

August 2024

A newsletter from the City of Dubuque's Office of Equity & Human Rights

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## Holidays & Celebrations

### August 1 – Lammas

The Wiccan holiday of [Lammas](#), or Lughnasad, marks the halfway point between the summer solstice and the fall equinox and it signals the readiness for the grain crop to be harvested. Grain has been a central part of many different cultures throughout all history, and it remains so today. Wiccans celebrate this day by baking breads and cakes and celebrating a harvest ritual.

### August 13 – Tisha B'Av

[Tisha B'Av](#) is seen as the saddest day in the Jewish calendar. It marks the “Five Calamities” that took place on this day throughout Jewish history (though there were far more than just five). Among the disasters was the destruction of Solomon’s Temple in Jerusalem in 6<sup>th</sup> century BCE, followed by the destruction of the rebuilt temple 500 years later. The holiday includes a 25-hour fast, prayer, and other rituals.

### August 26 – Women's Equality Day

Women's equality has made great strides over the past century; however, we still have a long way to go. In the U.S. we now have laws in place that require the equality of women, however unconscious bias can still rear its ugly head.

Underdeveloped countries have it much worse. Here are some worldwide stats:

- 178 countries legally restrict full job participation or equal wages for women.<sup>1</sup>
- 2.4 billion women enjoy less than three fourths of the economic rights as men.<sup>1</sup>
- Only 10% of the world's Heads of State are women.<sup>2</sup>
- The gender pay gap is 20%.<sup>2</sup>
- At our current rate of progress, it will take 131 years to achieve gender equality.<sup>2</sup>

### August 30 – Paryushana Parva / Jain New year

[Paryushana](#) is the Jain Festival of Forgiveness. Eight to ten days before the holiday is spent in deep reflection and purification. The holiday is spent asking and receiving forgiveness from family and friends, and indeed from all living beings. The rite of forgiveness is also known as the rite of universal friendship.

Images (top): Kokhan O/Adobe Stock, (bottom): Cerulean5000/Wikimedia; <sup>1</sup>[World Bank](#); <sup>2</sup>[Focus 2030](#)

# National Civility Month



It feels like we're living in an age where civility is at risk of becoming a forgotten thing. At best, a lack of civility leads to squabbling between friends, and at worst, it can lead to all-out wars.

Long-time friendships are broken up over differing beliefs, one country thinks another should belong to them and they attack, and people from both sides of the political chasm come to blows over who should be in the White House.



Civility is more than just being polite to each other; it is the basis for a peaceful world that is driven by understanding and respect for each other's differences. Civility is a tool through which productive conversations can happen, ideas can be shared, and difficult problems can be solved. Without civility, trade between nations would not be possible and Amazon would be nothing more than a rainforest and a river in South America.



Being civil to one another can often prove challenging, especially when views and opinions are wildly different. Despite the difficulties though, civility is not impossible. In fact, it is vital for a productive and peaceful society. So where do we start?

## Practice Empathy

Despite what many people think, empathy is not something you were either born with or you weren't. Empathy is a muscle which can be learned and strengthened over time. Empathy is putting yourself in the other person's shoes. For instance, some people feel that too much immigration could cause a drain on our resources. Others feel there is enough room for all and that we should welcome those who come to seek a better life. Whatever your opinion, try to see the other perspective and ask yourself, is it possible to see some truth in both perspectives?



## Practice Kindness

Practicing civility is about more than just being considerate in the moment, it is also about being considerate before the moment arises. Practice kindness in your daily interactions with others. Compliment others, remember birthdays, and just as your mother always told you, say please and thank you. Friendliness towards others builds strength within you that can be a useful tool to rely on in times when civility seems extra difficult.

## Welcome and Respect Differences

Everyone likes to be included, and when we're not we feel overlooked. Being welcoming is part of the definition of what it means to be civil. Invite and include others into conversations. Learning how their differing beliefs and opinions developed will build bridges to your own beliefs and opinions.

August is a time for us all to reflect on and practice our interactions with others now and throughout the rest of the year. Incidentally, August is also home to:

- National Promise to Care Day (1<sup>st</sup>)
- International Allyship Day (8<sup>th</sup>)
- Be Kind to Humankind Week (11<sup>th</sup>-17<sup>th</sup>)
- World Humanitarian Day (19<sup>th</sup>)

When we maintain civility in our interactions, we inspire others to maintain civility as well. When we are uncivil to others, they are often uncivil back. Productive communication is impossible when it is hindered by incivility.

For the sake of a peaceful society, let's end incivility and instead treat others as you would wish them to treat you – with kindness, respect, and empathy. Even though the world seems to be taking a step back from civility, let's all take a step forward and instead be a champion of kindness and civility.

