

Editor's notes:

January 2005, Volume 20-5

*Ring out the old, ring in the new,
Ring, happy bells, across the snow;
The year is going, let him go;
Ring out the false, ring in the true.*

-- Alfred Lord Tennyson



January comes from "*Janus*," the Roman god of gates and doors. He had two faces -- one to look in each direction, symbolizing beginnings and endings. Historians believe that the Roman ruler Numa Pompilius added January to the end of the 10-month Roman calendar around 700 B.C., and gave the month 30 days. In 46

B.C., Julius Caesar changed it to the first month and added a day (from August), making it 31 days.

The tradition of using a baby to signify the New Year began in Greece around 600 B.C. Traditionally, Dionysus, the god of wine, was honoured by parading a baby in a basket, symbolizing his annual rebirth as the spirit of fertility. Ancient Egyptians also used a baby to illustrate rejuvenation. Historians believe that early German settlers brought the image of a baby in a New Year's banner to America.

Today, hospitals across the country mark the births of their areas' first new Year's Day babies. Local merchants often offer store certificates and gift baskets to the parents.

Here are some other notable dates this month:

Trivia Day, January 4 -- A day to acknowledge and celebrate those who know all kinds of obscure facts (including this one!).

Twelfth Night, January 6 -- Twelfth Night is the English holy day traditionally celebrated on January 6. Also called the Epiphany, at a period it marked the last day of the Christmas season. William Shakespeare's famous play "Twelfth Night" (also known as "What You Will") was first performed on the twelfth day after Christmas, 1601, for the Queen of England.

World Religion Day, January 16 -- This day is celebrated on the third Sunday of January to promote harmony among different religions. According to the World Christian Encyclopedia, there are 10,000 distinct religions in the world. Only 150 of those have 1 million or more followers, and only 22 have a significant presence in more than one country.



Pooh Day, January 18 -- Anniversary of the birth of A.A. Milne, English author best remembered for his children's tales of Winnie the Pooh and the House at Pooh Corner. Milne was born in London in 1882 and died in Hartfield, England on January 31, 1956.

Milne always acknowledged that it was his wife, Daphne, and his young son, Christopher Robin, who inspired him to write the poems and stories.

National Hugging Day, January 21 -- Celebrate National Hugging Day this month by wrapping your arms around your spouse or a friend. Not only does it feel good, but research shows that hugging has actual health benefits. According to Tiffany Field of the Touch Research Institute at the University of Miami School of Medicine, touch -- such as hugging -- lowers the output of a stress hormone called cortisol. Other research has shown that hugging boosts the amount of hemoglobin in the blood, increasing the supply of oxygen to the body, which helps prevent diseases and speeds recovery from illness.

Did you know that 100 years ago . . .

- The Rotary Club and the Audubon Society were formed;
- A gallon of milk cost 7 cents; a loaf of bread -- 4 cents; a pound of steak -- 18 cents;
- Vicks VapoRub and Palmolive soap came on the market;
- Alberta and Saskatchewan became the eighth and ninth provinces?

Golden Globe Awards



More than 60 years ago, eight foreign film critics held an awards ceremony and luncheon for movie stars at the 20th Century Fox Studio in Hollywood to honour films and actors whose work was deemed interesting and worthwhile. It was such a success that they decided to make it an annual event.

An actual trophy appeared several years later; a globe encircled with a strip of motion picture film mounted on a pedestal. In the 1950s, the awards were expanded to recognize achievements in television. The event was broadcast nationally for the first time in the early 1960s. Today, it is broadcast to 125 countries and watched by 250 million.

John Hancock -- A National Treasure

In the movie *National Treasure*, the character played by Nicholas Cage steals the American Declaration of Independence in order to decipher a secret map on the back of the document. The map apparently leads to untold riches. During the course of the movie, viewers get glimpses of the front of the fading Declaration as well as some of the signatories to it.

Of the 57 signatories to the Declaration of Independence, one signature stands out for its boldness and beauty is that of John Hancock. He was born in Braintree, Massachusetts, on January 23, 1737, the son and grandson of clergymen. His paternal uncle, a wealthy shipowner, adopted him as a young boy when both his parents died. Upon graduation from Harvard, he joined his uncle's business and inherited it at 27 when his uncle died.

In 1768, when he was 31, one of Hancock's ships was seized by British customs officers. In protest, some Bostonians attacked the officers and destroyed homes of British loyalists. The British in response sent troops to America. Hancock and his allies demanded that they be removed. His activities won him the presidency of the First and Second Continental Congresses.

In 1776, Hancock was the first member of Congress to sign the Declaration of Independence. He is said to have made his signature large and bold so that King George III could read

it without his spectacles. Historians note that the defiant gesture gave confidence to the rest of the members of Congress because signing the document could be deemed an act of treason punishable by death.

In 1780, Hancock was elected the first governor of Massachusetts and during his five-year term, he presided over the state convention which ratified the Constitution. He died at 56 in 1793.



January 23, 2005, marks what would have been John Hancock's 268th birthday. The Writing Instrument Manufacturers Association (WIMA) honours the American founding father by celebrating National Handwriting Day.

"The purpose of National Handwriting Day is to alert the public to the importance of handwriting, stress the benefits of handwritten communication, promote good penmanship and encourage legible handwriting."

Need some resolutions?

If you're searching for some noble New Year's resolutions, take a page from the late Ann Landers:

- ◆ Don't abandon your old-fashioned principles. They never go out of style.
- ◆ Resolve to stop magnifying problems and shooting from the hip. Words that you have to eat can be hard to digest.
- ◆ Don't blow your own horn. If you've done something praiseworthy, someone will notice eventually.
- ◆ Vow not to make a promise you are not sure you can keep. Examine the demands you put on others.
- ◆ Read something uplifting. Deep-six the trash. You don't eat garbage, so why put it in your head?
- ◆ Lighten up. When you feel like blowing your top, ask yourself, "Will it matter a week from today?"

Wait 10 Minutes before taking seconds

A study by the University of Florida's college of Medicine found that it takes 10 minutes for the human brain to signal that the stomach is full. The study determined that there was a connection between the changes that occur in the human brain after eating and the traditional biochemical indicators in the body, which are increases in the levels of glucose and insulin in the blood. These findings help scientists further understand how the brain responds to food. For dieters, it suggests waiting 10 minutes before reaching for seconds or dessert. Perhaps after such a wait, you'll find you're no longer hungry, making it easier to avoid the extra calories.

A long Winter's Nap

Finding food and shelter in the harsh winter months is a problem for many animals. Some cope through hibernation, a sleep-like state in which the body temperature drops, the heart-beat slows, and the animal uses stored-up fat for nourishment. Animals that hibernate include ground squirrels, marmots, woodchucks, dormice, hedgehogs, and some types of bats. Snakes, frogs, terrapins, and newts also hibernate. Although most people think of bears when it comes to hibernating, they are not true hibernators. Their heartbeats do slow (from 55 to 10 beats per minute), but their body temperature doesn't drop much below 86 degrees, and they can be easily aroused.