**Belief**

**According to the Greeks, as an awful lot of things were, the amethyst protected its owner from getting loaded. The word itself means “not to intoxicate." It's a violet or purple variety of quartz. Don't count on it to prevent a hangover. (Bernie Smith, in The Joy of Trivia, p. 340)**

**Aroma folklorists insist believers can get rid of depression by sniffing cotton balls dabbed in peppermint oil. And can hurry themselves off to sleep by sniffing lavender. (L. M. Boyd)**

**Believers in the 14th century thought mild-mannered people who chewed catnip would become violent. So it became the custom for the royal hangmen to take a bite or two of it before going to work. (L. M. Boyd)**

**A Romanian village is enjoying a tourist boom, thanks to “humping hill" that is believed to help couples conceive. The mayor of Horea, Corneliu Olar, is determined to promote the hill as a tourist attraction, and has planted extra bushes to provide privacy for couples. “It has been a tradition for more than three centuries," Olar says. “Romanian kings have come and gone, but the humping hill has always been there." (The Week magazine, June 16, 2006)**

**Old-time Americans tossed salt over their left shoulders as some sort of token gesture, but I forget why? To hit the devil in the eye. Some believed spilled salt indicated the devil was at hand. The left, shoulder throwers mocked the notion. (L. M. Boyd)**

**Early beliefs:**

**Aztecs – “dead warriors become hummingbirds"**

**Incans – “gold is sweat of the sun"**

**Incans – “stars, moon, and sun arise from lake"**

**Ancient Egyptians – “human's created from tears of sun"**

**Mayans -- monkeys are “protectors of artists and dancers"**

**Incans – “moon goddess under attack during eclipse" (by a giant snake; Inca people made loud noises to scare it away). (Philip Wilkinson, in DK Illustrated Dictionary of Mythology)**

**When you first were told the earth is round, did you think that meant it's round but flat like a pancake? Researchers say this is the belief of more than half of all youngsters under 10. (L. M. Boyd)**

**We know from tomb art that the ancient Egyptian pharaohs believed in sex after death. (L. M. Boyd)**

**The original Henry Ford didn't eat breakfast. Said it slowed his thinking. (L. M. Boyd)**

**Fortune tellers of old India smashed hens' eggs against a special egg-breaking board, then interpreted the patterns of shattered shell fragments thereon. (L. M. Boyd)**

**Something else Sylvester Graham claimed about his invention, the Graham cracker, was that it dulled lust. Maybe that was a selling point at the time. (L. M. Boyd)**

**Stonewall Jackson let it be known to a few that his feet were cold almost all the time. He thought lemon juice might improve the circulation. So he sucked lemons all through the Civil War. Historical footnotes say he was rarely seen without a squashed lemon in his hand. (L. M. Boyd)**

**The Pilgrims refused to eat lobsters because they thought they were really big insects. (*Uncle John’s Bathroom Reader: Extraordinary Book of Facts, p. 65)***

**Some Malaysians protect their babies from disease by bathing them in beer. *(Noel Botham, in The Ultimate Book of Useless Information, p. 163)***

**A people that no longer can believe anything cannot make up its mind. It is deprived not only of its capacity to act but also of its capacity to think and to judge. (Hannah Arendt)**

**Race car drivers won't wear green. At least, most won't. That's what one of same contends. He contends further they won't allow peanuts in the pits. Superstitious bunch, he says. *(L. M. Boyd)***

**Legend has it that unless the ravens remain at the Tower of London, the structure will fall and the British Empire with it. Currently, eight ravens are in residence at the site, and their maintenance is provided by the Department of the Environment. Each bird is named and has its own heated cage. A Yeoman Warder with the title of Ravenmaster cares for them. To keep the birds from flying away, the flight feathers on one wing are clipped. But since ravens court in flight, the Tower birds weren't able to breed, and replacements were brought from Scotland, Wales or west England. That is, until 1989, when the first raven in over four hundred years was actually born at the Tower. His name? Ronald Raven! (L. M. K., in Reader's Digest, March, 1991)**

**Women wear engagement and wedding rings on the third finger of the left hand (not counting the thumb), because an ancient belief held that a delicate nerve runs directly from that finger to the heart. *(Bernie Smith, in The Joy of Trivia, p. 21)***

**Many a Roman soldier believed the garlic he ate gave him courage. And it was this courage, he surely assumed, that kept the enemy at bay. *(L. M. Boyd)***

**The old Romans thought a person's health changed every seven years. They also thought a mirror reflected a person's health, good or bad. It was a twist on this combination that gave us the superstition a broken mirror foretold seven years of bad luck. *(L. M. Boyd)***

**Those native Americans known as the Senecas neither spanked nor criticized their children. But they did threaten to send them off to the woods for the bogeyman to catch. The Senecas' bogeyman was name Longnose. He chased bad children and ate them. *(L. M. Boyd)***

**It's said early Senecas believed their prayer words were carried to the Great Creator on rising smoke. (L. M. Boyd)**

**Many a chimney on houses in Britain's Channel Islands has a large stone sticking out of it. Like a seat. That's what it was put there for. To give passing witches a place to rest and warm themselves. Better outside than in, the builders believed. (L. M. Boyd)**

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