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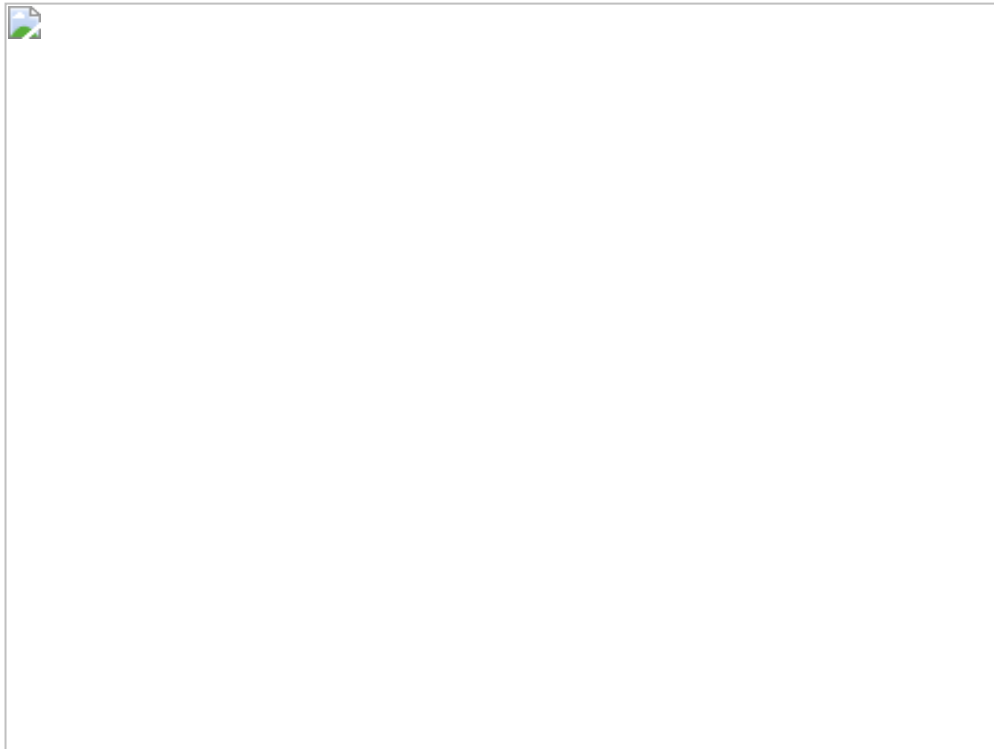
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Happy New Year



Ancient cultures, including those as varied as the Romans and the Hindus, celebrated New Year's Day on April 1. It closely followed the Vernal Equinox in the same way the the celebration of Brumalia closely followed Winter Solstice.

In 1582, Pope Gregory XIII ordered a new calendar (the Gregorian Calendar) to replace the then currently in use Julian Calendar. The new calendar called for New Year's Day to be celebrated Jan. 1. This happened because the Julian calendar's inaccuracies had cause recorded time to fall more than 10 days behind the actual solar calendar and the Pope was trying to get everything back on track.

In France, however, many people either refused to accept the new date, or did not learn about it - communication not being so good in 1582 - and continued to celebrate New Year's Day on April 1. Other people began to make fun of these traditionalists, sending them on "fool's errands" or trying to trick them into believing something false.

The French came to call April 1, *Poisson d'Avril*, or April Fish. French children would sometime tape a picture of a fish on the back of their schoolmates, crying "Poisson d'Avril" when the prank is discovered.

These French traditionalists weren't the only ones to reject the idea of changing the beginning of the year to January 1. For 200 years the English held dear to April 1st being the first day of the new year, finally officially accepting the Gregorian Calendar in 1752. All those years, English and French calendars were 10 days apart in recorded time.

But before the French point fingers at the English, there is a nice list of other

countries to say Poisson d'Avril to first.

While most Catholic countries went Gregorian in 1582, Germany and the Netherlands held onto April 1st until 1698. Russia only accepted it after the revolution of 1918 and Greece waited until 1923.

Currently many Orthodox churches still follow the Julian calendar, which now lags 13 days behind the Gregorian.

And what is really cool is that you don't know if I just made all of this up!!



St Stupid

For those of you who don't live in San Francisco, here are some photo's from the 2003 **St. Stupid's Day Parade** which is sponsored by the **First Church of the Last Laugh** every April 1st. Recognize anyone?

[St Stupid's Day.](#)

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