

FINDING YOUR iNNeR NeRDineSS

story and artwork by Anne M. Dellinger, Contributing Columnist

Have you ever been called a nerd?



Whoa...
Me?

If so, hopefully, you were flattered and proud to be recognized for your enthusiasm, expertise and know-how about a special topic, not ridiculed or embarrassed.

In the not-too-distant past, being branded a nerd was considered derogatory and belittling. The nerd label brought to mind a brainy person, usually a guy hooked on math and science who was socially awkward and overly focused on academics and technical subjects.

Often a nerd was portrayed wearing oversized glasses and unfashionable clothes, including a bow tie and a pocket protector full of ink pens. (Steve Urkell from the 90s sitcom, "Family Matters," was an iconic representation of a nerd ... ask your parents if they remember that TV show and how they felt about this character.)



F. FWD

Fast forward 30-plus years. Now there is a new, more positive perception of nerdiness.

The modern-day nerds are both guys and gals who are respected for their unique interests and abilities, along with their dedication to the things they deeply care about.

And while the stereotype of a nerd is still associated with math and science, the 21st century nerd can now be found hanging out in most any field of study and interest. Today, people are passionate and knowledgeable about a **ton** of different things.

DO YOU IDENTIFY WITH ANY OF THESE NERDY PURSUITS?

CARD COLLECTOR NERD — someone who is an avid and knowledgeable collector of specific trading cards such as Pokemon or sports, and may enjoy designing original cards.



SPORTS NERD — someone who loves collecting statistics and facts about a particular sport or team. Or someone who focuses on the form and technique of their sport and practices diligently.



TECH NERD — someone who is enthusiastic about technology, especially computers and electronics; excited about the latest gadgets, games and trends.

OUTDOOR NERD — someone who is passionate about camping, hunting, tracking, hiking and studying the environment.

HOBBY NERD — someone who is dedicated to mastering a special interest like playing a musical instrument, speaking a different language or even learning to cook.



WEATHER NERD — someone who regularly studies weather data, patterns, forecasting and phenomena.



With a wide range of interests to choose from, it is not about **what** you love but **how much** you love it that establishes a person's inner nerdiness.

If you have not yet found that "special something" that makes you passionately curious (beyond your cellphone), no worries. Nerdiness has no time or age limits; you may not discover an interest that you truly love and want to spend time exploring until you are older.

In the meantime, here is a suggestion.
Step outside ... the natural world always has countless things to get excited about.
Some are scary looking. Some are mysterious. Others can be beautiful, puzzling or even humorous. **Nature never disappoints!**



DO YOU RECOGNIZE EACH OF THE SUBJECTS IN THE PHOTOS BELOW?

Maybe there is something in this lineup that will trigger an interest?

There are endless mysteries and secrets to unravel in wooded areas, along streams/ponds or in your own backyard.

Observe ... collect ... photograph ... draw and record your findings.



The word NERD first appeared in print in 1950 in a book called...



CALLING ALL Super Sleuths



INDIAN PIPES



CICADA SHELLS



HICKORY HORNED DEVIL



PRAYING MANTIS EGG CASE

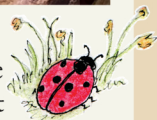


PIPEVINE SWALLOWTAIL BUTTERFLIES



GRAY TREE FROG

Who knows? You just might be a *nature nerd* in the making! And planet Earth can always use more nerd devotees! In today's society, it is cool to be smart and passionate about a single-minded interest. There is even an official day in August dedicated to Finding Your Inner Nerd. But any day is okay to recognize what makes you happy and gives you a chance to share it with the world. When your passion earns you the **NERD** label, wear it proudly! (Bow tie, oversized glasses and pocket protector are optional!) ●



If you have ever wondered when you may have first heard the word “nerd,” think back to your early childhood days. There is a popular book that your preschool or kindergarten teacher may have read to you that featured “a Nerkle, a **Nerd** and a Seersucker too.” The nerd in this story is portrayed as an imaginary animal, not someone with a passionate interest in a subject.

If you do not remember the book, you might recognize the quirky words and whimsical writing style of its famous author.

The book, with title and author, is hidden in this magazine. Help Hay Seed and City Slicker discover its whereabouts.

- Find the missing book in this magazine, giving the page number.
- Give the name of the book and its author.
- Do you remember reading this book from your early childhood?
- What is your nerdy passion?

For a chance to win a **\$25 Amazon email gift card**, enter online at co-opliving.com/super-sleuth or send answers with name, address and phone number to:

Cooperative Living Super Sleuths
4201 Dominion Blvd., Suite 101
Glen Allen, VA 23060

Kids Korner submissions are for children under the age of 16.

JULY Super Sleuths

The **July Super Sleuths** was about the coolest dessert of all — ice cream! For a chance to win a **\$25 Amazon email gift card**, kids were asked to find a July 1984 calendar page hidden in the pages of the magazine, give the page number and provide the name of the U.S. president found on the calendar. They were also asked to name their favorite ice cream treat and describe how eating ice cream makes them feel.

The winning answers are:

- Ronald Reagan
- Page 29
- Chocolate brownie batter ice cream
- “It makes me feel very happy.”

OUR WINNER IS CARSYN.

Congratulations, Carsyn!

