

## Editor's notes:

July 2006, Volume 21-11

July was named in 44 B.C. for Julius Caesar, the ruler of Rome. He reorganized the calendar to bring it closer in sync with the seasons, adding 67 days to the year 45 B.C. and introducing the 12 months of 30 and 31 days instead of the original 10. The Senate, grateful for righting the chaotic calendar, named the month after him because it was his birth month.

Here are so more dates that we celebrate:

**Canada Day, July 1** -- Canadians celebrate the birth of their country. This day marks the 139th anniversary of Confederation in 1867, which joined the British North American provinces under one federal government.

**The Dog Days of Summer, July 3 - August 11** -- The ancient Romans believed that this 40-day stretch of hot, sultry weather was the result of Sirius, the Dog Star, rising in conjunction with the sun. Because it is the brightest star, they believed its heat reinforced the sun's, raising temperatures on earth during this period.

**Bastille Day, July 14** -- is a French national holiday and an important day for people of French descent around the world. On this day in 1789, a Parisian crowd stormed the Bastille, a prison fortress where political prisoners were kept, to gather arms and ammunition.

The Bastille guarded one of the gates to the city, so it held considerable strategic importance for the revolutionaries. The attack marked the beginning of the French Revolution.

## 60th Anniversary of the Bikini

The swimsuit known as the bikini made its debut on July 5, 1946. Louis Reard, a French engineer, designed the two-piece bathing costume and named it after the Bikini Atoll, the site of nuclear tests in the Marshall Islands. He hoped that the reaction it caused would resemble that of the atomic bomb. The bikini was not accepted at first. Reard struggled to find a model who would even wear his creation, which consisted of only 30 square inches of fabric. In the end, he hired an exotic dancer to be his model. In 1951, the organizers of the Miss World



## Jelly Fish Facts

You'll be lucky if your only encounter with jellyfish this summer is sidestepping them on the beach. But they are fascinating creatures. Some jellyfish facts:

- There are 2,700 different species of jellyfish, ranging in size from a grape to a king-sized bed.
- They come in white, blue, pink, yellow, green, purple, red, orange, and striped.
- Jellyfish are 95 percent water and have no heart, bones, or brain.
- Jellyfish can have a few tentacles or as many as 800; the longest tentacles extend over half the length of a football field. Jellyfish use tentacles with stinger cells to catch plankton and small fish.
- They have been on the earth for more than 650 million years, making them older than the dinosaurs.
- Jellyfish inhabit all the oceans of the world. Freshwater varieties live in lakes and rivers.
- Dried jellyfish is considered a high-protein delicacy in some countries.
- The toxin from the Australian box jellyfish is more potent than the venom from a cobra; it kills 70 people each year, making it the deadliest marine creature.

Contest banned bikinis; they were deemed immodest in the United States throughout the 1950s. In 1960, the popular song, "Itsy Bitsy Teenie Weenie Yellow Dot Bikini" by Brian Hyland, opened a new market. In 1964, the bikini made the cover of the Sports Illustrated Swimsuit Edition. Bikinis lost some popularity in the 70s, 80s and early 90s because of growing concerns about skin cancer, among other reasons. But the "tankini" -- which features a tank-top -- has revitalized the two-piece market.

## Fact or Fiction?

1. A "jiffy" is an actual unit of time, 1/100th of a second.
2. Elephants weigh less than the tongue of a blue whale.
3. Niagara Falls has never frozen completely solid.

4. Peanut shells can be one of the ingredients of dynamite.
5. "Dreamt" is the only English word ending with "mt."
6. Caveman lived at the same time as the dinosaurs.

Answers: 1.T; 2.T; 3.F; 4.T; 5.T; 6.F

## Tour de France, July 1-23

The Tour de France, a nearly month-long bicycle race that runs through France, dates back to 1903, when it began as a publicity stunt for the publication *L'Auto*. The first race attracted 60 riders and covered 2,500 kilometres (1,500 miles) over 19 days. The competition was so fierce that the following year some cyclists sneaked onto trains and cars or dropped spikes in front of opponents' wheels. There was some talk of cancelling future races, but officials opted to lengthen the race and adopt tighter rules to ensure credibility.

The basic idea of a race through the country, broken into stages and based on cumulative time, has remained intact throughout the history of the Tour de France. However, the publisher of *L'Auto* felt that interest could be sustained only if the course changed from year to year. In 1910, he added a stage through the Pyrenees Mountains and the course went through the Alps the following year.

Part way through the 1919 race, it occurred to the publisher that the race leader ought to wear something distinctive, since spectators along the route often had no idea who was winning. He decided on a yellow jersey, mainly because *L'Auto* was printed on yellow paper, so the famous *maillot jaune* was born.

Since then, other jerseys have been added. A green jersey goes to the most consistent rider, a polka dot jersey is for the rider who does best on mountains, and a white jersey is given to the best rider under 25. The race was halted for World War II. Thus far, there have been 92 races (not including 2006).

Entry to the race is by invitation only. Race organizers invite about 20 teams, each with nine cyclists, to compete. Total prize money is 16 million francs, equivalent to approximately \$2.1 million.

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### Make your office green

You can add some life to your work space, literally, by bringing in a few plants, such as ivy, snake or spider plants, potted chrysanthemums, ficus trees, or peace lilies. These varieties thrive in artificial lighting and are likely to lift your mood. "Live plants have been scientifically proven to minimize electromagnetic frequencies that are emitted from computers, telephones, and overhead fluorescent lights," states the Comfort Council, a panel of lifestyle experts. "There's this thing called 'geopathic stress,' which feels like we're tired or fuzzy, and plants help reduce that."

### Multi-tasking has its drawbacks

Do you read e-mails while on the phone? Do you listen to voicemail messages as you file paperwork? Experts say doing two things at once may be counterproductive at times. "It takes extra time to shift mental gears, and it reduces the brainpower available for either task, says Dr. Meyer, a psychology professor at the University of Michigan.

### How to disagree politely

Differences of opinion crop up in most workplaces, but career consultants say they don't have to rile you or your opponent if you keep these tips in mind:

1. Keep your eyes on the person who's speaking. Rolling your eyes or seeking sympathy or backup from others will antagonize the person you are disagreeing with.
2. Ask questions and restate the contention, to ensure you're both on the same wavelength and fully understand the issue.
4. Agree with as much of what is said as possible. This will make the other person feel as if he is being heard and it will make you look more reasonable.
5. Be tactful. Say, "We have a different view," rather than "You're wrong."
6. Back up your claims or assertions with whatever facts or research you have on the subject.
7. If things get heated, put off the discussion to a later time.

By the time many of you get this newsletter, Canada Day will have passed. I hope that you will all have celebrated by watching fireworks displays, barbecuing in your backyards, or just relaxing with family and friends.

As one of the millions of immigrants who make up a substantial part of the Canadian population, I always remind myself to be grateful for what I have, for the welcome that Canada extended to my family way back in 1949, and that we still live in one of the most free places on this embattled planet of ours. We are truly lucky. Sieg Pedde

**We wish a great Canada Day and a wonderful summer to all our friends and customers!**