

AVAST! TODAY IS INTERNATIONAL TALK LIKE A PIRATE DAY, MATEY

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THE SOUTHERN

Ahoy, me mateys and me beauties. Today is International Talk Like a Pirate Day.

Avast!

According to founders of the playful holiday, Talk Like a Pirate Day doesn't commemorate anything or anybody. After all, real pirates were not always as courteous and handsome as Captain Jack Sparrow, star of the movie "Pirates of the Caribbean."

Ty Fleming, 3, of Tamaroa adjusts his cardboard pirate hat for his grandmother Rhonda after his grandfather Dana helped him put it on while the group was eating lunch at Long John Silvers Sunday in Carbondale. Monday is the International Talk Like a Pirate Day. (STEVE JAHNKE/THE SOUTHERN)

How many Southern Illinoisans will celebrate the special day and greet their co-workers and friends with an "Arr!" or an "Aye?"

Yo ho ho. Nobody knows.

Patrick Rollinson, lead vocalist for the local band Bourbon Knights - a group known to sing a pirate chanty from time to time - said a holiday "just for fun" can be a difficult concept for people to grasp. However, talking like a pirate, at least a Hollywood version thereof, is naturally attractive, he said, because as a nation we tend to be fascinated with accents.

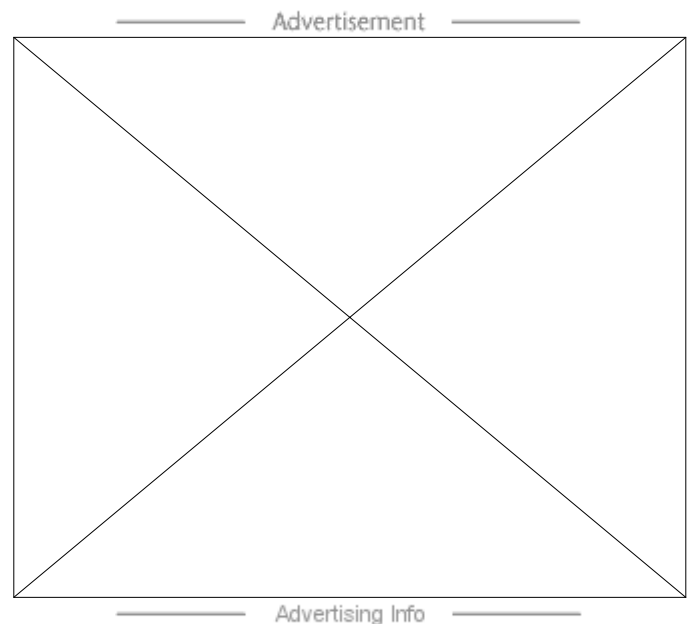
"I think (the accent typically said to be 'pirate') comes from Scotts-English," Rollinson surmised. "The sing-song quality has to do with Old English, the Germanic version of English before the Norman Invasion. Scotts is the closest living relative to Old English today."

Aye, aye.

Pirate lingo conjures different images and connotes a different style of life. Some see pirates as no-good scoundrels and thieves and, well, thugs.

Some merely see them as a stereotyped historical band of businessmen.

Author and leadership trainer Bob Garrow, whose book "Ahoy Mates! Leadership Lessons from Successful Pirates," uses pirate metaphors to illustrate concepts he says can be beneficial to modern businesspeople.



As "Captain Bob," the alias he uses when giving a seminar, Garrow gets to talk like a pirate fairly often.

For the rest of us, he said the holiday is a welcome bit of silliness in an otherwise very serious world.

"Why not have a bit of fun? Life is too serious" he said in a telephone interview Saturday.

His favorite pirates were the privateers, which were essentially sea captains whose pirating propensities were directed by one country's government against another's. He credits the crew of the privateer ship the "Liverpool Packet" with saving Canada from invasion by the United States in the 18th century.

Privateer, pirate - whatever they are, Garrow said, borrowing some of their swashbuckling swagger can liven up just about anyone's day.

"We tend to forgive their sins and see (pirates) as romantic characters," he said. "The romance, the excitement of far-away places and buried treasure - talking like a pirate can make a boring and repetitive job fun and keep it interesting."

The Talk Like a Pirate holiday has roots back to 1995, but officially started in 2002 when syndicated columnist Dave Berry was enlisted to give the concept national publicity. Since then, the holiday has slowly been gaining momentum.

Since 2002, founders John "Ol' Chumbucket" Baur and Mark "Cap'n Slappy" Summers have written Talk Like a Pirate Day guides and have been interviewed by scores of radio and television stations. This year, WILL in Urbana and KEZK in St. Louis both plan to air segments for the special day, according to talklikeapirate.com, the official website of the holiday.

For tips on how to talk like a pirate, dress like a pirate, have a party like a pirate, or donate to the victims of Hurricane Katrina not-so-much-like-a-pirate, visit the official website at www.talklikeapirate.com.

Oh, and one more thing, me mateys and beauties.

Arrr!