



# Diverse Issues

Volume 5, No. 1

January - April 2004

## *Diversity in People: Different Calendars for Different Cultures*

Why doesn't everyone celebrate the new year on the same day? And why do some people celebrate Christmas in January? That is because different cultures use different calendars. There are three distinct types of calendars in use today. Some are based on the movement of the moon (lunar); others are based on the position of the sun (solar). Still others are based on both the sun and the moon.

The solar calendar is designed so that one year is equal to a tropical year, or the amount of time it takes for the earth to make a complete rotation on its axis. A tropical year includes all four seasons. A **Lunar calendar** follows the lunar phase cycle without regard for the tropical year. Hence, the months of the Lunar calendar systematically shift with respect to the months of the solar calendar. In the third type of calendar, the **Lunisolar calendar**, months are based on the lunar phase cycle; but every few years a whole month is added to bring the calendar in phase with the tropical year.



### Solar Calendars

Two main versions of the solar calendar have existed in recent times: The **Julian calendar** and the **Gregorian calendar**. The difference between them lies in the way they approximate the length of the tropical year and their rules for calculating certain holidays such as Easter. The solar calendar has 365 or 366 days in a year. It is divided into 12 months that have no relationship to the motion of the moon. In parallel with this system, the concept of *weeks* groups the days in sets of seven.

### The Gregorian Calendar

The Gregorian calendar is the most commonly used calendar in the world. Most modern countries use the Gregorian calendar for their business and other official activities. By this calendar, the new year begins on January 1st and Christmas is December 25th.

The Gregorian calendar was adopted by Pope Gregory XIII in February 1582, to correct for errors in the older Julian calendar.

Since the tropical year is 365.242190 days long, an extra day must be added to the calendar roughly once every four years to synchronize the calendar with the tropical year. In this way, the calendar remains synchronized with the seasons. Years that have the extra day (366 days) are called leap years. In the Gregorian calendar, leap years are calculated as follows. Every year divisible by 4 is a leap year, with the following exceptions. Every year divisible by 100 is not a leap year, but every year divisible by 400 is a leap year.

*(Continued on page 2)*

### **In This Issue**

- **Diversity in People:** *Different Calendars for Different Cultures*
- **Diversity in the Workplace:** *The Ten Commandments of Communicating with People with Disabilities*
- **Diversity Resource:** *Guide to Exploring African American Culture*
- **Diversity Calendar**
- **Diversity Activity:** *Walk Apart - Walk Together*
- **Diversity Around the State:** *Celebrations From Around the World*

So, 1700, 1800, 1900, 2100, and 2200 are not leap years. But 1600, 2000, and 2400 are leap years.

### **The Julian Calendar**

Julius Caesar, in 45 BC, ordered the Romans to disregard the moon in calculating their calendars. He divided the year into 12 months, each containing 30 or 31 days, except for February, which had only 29 days. Every fourth year, February would have 30 days. The Julian calendar was widely used for more than 1,500 years. A Julian year lasted 365 1/4 days. But it was actually about 11 minutes and 14 seconds longer than the solar year, which led to a gradual change in the dates. By AD 1580, this difference had accumulated to 10 days; so two years later, in 1582, Pope Gregory XIII corrected the calendar with the newly developed Gregorian calendar. However, some countries (for example, Greece and Russia) used the Julian calendar into this century, and the Orthodox church in Russia still uses it, as do some other Orthodox churches. Hence, while Christmas falls on December 25th on the Gregorian calendar, it falls about 12 days later on the Julian calendar. Members of the Eastern Orthodox Church celebrate Christmas in January.

### **Lunar Calendar**

The lunar calendar is based on the cycle of the moon. The year consists of twelve months of 29 or 30 days each, totaling 353 or 354 days. Each new month begins at the sighting of a new moon. It is consistently shorter than a tropical year and, therefore, it shifts with respect to the Gregorian calendar. The Islamic calendar is a purely Lunar calendar.

