



Celebrating the Irrational



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Sometimes I envy the ability of daily newspaper editors to write editorials that are relevant and timely — they can write about what is happening in the moment. Writing timely editorials for a monthly magazine is more challenging. For example, I'm writing this during Black History Month, on the Presidents Day holiday, at the start of Engineers Week. The general media's coverage of these events is inspiring, but it comes too late for me to capitalize on it here.

Instead, I think ahead to what will be happening around the time when you will be reading this. According to Holiday Insights, March is National Craft Month, Frozen Food Month, Irish American Heritage Month, Music in Our Schools Month, Nutrition Month, Peanut Month, Poetry Month, Red Cross Month, Social Workers Month, and Women's History Month. The second week of March is National Bubble Week and Crochet Week.

Some of the more-offbeat holidays include: National Pig Day (3/1), Old Stuff Day (3/2), If Pets had Thumbs Day (3/3), Be Nasty Day (3/8), Panic Day (3/9), Middle Name Pride Day (3/10), Worship of Tools Day (3/11), Ear Muff Day (3/13), Everything You Think is Wrong Day (3/15), Everything You Do is Right Day (3/16), Extraterrestrial Abductions Day (3/20), National Goof Off Day (3/22), National Chip and Dip Day (3/23), Make Up Your Own Holiday Day (3/26), and Bunsen Burner Day (3/31), to name just a few. Bonza Bottler Day will be celebrated this month on Mar. 3, and every month on the day when the number of the day and the number of the month are the same.

I love numbers and number patterns, especially in dates. It's easy to remember the day my coworker's daughter was born (8/7/6), my nephews' birthdays (5/15 and 7/17), and the day my brothers turned 50 (12/11/10), and I hope my cousin will have a party for her birthday on 12/13/14. I find palindrome dates especially intriguing. I took 11/11/11 as a vacation day, simply because it was such a fascinating date. Last year, one CEP editor's (Emily) birthday was a palindrome, 11/02/2011. My birthday, 11/20/2011, although not a true palindrome, was pretty cool when you said it aloud: eleven twenty, twenty-eleven.

This month, mathematicians and number-lovers celebrate Pi Day on Mar. 14 (3.14); the extreme enthusiasts even mark Pi Minute, 1:59 on 3/14.

Pi Day was created in 1988, and is the brain child of Larry Shaw, a physicist at the San Francisco Exploratorium (www.exploratorium.edu/pi/). Those who visit the Exploratorium on Mar. 14 can take part in a variety of Pi Day activities that include: learning about the history of pi, what makes pi so special, and how pi is calculated; walking in a Pi Procession, in which each participant carries a digit of pi) while chanting the Pi Day song and then circling the Pi Shrine 3.14 times; singing a birthday song in honor of Albert Einstein, who was born on Mar. 14, 1879; and — of course — eating pie.

If you are unable to be there in person, you can watch the Exploratorium's webcast on www.exploratorium.edu/tv starting at 1 pm (Pacific time). You can also take part in the Pi Day Challenge, a series of logic-based puzzles that require research, mathematics, and/or pure savvy (www.pidaychallenge.com). WikiHow lists more ways to celebrate (www.wikihow.com/Celebrate-Pi-Day). Read my blog post on ChEnected (<http://chenected.aiche.org>), and let us know how you commemorated Pi Day.

If you are planning anything special for Mole Day, which is observed from 6:02 am to 6:02 pm on Oct. 23 (10/23), share your plans, and maybe we'll include them in the October issue of CEP.

Cynthia F. Mascone, Editor-in-Chief

