

The season of drought

We survived yet another Holiday Season, Super Bowl and Valentine's Day. Most of us managed to keep from going bankrupt. This is a good thing. Now, however, we are going through the tough times. The season of drought is upon us. Football season is over, our boats aren't in the water, and there's not much worth doing on the weekends until the elusive holiday of Easter.

I say elusive, because Easter never falls on the same date, it changes every year. It's just annoying. Nonetheless, whenever we are faced with difficult problems like "When is Easter this year?" we consult our crack research team, the Googlamanics. They never fail to come up with an answer. Sometimes it is even correct.

The Googlamanics worked for nanoseconds to find 290,000 Web sites with something to say about the subject of Easter. This time, I believe they were looking for job security, because when asked how to actually figure out the correct date, they told us the following:

Prior to A.D. 325, Easter was variously celebrated on different days of the week, including Friday, Saturday, and Sunday. In that year, the Council of Nicaea was convened by Emperor Constantine. The council issued the Easter Rule, which states that Easter shall be celebrated on the first Sunday that occurs after the first full moon on or after the vernal equinox.

However, a caveat must be introduced here. The "full moon" in the rule is the ecclesiastical full moon, which is defined as the fourteenth day of a tabular lunation, where the first day corresponds to the ecclesiastical new moon. It does not always occur on



You can't beat a system you can't understand

By Sam Bari

the same date as the astronomical full moon. The ecclesiastical "vernal equinox" is always on March 21. Therefore, Easter must be celebrated on a Sunday between the dates of March 22 and April 25.

They concluded their findings with: "So obviously Easter falls on March 23 this year." Huh? Oh . . . yeah . . . of course.

Are they kidding? Anyone who could figure that out by those convoluted directions probably understands how delegates and Superdelegates elect the president. Wasn't Constantine the guy who inspired Dan Brown's illogic in his premise for "The DaVinci Code?"

Anyway, the point is that nothing much is happening between now and Easter except maybe the opening day of baseball season, which is another day that isn't predictable. It isn't a holiday, but it should be. I think it opens on March 30 this year, so that's a bit after Easter. That leaves a grand total of 38 days, or, a little over five weeks with nothing to do but try to sober up and reunite with the family for entertainment.

The five to six weeks of football and baseball abstinence is like annual rehab for chronic sports fans. They have been immersed in beer-induced comas in front of television sets for the remainder of the year, and for some, this is the

only opportunity they afford themselves to get in touch with reality.

However, reality is probably what drove most of them to be beer-swilling sports addicts in the first place. For instance, Elmer Fuzzle, the mayor of my boyhood town said goodbye to his wife when she went to visit her mother on the opening day of football season. He didn't notice that she hadn't returned until Valentine's Day. I suppose we should keep in mind that Elmer was also the only person I've ever known to wear out a hip flask.

Then there was Hershel Lipsod whose children left for college during the football pre-season. Hershel was seated in front of two televisions at the time. A major league baseball game was on one and a pre-season football game was on the other. He had a beer in each hand, one for each game. Watching and drinking beer through both games at the same time required all the concentration he could muster.

He managed to do this through the end of the World Series. Then he took up watching two football games simultaneously. He didn't come up for air until February.

He was not aware that his wife had moved into his daughter's room and his jobless brother-in-law had moved into his son's room. He made it through the six-week drought without noticing that his kids had left home. And he actually thought this was reality.

"Why didn't you tell me?" he asked his wife. She did. You know she did. She probably told him half a dozen times. Nevertheless, I don't believe he ever sobered up. Six weeks was not enough time.

The drought is Mother Nature's way of telling us that reality is not all it's cracked up to be if you live in a system you can't understand.

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LEGAL TIP

Releases for gross negligence relating to recreational activities a city made available for children with disabilities are invalid as a matter of public policy, the California Supreme Court has ruled.

A 14-year-old who suffered from cerebral palsy and epilepsy drowned at a city-run camp for developmentally disabled children. Her parents had signed a form releasing the city and its employees from liability for "any negligent act" relating to their daughter's participation in the camp.

The city moved for summary judgement arguing that the release protected them from suit.

But the court disagreed. Emphasizing the importance of maintaining a distinction between ordinary and gross negligence, the court said it was trying to discourage - or at least not facilitate - "aggravated wrongs."

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