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# Culture Creators

## Judging Others

Making judgement about others is a natural human instinct. It helps our brains to decide very quickly whether someone is trustworthy or not. Unfortunately, our unconscious brains can sometimes betray our best intentions. We tend to judge others through the same lens we judge ourselves. For instance, if being beautiful is very important to you, you might judge others based on their attractiveness. However, judging someone based on things like beauty, race, or how much money they have only shows you a small sliver of who they are as a person, and it robs you of learning someone's true story.



Judging others is a natural instinct.  
It helps us decide quickly if  
someone is trustworthy.

Our beliefs are part of our identity  
in a group and group mentality  
can affect our judgement.

Envy makes us judge  
others and compare  
them to our own faults.

Criticizing others gives us a  
feeling of superiority and  
boosts our ego.

Accept that others measure  
themselves differently than  
you do.

Ask yourself: is it fair to judge others  
using the same yard stick by which  
you judge yourself?

Like all unconscious biases,  
recognize and address your  
judgements head-on.

Be more accepting of other's  
faults and be more accepting  
of your own faults.

Break the habit of judging  
by practicing self-awareness,  
compassion, and empathy.



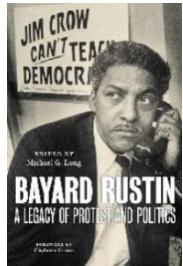
*"It's easy to judge. It's more difficult to understand. Understanding requires compassion, patience, and a willingness to believe that good hearts sometimes choose poor methods. Through judging, we separate. Through understanding, we grow." ~Doe Zantamata*

(Images): Yindee/Adobe Stock; Koblizsek/Adobe Stock

# News & Updates



Come and meet Dubuque's emergency services workers at this fun family event. Enjoy a free dinner, free games, music, and so much more!



## [Reading Challenge & Book Discussion](#)

### [Bayard Rustin:](#)

#### [A Legacy of Protest and Politics](#)

August 25 @ 3:00 p.m. – 4:00 p.m.

Dubuque Carnegie Stout Public Library

Bayard Rustin was an openly gay Black man, which meant he was often relegated to the background of the Civil Rights Movement. This book is a collection of essays on this highly influential man and his importance to the movement then and now.

## [S.M.A.R.T. Series](#)

August 6 @ 3:00 p.m. – 4:30 p.m.

NICC Town Clock Center

Each month the S.M.A.R.T. Series continues to empower people and businesses with discussion on diversity, equity and inclusion.



August's session is titled *Creating Inclusive Environments in the Workplace*. Cost starts at \$20.



## [DBQfest](#)

August 10-11 @ times vary  
Washington Park

This free summer festival includes more than just a juried art fair. It also includes live music, food trucks, dance performances, poetry readings, caricatures, art demonstrations, and a kid's creation tent. Come and celebrate art, music, and culture.



## [Art on the River](#)

August 9 at 5:00 p.m. – 7:00 p.m.  
Grand River Center

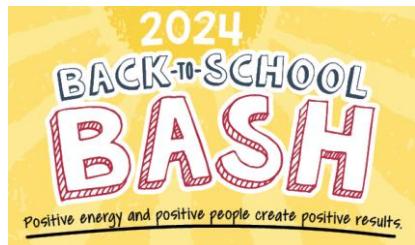
The theme for the 18<sup>th</sup> installment of Art on the River is "Culture & Conversation." The event and sculptures are meant to engage the community in conversations with

each other and the artists behind the works; to encourage, challenge, and educate; and to help overcome barriers. The eleven new sculptures will be displayed along the Mississippi riverwalk through July 2025. The reception is a free event and will include live music, light hors d'oeuvres, and a cash bar.

## [Dubuque Back-to-School Bash](#)

August 3 @ 11:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m.

Audubon Elementary School



Sending the kids back to school should be a relief for parents, not a source of stress. Attendees to this event can sign up to receive free school supplies from St. Mark's Apples for Students Program, register kids for school, and get school physicals and vaccinations. Community organizations will host resource booths and all attendees will receive a free t-shirt. Shuttle service is available throughout Dubuque.

## **BREAKING NEWS: Not ALL News is Bad News...**

In 1989, archaeologists uncovered the skull of a six-year-old Neanderthal child in Spain. [Recent examination](#) of the skull found signs in the inner-ear anatomy of the skull that indicate the child had down syndrome, was deaf, and had severe vertigo. The fact that the child lived to be six years old indicates that Neanderthals looked after vulnerable members of the group that couldn't care for themselves. So why is this important? It means that compassion is built into our DNA from our very earliest ancestors. If Neanderthals and early hominins could display compassion and empathy, then surely, we can too.