Originally, each month started when the lunar crescent was first seen (by a human observer's eye) after a new moon. Although new moons may be calculated quite precisely, the actual visibility of the crescent is much more difficult to predict. It depends on factors such as weather, the optical properties of the atmosphere, and the location of the observer. It was, therefore, very difficult to give accurate information in advance

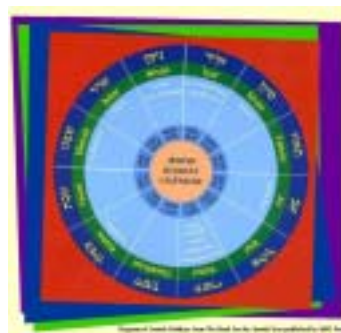
about when a new month will start. Today, modern astronomical calculations allow for a standard calendar around the world.

The Lunar calendar is the official calendar in countries around the Persian Gulf. But other Muslim countries use the Gregorian calendar for civil purposes and only turn to the Islamic calendar for religious purposes. The Islamic New Year, or Al-Hijra, commemorates Muhammad's flight from Mecca to Medina in 622 A.D. This was the starting point of the Islamic calendar. The date of the Islamic New Year varies every year, compared to the Gregorian calendar, since the Islamic calendar is shorter than the Gregorian calendar.

### **Lunisolar Calendars**

*Lunisolar* calendars have a year that corresponds to a cycle of seasons and a month which corresponds to a lunation, so that the day of month indicates the moon phase and the month of year indicates the season. Also, there is usually the additional requirement that the year has a whole number of months, in which case most years have 12 months, and the other years have 13 months. Examples include the Jewish and Chinese calendars. Since 12 months are

about 11 days shorter than the tropical year, a leap month (also called intercalary month) is inserted about every third year to keep the calendar in tune with the seasons.

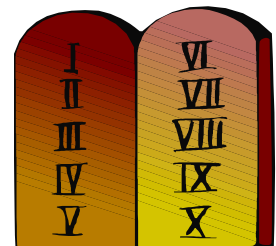


The Jewish calendar is used for religious purposes by Jews all over the world, and it is the official calendar of Israel. The Jewish calendar strives to have its years coincide with the tropical year and its months coincide with the lunar months. The Jewish New Year falls in September.

*(Continued on page 4)*

## *Diversity in the Workplace: The Ten Commandments of Communicating with People with Disabilities*

- I** Speak directly to the individual (or person with a disability) rather than through a companion or sign language interpreter who may be present.
- II** Offer to shake hands when introduced. People with limited hand use or an artificial limb can usually shake hands, and offering the left hand is an acceptable greeting.
- III** Always identify yourself and others who may be with you when meeting someone with a visual disability. When conversing in a group, remember to identify the person to whom you are speaking. When dining with a friend who has a visual disability, ask if you can describe what is on his or her plate.
- IV** If you offer assistance, wait until the offer is accepted. Then, listen or ask for instructions.
- V** Treat adults as adults. Address people with disabilities by their first names only when extending that same familiarity to all others. Never patronize people in wheelchairs by patting them on the head or shoulder.
- VI** Do not lean against or put hands on someone's wheelchair. Bear in mind that people with disabilities treat their chairs as extensions of their bodies.
- VII** Listen attentively when talking with people who have difficulty speaking and wait for them to finish. If necessary, ask short questions that require short answers, or a nod of the head. Never pretend to understand; instead repeat what you have understood and allow the person to respond.
- VIII** Place yourself at eye level when speaking with someone in a wheelchair or on crutches.
- IX** Tap a person who has a hearing disability on the shoulder or wave your hand to get his or her attention. Look directly at the person and speak clearly, slowly, and expressively to establish if the person can read your lips. (If so, try to face the light source and keep hands, cigarettes, and food away from your mouth when speaking.) If a person is wearing a hearing aid, don't assume that they have the ability to discriminate your speaking voice. Never shout at a person. Just speak in a normal tone of voice.
- X** Relax. Don't be embarrassed if you happen to use common expressions such as "See you later" or "Did you hear about this?" that seem to relate to a person's disability.❖



