



Watch those commas on National Punctuation Day

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It's always wise to mind your p's and q's, but on Aug. 22, you should watch your commas, semicolons and quote marks as well.

That particular Monday is National Punctuation Day, a holiday listed in *Chase's Calendar of Events* as a celebration of the lowly comma, correctly used quotes and other proper uses of periods, semicolons, and the every-mysterious ellipsis.

This year marks the second anniversary of the official tip-of-the-hat to punctuation awareness, founded by Jeff Rubin, owner of The Newsletter Guy (www.thenewsletterguy.com), a newsletter publishing company based in Pinole.

He created National Punctuation Day to draw attention to the importance of proper punctuation in business, education and everyday communications.

"As a journalist, I take the English language very seriously, including all its rules," he says. "I'm sad to see a decline in writing skills; we communicate so much by phone and email, where writing skills are virtually nonexistent. I founded National Punctuation Day because punctuation is essential to good writing and I'm passionate about good writing."

So are many other people, based on the number of contemporary stylebooks on store shelves. Taking their places next to the venerable *The Elements of Style*, *Chicago Manual of Style*, and *The Associated Press Stylebook*, are the best-selling *Eats, Shoots & Leaves* by Lynne Truss; *The Elephants of Style* and *Lapsing Into a Comma*, both by Bill Walsh; and *Woe is I* by Patricia T. O'Conner.

A visit to the official National Punctuation Day Web site (www.nationalpunctuationday.com) offers punctuation information, grammar resource links, National Punctuation Day celebration ideas and whimsical T-shirts for sale with such proper punctuation as "It's not possessive" as well as "An ellipsis is not when the moon moves in front of the sun" and "A semicolon is not a surgical procedure."

"People judge us by the way we present ourselves – how we act, how we look, how we speak and how we write," Says Rubin. "When we are professional in all of these areas, we get our foot in the door for our choice of college, scholarship, job, promotion or business deal. National Punctuation Day reminds us that writing can enrich our lives."

Rubin has designed more than 1,600 company newsletters since starting his business in 1981. He is a member of the National Speakers Association and speaks frequently on writing, marketing and integrity. He may be reached by e-mail at Jeff@nationalpunctuationday.com or by calling 1-877-588-1212