

## Editor's notes:

Some scholars believe that April, first termed "Aprilus" or "Aprilis," is derived from the Latin root word "aperire," meaning "to open" because this is the time of year when flowers open. Others contend that the month is named after Aphrodite, the Greek goddess of love.

Whatever the origin, we love having April arrive. This month offers many opportunities to reflect, to worship, and to enjoy a chuckle. Here are a few dates for your consideration:

**April Fools' Day, April 1** -- This unofficial holiday dates back hundreds of years. Then as now, April First was a day of trickery and good-natured fooling of the naive or unsuspecting.

**Tartan Day, April 6** -- Both Canada and the United States celebrate this day to honour those of Scottish descent. Many signers of the Declaration of Independence were Scottish, as were nine governors of the 13 original states.

**First run of the Pony Express, April 3, 1860** -- Launched as a private enterprise to improve on the U.S. Postal Service, the Pony Express consisted of 500 horses and 190 relay stations set up along the route from St. Joseph, Missouri to Sacramento, California. The service was in place for less than two years, when it was rendered obsolete by completion of the first trans-continental telegraph in 1861.

**Daylight Savings Time, April 3** -- Daylight Savings Time begins at 2 a.m. on this day and will remain in effect until the last Sunday in October.

**Apollo 13 Anniversary, April 11, 1970** -- "Houston, we have a problem." These words marked the beginning of the high drama that gripped the world 35 years ago. The heroic efforts of the astronauts and NASA engineers averted a near disaster for the American space flight program during the Apollo 13 mission, launched on April 11, 1970. Slightly more than two days into the mission, an oxygen tank ruptured, damaging the craft. Thanks to the expertise of all those involved, the crew made their way back to Earth on April 17, using the Lunar Module as a "lifeboat."

**50th Anniversary of the first McDonald's, April 15** -- In 1955, Ray Kroc opened the first franchised McDonald's in Des Plaines, Illinois. The first hamburger sold for 15 cents. Today, there are 31,000 McDonald's in 119 countries.

**Boston Marathon, April 18** -- This year will see its 109th running. The 26.4 mile race winds through eight Massachusetts towns, with the finish line in downtown Boston.

Roughly, 15,000 runners participate and 2 million watch. The

marathon run honours Phidippides, an Athenian, who first ran the 26 miles over twenty-five hundred years ago to warn the city of Athens of approaching Persian enemy ships.

**Clean-Out-Your-Files Day, April 22** -- Office workers mark this day by disposing of unneeded files and papers.

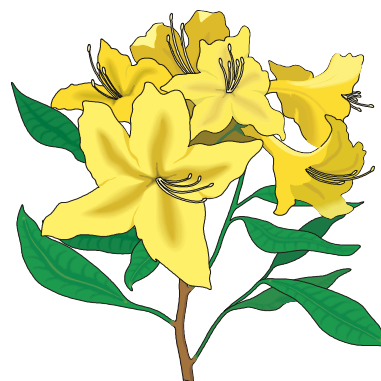
**Passover, April 23** -- This eight-day Jewish holiday celebrates the Jews' escape from their Egyptian slave-owners. It is one of the most important religious holidays in Judaism and is begun with a Seder, a ceremonial evening meal. Matzoh, the unleavened bread eaten at the meal, recalls the fact that the Jews, in their haste to flee, had no time to allow their dough to rise.

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### Fools Rule!

*"The first of April, some do say,  
Is set apart for All Fool's Day;  
But why the people call it so  
Nor I, nor they themselves, do know.  
But on this day are people sent  
On purpose for pure merriment."  
-- Poor Robin's Almanack, 1760*

Whence the origins of April Fool's Day? While no one knows for sure, a common belief traces the holiday back to the 1500s. Until 1564, the start of the European New Year was March 25, and celebrations lasted eight days, culminating in the exchange of gifts on April 1. Whether because news travelled slowly, or because some clung stubbornly to the March 25 date, many persisted in making New Year's visits and offering presents on April 1, and were considered fools by those who observed the new date. Eventually, this practice evolved to the deliberate exchange of humorous tokens.



## You don't say!

If you're feeling foolish this April Fool's Day, consider these not-so-smart predictions and proclamations from people who should have known better:

"I think there is a world market for about five computers."  
-- Thomas Watson, founder of IBM, 1943

"This 'telephone' has too many shortcomings to be seriously considered as a means of communications. The device is inherently of no value to us."  
-- Internal memo at Western Union, 1876

"There is no likelihood man can ever tap the power of the atom."  
-- Robert Milikan, Nobel Prize in physics, 1923

"Louis Pasteur's theory of germs is ridiculous fiction."  
-- Pierre Pouchet, professor of physiology, 1872

"Video won't be able to hold on to any market it captures after the first six months. People will soon get tired of staring at a plywood box every night."  
-- Darryl Zanuck, 20th Century Fox executive, 1946

"There is no reason anyone would want a computer in their home."  
-- Ken Olson, president of Digital Equipment Corp., 1977

"Such startling announcements as these should be deprecated as being unworthy of science and mischievous to its true progress."  
-- Sir William Siemens, electrical engineer, upon hearing about Thomas Edison's successful light bulb, 1880

"Rail travel at high speeds is not possible because passengers, unable to breathe, would die of asphyxia."  
-- Dionysius Lardner, professor of natural philosophy and astronomy at University College in London, 1830

"Heavier than air flying machines are impossible."  
-- Lord Kelvin, president of the Royal Society, 1895

## Do you have "Charisma"?

Saying that someone has "charisma" alludes to that good feeling we get when we are around them. Charismatic people are interested in us and are a pleasure to spend time with. In his book, *Secrets of Power Persuasion*, Roger Dawson gives some pointers for enhancing charisma:

- 1) **Work on your smile.** A relaxed, natural smile speaks volumes.
- 2) **Be free with sincere compliments.** Coworkers and subordinates are always eager for positive feedback.
- 3) **Develop a sensational handshake.** Like your smile, a good handshake can tell a person a lot about you.
- 4) **Treat everyone you meet as if they are the most important person you will meet that day.** Everyone likes to feel important and responds accordingly.
- 5) **Be consistent.** Knowing what to expect from you will make people more comfortable.

## Try your hand at these riddles:

Match the questions from the list below with your choice of answers from the second list below it. If you get stuck, the correct answers are at the bottom.

1. Take away my first letter and I remain unchanged. Take away my second letter and there is still no change in me. Take away my last letter and I am still the same. What am I?
2. What is it that will be yesterday and was tomorrow?
3. Why are people so tired on April 1st?
4. What always ends everything?
5. What has a neck but no head?
6. What has 10 legs and drools?
7. What do mechanics charge to fix tires?
8. What never gets any wetter no matter how hard it rains?
9. Who always goes to sleep with shoes on?
10. What do people make that nobody can ever see?
11. Where is it true that yesterday comes after today?
12. What has one foot on each side and one in the middle?

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- A. Today
  - B. A bottle
  - C. A mail carrier
  - D. In the dictionary
  - E. Because they finished a 31-day March
  - F. A flat rate
  - G. The letter g
  - H. Quintuplet babies
  - I. A horse
  - J. A Yardstick
  - K. Noise
  - L. The ocean
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**Answers:** 1C; 2A; 3E; 4G; 5B; 6H; 7F;  
8L; 9I; 10K; 11D; 12J