*The Ten Commandments were adopted from many sources as a public service by United Cerebral Palsy Association, Inc. (UCPA). UCPA's version of the Ten Commandments was updated by Irene M. Ward & Associates (Columbus, Ohio) also as a public service, and to provide the most current language possible for its video entitled, The Ten Commandments of Communicating with People with Disabilities.*

(Continued from page 2)

The Chinese calendar is based on exact astronomical observations of the longitude of the sun and the phases of the moon. This means that



principles of modern science have had an impact on the Chinese calendar.

In the Chinese Lunar calendar, the beginning of the year falls somewhere between late

January and early February. This is when the new year begins for approximately one quarter of the world's population. Although the People's Republic of China has adopted the Western Gregorian calendar for civil purposes since 1911, a special Chinese Lunar calendar is used for determining festivals such as Chinese New Year. Many Chinese calendars will print both the solar dates and the Chinese lunar dates.

### Other Calendars

**The Coptic, or Egyptian Calendar** is 7/8th of a year behind the Gregorian calendar. This discrepancy results from differences between the Ethiopian Orthodox Church and the Roman Catholic Church as to the date of the creation of the world.

The Ethiopian calendar is based on the Egyptian year. An Egyptian year has 13 months. The first 12 months have 30 days. The last month, Paguemain, is an intercalary month, which has six days on leap year and five on others. The year starts on 11 September in the Gregorian calendar or on the 12th in (Gregorian) Leap Years. The Coptic Leap Year follows the same rules as the Gregorian, so that the extra month always has six days in a Gregorian Leap Year.

**The Calendar of the Bahá'í Faith** - The year is based on the solar year of 365 days, five hours, and some fifty minutes. Each year is divided into nineteen months of nineteen days each with four Intercalary Days (five in a leap year), called

Ayyám-i-Há, which Bahá'u'lláh specified should precede the nineteenth month. The Bahá'í New Year's Day (Naw Rúz) falls on the Spring Equinox. This usually occurs on the 21st of March, but if the Equinox falls after sunset on the 21st, Naw Rúz is to be celebrated on the 22nd of March, because the Bahá'í day begins at sunset.

It is a good feeling when we give and receive special greetings and warm wishes from those who share the same holidays at the same times that we do. Make the special effort to remember to share similar greetings with those who celebrate important holidays at different times of the year. ❖

Sources:

*Calendars Through The Ages* by WebExhibits at: <http://www.webexhibits.org/calendars/calendar.html>

2003 Children Calendars at:

<http://www.calendar-store.com/history.html>

Wikipedia: The Free Encyclopedia at:

[http://en2.wikipedia.org/wiki/Main\\_Page](http://en2.wikipedia.org/wiki/Main_Page)



## *February is Black History Month*

Visit the following Web sites for a wealth of resources related to Black History Month and African-American history:

Black History: Exploring African American Issues on the Web site at: <http://www.kn.pacbell.com/wired/BHM/AfroAm.html>.

Black History Month: Heroes of the Civil Rights Movement at: <http://www.infoplease.com/spot/bhmheroes1.html>.

Black History Month Activities (elementary, middle, high, all ages) at: [http://www.gale.com/free\\_resources/bhm/activity.htm#freedom](http://www.gale.com/free_resources/bhm/activity.htm#freedom). ❖

## *Diversity Resource: Guide to Exploring African American Culture*

As the diversity of our nation continues to increase, the need to prepare youth to function in a diverse society and world becomes more important. Youth development leaders have the opportunity to help our youth understand, appreciate, and value the many different cultures that make up America.

*Guide to Exploring African American Culture* is a new curriculum designed to help youth explore African American culture. The activities are intended for use with youth from all backgrounds and cultures. The activities in this guide will help youth achieve the following objectives:

- Develop an understanding of African American culture and its importance in U.S. society.
- Learn about the individual contributions of selected African Americans to American history.
- Reflect on one's own culture, and the similarities and differences between cultures.
- Develop life skills that allow youth the opportunity to value diversity, think critically, process information, learn to learn, practice creativity, and complete a project or task.

