

Generations

Try some trivia at your next party

Have you ever been at a dull party or with a group of people you hardly know and suddenly there's an uncomfortable period of awkward silence?

According to www.bestlifeonline.com, here are some bits of trivia that might help break the ice and get people talking.

Start with the fact that the average person will spend six months of his or her life waiting for red lights to turn green. You can back up your claim with the fact that, according to the National Association of City Transportation Officials, the average time spent waiting at a red light is 75 seconds, accounting for about 20 percent of all driving time. My only comment on this one is that 75 seconds might as well be an hour during those instances when you should have used the restroom before getting in the car.

If the above doesn't produce some type of response from the group, tell them that a bolt of lightning contains enough energy to toast 100,000 slices of bread. According to scientists who actually took the time to figure this out, each bolt of lightning contains more than 5 billion joules of energy and the average 1,000-watt, two-slice toaster could be powered for 84,000 minutes with just one strike. This nifty fact, however, might lose its luster if everyone around you happens to be on the no-carb diet and not particularly happy because they haven't had the luxury of a toasted bagel in years.

If the group is still deadpan, try telling them that nearly 30,000 rubber ducks were lost at sea in 1992 and that they are still being discovered today. A cargo ship traveling from Hong Kong to the U.S. accidentally lost a shipping crate in the Pacific Ocean, and inside that

crate were 28,000 rubber ducks unwittingly about to embark on many long journeys across the globe.



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As rubber ducks continue to pop up on shores around the world from Australia to Alaska, their loss proved valuable to ocean experts to gain a better understanding of ocean currents.

Some ducks made it all the way to the Atlantic Ocean, while others have been found frozen in Arctic ice.

On a morbid note, the next one might not be wise at a black-tie anything, but you can give it a try. The inventor of the Frisbee was turned into a Frisbee after he died.

"Steady Ed" Headrick, who invented the Frisbee in the 1950s, "lived for Frisbee," his wife said of the inventor of the classic American toy. When he died in 2002, his final wish was to have his ashes turned into a Frisbee.

His son said it was his father's dream that they play with him after death and that he might even accidentally end up on someone's roof.

In a group of traveling enthusiasts, you might want to mention that the Netherlands is so safe that it imports criminals to fill its jails.

Enjoying a steady drop in crime since 2004, The Netherlands has become so safe that it has closed one prison after another, and 19 prisons were shut down in 2013 alone.

To offset the job losses that this has created, the country has taken to importing prisoners from other countries, bringing in 240 from Norway in 2015. This tidbit might also be interesting when you're in a group of older folks who are pon-

dering a good place to retire and aren't so keen on Florida.

If you're in a room filled with writers, you might want to mention that the Ikea catalog is the most widely printed book in history. With more than 200 million copies in circulation every year, it surpasses the Bible, the Quran and the Harry Potter series to earn the title of the world's most printed book.

And dedicated to my son, David, who always had a fascination with the movie "Jaws," flipping a shark upside down renders it immobile for up to 15 minutes. Some species of sharks enter a state of tonic immobility due to the loosening of muscles and the respiratory system, and the shock puts them into a trance that can make them look like they're dead. About 15 minutes later, they'll become responsive again and return to normal activity. My only wonder is, how do you get close enough to flip a shark on its back? Then again, would you have enough time to get away from the shark once it flipped back over?

And, finally, for those who have had a tough week and you're next in line to get weighed at Weight Watchers, remember that you can always blame your 2-pound gain on "kummerspeck."

This German word literally translates to "grief bacon" or "sorrow fat," and it's recognized as weight gain attributed to using food as comfort. You're not alone, because it's universal and culturally felt across the globe, and not simply plain old guilt when you reach for a bag of Doritos.

Next time, blame the gain on "kummerspeck."

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