

# GENTLE.NEWS

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*"It's like Tolstoy said. Happiness is an allegory, unhappiness a story."*

— Haruki Murakami

### **A Woman Who Keeps a Beautiful Dance Alive**

A woman named Adrienne Reiko Iwanaga has won one of America's highest honors in folk and traditional arts. She received a 2025 National Endowment for the Arts Heritage Fellowship. This award celebrates people who preserve important cultural traditions.

Reiko has spent her life teaching and performing Obon Odori. This is a Japanese folk dance that is hundreds of years old. The dance brings people together to honor and remember their ancestors. A beautiful phrase captures its meaning: "Because of you, I am."

Reiko was born in San Jose, California in 1938. She began learning this special dance as a young child. Over many years, she trained deeply in the art. She earned high-level certification in a formal style of the dance.

Reiko has gone on to become a beloved teacher and performer across America. She was inducted into the Japanese American Association of Northern California Cultural Hall of Fame. This honor recognized her work sharing and keeping Japanese culture alive.

Thanks to Reiko, Obon Odori continues to bring joy and meaning to many people. Her life's work reminds us that beautiful traditions can be kept alive through love, care, and dedication. What a wonderful gift she has given us.

### **Scientists Work to Build Better, Longer-Lasting Batteries**

A team of scientists in Tennessee is working to make batteries much better. They work at Oak Ridge National Laboratory. Their special lab is called STAR Lab.

Batteries power many things we use every day. They run electric cars, robots, and even drones. Scientists want batteries that last longer and store more energy.

The challenge is tricky. A material might work well in a tiny test. But it may fail in a full-sized battery. STAR Lab helps figure out why this happens.

Researcher Guang Yang leads the team. He says their goal is to close the gap between new materials and real-world batteries. The team tests how batteries hold up under tough conditions. They check how parts work together inside a complete battery cell.

The team focuses on a new kind of battery called solid-state. These batteries could store far more energy than today's batteries. Success here could mean better batteries for cars, power grids, and more. This research is good news for everyone who uses electricity every day.

### **Millions Spent to Give Fish Better Homes Across America**

Fish across America are getting a wonderful gift. The government is spending \$103 million to fix and restore places where fish live. Healthy homes help fish grow strong and have babies.

Fish need special places to thrive. They live in wetlands, rivers, and coral reefs. These places give fish food, shelter, and safety. When these habitats are healthy, fish populations grow.

Sixteen projects are happening all across the country. Workers are planting corals to rebuild reefs in the Caribbean. They are reconnecting rivers so salmon can swim freely again. In the Gulf, salt marshes are being restored for shrimp and oysters.

Some projects help special fish in Alaska, like Chinook salmon. Others help coho salmon in California rivers. In Georgia, scientists are restoring salt marshes. Hawaii is getting coastal habitat repairs too. Each project helps a different kind of fish in a different place.

This is wonderful news for nature lovers everywhere. Healthy fish populations mean cleaner rivers and oceans for all of us. They also support fishing jobs and fun outdoor activities. When we take care of fish habitats, we take care of our whole beautiful country.

### A Craftsman Who Honors the American West

Ernie Marsh is a master craftsman from Lovell, Wyoming. He makes beautiful bits and spurs for horses. He has just received a very special honor. The U.S. government named him a National Heritage Fellow. This is the highest arts honor in America.

Ernie grew up loving horses and cowboy life. He learned the art of making riding tools by hand. He also works with silver to decorate his pieces. His work is known all across the American West. People admire how beautiful and useful his creations are.

A bridle bit is a small tool a horse holds in its mouth. It helps the rider talk to the horse gently. A well-trained horse responds to soft signals. This means the horse stays comfortable during long rides. It is a kind and careful way to work with animals.

Spurs have been used by riders for thousands of years. In skilled hands, spurs give gentle signals. They are not meant to hurt. A good rider uses them softly. Ernie's spurs are made with great care and skill.

Ernie's work keeps old cowboy traditions alive. Each piece he makes is both useful and works of art. His honor reminds us that traditional crafts still have great value today. His story is a celebration of American history and craftsmanship.

## History & Heritage

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### **Star Trek Fans Helped Name America's First Space Shuttle**

Fifty years ago, something wonderful happened in space history. NASA showed the world its very first space shuttle. The date was September 17, 1976.

NASA had planned to call the shuttle "Constitution." That name honored America's 200th birthday that year. But then something surprising happened.

Fans of the TV show Star Trek stepped in. Nearly 100,000 people wrote letters to the White House. They asked President Gerald Ford to name the shuttle "Enterprise." That was the name of the starship in the show. President Ford agreed. He said he was "partial to the name."

The name Enterprise had a proud history in America. Ships called Enterprise served in the Revolutionary War and World War II. The first nuclear-powered aircraft carrier also carried that name.

The celebration was joyful and star-studded. Star Trek creator Gene Roddenberry attended. So did beloved cast members like Leonard Nimoy and Nichelle Nichols. The shuttle never flew into space, but it did important test flights. Those flights helped make later space missions possible. Today, the Enterprise is on display at the Intrepid Museum in New York City, where visitors can still see this piece of history.

## Activity Time - Word Search

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*Find the words below in the puzzle. Words go across or down only.*

### Words to Find:

HABITAT

SCIENCE

CULTURE

BRIDLE

SALMON

HORSE

NASA

