

Witch Watch

by GUNDELLA



It's a new year, time to look at the calendar

As I look over my new appointment calendar, I am reminded of what the poet Omar Khayyam called the succession of days, months and years from tomorrow through today, and into yesterday and distant history.

He appropriately referred to it as a "checkerboard of nights and days."

Calendars are fascinating, and the stories of how they got that way is even more so.

"Thirty days hath September,
April, June and November;
All the rest have 31
Except February, which alone has 28
and one more
Added every year in four."

HAVE YOU ever wondered why February is so short and both July and August, the only two long months which come together, have 31 days each?

One legend has it that a day was taken from February and added to August to make it as long as July. This was supposedly done so that the month named for Augustus Caesar would be equal in length to the month named for his uncle Julius Caesar.

The names of the other months, too, have meaning:

- January, named for Janus, the Roman two-faced god of gates and doorways.
- February, from the Latin word "februrium," an instrument of purification. Probably so named because of ancient purification rites held on what is now Feb. 2.
- March, named for Mars, the god of war.
- April, from the Latin "aperio," to open.
- May? Historians differ on whether this month is named for the goddess Maia or the word "maior," meaning to increase.
- June, named for the goddess Juno.
- July, named for Julius Caesar.
- August, named for Augustus Caesar.
- September, the "seventh month" in the old Roman calendar.
- October, the "eighth month."
- November, the "ninth month."
- December, the "tenth month."

SINCE THE beginning of time, mankind has used one method or another of telling time.

Ancient Egyptians determined the length of the solar year by observing the shadows cast by the pyramids.

The early Teutonic people counted nights instead of days. From this custom has come the term "fortnight," meaning 14 nights.

Many primitive peoples—the Vikings and American Indians among them—measured time by the changes of the moon.

Since the seventh century B.C., men have used calendars of one sort or another.

Numa Pompilius is believed to have created the first calendar at that time. His work was followed by several Roman calendars.

In 1582 A.D., Pope Gregory initiated our present leap-year system to correct the inaccuracy of the calendar set up Julius Caesar.

Now there is a movement to a new "Universal Calendar." I'll tell you more about that next week.



NEWS RELEASE

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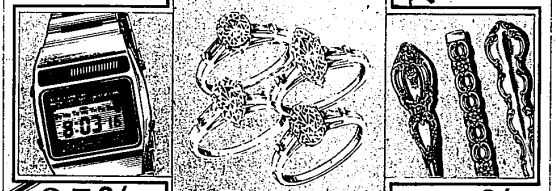
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