

Features

Holiday Roulette

Are These Things Really Necessary?

by Mark Owens
Collegian Staff Writer

Well, it's 1989 and the two big holidays of the year are over. Recalling the crowded spaces, grouchy shoppers, bonehead drivers, foul air and migraine headaches (and that was just the parking lot), I would like to propose a solution to this source of human misery.

My idea involves getting rid of meaningless, idiotic and otherwise stupid holidays and rotating the rest so that each year one of them is not celebrated. For example, once every, say, six years we wouldn't celebrate New Year's. Let's take a stroll through my calendar and see what holidays we would and wouldn't have to put up with:

New Year's: A primary excuse to act incredibly stupid, this is the time of year where normally responsible people get intoxicated, dance on tables in their underwear, shave the dog and paint it orange and call the boss's wife a cow with the idea of starting the new year right. Also any promise made is automatically assumed to be broken five minutes later. Keep it.

Martin Luther King's Birthday: Nice guy. It stays.

Lincoln and Washington's Birthdays: Swell fellahs. Keep.

Ground Hog Day: Ugly rodent. Shoot it. Next...

Valentines Day: "Oh Ethel!" "Oh George!" "Oh Ethel!" "Oh George!" Oh brother. If there's any day of the year that brings out the twit in mankind (or womankind for that matter) it's this day. Guys go broke and girls either put on weight or break out with some skin disease. The only people that come out ahead are Hallmark, Flower shops, candy stores and the folks that make Oxy-10. Dump it.

St. Patrick's Day: An excuse to get plastered. Ironically, it lasts three weeks; two to get tanked and one to get over the hangover. Any holiday who's main feature is a beverage that looks like it's been sitting in a moldy barrel for the last 27 presidential elections deserves to get dumped.

Easter: Holidays that deal with BIG, COSMIC, or NATURAL things are not to be tampered with, as the wrath of the heavens could void the warranties on electrical appliances should you be struck by BIG, HUGE bolts of lightning (with little pointy teeth!).

April Fools Day: A day of chaos and great immaturity. My favorite day of the year. It stays.

Income Tax Deadline Day: One of those "necessary evils" of life. Of course, in my calendar this holiday is celebrated only on leap year, on even decades, with a solar eclipse falling on...

Mother's Day: See Easter.

Memorial Day: Beaches open, "Nuff said?"

Father's Day: Sales of Old Spice and ugly ties skyrocket. Dads could probably live without this holiday.

Fourth of July: A holiday where everyone is allowed to have explosives no bigger than one megaton. Most people ignore this and plant small tactical warheads on their neighbor's front porches "for fun". Keep it.

Labor Day: Another excuse to hang out at the beach all day. Who needs it? Just do it!

Sweetest Day: A day created just so Hallmark could sell more cards. As if Valentines Day wasn't bad enough. Kill it.

Columbus Day: I'm ashamed that it took us so long to figure out that the earth was round.

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Malnutrition Is Not Just A Third World Problem

by Tammy Stecko
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American society is faced with a problem that is causing psychological problems and can lead to physiological problems if it is left to grow more severe. The problem is malnutrition, "a state of impaired functional ability or deficient structural integrity or development between the supply to the body tissues of essential nutrients and calories and the specific biological demand for them."

No society is free of this condition and it is becoming more and more of a problem everyday. There are more people living in the United States than many of us are aware of that go to bed with empty stomachs and wake up many mornings without any food on the table. Finally, action to solve this problem is being put into effect and this issue is being taken more seriously than it has in the past.

It was the belief of many that malnutrition only existed in third world countries, but it does exist in this country because of impaired physiology, poor selection of food, lack of money, and sometimes due to food shortages. Certain diseases cause a lack of proper nutrition even though the body is being supplied with adequate nutrition and calories.

An illness also causes a loss of appetite. Another reason why malnutrition may be an increasing problem may be the lack of education that society is given that is related to this area. This is only magnified when the amount of emphasis our society places upon "junk food" through television commercials and other forms of media is taken into consideration.

A variety of foods must be consumed to give the body the required nutrients. It's always been said that man can not survive on bread alone. Poor economic conditions can also contribute to malnutrition. If the money to buy the food goods is

not accessible, then the available food sources can not be utilized to their fullest potential.

Although we have not had a severe food shortage, such as a famine, we have had times when a certain type of food, such as oranges, has not been available due to problems with the climate, such as frost. When these circumstances arise in a less expensive form, prices are usually raised with a lower quality of goods that are available for purchase, which only increases the problem for people lacking financial stability.

In more severe instances, that certain shortage may also effect livestock, which in turn causes more food source problems. The extreme of this condition is called starvation.

There are four basic classes of malnutrition: Slight, Moderate, Severe and Extreme. Slight malnutrition is classified by being 10 percent underweight. This stage causes no serious functional deterioration of the body or it's functions.

In the moderate stage of malnutrition, weight is 10-20 percent under the desired level. There is a substantial change in the body, but there is still the ability to function moderately.

Severe malnutrition is a potentially serious condition being 20-30 percent underweight. The body and it's systems undergo profound changes and develop problems functioning.

The last class of malnutrition is the extreme phase. This class is characterized by being 50 percent underweight and is many times fatal.

Only one-third of the world's population had an adequate food supply. This statistic is surprising to many of us. In 1964, this was a fact. In 1989, things have improved, but there is still many miles until this problem is even brought to a stable position.

About 70 percent of a low income family's income is spent on food. For instance, if a family's total net income was \$7,000.00 around \$700.00 of that amount would be spent on food.

There are many local organizations that deal with problems concerning hunger in this community. Some, like Central City NATO, Inc. and Erie Senior Citizen Center, help the elderly who can no longer afford or prepare their own meals.

Others, like food and Nutrition Emergency Food Pantry Program, help in emergency conditions, such as natural disasters. Organizations that deal with the problem of malnutrition are New Life Center, County Meals On Wheels, St. Martin's Center, Salvation Army, and Erie Community Food Bank. Some of the organizations are nonprofit and operate on grants, donations and the help of volunteers and others are profit organizations.

Malnutrition is a problem that has existed since the beginning of time and will probably exist for years to come. Someday with the help of many, many people maybe this problem can be reduced to a level where it can be handled within a country, but for now hunger is a worldwide involved problem.

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