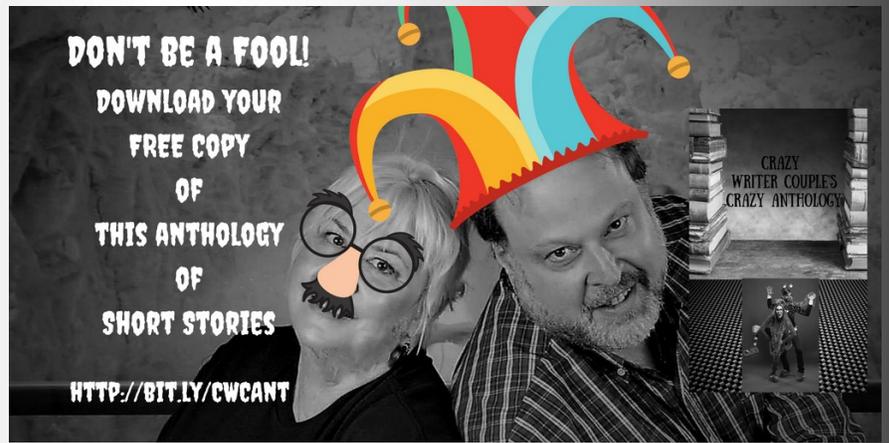


The Crazy Writer Couple's Newsletter

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The History of April Fools' Day, Sort Of...

Who came up with the crazy idea of April Fools' Day? Some historians think it may have originated with the Roman festival of Hilaria. Of course Hilaria was actually celebrated on the March equinox in honor of Cybele ("The Great Mother" or Mother of the Gods). Following a procession in which a statue of the goddess was carried, events such as games and masquerades took place. People were free to disguise themselves as any person they chose. Imagine dressing up as President Trump or Queen Elizabeth!

"Herodian details an assassination plot by Maternus against Emperor Commodus that was to occur on the hilaria.[6] Maternus planned to disguise himself and his followers as members of the Praetorian Guard, and proceed among the true members of the Guard, until they were close enough to kill Commodus. However, one of Maternus's followers revealed the plot ahead of time, betraying him because, according to Herodian, his men "preferred a legitimate emperor to a robber tyrant". On the day of hilaria, he was beheaded and his followers punished. The public celebrated the emperor's safety, and Commodus sacrificed to Cybele for protecting him from harm." (Wikipedia)

Apparently it wasn't always fun and games.

Amusingly enough the idea for Hilaria was taken from the Greeks!

Do you have any April Fool's Day traditions?



April Fools Days for the Prankster Averse

Neil Douglas Newton

The earliest reference to April Fool's day comes from Chaucer. Since then, in various parts of the world, a day is put aside from the playing of pranks. The most accepted explanation for the holiday's origin has to do with the creation of the Gregorian calendar. When the western world employed the Julian calendar, years began on March 25. Festivals marking the start of the New Year were celebrated on the first day of April because March 25 fell during Holy Week. The adoption of the Gregorian calendar during the 1500s moved the New Year to January 1. According to the most widely-believed origin postulated for April Fools' Day, those who could be tricked into believing April 1 was still the proper day to celebrate the New Year earned the sobriquet of April fools. To this end, French peasants would unexpectedly drop in on neighbors on that day in an effort to confuse them into thinking they were receiving a New Year's call. Out of that one jape supposedly grew the tradition of testing the patience of family and friends.



The real reason that a day like April Fool's Day would have been created is a story lost to history. For me this issue is not why this "valuable" day was created but why anyone would want to create a holiday like that in the first place.

There are some of us who do not like pranks. An immediate reaction to this statement, especially from true pranksters, is that people like me are wimps. There is a macho associated with pranks that is not that different than standard macho. The ability to drink heavily, eat hot foods, juggle multiple women, are similar to the sense of power gained from pranks.

What would a world without pranks be like? Granted there are quiet, basically silly, pranks that have no potential for becoming ugly, poisonous monsters. But pranks, in their most toxic incarnation, are about gratuitous power and its growth. Pranks are often a tool of bullies.

It starts, of course, when we are children in school, where pranks dovetail with bullying, domination, and power are the key; in fact pranking in its extreme form can't be distinguished from bullying. The effects of bullying have already been documented and, adding the prank as a weapon only amplifies the humiliation that begins with the standard harsh words and anger of common bullying.

And, as we've also found, there is bullying in the workplace, both by managers against their employees and by employees against other employees; high school does not end at graduation, at least for some people. I have spent years in business where, in some cases, pranks are part of the corporate culture. In some cases, the first prank against a target creates a reaction of helplessness and extreme reaction from the "target". "Poking the bear" successfully provides a sense of victory in an already competitive environment which, in turn, encourages more and more elaborate pranks. What this does, over time, is to create a "high school like" environment in the workplace which is a glorification of the alpha male syndrome. It becomes as senseless as it is destructive. The result is pointless misery with nothing productive and negatively affects the work effort and, in some cases, the bottom line.

