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## A BIG NYC ATTRACTION BECOMES ILLEGAL THE 1930S AND PUSH CART MARKETS

If you were an immigrant who just arrived to New York City in the 1880s, you probably didn't have much money to spare. But, if you had at least 10 cents, you could rent a pushcart and become a pushcart merchant and business owner.

For more than 50 years, pushcart markets in New York City offered immigrants immediate access to an \$828 million industry (in today's money) that sold competitively priced goods like groceries, household items, clothing, and much more. Pushcart merchants would line up their carts along the streets of New York City and create vibrant and diverse markets that even tourists could enjoy. But not everyone in the city seemed happy about it.

Although technically "merchants," in the late 1800s and early 1900s, pushcart sellers were not described as such. Many of New York City's middle class and wealthy residents reserved this favorable term for sellers who had brick-and-mortar stores since they did not see pushcarts as a traditional means of honest work. Instead, they saw it as a public nuisance and a source of embarrassment. Politicians, city planners, and anti-pushcart movements complained primarily about poor sanitation in the open-air markets.



So, in 1938, Mayor La Guardia proclaimed in The New York Times that "peddling on the streets of this city is a thing of the past."

To ease opposition, La Guardia opened indoor markets, which required pushcart sellers to apply for limited spots and pay higher fines. Upon opening the first indoor market, Mayor La Guardia proclaimed to the crowd, "I found you pushcart peddlers, and I have made you MERCHANTS!" Despite the cheers that followed, thousands of pushcart sellers lost their jobs after the final ban of open-air pushcart markets.

The ban surprised the people who supported it; some brick-and-mortar stores lost as much as 60% of their business with the decrease in nearby foot traffic. New Yorkers eventually became nostalgic about pushcart markets. Once described as dirty and a "menace to the health of New York City," people began to describe them as "fresh and attractive," even "picturesque."

To this day, pushcart selling is still illegal, and New York City's licensing policies make it extremely difficult for vendors to obtain permits, leading to an underground black market of selling and buying outdoor permits. However, in the city, you'll still find street food with hardworking vendors making their American dream a reality!



## THINGS ARE GETTING WEIRD IN HERE! 10 Wacky Holidays Worth Reading About

Sometimes, when I'm trying to decide what to write about in this newsletter, I go online and check out all of the strange and unusual holidays coming up. Usually, this strategy doesn't bear any fruit and I end up writing about my cat, but this month was different.

February is blessed with an unusual number of wacky holidays, and some of them actually spoke to me! A few were so ridiculous I couldn't help but laugh, and others triggered fond memories. I thought you might get a kick out of my discoveries, so here are the top 10!

**Feb. 1 — Dark Chocolate Day**  
My wife Kaye and 11-year-old grandson Hank share a love of indulging in dark chocolate. Whenever we buy a snack featuring dark chocolate, Kaye will put it aside so she and Hank can enjoy it together. He has never admitted that he appreciates it, but I can tell he does!

**"If you handed me frozen bags of french fries, mozzarella sticks, and tater tots, I'd go for the tater tots every time."**

**Feb. 1 — Texas Day**  
This holiday celebrates Texas, its history, and its fiercely independent people. I'm very pleased to have lived here since 1981. The weather and the people are my favorite parts of Texas, and I've made excellent friends and business relationships here over the years — I think I'm a Texan for life.

**Feb. 2 — Tater Tot Day**  
If you handed me frozen bags of french fries, mozzarella sticks, and tater tots, I'd go for the tater tots every time.

**Feb. 2 — Groundhog Day**  
Kaye and I have a unique pair of friends who throw a Groundhog Day party every year. Folks go dressed up in all of the brown and beige clothing they own, with whiskers drawn on their faces and fake fur plastered to the backs of their hands! All of the food is beige or brown, and even the music is groundhog-themed.

**Feb. 5 — Shower With a Friend Day**  
Apparently this is a tongue-in-cheek way of educating the public about the benefits of filtered water. Can you believe it?

**Feb. 7 — Fettuccine Alfredo Day**  
This holiday brings back fond memories of my maternal grandmother. She grew up in Comano, Switzerland, on the Italian border and had a penchant for making Italian dishes like fettuccine Alfredo. Noni's pasta was made from pure love, and although it wasn't the best I've ever had, it meant the most to me.

**Feb. 8 — Boy Scouts Day**  
I was only a Cub Scout for about six weeks in fourth grade (it's a long story), but I've known many Eagle Scouts and respect the hard work and dedication behind the title.

**Feb. 13 — Cheddar Cheese Day**  
Growing up on a Wisconsin dairy farm, I ate cheddar cheese with every meal. It may not be healthy, but it's certainly delicious! To get our cheese, we contracted with the dairy farm that



took our milk, and we got money and cheese in exchange. Our supply of cheddar never ran low.

**Feb. 14 — Organ Donor Day**  
I'm an organ donor, and I'd encourage you to consent on your license as well. A single organ donor can save up to eight lives, and it's a very noble choice to make.

**Feb. 14 — Football Hangover Day**  
Yes, the day after the Super Bowl is officially Football Hangover Day. The fans on the winning side might not need it, but certainly, fans of the losing team will.

