ARBiT it happens here...

Celebrating Aspirations And The Courage To Dream

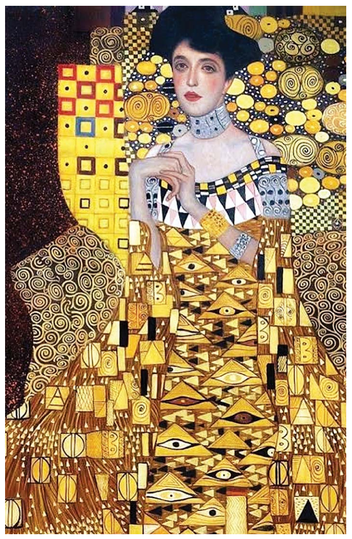
National Dream Day is observed to celebrate the power of aspirations and the courage it takes to pursue them. The day encourages individuals to reflect on their goals, rekindle forgotten ambitions, and take meaningful steps towards turning dreams into reality. It serves as a reminder that innovation, creativity, and progress often begin with a simple idea and the determination to act on it. Whether personal or professional, dreams shape purpose and direction in life. National Dream Day inspires people of all ages to believe in possibilities, overcome self-doubt, and work steadily towards building the future they envision.

राष्ट्रदूत
WEDNESDAY
11 March 2026
A-B

#GUSTAV KLIMT

Before Gold

What is particularly striking is Klimt's attention to the sitter's gaze. The girl does not confront the viewer directly; her eyes drift slightly aside...



Looking closely at *Head Study of a Girl from Haná* (c.1883).

When speaking about Gustav Klimt, public imagination almost automatically jumps to gold leaf, flattened ornament, and the seductive symbolism of his mature period. Yet, works such as Head Study of a Girl from Haná remind us that Klimt's artistic language was built on a foundation of exceptional academic discipline and observational sensitivity.

Painted around 1883, this modestly scaled oil on wood belongs to Klimt's early formative years, when he was still deeply embedded in the traditions of academic realism. The handling of the face is careful and restrained: the modelling is soft, the transitions between light and shadow finely calibrated, and the palette subdued. There is no decorative excess here, only a quiet insistence on presence, weight, and psychological inwardness.

What is particularly striking is Klimt's attention to the sitter's gaze. The girl does not confront the viewer directly; her eyes drift slightly aside, creating a subtle tension between intimacy and reserve. This compositional choice already hints at a trait that will later define Klimt's mature work: figures that are emotionally charged yet inwardly self-contained. Even at this early stage, Klimt seems less interested in narrative than in the mental and emotional state of the subject.

The reference to Haná, a region in Moravia known for its distinct folk culture, adds another layer. Klimt was not merely studying anatomy; he was engaging with regional identity and human type, an approach common in academic training but elevated here by his unusual empathy. The headscarf, softly merging with the background, dissolves the boundary between figure and space, foreshadowing Klimt's later fascination with unity between body and environment.

Importantly, this painting stands as firm evidence that Klimt did not abandon realism because he lacked skill. On the contrary, works like this demonstrate that his later radical stylistic shifts were a conscious rejection of academic limits, not an escape from them. The seeds of the secession, flatness, psychological intensity, and the suppression of anecdotal detail, are already quietly present.

To view Head Study of a Girl from Haná is to witness Klimt thinking through paint, testing how far a face alone can carry meaning. It is not a decorative object, but a disciplined, searching study, one that anchors his later brilliance in a deeply serious artistic beginning.

Chocolate Syrup Soda And Other Curatives

At the time, chocolate was touted for its medicinal properties and prescribed as treatment for a range of diseases, says Deanna Pucciarelli, a professor of nutrition and dietetics at Ball State University who researches the medicinal history of chocolate. It was often prescribed for people suffering from wasting disease. The extra calories assisted in weight gain, and the caffeine-like compounds helped perk patients up. "It didn't treat the actual illness, but it treated the symptoms," she explains.

#TASTY MYTHS

Verna Mohon

At first glance, nothing seems particularly odd about the December 1896 edition of *The Druggists Circular and Chemical Gazette*, a catalog of products that any self-respecting pharmacy ought to carry. But look closer! Hiding among medical necessities like McElroy's glass syringes and Hirsh Frank & Co's lab coats, you'll find some more curious finds, including Hershey's cocoa powder.

"Perfectly soluble," boasts the ad in bold, capital lettering. "Warranted absolutely pure." It reads as if it was peddling medicine, and in fact, it sort of, was.

Druggists of the day often used the dark powder to whip up a syrup sweet enough to mask the flavour of objectionable remedies, explains Stella Parks, a pastry chef with the food and cooking website *Serious Eats*. Parks happened upon these vintage advertisements while she was researching her new book, *BraveTart: Iconic American Desserts*, which features lesser-known histories of our favourite sweet treats.

The Hershey's ad intrigued her. "What in the world are these guys doing, advertising to druggists?" she recalls wondering at the time. By digging into the history and tracking down more pharmaceutical circulars and magazines, she discover the rich history of chocolate syrup, which began not with ice cream and flavoured milk, but with medicine.

