

## Editor's notes:

September 2008, Volume 24-1

### September Poem

*Far in the woods, these golden days,  
Some leaf obeys its Maker's call;  
And through their hollow aisles it plays  
With delicate touch the prelude of the Fall.*

-- Henry David Thoreau

Autumn is an early name for the season between summer and winter. According to the dictionary experts at Merriam-Webster, it's derived from Latin and was first recorded in the 14th century. The word "fall" didn't come into use until the 16th century; even then, it was incorporated into phrases such as "fall of the leaf" and "fall of the year." The Old English word for fall was "haerfest," from which comes our modern word "harvest."

Although the calendar still maintains that it's summer, for many, it officially ends when September and school start.

Here are a few dates of note this month:

### **Days of Marathon Anniversary, September 2-9, 490 B.C.**

This week celebrates an ancient messenger's run that inspired present day marathons. The word comes from the Greek town, Marathon, from which the messenger, Phidippides, ran 26 miles nonstop to Sparta to seek help in repelling the Persian army attacking Athens. The Athenians defeated the Persian army, and Phidippides ran back to Marathon and died as he spoke the words, "Rejoice, we are victorious."

**Monday, Labour Day, September 2** -- The first Monday in September in Canada and the United States celebrates the accomplishments of working people and labour organizations.

**Talk Like a Pirate Day, September 19** -- If you need a nudge to have fun at home or at work, this is the day for it. Get tips and history at [www.talklikeapirate.com](http://www.talklikeapirate.com).

**Autumnal Equinox, Start of Fall, September 22** -- Autumn formally begins on this day when the sun crosses the equator, making night and day equal in length all over the world.

**Rosh Hashanah, September 29 - October 1** -- Rosh Hashanah -- Hebrew for "head of the year" -- begins at sunset on this day. Jews begin 10 days of repentance and spiritual renewal culminating on the fast day of Yom Kippur.

### **Playing numerical board games boosts number skills in pre-schoolers**

Playing a simple board game such as Chutes and Ladders can improve a pre-schooler's numerical knowledge, researchers at Carnegie Mellon University have found. Researchers knew that children varied greatly in the math knowledge they brought to school, with poor children tending to have far less math knowledge than their peers from middle-income families. It is believed that this early gap has long-term consequences and probably reflects a difference in exposure to informal numerical activities. Board games provide a good, informal opportunity for young children to learn about consecutive numbering and the relation of numerals and their sizes.

In the study, four- and five-year-old Head Start students from low-income backgrounds played numerical board games for four 15-minute sessions over a two-week period. The activity increased the children's proficiency in counting, identifying printed numerals, comparing the relative size of numbers, and estimating the position of numbers on number lines. The gains were still in place two months after the board game sessions ceased. Children who played an identical board game that varied in colour squares rather than numbered squares did not improve in any of the four math areas noted.

### **Points to Ponder**

*Youth is like spring, an over praised season more remarkable for biting winds than genial breezes. Autumn is the mellower season, and what we lose in flowers we more than gain in fruits.*

-- Samuel Butler

*I have only one superstition. I touch all the bases when I hit a home run.*

-- Babe Ruth

*When one finds oneself in a hole of one's own making, it is a good time to examine the quality of the workmanship.*

-- John Rennerde

*London has too many potholes.*

-- Helix Courier

# **HAPPY 40TH BIRTHDAY, HELIX COURIER!**

We are pleased to have been serving London and area since September 4, 1968.

## Turn the pages of ancient texts online

In a historical twist, some of the world's oldest and most fragile texts are finding a new life in the digital world. Meet the British Library, Turning the Pages Web site:

[www.bl.uk/onlinegallery/ttp/ttpbooks.html](http://www.bl.uk/onlinegallery/ttp/ttpbooks.html).

