

In like a Lion Community Comment Mike Goldsby, March 1, 2012

March has come in like a lion and we hope it goes out like a lamb.

Sandi Duncan, managing Editor of the Farmers Almanac, says this saying is based on our human desire for balance, in weather and life. She writes, "People believed if a month came in bad (like a lion) it should go out good and calm (like a lamb). We can only hope that if March starts off cold and stormy, it will end warm and sunny, but the key word is hope." Duncan calls the saying more of a rhyme than a weather predictor.

We have had a very mild winter. Our winter weather was consistently better than some of our summers. A co-worker noted she has lived in Humboldt County 3 years and this winter was the first time she has experienced night skies so clear that she could see one complete cycle of the moon.

March 15th is The Ides of March. When I was a kid I thought I was supposed to beware the EYES of March and that sounded really creepy. I later learned Julius Caesar was the only one that need beware.

March 20 is the Vernal Equinox, the First Day of Spring. The plants and trees at my house are confused. They thought Spring came last month.

The weather was in the news recently, with the ongoing political battle over the science of climate change. Everyone knows the climate changes. Ask any mastodon. But what is contested is the role that humans play in altering that climate change.

Before the 2009 Copenhagen Summit on climate change, someone hacked the e-mail of a British climate change Scientist and posted those on a website dedicated to debunking global warming. The e-mails showed that the scientist obscured information to support his beliefs.

In mid February, the reverse happened. A climate change advocate used fraud to obtain documents from the Heartland Institute, a conservative and libertarian non-profit group dedicated to research and advocacy against government regulations. They were first made famous by working with tobacco companies to question the risks of second hand cigarette smoke.

The documents obtained through fraud allegedly show that the Heartland Institute made substantial cash payments to the climate change critics and they promoted using their information to influence elementary school curriculums.

All of this probably means very little. Yale University conducted surveys in 2011 and found climate change opinions are highly correlated with political beliefs. 78 percent of the Democrats surveyed believed in global warming compared with 70 percent of the Independents, 53 percent of the Republicans and 34 percent of the Tea party members. They further found that news reports on climate change were more likely to reinforce existing beliefs than cause a person to change their beliefs. They found that the weather conditions on the day of the survey can affect choices. More people believe in global warming on a warmer than average day.

There is another annual occurrence in March. This is the season when schools typically distribute pink slips. The uncertain economic situation may well make this worse than usual. Sure, some teachers may get hired back next fall, but who would like to have this hanging over them all Spring and Summer.

This is Mike Goldsby for Community Comment