

Happy New Year!

The year 2005 has had its challenges for all of us and we aren't too disappointed that it is coming to an end. Despite incontrovertible world-wide evidence that human foolishness knows no bounds and that we are likely to be hating and killing each other forever, we are nevertheless optimistic that each new year will mark a turning point and that peace and goodwill will reign on earth. In this spirit, we at Helix Courier Limited join our friends, customers and suppliers in bidding adieu to 2005 and wish you all a very happy, healthy and prosperous New Year.



Editor's notes:

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Although New Year's resolutions are almost always expected to be broken, the start of every new year can still be an excellent time to re-evaluate chosen paths.

Having difficulty setting career goals? Deborah Prussel, career coach, suggests that "the act of defining goals, thinking them through, visualizing and writing them down will bring focus. And, she adds, "find someone bright and trusting with whom you can share and refine your goals."

Maybe you're just looking for ways to energize your day. Take note that doing the same thing day in day out can make your work boring. The Rockhurst College Continuing Education Center says the antidote is to make your job different every day. "Whether it is a different person you discuss an issue with, someone different to have lunch with, a new computer tool, a different point of view to argue, a different route to work, a trade magazine you haven't read, a different website to visit."

Every year, many of us resolve to start or improve fitness regimens. We already know that exercise reduces the risk of many diseases; now, Harvard Medical School advises that regular exercise also offers these additional benefits:

- Improves mental vigor, including reaction time, acuity, and math skills.
- Reduces depression.
- Enhances creativity and imagination.
- Combats stress and anxiety.
- Improves sense of well-being.
- Reduces sleeplessness.

January gets its name from the Middle English word "Januarie," which translates roughly to "month of Janus," the Roman god of gates and doorways who was depicted with two faces looking in opposite directions. His festival month was January.

Here are a few more dates of interest this month:

The Twelfth Night, January 6 -- This night marks the end of the 12 days of Christmas, that is, the last six days of the old year and the first six days of the new. It is said to commemorate the visit of the Magi to the infant Jesus. In medieval celebrations in England and Ireland, people drank "lamb's wool," a concoction of cider or ale mixed with spices and apples. Leftovers would be poured on apple trees to ensure a plentiful crop. In other cultures, a king's cake with a bean or trinket baked inside was served on this day. Custom held that whoever found the trinket would have good luck for the year. In Portugal, the lucky recipient was also charged with baking the cake the following year. While some still bake and eat king's cakes today, most people observe Twelfth Night by taking down their holiday decorations.

Clean Off Your Desk Day, January 9 -- Jeffrey Mayer, author of *Winning the Fight Between You and Your Desk*, says that 60 percent of the papers piled on a messy desk have little value or meaning. A clean desk can save an hour a day.

Robbie Burns Night, January 25 -- On this day, hundreds of Scottish clubs and societies will meet to honour their favourite poet, Robert Burns, born in 1759. Dinners begin with "piping in the haggis," a procession of people wearing kilts, led by a bagpiper.

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(A haggis is made from the lung, liver, and heart of the sheep. These are mixed with oatmeal and a few spices and stuffed into the sheep's stomach.) Then the master of ceremonies reads Burns' poem called "To a Haggis," cuts the haggis and says the famous Selkirk Grace, also composed by Burns. The evening finishes with Burns' famous "Auld Lang Syne."

Chinese New Year -- January 29 -- This year's Chinese New Year ushers in the Year of the Dog. According to Asian astrology, the animal ruling the year in which a person is born has a profound influence on personality: "This is the animal that hides in your heart."

Dogs of the Chinese Zodiac have a deep sense of loyalty and willingness to fight for justice. They make faithful friends and are genuine listeners and confidants. Those born under the sign of the dog make good leaders, counsellors, teachers, police officers, and nurses. They are people born in 1922, 1934, 1946, 1958, 1970, 1982, and 1994. Famous dogs include Bill Clinton, George W. Bush, Madonna, Winston Churchill, and Mother Theresa.

The Great Lakes

The five Great Lakes -- Superior, Michigan, Huron, Erie, and Ontario -- cover more than 94,000 square miles and contain 6 quadrillion gallons of fresh surface water, one-fifth of the world's fresh water. The lakes are so big, they have small tides, especially Lakes superior and Erie. And when the wind pushes down on one part of a lake, the water surface rises in another part, creating waves. Hundreds of lighthouses are situated around the Great Lakes; Lake Michigan boasts the most, with more than 115, many of which are still operational. Even so, experts estimate that the lakes hold as many as 5,000 shipwrecks. It's rare, but the lakes can freeze over, although not solidly. The Great Lakes are connected by a series of dams, canals, smaller lakes, and rivers.

Lake Erie was named for the Indian tribe, the Eries; Lake Huron for the Huron Indians. An Indian name for Lake Michigan was "Michi gami," meaning "the great water." Lake Ontario got its name from the Iroquois; their word for "beautiful" was "Ontara," and "Ontario" meant "beautiful lake." Superior was named by the French and it means "Upper Lake," referring to its position above Lake Huron.

The New Year's Baby



The tradition of using a baby to signify the New Year began in Greece around 600 B.C.E. 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.

Woolly Allergens

Using wool blankets or wearing wool clothes can make you sneeze -- even if you're not allergic to the wool itself. A recent study at the University of Sydney, Australia, measured allergens in certain types of clothing. Researchers found that wearing a wool sweater exposed test subjects to 10 times the normal level of dust mites and 11 times the average level of cat dander. Even if you don't have a cat at home, your sweater can pick up dander from other cat owners.

Garments that caused the least exposure to allergens were freshly washed cotton T-shirts or other light cotton clothing. If you do wear wool sweaters, have them cleaned frequently to reduce the allergens they carry.

Don't Eat and Drive

Let's make another resolution this year -- that of not eating and driving at the same time. More than 1.5 million car crashes each year in North America result from driver distraction or inattention -- and studies have shown that eating is one of the most distracting things you can do.

Some foods are more dangerous than others. Hot liquids are the worst offenders, with dripping or greasy foods right behind.

The top 10 food and drink items related to accidents:

1. *Coffee*
2. *Hot soup*
3. *Tacos*
4. *Chili*
5. *Hamburgers*
6. *Barbecue*
7. *Fried chicken*
8. *Jelly or cream-filled doughnuts*
9. *Soft drinks*
10. *Chocolate candy*

The History of the Trumpet

Musical historians regard conch shells as the earliest versions of the trumpet, with other early versions made from bamboo, ivory, wood, bone, and silver. The first true trumpets were typically long narrow horns. In the 16th century, trumpet players developed the art of articulating notes by altering the pressure and shape of the lips on the mouthpiece and the amount of air pressure applied. The word "trumpet" comes from "trombita," an instrument used by shepherds in southern Poland. Today, most trumpets are made of brass and they are heard in every style of western music, from Mexican mariachi ensembles to jazz, classical orchestras, and marching bands.

Setting Goals for the New Year

You're never too old to set another goal or to dream another dream.

-- C.S. Lewis

When it is obvious that the goals cannot be reached, don't adjust the goals, adjust the action steps.

-- Confucius