Ugly pranks can become part of marital relationships, domestic partner relationships, sibling relationships. They are everywhere and, while they are often truly harmless, they can verge into a pattern of abuse that has the same debilitating effects as bullying. Making "poking the bear" a blood sport, can only lead to more of the same: an endless, knee-jerk exercise of power and domination.

Do you like to "prank" on April Fool's Day?



"April Showers" (Excerpt)

Elizabeth Horton-Newton

It had been a long hard winter. The freeze had begun in October and as March drew to a close it seemed it would never end. Then April Fool's Day came, bringing with it warmer temperatures and the sun shining brightly on soil that had been ice bound for months. The runoff was fierce and flooding hit hard. Those of us who lived near the river watched the banks with trepidation. My little house was not as close as some of my neighbors but when a small community experiences trouble we all share it. The melt was bad enough; the rains that followed only compounded a bad situation. The whole town pitched in to stack sandbags around the foundations of the houses nearest the river. Jo and Glenn Baker lived closest to the river; their house built on stilts in an effort to avoid the possibility of flooding. But as the river edge grew closer to the stilts and eventually made its way up, foot by foot, it was apparent the stilts might not be enough to keep the house dry.

Jo and Glenn moved their sheepdogs to their cousin's house on the hill. There wasn't much they could do but watch the water rise and move valuables like family photos and treasures to the upper floor. In the end their back deck was washed away when the soil that held the stilts gave way. Piece by piece it floated off in a rush of gray water with white caps like an ocean storm instead of a raging river. About that time they decided enough was enough and got a storage unit in town and started moving as much as they could out of the house.

Dewey Parker lost his shed but by some miracle the house stayed put. The sandbags kept most of the water out but his carpet was ruined and the tiles in his bathroom floated in an inch of dirty water. His wife Ella ran screaming from the house when she jumped off the commode after seeing a fat rat swimming vigorously in the bathtub. Dewey actually got a laugh out of it and retold the story for days.

By the second week of April things began to simmer down. The rain lessened and the sun peeked out every so often, making a valiant effort to dry up some of the soil. The third week into April the rain stopped and the waters began to recede. Folks stopped making jokes about building an ark. It seemed as though the nightmare was over and life could begin the slow process of returning to normal.

The last week of April is the week we all remember. That was the week the first body floated past the boat ramp. Four of the local boys had disobeyed their parents and gone down to the river to see if there was anything worth collecting, the way small boys like to collect things. Joey Fisher thought it was a mannequin and even considered trying to swim out and get it. The boys ran along the river's edge following it as it bobbed along. It was Mike Mills who got the closest to it when it got hooked on a tree that had fallen into the river and extended several feet into the murky waters. The boys were arguing about the likelihood it was a body when two more bobbed along like they were joining a death dance party. That sent the boys running to the road where they flagged down the Nelson twins who were heading into town for the first baseball practice of the season. The Nelson twins pulled over and chewed the boys out for their stupidity and followed them back to the river's edge. Bobby Nelson pulled out his cell phone and almost dropped it when he dialed the sheriff to report five bodies stuck out in the middle of the river, bobbing around, arms and legs entangled as though they were performing a bizarre group hug. **Read the rest in the Crazy Writer Couple's Crazy Anthology! <http://www.crazywritercouple.com/>**



- 1/2 cup butter, softened
- 1 (8 ounce) package cream cheese, softened
- 1/2 cup confectioners' sugar
- 2 (3.5 ounce) packages instant vanilla pudding mix
- 3 1/2 cups milk
- 1 (12 ounce) container frozen whipped topping, thawed
- 32 ounces chocolate sandwich cookies with creme filling

1. Chop cookies very fine in food processor. The white cream will disappear.
2. Mix butter, cream cheese, and sugar in bowl.
3. In a large bowl mix milk, pudding and whipped topping together.
4. Combine pudding mixture and cream mixture together.
5. Layer in flower pot, starting with cookies then cream mixture. Repeat layers.
6. Chill until ready to serve.
7. Add artificial flower and trowel. Enjoy!





How would you like to win a signed copy of one of The Crazy Writer Couple's Books? Tell us your best April Fool's Day Prank and be entered into a random drawing. E-mail your entry with your name and e-mail address putting Contest Entry in the subject line. Winner will be announced in our next newsletter.

elizabethnnewton@outlook.com

Choose from the following books.

The Railroad by Neil Douglas Newton

View From the Sixth Floor: An Oswald Tale by Elizabeth Horton-Newton

Riddle by Elizabeth Horton-Newton

