

Generations

Some brain food for thought

“You don’t really start getting old until you stop learning,” software magnate and billionaire philanthropist Bill Gates told Time Magazine last year, and that may be true, but for me and many others, hard learning doesn’t tempt me to dig in unless there’s dry humor or at least a chuckle or two.

So, I hunted a little and was able to find a super collection of brain knowledge tidbits (or useless information depending on your assessment) via www.bestlifeonline.com compiled by Bob Larkin, and I’ve chosen the best to arm you with when you’re looking to win your last pie piece playing Trivial Pursuit.

First example: If anyone poses a question about mooing cows — for example, do cows communicate — get ready to wow the crowd with the fact that, in small populations such as herds, cows moo with an identifiable dialect according to the herd that they’re in (yes, scientists were at work on this one).

And while we’re on the subject of cows, a dairy cow will produce up to 3 percent more milk while listening to music. Bad news for Willie Nelson fans, however. They didn’t care for his music and prefer drums and a good beat.

Suppose your unicorn-loving grandchild is obsessed with the one-horned wonder? Well, it’s perfectly legal to hunt unicorns in Michigan and Lake Superior State University even offers a unicorn hunting license — not that anyone would ever think about harming a unicorn. But a group was formed anyway and they offer a free license to download. Watch out, however, for plenty of do’s and don’ts that the group enacted into its bylaws. It has

come up with some interesting events with plenty of press and nothing to do with unicorns: establishing an annual List of Words Banned from the Queen’s English for Mis-Use, Over-Use and General Use-



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lessness; burning a snowman on the first day of spring, and holding an annual International Stone-Skipping Tournament. For those interested, check them out at www.lssu.edu and key in “unicorn hunters.”

And for those who think that the Supreme Court doesn’t have a sense of humor, not so. It has its own private basketball court on the top floor of the U.S. Supreme Court Building and its tagline, naturally, is “the highest court in the land.”

Young adults who dream of getting into Harvard have more of a chance than getting hired by Walmart. Harvard’s 8.9 percent admittance rate is much higher than Walmart’s because only 2.6 percent of applicants are accepted at Walmart. I have new respect for the Walmart greeters.

A school of higher learning actually measured Tootsie Pop licks. It officially takes 364 licks to get to the center of a Tootsie Pop, according to engineering students at Purdue University, who used a proprietary “licking machine” rather than a human tongue.

Politically, in the small town of Dorset, Minnesota, where a new mayor is picked every two years by drawing names out of a hat, a 3-year-old named Robert Tufts was elected mayor in 2015. His governing style was

unique: “Being nice and no poop talk.”

Vending machines apparently are bigger threats to humanity than sharks because a study found that you’re twice as likely to be killed by a vending machine than a shark. I’m still trying to figure out how.

Most airlines charge a \$25 fee for your bag. In 2012, a man sweated out an 11-and-a-half-hour flight from China to Africa because he wore 60 shirts and nine pairs of jeans and didn’t want to pay the extra baggage fee.

Addicted to Facebook? One programmer’s unusual way of weaning himself off Facebook was to hire a woman at \$8 an hour to slap him in the face every time he tried to check Facebook during working hours. Ouch!

Hard to believe but we’re more prepared for a zombie invasion than expected.

The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has a real page devoted to “zombie preparedness” and, yes, I checked it out. According to the website, what first began as a tongue-in-cheek campaign to engage new audiences with preparedness messages has proven to be a very effective platform. They promise to continue the page to “reach and engage a wide variety of audiences on all hazards preparedness via zombie preparedness.”

And the last tidbit of knowledge: It would take 76 work days (if you work an 8-hour day) to read every online privacy policy you agree to in an average year. In other words, that’s how long it would take to read all the fine print that no one really reads.

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