

Editor's notes:

*"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*

Some scholars say that April was named for Aphrodites, the Greek goddess of love and beauty. Others contend that "April" is derived from the Latin word "aperire," which means "to open," referring to the buds and blossoms that come out during this month.

April is quite a busy month so check out these dates:

National Humor Month April marks the 33rd anniversary of this observance, which focuses on the therapeutic value of laughter in reducing stress, improving job performance and generally enriching the quality of life. It was founded in 1976 by best-selling humorist Larry Wilde, Director of The Carmel Institute of Humor.

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.

Passover, begins April 8 -- Passover commemorates the delivery of the Jews from slavery in Egypt. It starts at sundown of April 8 and continues for the next eight days. It is one of the most important religious holidays in Judaism and it begins with a Seder, a ceremonial evening meal taken on the first night. Special dishes symbolizing the hardships of the Israelites during their servitude in Egypt are prepared. Matzo, 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. The Last Supper, taken before Jesus' crucifixion, was a Seder.

Good Friday, April 10 -- The name Good Friday is believed to be a corruption of God's Friday, the day Christ was crucified. Since the days of the early church, it has been dedicated to penance, fasting and prayer. In many regions, Good Friday is a legal holiday.

Easter, April 12 -- Christians celebrate Easter to commemorate the Resurrection and Ascension of Christ into Heaven. Its calendar date varies each year by as much as a month

because it is supposed to occur on the first Sunday after the full moon on or after the spring equinox, the start of spring. Like many religious holidays, Easter had pagan origins. The word itself stems from the names of two mythological goddesses -- Ostra and Eastre -- who symbolized spring and fertility, as do eggs and rabbits.

Boston Marathon, April 20 -- This year marks the 113th running of the world's oldest marathon race. Last year over 22,000 runners completed the race. Entry to the race is limited to entrants who have met running times specific to their age and gender.

Energize Your Career with Good Feng Shui

Feng shui is an ancient Chinese belief which preaches that your physical surroundings affect the positive and negative energy in your life. If your career could use some energizing, you might want to follow these tips from the Feng Shui Institute of America:

- Position your workplace so that you are facing the door with your back to a solid wall. This will give you a sense of control and support.
- Eliminate clutter and trash from your workplace to make room for more positive objects.
- Place decorative red objects around your office, such as red roses or candles, to attract greater recognition.
- Add live plants and lights to energize the room.

A different sort of chemical reaction

A freshman at Eagle Rock Junior High won first prize at the greater Idaho Falls Science Fair. He urged people to sign a petition demanding strict control or total elimination of the chemical "dihydrogen monoxide." Why? Because:

1. It can cause excessive sweating and vomiting.
2. It's a major component in acid rain.
3. It can cause severe burns in its gaseous state.
4. Accidental inhalation can kill you.
5. It contributes to erosion.
6. It decreases effectiveness of automobile brakes.
7. It has been found in tumours of terminal cancer patients.

He asked 50 people if they supported a total ban. Forty-three said yes, six were undecided, and only one knew the chemical was water. The title of his prize-winning project was, "How Gullible Are We?" He was attempting to show how conditioned we have become to alarmists practising junk science.

Traditions of the egg, from equinox to Easter

Eggs were coloured, blessed, exchanged, and eaten as part of the rites of spring long before Christian times. Even the earliest civilizations held springtime festivals to welcome the sun's rising from its long winter sleep. They thought of the sun's return from darkness as an annual miracle and regarded the egg as a natural wonder and a proof of the renewal of life.

As Christianity spread, the egg was adopted as a symbol of Christ's Resurrection.

In Slavic countries:

Baskets of food including eggs are traditionally taken to church to be blessed on Holy Saturday or before the Easter midnight Mass, then taken home for a part of Easter breakfast.

Central European countries:

Polish, Slavic, and Ukrainian people create intricate designs on the eggs. They draw lines with a wax pencil or stylus, dip the egg in colour, and repeat the process many times to make true works of art. Every dot and line in the pattern has a meaning. Yugoslavian Easter eggs bear the initials XV for "Christ is Risen," a traditional Easter greeting.

Russians:

During the reign of the tsars, the Russian royal family carried the custom of decorative eggs to great lengths, giving exquisitely detailed jewelled eggs made by goldsmith Carl Faberge from the 1880s until 1917.

Germans:

Eggs that go into Easter foods are not broken, but emptied out. The empty shells are painted and decorated with bits of lace, cloth or ribbon, then hung with ribbons on an evergreen or small leafless tree.

The Power of Personal Notes

Business etiquette expert Ronna Archbold says few things make a more powerful statement in the business world than a personal thank-you note. She advises that the letter be prompt, honest, simple, and to the point. "It's best to hand write the note, but if your handwriting is truly illegible, type the note and sign your name," she says. Stick with a standard business-like closing, such as "sincerely" or sincerely yours."

From Us to You

Times are tough right now for a lot of Londoners. Many jobs have evaporated and for affected families some of the simplest things can become a financial burden. Our staff has been shopping around among some of our friends and clients to see if together we might be able to offer some special discounts for entertainment and services around London.

We're not sure yet how this will turn out, but we would like to thank Fairmont Lanes for this month's discount offer. A coupon is enclosed with your invoice. Go bowling. It's good for you! And if you have something interesting to offer that might provide benefit to our customers, call Sharon Coll here at Helix, or email her at sharon@helixcourier.com.

The role of secretary through the ages

The word "secretary" ultimately comes from the same Latin word that gave us "secret." Originally, it meant "one entrusted with the secrets and confidences of a superior."

In Middle English it was *secretarie* and in Middle Latin it was *secretarius*. The word "secretary," in something close to its present meaning, has been with us for at least 500 years.

In France, from the 13th to the 16th century: The word "secretaire" meant a confidant. It also became an administrative term meaning "someone who transcribes or arranges for another."

Earliest use: Probably the earliest use of the word was in relation to those people who acted for a king. A king would have his trusted agents handle correspondence on private or secret matter, particularly matters of state.

18th century: The English lexicographer Samuel Johnson, in his 1755 dictionary, quotes Shakespeare, who wrote in early 17th century, "Call Garnier to me, my new secretary." There is also a quotation from the English philosopher Francis Bacon, a contemporary of Shakespeare: "That which is most profitable is acquaintance with secretaries, and employed men, of ambassadors." Johnson described a secretary as "one entrusted with the management of business; one who writes for another."

By 1806: Noah Webster succinctly described a secretary as "one who writes for another."

**The Human Rights Commission:
Useful or Obsolete?**
with
Salim Mansur, Ezra Levant and Kathy Shaidle

April 13th 2009 7:00pm

London City Music Theatre
316 Rectory Street, London, ON
519-432-5264 • Email: lcmtlive.com
Cost \$5.00 at the door
Ezra Levant and Kathy Shaidle's books
will be available for purchase at the event.

This event is being sponsored by the Friends of Canadian Coalition for Democracy and the Forest City Institute.
For RSVP and inquiries please contact
Forest City Institute at 519-438-8406
or info@forestcityinstitute.ca