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MY TURN

■ Wayne Chan



The holiday for those who love time travel

The Lunar New Year is a big deal. It has the ability to bend time and space.

Believe me — I know.

Here's the evidence: I've never known my dad's birth date. You might ask, what does that have to do with the Lunar New Year and time travel? Good question.

Growing up, we always gathered for dad's birthday. The only thing is, we celebrated it on a different day. Not just a different day of the week. We celebrated it on a different day every year.

My dad was my hero and I always felt bad because I usually did not have a present or a birthday card ready for him since I never knew when it would be held.

Each year, when I'd ask what his actual birthday was, he would calmly say, "My birthday is based on the lunar calendar, so we have to look it up to know when it is."

That was long before the internet was invented, so "looking it up" was no easy task. I never actually saw my dad look it up, but somehow he figured it out. My guess is that a compass or abacus was involved.

Now that nearly everything is online, finding a lunar calendar calculator is easy and accurately determining one's birthday and age is a click away.

Wait a minute — you need a calculator to figure out how old you are?

Yes, you do. You see, there are fewer days in a lunar year, therefore using a lunar calendar means people are actually older than their age calculated with a Gregorian calendar. It also means the actual date of the Lunar New Year changes from year to year.

Therefore, based on either a Gregorian calendar year or a lunar calendar, I'm either 51 years old or 53 years old.

Let me get this straight — with a typical calendar, I know exactly how old I am and the day I celebrate my birthday stays the same every year? And with a lunar calendar, not only do I not know when my birthday is each year, but the day always changes and I end up being two years older?

And the reason this is a good thing is ... why?

Actually, I can think of a few reasons the lunar calendar makes a lot of sense:

- 1) I'd be able to collect social security two years early.
- 2) For those who hate surprise birthday parties, nobody will be able to throw one because people never know your actual birthday.
- 3) Those who actually enjoy parties can use both calendars and guess what? Double the presents!
- 4) At the county fair booth where they try to guess your age, you'll be able to clean up.

The Lunar New Year is upon us. It is the Year of the Monkey. Have fun and here's hoping the next year is full of fortune and prosperity.

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