

## Real Millennium Group™

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This is a copy of the original web page that AOL member Mkellehe had published.

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Millennium Mistaken (deliberately?)

Why is the Media avoiding this?

"Important people", both from government and press, have been proclaiming things about the end of the century and/or millennium and the beginning of the next. Many of these talk about "THE NEW MILLENNIUM" (and "THE MILLENNIUM") as if it were a particular year (2000) or a particular day (January 1, 2000) or even a particular time (Midnight, Jan. 1, 2000). In the process, the vast majority of these apparently educated people have been demonstrating their ignorance of our calendar system. Indeed they may be emphasizing the weakness of our educational system.

We depend on these very sources for our information, and when that is flawed the education of our people is undermined. Perhaps the cynicism of many people regarding these sources is fueled by their reckless disregard for being properly informed themselves before they try to pass along information to us.

Calendars are arbitrary, but once adopted they should be followed with consistency. The rules of their use are not subject to popular vote.

A calendar counts the years after and before a certain event. The event begins or concludes on a particular day and this marks the reference base for the calendar. The first year after the event is called 1. The first year before the event is also called 1. Notations indicating after or before are added to the numerals to distinguish one from the other. There is no year "0"; it makes no sense to refer to the "zeroth year since" or the "zeroth year before" any event.

Thus I disagree strongly with those who blame our system on the lack of "zero concept" among its creators, and with those who wish to make a mathematical number line out of it. I teach math, but I avoid trying to make everything fit one particular number system. For me mathematics is a tool, not an end. The calendar is perfectly logical as it is.

The first year after the event begins with the event at the start of the year 1 (after) and ends one year after the event at the end of the year 1 (after); the first year before the event begins one year before the event at the start of the year 1 (before) and ends with the event at the end of the year 1 (before).

A century is 100 years. Since 1 is the first year of the 1st Century, 100 must be the last year of that century. So the 2nd Century begins with the year 101 and ends with the year 200. Thus the 19th Century begins with the year 1801, ending in the year 1900, and the 20th Century begins with the year 1901, ending with the year 2000. The 20th Century is not over until the year 2000 is over!

In like manner a millennium is 1000 years. The 1st Millennium begins (of course) with the year 1. It ends with the year 1000. It does not start until the year 1 starts; it does not end until the year 1000 ends. Thus the total time involved is 1000 years.

So the second millennium begins with the start of the year 1001 and ends with the end of the year 2000. That means that in the case of the calendar currently in use "THE NEW MILLENNIUM" begins at the start of 2001, one year after the date being incorrectly proclaimed by so many of those responsible for spreading information among us.

So President Clinton was wrong when he said during his State of the Union Address in January, 1999, that it was the last one to be given in the 20th Century. He made a similar error in his November 11th Veterans Day remarks. And the many commencement speakers and others talking about the graduates of 1999 (including John Glenn) incorrectly referred to them as the last of the century/millennium. Newscasters have joined the rush announcing the last Thanksgiving and, I expect, the last Christmas. Politicians have company in extending their fingers to the wind this year. Even if books have lost favor, there is the internet; they all might have done some research and possibly have gotten it right.

Even more annoying perhaps, are the many sports proclamations we have heard this year. Statistics are important to sports, and are almost a religion to some, perhaps none more so than baseball. And sportscasters pride themselves on the accuracy of their memories about these items of trivia. Yet we have heard over and over about "the last Indianapolis 500", "the last Masters", "the last All Star Game", etc., of both century and millennium from these admired masters of minutiae ... but they are wrong. The record books of this century and millennium are still open for one more year. Again, "It ain't over 'til it's over!" (2000, that is!)

Several things contribute to our confusion in this regard. Certainly we may begin counting centuries/millennia wherever we choose. Hitler proclaimed the Third Reich to last a millennium in the early 1930's. We talk about the "Decade of the 90's" and are correct in assuming it starts in 1990 and ends in 1999; that is because we named it based on ten repetitions of its penultimate numeral 9. But this is not the 199th decade of our calendar. That started with 1991 and ends at the end of 2000.

We are also confused by our method of telling age. We do not turn a certain age until that number of years has passed since our birth. So the age of "1" is conferred throughout the second year following birth (although in the first few years we may use days, then weeks, and later months instead). As we approach a birthday we often ignore the lack of days and call ourselves by the age we more closely approach. Legally, though, we are 20 from the moment of the end of our 20th year until the moment before our 22nd year begins (don't get confused; that is only 1 year). But this is not how our calendar works.

Many of our citizens are confused. In May one person wrote a letter to the editor of a St. Louis, MO, Suburban Journal asking why people were talking about the coming 21st Century when everyone knew we were still in the 19th! And in October a computer expert explaining the Y2K problem on Public Television said "computers have no trouble recognizing the 19th Century", but many will not be able to handle 2000 properly.

Of course Y2K is about "year 2000" and in itself has nothing to do with either century or millennium, but with how we express the date. But the very name should give us a hint: 2000 is "2K", not 3rd thousand.

The hypsters who have been selling all sorts of millennium things (including calendars!) have really missed the boat, it seems to me. They could have sold 2000 as the END of a fantastic period (1999 just doesn't look as good as a conclusion to anything), and then cashed in on the following year as the start of something new, maybe getting "spaced out" on 2001 following Arthur C. Clarke's example (perhaps

they will still try to cash in on that anyway). Dum dum dum ... de dum ... boom boom boom boom boom ...

Those who proclaim our information have an obligation to tell us correctly lest we continue to follow paths of misinformation and ignorance. One can rightfully wonder about their correctness (and perhaps truthfulness and honor) when they do otherwise.

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