

March Musings

By Charlie McBriarty

There was a time when March marked the beginning of a new year. That was the case in Ancient Rome when the calendar was originally designed by Romulus, the first king of Rome. This fledgling calendar, based upon the phases of the moon, focused on the planting and harvesting seasons. It consisted of only ten months, with the first month named after Mars, the Roman god of war. For these early Romans the initial month of the year marked the resumption of war and the beginning of planting season. The final month of the calendar, Decimus, is the Latin word for ten. The midwinter season was not included in this Roman calendar, and March remained the first month until January and February were added by the second king of Rome. Thus March became the third month and December moved to the twelfth.

The introduction of a twelve-month calendar may be the only similarity between the Roman calendar and the one we use today. Through the passage of time, the calendar became out of sync with the agricultural seasons. As a consequence, it underwent numerous tweaks and modifications through the years in an effort to reconcile the phases of the moon with the agricultural process of sowing, growing and harvesting.

Julius Caesar is credited with changing the lunar-based calendar to one based upon the solar year when he became emperor of the Roman Empire. This Julian calendar had the same twelve months, but after Caesar's assassination, the name of the seventh month, Quintus, was changed to Julius (July) in his honor. The next emperor, Caesar Augustus, was responsible for modifying the calendar so that it remained in sync for a longer period of time. For this, the eighth month, Sextus, was renamed in his honor.

However, through the centuries that the Julian calendar was used, it was not without problems. A four-year cycle took an average of 365.25 days to complete, which was not an exact match with the solar year—it was too long by just over 11 minutes. This overage caused a gain of about one day every 128 years. The discrepancy was

finally addressed by Pope Gregory XIII more than 1,600 years after the death of Caesar. The revised calendar became known as the Gregorian calendar and remains in use by most nations of the world today.

The month of March is notable for more than its former place as first month of the year. Over the years a whole series of noteworthy events have occurred in March. There is Mardi Gras followed by Ash Wednesday on March 5, and on March 9 we “spring” ahead at 2 a.m. when we move to daylight saving time. March 11 is Johnny Appleseed Day and the following day is the birthday of the Girl Scouts. In 44 BC, Julius Caesar was assassinated on March 15 (the ides of March), and Hinckley, Ohio, celebrates March 15 as the day buzzards come home to roost. Two days later, we celebrate St. Patrick's Day—a day when all are Irish or wish they were. On the 19th the swallows return to San Juan Capistrano, and on the 20th the vernal equinox marks the beginning of spring.

March is also the birth month of four presidents of the United States. James Madison, the fourth president, was born on March 16, 1751, in Port Conway, Virginia. The seventh president, Andrew Jackson, was born March 15, 1767, in the Carolinas near Waxhaw. The tenth president, John Tyler, was born in Charles City County, Virginia, on March 29, 1790. The only president to serve two non-consecutive terms, Grover Cleveland, was born on March 18, 1837, in Caldwell, New Jersey. He was our 22nd and 24th president. Coincidentally, this is also a month when four presidents died. Millard Fillmore died on March 8, 1874, and on that same date in 1930 our 27th president, William Howard Taft, also died. Benjamin Harrison died on March 13, 1901. The fourth president to die in March was Dwight D. Eisenhower, who died on March 28, 1969.

Other noteworthy March dates include March 4, 1830, when former president John Quincy Adams was the first and only president to return to Washington, DC, as a member of the House of Representatives, where he served for eight terms. On March 5, 1868, the Senate convened to hear impeachment charges against President Andrew Johnson. The move to impeach Johnson failed by a single vote. President Ronald Reagan was shot in a failed assassination attempt as he exited from the Washington Hilton on March 30, 1981. On March 31, 1968, President Lyndon B. Johnson stunned the nation when he announced that he “would not seek, nor would he accept” his party's nomination to serve another term.

In the world of sports, March includes the beginning of one season and the conclusion of another. Major League baseball will kick off the 2014 regular season on March 22 in Australia. That's correct: the Arizona Diamondbacks and Los Angeles Dodgers face each other in the two-game series in Sidney, Australia. Then, on Monday, March 23, the Dodgers will face the San Diego Padres on ESPN's “Sunday Night Baseball.” Opening day for the rest of the teams will be on March 31.

Of course, most North Carolinians are familiar with the event that concludes this month. It is March Madness. Well, actually, in spite of its moniker, the NCAA Men's Division 1 basketball tournament to determine the team to be declared champion of the 2013-14 season will not be concluded until Monday, April 7, when the final game of the tournament will be played in Texas. A total of 68 teams will be potential champions when the tournament gets underway on March 18 in Dayton, Ohio. As March draws to a close, the field will have been narrowed to the final four teams who will compete for the championship in Arlington, Texas, in early April.

Carteret Community College Corporate and Community Education March Schedule - Call 252-222-6200

Course	Start Date	End Date
Elections Process & Precinct Officials Cert.	03-06-14	04-10-14
Real Estate Provisional Broker	03-08-14	05-03-14
Notary Public	03-08-14	03-08-14
Forklift Operator Certification	03-08-14	03-08-14
Insurance Prelicensing: Property & Casualty	03-10-14	03-17-14
Digital Photography	03-11-14	05-08-14
AutoCAD, Introduction to	03-11-14	04-03-14
Real Estate Update & BICAR	03-14-14	03-14-14
Medication Aide	03-14-14	03-16-14
Applications, Resumes & More	03-17-14	03-20-14
Professional Bartending & Wine Steward	03-17-14	05-07-14
Real Estate Broker Selected Topics	03-17-14	03-26-14
50 Home Based Businesses for Start Up	03-18-14	03-18-14
Your iPad at Work	03-18-14	05-06-14
Computer Basics for Job Search	03-24-14	03-27-14
Wilton's Cake Decorating	03-18-14	05-08-14
Computer Bootcamp	03-24-14	05-14-14
Beginning Spanish	03-24-14	05-14-14
Introduction to Photoshop Elements	03-24-14	04-16-14
ICD-10CM Proficiency Training	03-24-14	05-28-14
Social Media Marketing Using Facebook	03-25-14	05-13-14
Effective Teacher Training	03-25-14	04-17-14
Nursing Assistant I Refresher	03-25-14	04-03-14
Fundamentals of Anatomy & Physiology	03-26-14	05-14-14
Microsoft Office	03-31-14	05-12-14
Computer for Beginners	04-01-14	05-08-14

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