Of course, there is one other holiday I'll celebrate this month that's not on any internet list: my anniversary! Kaye and I were married on Feb. 10, 1973, and as I write this, we're about to celebrate 49 years together. I'll never forget the date because my father-in-law was kind enough to carve it (along with a heart) into a piece of wood that we keep on our kitchen windowsill. You can read more about our anniversary on Page 2.

I hope you had some fun reading this list of holidays. And if you'd like to celebrate National Fettuccine Alfredo Day next year, just let me know — I'd love to create a tasty new tradition.

*Travis West*



# 49 YEARS TOGETHER



## Travis and Kaye Celebrate Their Almost-Golden Anniversary

I moved from California to Greenwood, Wisconsin, in eighth grade, and everyone called me "The California Kid." I guess I seemed like hot big-city stuff in our rural area! The name stuck all the way into high school. I never would have suspected I'd find my future wife in a class of 60 people, especially saddled with a nickname, but that's exactly what I did.

Kaye and I went on our first date when we were teenagers. We're about to celebrate our 49th wedding anniversary as I write this. Though it wasn't all smooth sailing, even college and many miles couldn't keep us apart. As you can tell from the photo, we got married in 1973 at the height of long-haired hippie fashion.

Our wedding date was Feb. 10. We tied the knot on a very cold evening at Savior's Lutheran Church in Greenwood in front of about 50 guests. Kaye's family filled most of the church, including her parents, cousins, aunts, uncles, and sister who lived in the area. My parents, great aunt, and great uncle also attended. Afterward, we held a brief reception in the church before taking the real party elsewhere.

As most grooms will tell you, beyond the ceremony, the rest of the day was a blur to me! All that mattered was that I had my new wife by my side. We traveled to her parents' farm for our reception in rural Greenwood and had a wonderful time playing cards, telling stories, and drinking beer with our friends and family. There was plenty of laughter, food, and drink for everyone.

After the reception, Kaye and I moved to a little town called Spencer, Wisconsin, to start our lives together. We were both working at the time, so it took another 10 years for us to get away for our honeymoon! In 1983, we finally managed it. We drove to Napa, California, for 10 days to visit relatives and explore the local wine country.

Forty-nine years after saying "I do," I still count myself lucky to have Kaye. I'm looking forward to our 50th anniversary next year, and many more after that! Not bad for "The California Kid."

## FROM 'CAR GIRL' TO CEO OF GM

### MEET MARY BARRA

According to an interview with Stanford Magazine, Mary Barra is a self-proclaimed red convertible "car girl." Her eyes gleamed as she talked about the day she first saw her cousin's Chevy Camaro convertible, a late '60s vintage model.

At that moment Barra knew she'd love cars forever, so she worked on cars as soon as she could. In fact, she was only 18 years old when she started working for General Motors (GM). She worked her way up while earning a couple of college degrees, and she held multiple engineering and administrative positions at GM, including managing the massive Detroit/Hamtramck assembly plant.

By 2014, Barra became the CEO of GM and was the first female head of a "Big Three" automaker in the United States. It was a dream come true — her appointment even earned her a spot on Time's 100 Most Influential People in the World of 2014.

However, during her first year as CEO, GM faced one of the worst scandals in the U.S. auto industry: the GM ignition switch scandal.

Faulty switches resulted in 124 deaths and 275 injuries, which prompted the Senate to conduct an investigation. Barra's court appearances led

to a public outcry against GM, forcing the company to recall nearly 30 million cars due to their defective ignition switches. Although no federal charges were pressed against Barra or the GM executives, the company paid \$120 million in settlement claims and offered \$595 million to victims and families affected by the scandal.



Barra's subsequent actions became key. She fired 15 employees, including eight executives, for failing to respond quickly to the defective ignition switches. Additionally, she initiated GM's shift toward electric-powered cars, including the Chevrolet Bolt EV, which became the first electric car with a range of 200 miles priced under \$40,000, a milestone that warranted significant coverage.

According to GM executives, a major reason for Barra's corporate and entrepreneurial success is not only her passion for cars, but also her skill to listen and communicate well with others. Her "consensus approach" involves conducting town hall meetings to seek input from the majority of people, not just top management. This allows every employee to be heard, and that inclusive environment remains a crucial part of GM's ability to thrive far beyond its darkest days.

## TAKE A BREAK!

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## CHERRY CORDIAL CAKE BALLS

Inspired by TasteofHome.com

### INGREDIENTS

- 1 package fudge marble cake mix
- 1 1/4 cups and 3 tbsp brewed coffee, divided
- 1/4 cup canola oil
- 3 eggs
- 10 oz maraschino cherries, stemmed, drained, and chopped
- 1/3 cup brandy
- 1/4 cup cherry preserves
- 1 cup chocolate frosting
- 1 lb chocolate candy coating, chopped

### DIRECTIONS

1. In a large bowl, combine cake mix, 1 1/4 cups coffee, canola oil, and eggs. Beat on low for 30 seconds, then on high for 2 minutes.
2. Preheat the oven to 350 F.
3. Pour batter into a greased, floured 9-by-13-inch baking pan. Bake for 30-35 minutes and let cool.
4. In a small bowl, combine cherries, brandy, cherry preserves, and remaining coffee.
5. Crumble cake. Add frosting and cherry mixture. Combine and shape into 1-inch balls.
6. Melt chocolate coating, following package directions.
7. Line a baking sheet with parchment paper. Dip balls into coating. Let them stand on the paper for 20 minutes, then serve!