Through information, illustrations, and fun activities, youth are challenged to explore African American culture in the following areas: skin and hair, language, arts and crafts, cuisine, music, poetry, holidays, and notable African Americans. In addition to reflection questions and activities, each section includes additional suggested activities and resources to extend the learning.

The guide can be used flexibly, as a "stand alone" curriculum, or the leader may select and chose topics of interest to the participants. The guide may be used in 4-H clubs, after-school programs, or as a supplement or complement to formal school curriculum. The *Guide to*

*Exploring African American Culture* will be available for sale by the end of January 2004. Contact the Publications Distribution Center, The Pennsylvania State University, 112 Agricultural Administration Building, University Park, PA 16802, (814) 865-6713 for order information. ❖

### *Announcing*

#### **Amish Safety Info: Enhancing the Health and Well-Being of Plain Communities**

A Conference for Professionals Working with Old Order Anabaptists



**When:** June 2-4, 2004

**Where:** The Young Center  
Elizabethtown College  
Elizabethtown, PA 17022

This conference is designed to equip extension educators, health workers, safety professionals, law enforcement personnel, vocational rehabilitation counselors, and other service providers in their work with Amish and other Old Order Anabaptist groups.

Conference brochure and registration forms are scheduled to be posted in early January. Check the following Website for additional information: <http://www.amishsafety.info/>.

# Diversity Calendar

## January 2004

- 1<sup>st</sup> *New Year's Day* - International.  
*Shogatsu* (New Year's Day) – Japan. Most significant and elaborate event in Japan.  
*Emancipation Day* – U.S. African American. Commemorates President Lincoln's 1863 signing of the Emancipation Proclamation.
- 5<sup>th</sup> *Guru Gobind Singh's Birthday* – Sikhs. Celebrates the birth of the 10<sup>th</sup> Guru of the Sikhs.
- 6<sup>th</sup> *Epiphany* – Christian. Commemorates the visit of the three wise men to baby Jesus.  
*Three Kings's Day* – Christian, International. Time of gift giving and the end of the Christmas season.
- 7<sup>th</sup> *Christmas* – Coptic and Eastern Orthodox Christian.
- 14<sup>th</sup> *Makar Sankrat* – Hindu. Hindu and South Indian winter solstice marking the beginning of the Pongal festival.  
*New Year's Day* – Eastern Orthodox Christian.
- 15<sup>th</sup> *Seijin no hi* (Adult's Day) – Japan. Honors those persons who have turned age 20 in the preceding year.
- 18<sup>th</sup> *World Religion Day* – Baha'i. Observance to emphasize that the goals of religion are to create unity among people, ease suffering, and bring about peace.
- 19<sup>th</sup> *Epiphany* – Eastern Orthodox Christian.  
*Martin Luther King, Jr. Day* – U.S. Commemorates the life and accomplishments of Martin Luther King, Jr.
- 21<sup>st</sup> *Altagracia Day* – Dominican Republic. Religious holiday, also known as Our Lady of High Grace Day.
- 22<sup>nd</sup> *Lunar New Year* – International, Asian. Observed during the first three days of the first lunar month. Known as Shul in North and South Korea, Tet in Vietnam, and Chinese New Year.
- 26<sup>th</sup> *Duarte Day* – Dominican Republic. Celebrates the birthday of Juan Pablo Duarte, one of the fathers of the country.  
*Vasanta Panchami* – Hindu, Sikh. Spring festival honoring the goddess of learning, wisdom, and fine arts.
- 31<sup>st</sup> *Wakuf: Day of Arafat* – (sundown) Islamic. The most important day during the Hajj pilgrimage when Muslim pilgrims ask God for forgiveness and mercy.

