

# Leap year: who needs it?

*It's always "open season" for hunting mates, and tomorrow's no exception, says this miniature model of masculinity*

By **ARNOLD STANG**

**S**O EVERY four years we have a Leap Year, right? Like tomorrow, a 29th day in a month where usually there are only 28. So, big deal—somebody needs that extra day?

Cheep, cheep, Leap Year is supposed to be a big thing for women, but even they don't need it. Take it from me, they don't sit around on their hope chests from one February 29th to another just so's every four years they get one day they can legitimately propose marriage.

No doubt some women do take advantage of it being Leap Year to set their caps on a guy, but smarten up, friends, the girls are in there grabbing themselves off a man any time—and any way—they can. By them, hooking a husband is a full-time, around-the-calendar proposition, and Leap Year is no exception.

Personally, I'm not in favor. To me, a woman should be a woman, you know what I mean? She should play the desired one: it's a much better role for her. But females are getting less feminine every day, and popping the question of marriage is just another step into what used to be a man's world.

In spite of it all, though, the marriage rate in this country is just about the same in regular years as in the ones like 1960 where the ladies get an unofficial sanction to land themselves a spouse. This proves that with women it's *always* the 29th of February.

Another thing about Leap Year is that it costs so much. The stores are open an extra day, everybody has sales, and—zingo—there goes the family budget.

Besides that, just to run the Federal Government this one additional day is going to cost taxpayers an extra hundred million dollars! No kidding; and that's just to pay people for the extra day on the job. It doesn't figure in things like the

tons of paper that'll be used up in Government offices, the coffee breaks, the telephone calls, and things like that.

Just to pay the mailmen tomorrow will cost an extra seven million dollars. And what a mockery that is! On the last day of the month, who ever gets anything in the mail but bills?

On top of everything else, Leap Year doesn't even do what it was planned to do when Julius Caesar or some other smart aleck like that got the whole miserable idea started. The extra day every four years was supposed to fix things so that the calendar really came out even with sun time and all that jazz, but don't let anybody kid you: it doesn't.

What I mean is Leap Year is supposed to be, like clockwork, every fourth year, right? But 1900, which everybody expected to have a 29th of February, didn't. Neither did 1800 or 1700 for that matter, but the year 2000 *will*—so who can figure it?

**I**N SPITE OF all these twists with the calendar, scientists say that a year is still 26 seconds out of whack. That may not sound like much, but over the years it adds up, you know.

So what Leap Year in general amounts to, in my way of thinking, is a complete bust, a nothing. When Family Weekly asked me to pose for today's cover, it sort of nominated me as a man most unlikely to succeed romantically, the kind of *neb-bish* who really needs the help of Leap Year in his love life.

Well, let's face it, Cary Grant or Rock Hudson I ain't. But I've been happily married now since 1949, which was not a Leap Year, incidentally. And when Jo-Anne and I decided to become one, it was my idea, and it was me who did the proposing and the planning and the arranging—at least, I think it was.



It didn't take a Leap Year for Jo-Anne to persuade Arnold that she should become the future Mrs. Stang.

## COVER:

*It was an uphill struggle to find a really unlikely candidate for our Leap Year cover. End of search: comedian Arnold Stang; photo by: Richard Heimann; bonus: the story above, an odd view of our odd day.*

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