

# Fair Practices

Martin O'Malley, Governor  
Anthony G. Brown, Lt. Governor  
Thomas E. Perez, Secretary

Department of Labor, Licensing and Regulation

March 2009

## *March is "Women's History Month"*



The public celebration of women's history in this country began in 1978 as "Women's History Week" in Sonoma County, California. The County selected the week including March 8, International Women's Day, for the celebration. In 1981, Sen. Orrin Hatch (R-Utah) and Rep. Barbara Mikulski (D-MD) co-sponsored a joint Congressional resolution proclaiming a national Women's History Week. In 1987, Congress expanded the celebration to a month, and March was declared Women's History Month.

Two significant factors contributed to the new attention to women's history. The women's movement of the 1960s caused women to question their invisibility in traditional American history texts. The movement also raised the aspirations as well as the opportunities of women, and produced a growing number of female historians. Carroll Smith-Rosenberg, one of the early women's historians, remarked that "without question, our first inspiration was political. Aroused by feminist charges of economic and political discrimination . . . we turned to our history to trace the origins of women's second-class status."

Women's history was also part of a larger movement that transformed the study of history in the United States. "History" had traditionally meant political history—a chronicle of the key political events and the leaders, primarily men, who influenced them. But by the 1970s "the new social history" began replacing the older style. Emphasis shifted to a broader spectrum of American life, including the history of urban life, public health, ethnicity, the media and poverty.

## *March 25<sup>th</sup> is "Maryland Day"*



Maryland Day commemorates March 25, 1634, the day settlers disembarked from two small sailing ships – the *Ark* and the *Dove* – onto Maryland soil. At St. Clement's Island, they landed in what is now St. Mary's County, Maryland.

The Maryland settlement was authorized under the charter granted June 20, 1632, by Charles I of England to Cecilius Calvert, Baron of Baltimore. Traveling on the *Ark* to the new colony, Leonard Calvert, Lord Baltimore's brother, led the Maryland settlers. The purpose of their voyage was not to discover new lands, but to settle them. And, as it happened, they journeyed from island to island to find their new world.

Departing on November 22, 1633, these travelers (about 140 in number) set off from Cowes on the English Isle of Wight. Three days later a severe storm tossed them relentlessly about at sea. The morning after, the *Dove* (the smaller ship) could not be seen.

The *Ark* continued its journey, following the European coast south to the Fortunate (now Canary) Islands. From the Canaries, the *Ark* sailed due west across the Atlantic, touching land at the island of Barbados in the West Indies on January 3, 1633. There, the ship's weary travelers stayed three weeks replenishing provisions, and there the *Dove* reappeared, having weathered the Atlantic voyage alone. At other Caribbean isles they also landed, and then sailed north. They reached Virginia on February 27, gathered more supplies, and navigated Chesapeake Bay north to the mouth of the Potomac by March 3rd.

## ***Maryland Day Continued .....***

As the voyagers approached southern Maryland shores in March 1634, their ships alarmed Native Americans, who sent alerts with huge signal fires. To meet the Conoy Indian chief and calm Indian fears, Leonard Calvert on the *Dove* sailed to Piscataway. There, they negotiated a peaceable accord, and then Calvert sailed back down the Potomac off present-day St. Mary's County. On March 25th, the English settlers climbed down from the *Ark* and the *Dove* and rowed to the island, which they named St. Clement's. They held a day of thanksgiving for their safe voyage end, and we continue to commemorate it as Maryland Day.

The formal observance of Maryland Day began in 1903 when the State Board of Education chose one day in the school year to be devoted to Maryland history. March 25th was named Maryland Day by the Board.



## ***St. Patrick's Day***

St. Patrick's Day is celebrated annually on March 17 in honor of Ireland's patron saint. St. Patrick was born between 370 and 390 C. E. in the Roman Empire in Britain. His given name (Magonus Sucatus or Maewyn Succat) was changed to Patricius (Patrick) either after his baptism or after he became a priest. At the age of 16, Patrick was kidnapped and sold into slavery in Ireland. He remained in captivity for six years during which time he worked as a shepherd and began to have religious visions. During one of the visions, Patrick became aware of a rescue ship and he fled to France.

