

The year 2000

This special retrospective issue of the Helix Courier Limited Messenger newsletter covers the year 2000. Yet to come in this series are the years 2005, 2010 and finally 1968, the year in which Helix was founded.

We hope you enjoy this series as much as we enjoy preparing it for you.

The year 2000 was a year with many noteworthy events. It was also the year of a lot of millennium hype. A dictionary defines a millennium as any span of one thousand years, but the hoopla approaching the year 2000 was that it was the beginning of the 'third' millennium. Strictly speaking this was not quite true.

The Gregorian calendar that we use today has no year zero. The first millennium, therefore, would technically be counted from January 1 in the year 0001 to the end of the year 1000. The second millennium would thus be from January 1, 1001 to December 31, 2000. The third millennium would begin January 1, 2001 and so on.

Do we really care? Not one bit. 2000 is a nice, round number and using this date to mark the beginning of the current millennium suits us just fine.

Y2K concern

The most notable thing about the year 2000 was probably the so-called Y2K problem. Since early computer memory was tiny by today's standards, programmers saved memory resources by often using only two characters to denote a calendar year. 86 would denote 1986, for example. As the year 2000 approached, there was the real possibility that at least some computer programs would not have been programmed to correctly handle what to do when the calendar turned from 99 to . . . what? 100? \$1000? 2000? Websites and news articles and TV prognosticators predicted that systems would fail everywhere and we would all lose everything civilization and innovation and invention had wrought for us and that we would all end up starving and freezing to death.

Or something like that.

Naturally, none of these dire things actually happened. Companies worldwide spent billions to ensure that their services and systems would chug along properly and everything turned out fine.

At Helix, we knew our custom systems had been designed and coded properly, but we used the opportunity to upgrade our systems anyway. There were, after all, tax incentives to update. We like saving a buck as much as anyone.

The Man With Two Hats

On May 2, 2000, to mark the 55th anniversary of the liberation of the Netherlands and to serve as a lasting reminder of the role of Canadians in securing that freedom, the original Man With Two Hats monument was unveiled by Her Royal Highness Princess Margriet, near Het Loo Palace in Apeldoorn, the Netherlands, with thousands of Canadian veterans in attendance. The monument, which was sculpted by Dutch artist Henk Visch, is made of bronze and measures 4.6 metres in height.

The monument symbolizes the historic bonds between Canada and the Netherlands. It is a mysterious figure which, from a distance, seems to be waving both hands with a hat in each one. Close up, the figure looks melancholic. It evokes feelings of the joy of liberation subdued by the memory of the war's many victims, and symbolizes the enduring legacy of Dutch gratitude to Canadians.

On Saturday, May 11, 2002, in conjunction with the Canadian Tulip Festival in Ottawa, Her Royal Highness, Princess Margriet unveiled a replica of The Man With Two Hats, which Holland donated to Canada. Princess Margriet was born in Canada during the Second World War and her youngest son, Prince Floris, is the godchild of the Royal Canadian Legion. The date is significant as it falls shortly after May 5, the anniversary of the liberation of the Netherlands, and May 8, the anniversary of the end of the Second World War in Europe.

Top 10 movies and Top 10 songs of 2000

Movies

- 1 The Grinch
- 2 Cast Away
- 3 Mission: Impossible II
- 4 Gladiator
- 5 What Women Want
- 6 The Perfect Storm
- 7 Meet the Parents
- 8 X-Men
- 9 Scary Movie
- 10 What Lies Beneath

Songs

- 1 It's My Life -- Bon Jovi
- 2 One More Time -- Daft Punk
- 3 Kryptonite -- 3 Doors Down
- 4 One Step Closer -- Linkin Park
- 5 Stan -- Eninem
- 6 With Arms Wide Open -- Creed
- 7 The Bad Touch -- Bloodhound Gang
- 8 Deep Inside You -- Third Eye Blind
- 9 Beautiful Day -- U2
- 10 Music -- Madonna

Political Events Worldwide in the year 2000

- The presidents of North and South Korea sign a peace accord and symbolically, end a half-century of antagonism.
- Tarja Halonen is elected the first female president of Finland
- Stipe Mesic is elected president of Croatia.
- Bill Clinton becomes the first sitting U.S. President to visit Vietnam.

George W. Bush for U.S. President

The United States presidential election of 2000 was a contest between Republican candidate George W. Bush, the then-governor of Texas and son of former president George H. W. Bush (1989–1993), and Democratic candidate Al Gore, the then-Vice President.