Here you can view some of the world's greatest masterpieces: William Blake's sketchbook and poems, Leonardo da Vinci's scientific sketches, and notes, Lewis Carroll's original handwritten version of *Alice in Wonderland*, and Mozart's musical notebook -- written in the artists' own hands. You can use a virtual magnifying glass to examine the texts closely -- plus the texts have audio components. You can listen to the notes Mozart wrote as you view them, for instance -- or hear the entirety of *Alice* being read out loud.

## Go for a Walk

The University of Texas conducted a study and found that a half-hour walk proved to be a mood booster -- even for people suffering from major depression. The lift lasts about an hour, and the study's author attributes it to elevated levels of serotonin, a mood-elevating neurotransmitter whose production is increased by exercise. "People also get an extra boost and a sense of accomplishment by knowing that they've done something good for themselves," said John Bartholomew, PhD, a professor of kinesiology.

## Glue to the Rescue

If a stroll through the desert or bare-handed gardening has left you with tiny plant spines embedded in your skin, try this home remedy from the University Medical Center in Tucson, Arizona: Apply a thick layer of white household glue (such as Elmer's) to the affected area and let it dry. When the glue is peeled off, the spines will come out. Apply antiseptic and watch for any redness or swelling, which could indicate an infection.

## A Matter of Height

The average North American male is 5' 9"; the average North American female is 5' 4". For two centuries, Americans were the tallest people on the planet, but this started to change in the 1950s. Today, the Dutch are the tallest, measuring in at an average of 6;1" for the men, and 5' 8" for the women. Here are some other tall people facts:

- The tallest presidential candidate has won the last 10 out of 12 elections.
- A study by the University of Pittsburgh found that people 6' 2" and taller receive starting salaries 12 percent higher than those under six feet. Other studies stated that for every additional inch, salaries rise by more than \$700 a year.
- A survey by journalist Malcolm Gladwell found the 58 percent of chief executives of Fortune 500 companies were 6' 1" or taller.
- A study by Syracuse University found that taller men are more likely to marry (and divorce and marry again) and have more children than shorter men.

## Hair Parting and Personality

Some social scientists believe that the way people part their hair reflects their personalities. A part on the left indicates a logical, mathematical bent; a right part signifies a freer, more artistic air. Those who part their hair in the middle or are bald are generally viewed as balanced and trustworthy.

In general, men normally part their hair on their left; women on the right. People who stray from these norms may do so because of the unique natures of their jobs. Hillary Clinton parts her hair on the left. Former British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher also parted her hair on the left. Most U.S. presidents have parted their hair on that side, too.

## What Employees want

An enthusiastic work force is key to every successful business. But how many hoops do you have to jump through to get a little enthusiasm from your employees?

Not too many, say the authors of *The Enthusiastic Employee*. After researching and studying the matter for years, David Sirota, Louis Mischkind, and Michael Irwin write that there are three things all employees want -- regardless of their salaries, their status, and their positions:

**Equity** -- Employees want to be respected and treated fairly regarding compensation, career development, and safety.

**Achievement** -- Employees want to be proud of what they do and the company for which they do it.

**Camaraderie** -- Employees want collaborative, productive relationships with their co-workers.

No matter how many bells and whistles you might offer, if you don't have those key factors covered, you're not likely to have an enthusiastic or loyal work force.

## Forty Years and Counting...

On September 4, 1968, I was a young man about to enter my second year of study at the University of Western Ontario. It was also the first day of business for Helix Courier. The plan was that I would continue my studies and that my brother Alfred, who I had invited to be my partner, would run things when I was in class.

It didn't turn out quite that way. I found university life boring and by January had left Western to devote myself full-time to Helix. I bought out my brother's interest in 1985 but I have been here ever since and will be for a long time to come.

It has been an interesting ride, and quite an education. I learned all about philosophy and psychology and business ethics and economics on the job. I have met many great people. Helix has never been a one-man show and I value every employee, every broker-driver, every supplier and every customer who has contributed to our success.

Thank you, sincerely, for your ongoing support and for giving me 40 great years, so far, with many more ahead.

-- Sieg Pedde, President, Helix Courier Limited