Our love of chocolate goes back over 3,000 years, with traces of cacao appearing as early as 1500 B.C. in the pots of the Olmecs of Mexico. Yet, for most of its early history, it was consumed as a drink made from fermented, roasted, and ground beans. This drink was a far cry from the sweetened, milky stuff that we call hot chocolate today. It was rarely sweetened, and likely very bitter.

Still, the roughly football-sized pods that cradled the beans were held in high esteem; the Aztecs even traded cacao as currency. Chocolate didn't become popular overseas, however, until Europeans ventured into the Americas at the end of the 15th century. By the 1700s, the ground beans were avidly consumed throughout Europe and the American colonies as a sweetened hot drink that was vaguely reminiscent to today's hot cocoa.

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Yet, for pharmacists, it wasn't only the supposed health benefits but also the rich, velvety flavor that held such appeal. "One thing about medicines, even going way back, is that they are really bitter," says Diane Wendt, associate curator of the division of medicine and science at Smithsonian's National Museum of American History. Many medications were originally derived from plants and fall in a class of compounds known as alkaloids, which has an acrid, mouth-puckering flavour. The first of these alkaloids, isolated by a German chemist in the early 1800s, was none other than morphine. Chocolate, it turns out, effectively covered the toe-curling taste of these foul flavours. "Few substances are so eagerly taken by children or invalids, and fewer still are better than chocolate for masking the taste of bitter or nauseous medicinal substances," according to the 1899 text, *The Pharmaceutical Era*. It's unclear exactly when pharmacists first combined cocoa powder and sugar to brew the sticky syrup. But its popularity was likely helped along by the invention of cocoa powder. In 1828, Dutch chemist Coenraad J. Van Houten patented a press that successfully removed some of chocolate's natural fats, reducing its bitter flavour and making it easier to dissolve with water. Still, the result wasn't exactly the 'same kind of smooth mellow chocolate we have now,' says Parks; to make it palatable, pharmacists would mix cocoa powder with at least eight times more sugar than chocolate.

The popularity of chocolate syrup exploded in the second half of the 19th century, coinciding with the golden age of so-called patent medicines. These are named after the 'letters of patent' the English crown awarded to inventors of supposedly curative formulas. The first English medicine patent was awarded in the late 1600s, but the name later came to refer to any over-the-counter drugs. American 'patent medicines' went by the same name, but were not typically patented under this system. Patent medicines emerged at a time when public need for treatments and cures outpaced medical knowledge. Many of these 'cures' did more harm than good. Often marketed as cure-alls, the concoctions could contain anything from pulverized fruits and veggies to alcohol and opioids. At the time, the common use of these addictive substances in remedies was legal; regulation didn't come about until the 1914 passage of the Harrison Narcotic Act.

One popular remedy featuring tincture of opium as its active ingredient was Stickney and Poor's Paregoric. This syrup was marketed as a treatment for many ills, and given to cholicky infants as young as five days old. 'Remedies' like this weren't completely ineffective. The inclusion of narcotics and alcohol in the cures did indeed give customers temporary relief from illness, and, more sinisterly, their addictive nature kept them coming back for more.

The boom of factory mass production in the 1900s brought with it the rise of easy-to-swallow medical pills. But before that, "pill making by hand is pretty labor intensive," says Wendt. "To actually make a pill of a certain dose, to mix it up and cut the pills, and roll the pills, and dry the pills, and coat the pills, that's a pretty lengthy process." That's why, during this time, medications were mostly served up in liquid or powder form, says Wendt.

Druggists would mix each liquid remedy with a base of sugary flavoured syrups, like chocolate, and take it either by the spoonful or mixed into a beverage, says Wendt. Alternatively, powders could be directly poured into your refreshment of choice. The base for these medicinal drinks could be anything from plain water to tea to a couple fingers of whiskey. But over the course of the 1800s, one particular drink was gaining popularity as a medicine masker: carbonated water.

Not unlike chocolate, soda water was initially considered a health drink in its own right. The carbonated beverage mimicked the mineral-rich waters bubbling up in natural springs that had become known for its curative and healing powers. Soda became a truly widespread phenomenon in America around the turn of the century, thanks to the pharmacist Jacob Baur, who invented the process necessary to sell tanks of pressurized carbon dioxide.

Part health drink, part delicious treat, sweetened carbonated water began spreading like wildfire in the form of soda fountains, Darcy O'Neil writes in his book *Fix the Pumps*.

Syrups became ever more popular to keep pace with the soda craze. Many of these flavours are still common today: vanilla, ginger, lemon and, of course, chocolate. By the late 1800s, hardly a pharmacist publication went without some mention of chocolate syrup, Parks writes in *BraveTart*. And hardly, a drug store went without a soda shop: Soda fountains served as a lucrative side business for druggists and pharmacists who commonly struggled to make ends meet, says Parks.