Bill Clinton, the incumbent President, had served the maximum two terms allowed by the Twenty-second Amendment. Bush narrowly won the November 7 election, with 271 electoral votes to Gore's 266 (with one elector abstaining in the official tally).

The election was noteworthy for a controversy over the awarding of Florida's 25 electoral votes, the subsequent recount process in that state, and the unusual event of the winning candidate having received fewer popular votes than the runner-up. It was the closest election since 1876 and only the fourth election in which the electoral vote did not reflect the popular vote.

Miscellanea in 2000

Although Y2K caused few real problems, an internet virus did. It damaged many 'jpeg' and 'mpg' files on computers all over the world. It was traced back to a man in the Phillipines. The name of the virus was: I love you. The writer of the virus was never convicted because the law in the Phillipines didn't cover this sort of crime.

With 5 Oscars including Best Movie, this movie was the big winner of the 2000 edition of the Oscars: *Gladiator*.

Elian Gonzales, a young boy from Cuba, was all over the news when he tried to get to America with his mother. His mother died and he was being looked after by his family in Florida. After much finagling, and a great public uproar in favour of allowing Elian to stay in the U.S., American authorities sent him back to live with his father in Cuba.

Weather Events in the Year 2000

On July 14th, 2000, a F3 tornado ripped through an Alberta camping area, killing 11 people.

At around 7pm, a supercell storm spawned a tornado which travelled across a lake and into a camping area filled with trailers, killing 10 people and injuring hundreds. The path of destruction was 20km long and 1km wide at its greatest intensity.

Several hundred trailers were flipped upside down at the Green Acres campground. A stream of tow trucks, ambulances, rescue divers and other emergency services descended on the site, about 90 miles north of Calgary.

Flash Flood Drowns Saskatchewan Town

There is a certain irony about one of the driest places getting the greatest rainfall, and yet that is exactly what happened at the usually rain-sparse Vanguard, Saskatchewan on July 3, when a carwash-like downpour flooded the community

of 200 people, some 65 km southeast of Swift Current. As much as 375 mm of rain fell in eight hours, the greatest storm for that duration on the Canadian Prairies and one of the largest rainfall intensities ever recorded in Canada.

The spectacular thunderstorm produced more cloud-to-ground lightning strikes than that part of Saskatchewan would normally expect in two years. A year's amount of rain left crops in the field drowning and rotting, and roads and rail lines under water. The force of the water crushed cars and farm implements and swept away grain bins. Stranded residents had to be rescued by boat, which rapidly became the carrier of choice on the main street in Vanguard. The flash flood also carried away herds of cattle and drowned dozens of deer and antelope. When millions of litres of contaminated water submerged the water-treatment plant and backed up into homes and businesses, officials had to ship in bottled water from Swift Current.

Plane Crashes in 2000

Air France Flight 4590 was a Concorde flight from Charles de Gaulle International Airport near Paris, to John F. Kennedy International Airport in New York City. On July 25, 2000 it crashed in Gonesse, France. All one hundred passengers and nine crew on board the flight perished. On the ground, four people were killed with one left wounded.

The flight was chartered by German company Peter Deilmann Cruises and all passengers were on their way to board the MS Deutschland cruise ship in New York City for a 16-day cruise to South America.

On January 30, Kenya Airways Flight 431 crashed into the Atlantic Ocean, off the coast of Côte d'Ivoire, killing 169. On January 31, Alaska Airlines Flight 261 crashed into the Pacific Ocean, off the California coast, killing 88.

Napster

Napster creator Shawn Fanning was only 18 when he wrote the source code that shook the music world to its very foundation. His free, Internet song-swapping service turned him into a Time magazine cover boy and the darling of downloaders everywhere. But Napster also came under heavy legal fire in 2000 from the five giants of the recording industry -- Warner Brothers, EMI, Sony, BMG, and Universal -- who sued to shut down the service, citing alleged copyright infringement. The conclusion of the lawsuit resulted in a federal judge agreeing with the labels. However, after gaining a temporary reprieve in July, Napster shocked web-surfing freeloaders worldwide by going legit. In October, Fanning and company entered into an agreement with corporate kingpins Bertelsmann -- BMG's parent company.

Did you know that 2000 was a leap year? In accordance with the Gregorian Calendar, a leap year is any year divisible by 4, except centenary years divisible by 400. A leap year contains one extra day in order to keep the calendar year synchronized with the astronomical or seasonal year.