## February 2004 African American History Month

- 1<sup>st</sup> *Eid Al-Adha* (sundown) – Islamic. Commemorates Abraham's willingness to sacrifice his son in obedience to God.
- 2<sup>nd</sup> *Candlemas* – Christian. Commemorates the presentation of the baby Jesus at the Temple of Jerusalem  
*Groundhog Day* – U.S. The length of winter is determined by whether or not the groundhog sees its shadow.
- 3<sup>rd</sup> *Setsubun* – Japan. National Shinto holiday.

## February 2004 - (Continued)

### African American History Month

- 5<sup>th</sup> *Lantern Festival* – China, Taiwan. Marks the end of the Chinese New Year and the appearance of the first full moon of the new year.
- 6<sup>th</sup> *Tu B'Shevat* (sundown) – Jewish. Israel's New Year celebration for trees and fruits.
- 12<sup>th</sup> *Darwin Day* – U.S. Commemorates the birth of Charles Darwin and his significant contributions to science and humanity.
- 14<sup>th</sup> *Race Relations Day* – U.S. Day to encourage understanding of all races.
- 15<sup>th</sup> *Nirvana Day* – Buddhist. In the northern tradition, this is the anniversary of the Buddha's passing away.
- 16<sup>th</sup> *President's Day* – U.S. Celebrates the birthdays of Abraham Lincoln and George Washington.
- 18<sup>th</sup> *Maha Shivaratri* – Hindu. Honors the Lord Shiva with vigil and fasting
- 21<sup>st</sup> *Muharram* – (sundown) Islamic. First day of the first month of the Islamic year.
- 23<sup>rd</sup> *Clean Monday/The Great Lent* – Orthodox Christian. First day of Lent.
- 24<sup>th</sup> *Shrove Day* – Christian. Day to confess sins.
- 25<sup>th</sup> *Ash Wednesday* – Christian. First day of Lent, period of penitence and self-examination.
- 29<sup>th</sup> *Leap Year* – International.  
*Ayyam-i-Ha* – Bahai. The intercalary Days for festivities, gifts, and charitable acts.

## March 2004

### Women's History Month Irish American Heritage Month

- 1<sup>st</sup> *Martisor* – Bulgaria, Romania. Celebrates ending of winter and arrival of spring.
- Ashura* – (sundown) Islamic. A somber day dedicated to the grandson of Muhammad.
- 6<sup>th</sup> *Holi* – Hindu, Sikh. Celebration of spring throughout Northern India.
- 17<sup>th</sup> *St. Patrick's Day* – Ireland, U.S. Commemorates the patron saint of Ireland, who converted the island to Christianity in 432 C.E.
- 20<sup>th</sup> *Naw-Ruz* – (sundown) Zoroastrian, Baha'i. New Year celebration, commemorates the end of a long fast.  
*Shubun no hi* – Japan. National holiday celebrated on the vernal equinox. The central day of Higan, a seven-day Buddhist memorial service.
- 30<sup>th</sup> *Ramanavami* – Hindu. Celebrates the birth of Shri Rama, incarnate of the Hindu god Vishnu.



Sources:

*Honoring Differences: Professional Development Group, Inc. 2003.*

*Interfaith Calendar located at:*

<http://www.interfaithcalendar.org/2004.htm>.

## *Diversity Activity: Walk Apart - Walk Together*



This activity is appropriate for a wide variety of ages, ranging from elementary school

age to adults. Since it requires no special materials, it can be conducted in almost any setting. It is a particularly good activity for groups that are just forming.

**Time:** 10 – 15 minutes

**Materials:** Open space large enough for two people to take a short walk.

### **Directions:**

Two volunteers come forward and stand with their backs together. The audience is asked to call out things about these two volunteers that are different. Differences sometimes pull us apart.

As each difference is called the volunteers take one step apart. When they reach the end of the available space, have them turn and face each

other. Now the audience is asked to call out things that are similar/alike about the volunteers. As each similarity is called out, the volunteers take one step toward each other.