Patrick eventually returned to Ireland as a missionary and succeeded in converting the Irish to Christianity. He used a shamrock to explain the Trinity to potential converts. The three leaves of the shamrock represented the father, son, and holy spirit. Patrick is also reported to have driven all of the snakes, a pagan symbol, out of Ireland and into the sea where they drowned. This is perhaps a metaphor for driving paganism out of Ireland since biologists believe there were no snakes in Ireland at the time.

St. Patrick's Day celebrations in the United States are secular and date back as far as 1737 when Boston held

its first St. Patrick's Day parade. The day is celebrated with green beer, the wearing of green clothing, and parades. However, in Ireland, the day is primarily a religious occasion.

Because many Americans celebrate their Irish lineage on St. Patrick's Day, March was chosen as Irish American Heritage Month. The month was proclaimed in 1995 by Congress. Other March Holidays Include:

- American Red Cross Month
- Music in our Schools Month
- National Craft Month
- National Frozen Food Month
- National Noodle Month
- National Nutrition Month
- Youth Art Month
- Dr. Seuss's Birthday
- Girl Scout Day
- Johnny Appleseed Day
- First Day of Spring
- National Goof Off Day



## **FACTS ABOUT MARCH**

According to the Georgian calendar, March is the third month of the year. According to the early Roman calendar, it was the first month and was called *Martius*. The ancient Romans later made January 1 the beginning of the year, and March became the third month on the calendar. March has always had 31 days. Its name honors Mars, the Roman God of war.

Winter ends with March, and Spring begins. March 20, is the day when the sun is directly over the equator. March can either feel like winter or spring, with as many blustery, windy days as there are mild, sunny days.

In the northern hemisphere, the animals end their hibernation and many plants come to life again in March. The sap flows in the trees again, and the buds begin to show up for the arrival of Spring.

## Romances in the Workplace

Let's talk about workplace dating. Is it a good idea or not?

(For purposes of this discussion, workplace romance is generally characterized as some form of intimate relationship between truly consenting employees).

It's understandable why office love connections flourish: People spend much of their lives at work and end up sharing hobbies, personality quirks and intimacies. Dating co-workers seems safer, especially for many women, because they get time to know each other. Moreover, many employees share similar education, interests, attitudes, values, and income levels. And often work projects offer intellectual stimulation and emotional bonding.

Far from being harmful, many romances actually *improve* work performances. They add a dynamism and energy that translates into enhanced morale, communication, creativity and even productivity. Should these relationships evolve into long-term commitments, as often happens, companies will generally benefit from happier and more fulfilled employees.

However, on the other hand, complaints of favoritism, claims of sexual harassment, decreased productivity of those involved and decreased morale of co-workers are all potential negative outcomes of workplace relationships.

So it appears the key issue isn't thwarting workplace romances so much as managing them. Many workers have overlapping responsibilities and frequently interact. Love affairs are quickly noticed and co-workers are especially sensitive to favoritism, whispered confidences, and tensions and hostilities, all of which may affect morale and even performance.

With any decision you make in your life, it's important to weigh the pros and cons as well as the potential outcome. It's up to you to decide whether it's worth taking the plunge.

Should you mix business with pleasure? Before you pursue a relationship with a coworker, you should ask yourself the following questions:

1. How will my relationship be viewed?
2. How will a promotion affect my relationship?
3. Can I ignore the rumor mill?
4. What will happen if the relationship ends?
5. Will my relationship bring up harassment issues?

Recent, high-profile cases in the news have all too clearly shown the dangers to an organization when a workplace relationship is unexpectedly exposed or untangles badly. Such romances can lead to very negative publicity, sexual harassment claims, and even criminal charges, particularly when the relationship involves a manager and a subordinate. Add to that the ramifications that office romance can have on employee productivity, retention, and motivation, and you have the making of an HR nightmare.

Exposed office romances, or those that become unwelcome, can leave a wide trail of negative morale. Statistically, 53 percent of intimate employee relationships end within one year, and 84 percent of these relationships end within five years, according to a survey conducted by MSNBC.com. Employee relationships ending have the potential to cause any number of problems for the employees involved. Romance in the workplace is all but inevitable. We all know of employees involved in relationships at work, or perhaps we are in a workplace relationship ourselves. Typically, there are few to no problems (with the exception of "affairs") if the relationship continues. However, when a relationship deteriorates, trouble usually begins.

