

The 10-Day Leap

For most of us, the arrival of a highly anticipated event – such as the birth of a baby, a long-awaited vacation, the return home of a loved one, or the big game we’ve been looking forward to – seems to take forever.

On the other hand, if it’s one of those dreaded events – like April 15, the date a divorce becomes final, admission to the hospital for major surgery, or any event that brings pain, despair or a sense of loss – the calendar rushes forward with breathtaking speed.

Regardless of whether you approach a particular date with anticipation or dread, you will be intrigued to know that on Feb. 24, 1582, a church commission appointed by Pope Gregory XIII decided to change the calendar, dropping 10 days and adopting a “leap year.” And this year is Leap Year, so the next Leap Day is coming up – on Feb. 29, 2016. This extra day makes the year 366 days and not 365, like a normal year.



Leap Day is still associated with age-old traditions, folklore and superstitions. One of the most popular traditions is that women propose to their boyfriends.

Back in 1582, for those countries that accepted the change, the date immediately became 10 days later. Just think, we have enough struggles today adjusting to the change between standard and daylight saving time twice a year.

I have no information as to the resulting chaos and confusion that undoubtedly took place following the time/date change back then. Most likely, the people who happened to have birthdays during those 10 days were somewhat chagrined that they had missed out on a birthday (or an anniversary) which generally brings more pleasure than pain.

In this day of litigation, many employees would probably sue their employers if they were not paid for the 10 days they didn’t work. Some of the creditors would be besieged with threats and pleas if they were unwilling to bend the rules and give a few days of grace to people who were in debt to them.

Today, however, if we live our lives one day at a time, and if we do the best we can each day, we are making the best preparation for tomorrow. After all, today is the tomorrow of yesterday that we were going to do so much with.

Do “so much” every day, and all your tomorrows will be better.

Author Robert O’Brien said: “Time flies. It’s up to you to be the navigator.”

– Beecher Hunter