

## RECIPE OF THE MONTH

### Laura Bush's Texas Cookies

Ingredients:

- 3 cups flour
- 1 tablespoon baking powder
- 1 tablespoon baking soda
- 1 tablespoon ground cinnamon
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 1 1/2 cups unsalted butter, room temperature • 1 1/2 cups sugar
- 1 1/2 cups brown sugar
- 3 eggs • 1 tablespoon vanilla extract
- 3 cups semisweet chocolate chips
- 3 cups old fashioned oats
- 2 cups sweetened flake coconut
- 1 cup chopped pecans

Directions 1. Preheat oven to 350°F. Line a baking sheet with parchment paper.

2. Combine flour, baking powder, baking soda, cinnamon, and salt in a medium bowl. Set aside.

3. Cream butter and sugars in a large bowl with a hand mixer until smooth. Beat in eggs, one at a time. Beat in vanilla.

4. Stir in flour mixture. Stir in chocolate chips, oats, coconut, and pecans.

5. Drop by heaping tablespoonful onto the prepared baking sheet.

6. Bake 8–10 minutes. Allow to cool on baking sheet 3 minutes before transferring to a cooling rack.

Makes 4 1/2 servings

## The Last Shall Be First

New Year's Day is also Z Day, a day when those who are always last on alphabetical lists are finally allowed to be first. The holiday was created by Tom Zager, who decided that alphabetical order should be reversed so that all those with "Z" names might finally enjoy the pleasure of being first. This begs a larger question, though: Why is our alphabet in ABC order? To answer these questions, we must go all the way back to the Phoenicians, who inhabited Egypt 4,000 years ago. While Egyptian writing was based on hieroglyphics, the Phoenicians developed a set of symbols to represent the sounds of their language. Their first alphabet evolved from hieroglyphics and consisted of 22 simple symbols, an alphabet that was used by maritime merchants sailing around modern Lebanon, Syria, and Israel. Over the millennia, this alphabet slowly transformed into Greek, Latin, Old English, Middle English, and then Modern English. Despite these transformations, the letter order has largely stayed the same. Some of the earliest Phoenician alphabets begin with *abcdef*.



## The Sound of Silence

The first week of January brings Silent Record Week. Why on earth would someone go through the trouble of putting a silent record on the turntable? In 1952, experimental composer John Cage wrote his piece 4'33", which "consisted" of four minutes and 33 seconds of silence. During the silence, any environmental sounds were supposed to be considered music. In 1959, a jukebox at the University of Detroit won fame for including three silent records. Anyone who wanted a bit of silence could buy it for the price of a song. Rumor has it that the silent records were so popular that they developed noisy scratches and had to be repeatedly replaced. Many would argue that silence is valuable. Cage agreed. It was after his study of Zen Buddhism and the religion's emphasis on silence and stillness of the mind



## Brain Games

As we age, we might misplace our keys or forget the names

of people we know. These forms of memory loss might lead to worries about cognitive decline and even the onset of diseases such as Alzheimer's and dementia. Enter the industry of brain teasers and brain games, which promise to strengthen our minds and stave off cognitive decline. January is International Brain Teaser Month, but can these brain games actually fulfill the promises of mental acuity they so readily advertise?

Computerized brain-training programs are a \$1.3 billion-a-year industry. Some of the world's best neuroscientists have even designed brain games they tout as the best on the market. If you have bought into the notion that playing daily brain games can help keep your mind sharp, you are by no means alone. Sure, there is abundant evidence to suggest that living in an enriched environment with lots of stimulation can create positive changes in the brain. However, can a computer screen replicate such enriched environments? The general consensus of the scientific community is "no." There is no conclusive evidence that routinely playing brain games will improve cognitive performance in everyday life. Nor does evidence exist that brain teasers will ward off any form of cognitive slowing or brain disease associated with aging.

This does not mean that people should avoid brain teasers, especially if they enjoy them. However, other studies do show how exercise and socialization have positive effects on cognition. So perhaps the best solution is to play your brain games with a friend, rather than sitting alone in front of a computer. Better yet, take that friend and join a juggling club or play bridge, and then enjoy a lunch of brain-friendly foods such as vegetables. It seems that the healthiest modes of living for both the body and the brain are the ones we have been practicing and spending time with friends and family.

