

End of Days

by Marilyn Reeves

The year is divided into four parts, not all being equal. The cool, colorful seasons of Spring and Fall last for roughly three weeks apiece, while the long, hot days of Summer and the cold, drab days of Winter seem to go on forever.

But according to the calendar, the Vernal Equinox, occurring around March 21st, is the designated first day of Spring. The Summer Solstice, or the longest day of the year around the 20th of June, has been dubbed the first day of Summer. Fall begins on the Autumnal Equinox, roughly the 20th of September. But the first day of Winter, or the Winter Solstice, is way off, because everyone knows that winter begins on Halloween.

I finally figured out that the reason it's so darn hot at the Equator is that it gets the full treatment of the sun both Spring and Fall as it travels from the North Pole to the South Pole and back again (okay, it's actually the earth rotating, but let's not quibble over details). But the Solstices occur when the sun is at its most extreme point, either north or south, producing the longest and the shortest days of the year, respectively.

This year, being 2012, we have a whole new treat to look forward to come the Winter Solstice. If the Mayans were correct in their calculations, on December 21, the first day of Winter this year, that's the date when everything stops. No more days were predicted following that date. So what does that mean? The end of the calendar would indicate the End of Time, or at the very least, the end of the world as we know it.

I must admit that I haven't put a lot of effort into researching the subject, so am not sure whether The End is supposed to occur at the stroke of midnight, or at noon, or at 9:15 in the morning. If I really thought that would be the last day of our earthly existence, I would forego putting up the tree and shopping for Christmas presents. But since it's simply too much for my poor mind to assimilate, I'll probably check out the window from time to time between making batches of cookies, just to see if there are any giant mushroom clouds out there. If not, I'll get back to my baking.

Since we all survived the Turn of the Millennium in the Year 2000, I assume we'll survive the End of the World on December 21. I'm thinking those poor Mayans simply got tired of chiseling out those dates and decided to let someone else take up the chore a few centuries down the line. But just in case, perhaps we should think about having Christmas early this year – some time before the 21st. And if we should happen to wake up the next morning after all, we can start drawing up plans for a whole new calendar that will go on till the End of Time.