At the time, carbonated concoctions were largely still seen as cures. "Soda is an excellent medium for taking many medicines," according to the 1897 book, *The Standard Manual of Soda and Other Beverages*. "For example, the best method of administering castor oil is to draw a glass of sarsaparilla soda in the usual manner and pour in the requisite amount of oil." (Sarsaparilla, a flavour derived from the root of a tropical vine, is still used today in some root beer variants.)

One example still very much available today is Coca Cola. Originally mixed up with cocaine, the fizzy drink was touted it as a healthful stimulant to revive the brain and body.

At the turn of the century, however, chocolate syrup began to shift from treatment to treat. "It just seemed to naturally segue into all the ice cream (desserts) that pharmacists had to keep on hand just to stay afloat," says Parks.

A fortuitous mix of events helped elevate the state of chocolate to commercial confection. First, in the early 20th century, concerns over false health claims and downright dangerous cures helped lead to the passage of the 1906 Pure Food and Drug Act, which required druggists to disclose the remedy ingredients with clear and accurate labels. Similarly, a clamp down on American patent medicines may have further driven the chocolatey transition.

At the same time, other forms of chocolate were gaining traction as confections in their own right. As the industrial revolution ushered in machinery that took over the time-intensive process of turning cacao to cocoa, prices began to fall, explains Pucciarelli. "It all comes together," she says. "The price of manufacturing drops, the price of sugar drops, and then you have chocolate bars."

In 1926, Hershey's began marketing pre-mixed chocolate syrup in both single and double strength varieties for commercial businesses. The cans were shelf stable, meaning druggists (and soda jerks) didn't need to continually mix up new batches. By 1930, both Hershey's and other chocolate companies like Bosco's had begun marketing chocolate syrup for home use. The rest is sweet, sweet history. These days, despite many modern claims of health benefits, some founded and some unfounded, chocolate is considered more confection than cure. Chocolate accounts for the 'vast majority' of the $35 billion confection market in the United States, according to the National Confectioners Association.

Yet, the use of a sweet cover for medications remains isn't completely dead. You can find sweetness masking medicine in many forms, from cherry cough syrup to bubblegum-flavoured amoxicillin. It seems Mary Poppins was right! A spoonful of sugar, or in this case, chocolate, really does help the medicine go down.

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An Ad of Stepping Stones to Health, Hershey's Syrup.

The Druggists' Circular and Chemical Gazette.

#NIGHTMARE

The Mare - An Evil Spirit!

The mare was believed to be a malevolent entity that haunted individuals during the night, inducing feelings of suffocation, anxiety, and dread

In Old English, the word 'mare' originally referred not to a horse but to a supernatural creature or evil spirit. The term 'mare' comes from the Old English word mære, which described an evil spirit or goblin that would sit on people's chests while they slept, causing them to experience bad dreams or nightmares. The mare was believed to be a malevolent entity that haunted individuals during the night, inducing feelings of suffocation, anxiety, and dread.

The creature was often depicted as a night-riding demon who would visit people while they slept, usually inducing feelings of paralysis, breathing difficulties, or night terrors. The presence of the mare was associated with a sensation of being crushed or smothered, which could explain the feelings of pressure many experience during intense nightmares, often resulting in a feeling of being unable to breathe or move.

In many cultures, the mare was considered a type of night hag or incubus that would torment people during sleep, usually preying upon the vulnerable or the weak. This evil spirit was often blamed for phenomena such as sleep paralysis, a condition in which individuals wake up but are temporarily unable to move, often accompanied by terrifying hallucinations or sensations of a presence in the room.

The Role of the "Night" in "Nightmare"

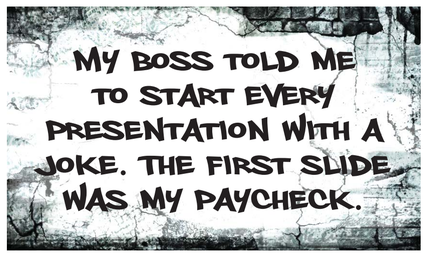
The word 'nightmare' itself comes from a combination of 'night' (referring to the time of sleep) and 'mare' (the spirit or goblin). In ancient times, people did not necessarily distinguish between the physical world and the supernatural one in the way that we do today, so bad dreams and nighttime experiences were often thought to be the result of malevolent forces. The term 'nightmare' thus implies that these unsettling experiences were not simply random occurrences but rather caused by some external, paranormal influence.

Interestingly, while the modern usage of the word 'nightmare' refers strictly to bad dreams, its origins were much more physical and terrifying. The mare's torment would often be tied to feelings of breathlessness, panic, or a sense of oppression on the chest. This can be linked to certain sleep disorders like sleep paralysis, where people wake up but experience an inability to move, and may even hallucinate an intruder or oppressive force pressing down on them.

Not Related to Female Horses

The confusion with the female horse is understandable, given that the word 'mare' is still used in modern English to refer to a female horse. However, the connection between the spirit and the horse is a matter of linguistic evolution, not mythology. The word 'mare' in the context of nightmares has nothing to do with horses; instead, it refers to an old belief in a supernatural entity.

THE WALL



BABY BLUES

By Rick Kirkman & Jerry Scott

ZITS

By Jerry Scott & Jim Borgman