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JIM C'S QUIZ OF THE WEEK

MONDAY – 4/30/2007

The Wicker Man: “Perhaps it’s just as well that you

won’t be here to be offended by the sight of our May Day celebrations.”

HOW DID THE TERM “MAY DAY” (MAY 1st) ORIGINATE?

Origin: “May Day” - 1438; with accounts of merrymaking on May 1st since 1240, although its celebration originated with the spring fertility festivals of India and Egypt. Folklore - the month of May is named for Maia, the Greek goddess of death and fertility.

Called Beltane by the Druids/Celts, Walpurgis by the Teutons, and Floralia by the Romans, May festivals were a time of "wearing of the green." In Europe May was a time to celebrate renewal of life.

Medieval England: The maypole was a key element of the festival by taking a growing tree from the woods and bringing it to the village to decorate, dance, and celebrate the oncoming summer.

1880s: Labor leaders and socialists around the world took the American strikes and their fallout as a rallying point, choosing *May Day* as a day for demonstrations, parades, and speeches.

1929: May 1st was first celebrated as “Lei Day” in Hawaii

1955: Pope Pius XII - May 1 is a feast day of St. Joseph the Worker

Conventional Wisdom: May Day = A day of many meanings & causes

Moment of Zen: Puritans ruined May Day, the pagan day of romp