

The Hour

Ex-Norwalker organizes day that points to punctuation

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NORWALK – In case it hasn't registered, Monday is National Punctuation Day. You're forgiven if you aren't aware of it because it's relatively new as "national days" go.

There are probably many more special national days you're also in the dark about, since far more exist than anyone could possibly remember.

The official list is in *Chase's Calendar of Events*, where almost every available day has been set aside for several observances, all vying with each other for recognition.

That's just the tip of the iceberg because two or three times as many organizations and individuals have petitioned *Chase's* for listings on each day of the year. But a long protocol of requirements prevents listing of most of them in the publication.

Originator of National Punctuation Day (www.nationalpunctuationday.com) is none other than a former resident who graduated from Norwalk High School in 1967 and was a reporter for *The Hour* from 1974 to 1976.

Jeff Rubin, now of California, was driven to create the special national day by the daily habit of reading newspapers for more than their news content.

"Punctuation errors just jump out at me," he said Thursday from his home office in Pinole. "I was putting so many red pencil marks on the local newspaper that it looked like I'd popped a vein."

The irritation was such that it would carry over into a string of expletives that inevitably led to marital strife.

"I really don't like it when you talk that way," my wife said once too often," Rubin said. "I decided something like the promotion of National Punctuation Day might relieve my frustration with the degradation of writing skills."

He set his sights on Aug. 22 because it's his birthday. (He'll be 55 on Monday.)

However, after two years of observing that date, he's been authorized by *Chase's* to change it to Sept. 24.

"That will place it after the start of school in the fall and a better chance to publicize the observance," he explained. "We could teach writing skills by costuming children as punctuation marks."

Writing has been an obsession with Rubin since he was a youngster.

He even calls his 24-year-old newsletter business “The Newsletter Guy” (www.thenewsletterguy.com).

Eighteen clients require him to produce about 70 newsletters a year; an output that brings him a six-figure income.

The Brooklyn, N.Y., native, who came to Norwalk as a teen, graduated from Norwalk Community College in 1970 and from Bradley University in 1974 with a major in journalism.

He spent two years with the sports department of the *New York Post* before moving in 1978 to California, where he was a sports writer and columnist for the *Vallejo Times-Herald* three years until becoming an entrepreneur.

Rubin has never lost his attachment to Norwalk and to the local community college where he established two scholarships for business majors a few years ago in memory of his stepfather, Benson Meth, onetime Pitney Bowes manager.

Although he’s a seasoned skilled public relations professional himself, Rubin has hired a professional publicist to help him gain identity for National Punctuation Day.

“This is a special skill that’s impossible to do for yourself,” he said. “I’ve got a really talented person handling this who’s gotten me calls for interviews from all over the country. It will be interesting to see how long it takes to make an indelible impression on the calendar.”