment. The resulting *National Freedom Association* proposed having a memorial date to call attention to the continuing struggle for freedom for African-Americans. The first commemoration took place on February 1st, 1942, at Independence Hall.

Who Wants To Win Movie Tickets?

**Take my Trivia Challenge
And you could win too!**

This is one of my favorite parts of the newsletter! Each month, I'll give you a new trivia question. The first 5 people who e-mail my office with the correct answer will win **two FREE movie tickets**. Enjoy a night out on me with someone special in your life! Take your best guess, and then e-mail me at **candy@allfloodfire.com!** Remember, your chances of winning are better than you think!

This month's Mega Trivia Question:

**How many spots did the Beatles hold on the
Billboard Top 100 the week of April 4, 1964?**

A) 3 B) 5 C) 8 D) 12 E) 15

HINT: The answer is somewhere in this newsletter

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