## JANUARY OUTINGS & SPECIAL EVENTS:

- Jan. 1<sup>st</sup>...Happy New Year!
- Jan. 2<sup>nd</sup>...Jimmy's Mega Bucks  
New Year's Bingo
- Jan 13-17 Western Week
- Jan. 13<sup>th</sup>...Cowboy Bingo
- Jan. 14<sup>th</sup>...Lunch @ Gianelli's
- Jan. 15<sup>th</sup>...The History of Kennywood Park  
With Andrew Quinn
- Jan. 16<sup>th</sup>...Chili Cook-Off
- Jan. 17<sup>th</sup>...Entertainment by Tim Litvin
- Jan. 19-25...National Activity Professionals Wk
- Jan. 21<sup>st</sup>...National Activity Professionals  
Celebration Pizza Party
- Jan. 22<sup>nd</sup>...Memorial Service
- Jan. 24<sup>th</sup>...Chinese New Year Bingo
- Jan. 27<sup>th</sup>...Funny Money Auction
- Jan. 28<sup>th</sup>...Shopping at Walmart
- Jan. 29<sup>th</sup>...Resident Council Meeting
- Jan. 30<sup>th</sup>...Birthday Party with entertainment  
By Joe Brucker



## Mummers the Word

Each year on New Year's Day, the Mummers Parade makes its way through Philadelphia.

The parade is one of the

oldest folk festivals in the United States, with roots dating back to the mid-17th century, when Swedish and Finnish immigrants would

go door-to-door visiting neighbors on the day after Christmas. The parade is related to the English and Irish traditions of mummers' plays, folk plays performed in streets and pubs by amateur costumed actors. Today, the parade is a New Year's spectacle full of clowns, string bands, elaborate floats, and fancy costumes. At 11 hours long, the parade may also be the longest held in America.

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Our Beauty shop is open on Tuesdays.  
Appointments may be made at the  
receptionist desk. Our hairdresser is  
Niccole Swiatkowski.



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### CONGRATULATIONS!

Transitions Resident Council  
Recognizes  
Jill Richter, Activity Assistant  
As an outstanding employee for  
January 2020

Tina Yakich, Administrator  
Elizabeth (Beth) Kohler, DON  
Leslie King, ADON  
Ivy (Vita) Burrell, Admissions Director  
Tawnette Arford, Business Office Mgr.  
Raeann Matiasic, Social Service Director  
Marsha Kirker-Bozich, Activity Director  
Lynn Marie, Dietician  
Jackie Austin, Dietary Manager  
Mark Wargo, Maintenance Director  
Kim Bartos, Environmental Services

## January Birthdays

In astrology, those born between January 1–19 are the horned goats of Capricorn. As goats climb to great heights, Capricorns strive to get to the top, using discipline and common sense to find fame, prestige, and wealth. Those born between January 20–31 are the Water Bearers of Aquarius. As the water of life heals the land, so Aquarians are the humanitarians of the zodiac. Free-spirited, nonconformist, compassionate, and visionary, they support giving “power to the people.”

### HAPPY JANUARY BIRTHDAY TO:

Cheryl D...Jan. 1<sup>st</sup>  
Louise E...Jan. 6<sup>th</sup>  
Helen B...Jan. 11<sup>th</sup>  
Jonathan H...Jan. 18<sup>th</sup>  
Richard A...Jan. 23<sup>rd</sup>  
Barbara M...Jan. 29<sup>th</sup>  
Angelina S...Jan. 31<sup>st</sup>



## Hubby's Day

According to old Viking calendars, the Friday of the 13th week of winter is celebrated as Husband's

Day in Iceland. Also known as *Bóndadagur*, it is the first day of the month of Þorri, or Thorri, in honor of Thor, the god of thunder. There are many traditions associated with this holiday honoring both the god and the master of the house or farm, or *bóndi*. In olden times, husbands were expected to rise first and welcome Thor with a special ceremony where they would go outside dressed in a shirt, with one leg of his trousers on and the other dragging behind him. He would then hop on one leg as a welcome to Thor. Since the mid-19th century, though, this day is more like Valentine's Day, and men are given gifts and treated to dinner. Not to be forgotten, Wife's Day arrives a month later on February 24.