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Generations



Some More Trivia – Part Two

By Peg DeMarco - Special to The News Herald

Since some people sent me e-mails telling me how much they enjoyed the column I wrote for President's Day on presidential trivia, when I recently read www.mentalfloss.com's "116 Amazing Facts for People Who Like Amazing Facts," I knew I had hit pay dirt for a second column. I won't have room for all 116, but I picked out my favorites and you can see them all if you visit the website.

Sticking with presidents and politics, did you know that before George W. Bush took office, some Clinton staffers canvassed the White House offices and removed the W key from over 60 keyboards? Clinton people venomously deny it, but secretaries had a hard time typing "Very truly yours, George W. Bush" without the W.

Apparently, I'm not the only one who loves watching raccoons because during the Coolidge presidency, the First Family had a pet raccoon named Rebecca who liked to play in the White House bathtub.

Herbert Hoover was Stanford's football team manager. At the first Stanford-Cal game in 1892, however, he must have forgotten the Boy Scout motto "Be Prepared" because he forgot to bring the ball.

George Washington insisted his continental army be permitted a quart of beer as part of their daily rations – which no doubt made him one of the most popular presidents.

In 1965, a Senate subcommittee predicted that by 2000, Americans would only be working 20 hours a week with seven weeks' vacation. Yeah, right. Perhaps the subcommittee meant the year 3000?

For Hollywood trivia, did you know that in the early stage version of *The Wizard of Oz*, Dorothy's faithful companion Toto was replaced by a cow named Imogene? Just imagine Judy Garland riding her bicycle with a cow in her basket as she eluded the twister – then again, it might be possible with special effects in today's world.

Before settling on the Seven Dwarfs we know today, Disney also considered Chesty, Tubby, Burpy, Deafy, Hickey, Wheezy, and Awful. In today's world, most of those names would violate a law or two somewhere in the U.S.

But the Disney Corporation apparently also played cupid because in 1991, Wayne Allwine, the voice of Mickey Mouse, married Russi Taylor, the voice of Minnie.

A sign of the times? Truman Show Delusion is a mental condition marked by a patient's belief that he or she is the star of an imaginary reality show. I know a few people who might be suffering from this malady and not know it.

Writers seem to always do the unexpected so it was no surprise that William Faulkner refused a dinner invitation from JFK's White House, saying, "Why that's a hundred miles away. That's a long way to go just to eat."

When editor Bennett Cerf challenged Dr. Seuss to write a book using no more than 50 different words, he did it and the result was the superb "Green Eggs and Ham."

I can't see CNN ever doing this, but on an April day in 1930, the BBC reported, "There is no news," and instead played piano music.

Food trivia seems to be a hot topic and I particularly loved that at Fatburger, you can order a "Hypocrite," which is a veggie burger topped with crispy strips of bacon.

Marketing techniques have certainly changed. In 1907, an ad campaign for Kellogg's Corn Flakes offered a free box of cereal to any woman who would wink at her grocer. Today, you might just find yourself in court for sexual harassment.

I don't know which tired parent figured this out, but according to the site, a baby can cost new parents 750 hours of sleep in the first year. And, sorry, parents, but according to NASA's FAQ page, "There are no plans at this time to send children into space."

For those of you parents and grandparents who sit through endless episodes of SpongeBob SquarePants, it's creator, Stephen Hillenburg, taught marine biology before penning the award-winning cartoon. As of 2015, the media franchise has generated \$12 billion in merchandising revenue for Nickelodeon – as well as a nice paycheck for its creator.

Someone, someplace, is probably counting something because two items caught my eye: the sum of all the numbers on a roulette wheel is 666, and in 1988, a scientist found two identical snow crystals from a storm in Wisconsin, disproving the myth that no two snowflakes are exactly the same.

How about this one? When Canada's Northwest Territories considered renaming itself in the 1990s, one name that gained support was "Bob." Huh?

And, finally, my favorite: when the mummy of Ramses II was sent to France in the mid-1970s, it was issued a passport. Ramses' occupation? "King (deceased)."

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