### **Discussion:**

Think about the things that were noted as differences. How many were things that we can easily see with our eyes? Gender, size, hair color, skin color, dress, wearing glasses or not, etc. What were the things that were noted as similarities? While there are certainly physical characteristics that are similar, many other similarities are not so visible. Perhaps both “volunteers” are enthusiastic or both have similar interests or goals in life. Talk about the importance of the differences and of the similarities among members of the group. Be sure to talk about the importance of accepting and welcoming all members into the group.❖

This activity was adapted from the Scouting Web Pages. The original activity can be found at: <http://www.epilogsys.com/ScoutingWeb/SubPages/DiversAct.htm>. Permission to reprint was granted by Kathie Little, Volunteer Girl Scouts of the Old 96 Council.

## *Diversity Around the State: Celebrations Around the World*

This past summer, 140 youth and 35 counselors had a fun opportunity to explore Japanese, African, and Latin American cultures. *Celebrations Around the World* was the theme of a three day summer camp organized by Cindy Arblaster and Joann Logan, 4-H Youth/Development Agents in Westmoreland County. The camp was held at Twin Lakes County Park from 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. daily. Each day focused on a different culture and involved youth in a variety of activities. Youth resided throughout the county and were sponsored by a variety of community organizations. These included: the Monessen Communities That Care Program, Westmoreland County Children’s Bureau, and Saint Vincent College’s Success in Life Program.

The following are just a few of the comments that suggest the youth enjoyed this unique experience:

- *It was fun learning how to use chopsticks.*
- *We were taught by the guest speaker how to say our names in Japanese.*
- *I learned about how African rain sticks were used to ask for rain from the gods.*
- *A lady did our hair with different braiding styles like they do in Africa.*❖



# St. Patrick's Day: March 17

Although not an official holiday in the United States, St. Patrick's Day has a long history of being celebrated with parades and general goodwill toward all things Irish. The day commemorates Bishop Patrick, who brought Christianity to Ireland in the Fifth Century.



## Here are some facts about the Irish in the United States:



**33.7 million** U.S. residents are of Irish ancestry. This number is almost nine times the population of Ireland itself (3.8 million).



**23 %** of Massachusetts residents are of Irish ancestry. Massachusetts has a higher proportion of residents of Irish descent than any other state, edging out New Hampshire (20 percent) and Rhode Island (18 percent).



**156,000** U.S. residents were born in Ireland, which was among the top 10 countries of birth among the foreign-born population as recently as 1970.

As you go out and about this St. Patrick's Day, you may run into a real live Irish citizen, as about 373,000 tourists and business travelers from "the old sod" visit the United States annually. ❖

**Source: U.S. Census Bureau**

---

*Diverse Issues is authored by:*

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Patreese D. Ingram".

*Patreese D. Ingram  
State Extension Specialist Diversity Education  
Department of Agricultural and Extension Education  
323 Agricultural Administration Building  
University Park, PA 16802 E-mail: pdi1@psu.edu 814-863-7439*

**This file may be accessed electronically at: <http://AgExtEd.cas.psu.edu/FCS/pi/pimenu.html>**

© The Pennsylvania State University 2003

**This publication is available in alternative media on request.**

The Pennsylvania State University is committed to the policy that all persons shall have equal access to programs, facilities, admission, and employment without regard to personal characteristics not related to ability, performance, or qualifications as determined by University policy or by state or federal authorities. It is the policy of the University to maintain an academic and work environment free of discrimination, including harassment. The Pennsylvania State University prohibits discrimination and harassment against any person because of age, ancestry, color, disability or handicap, national origin, race, religious creed, sex, sexual orientation, or veteran status. Discrimination or harassment against faculty, staff, or students will not be tolerated at The Pennsylvania State University. Direct all inquiries regarding the nondiscrimination policy to the Affirmative Action Director, The Pennsylvania State University, 328 Boucke Building, University Park, PA 16802-2801, Tel 814-865-4700/V, 814-863-1150/TTY.