**Subtle Changes**

**Alaska is still gaining altitude. A seashore farmhouse built in 1928 now is more than a mile inland. *(L. M. Boyd)***

**The decay of potassium - 40 into argon - 40 occurs with a half-life of 1,300,000,000 years. *(Paul Kroll, in Plain Truth magazine)*
The Atlantic Ocean widens by six feet every 70 years. *(L. M. Boyd)*
Man: “A zillion relationship books out there, and you’re saying I can understand women better by reading a romance novel?” Woman: “If it’s by Nora Roberts, yes!” Man: “Next thing you know I’ll be joining the Oprah Book Club.” Woman: “One hurdle at a time.” *(Ted Dawson, in Spooner comic strip)***

**Arizona’s state flower is the blossom of the Saguaro cactus. Though it grows slowly (reaching only six inches in height after nine years), the plant may grow to weigh more than eight tons and can hold up to 250 gallons of water. The Saguaro cactus doesn’t begin to bloom until it is at least 30 years of age, and the familiar “arms” don’t appear until 75. Woodpeckers, owls, and wrens make homes there. The Tohono O’odham natives make great use of the plant. They not only eat its fruit and ferment its juice, but they use its ribs to build homes, traps, and storage containers. *(Mary A. Hamilton, in Tidbits)***

**Zoey: “Mom! Dad! One of the callipidders made a cocoon!” Mom: “He sure did!” Dad: “How about that!” Mom: “And after the caterpillar is finished changing into a butterfly, he’ll come out of the cocoon.” Zoey: “When?” Dad: “According to this, in about a week.” Mom: “Isn’t nature amazing?” Zoey: “If ‘amazing’ means slow, it sure is!” *(Rick Kirkman & Jerry Scott, in Baby Blues comic strip)***

**Anthodites, rare formations of long thin needles of stone on cave ceilings, grow about one inch in 7,000 years. *(Barbara Seuling)***

**If cocaine is so devastating, how have Peruvian Indians managed to survive hundreds of years of chewing coca leaves? The leaves contain less than 1 percent cocaine. It’s absorbed slowly. Daily work dissipates it. Doctors say such users become addicted, but not necessarily so sickened they can’t function at all. *(L. M. Boyd)*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*
How these jigsaw pieces of land -- or “suspect terrains,” as scientists call them -- managed to travel such long distances builds on the earlier discoveries of drifting continents and plate tectonics. These concepts hold that the planet’s crust is a mosaic of rocky plates that are propelled like rafts across the viscous portion of the earth’s mantle, carrying continents, oceans and terrains on their backs. The giant plates move only about as fast as a fingernail grows. *(Ronald Schiller, in Reader’s Digest)***

**Europe and America moving farther apart: NASA scientists using new and precise techniques of measuring, have determined that the North American and European continents are moving apart by .59 inches every year. *(Ripley’s Believe It or Not!: Weird Inventions and Discoveries, p. 38)***

**\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*Helga says to Hagar: “I’m teaching Honi how to cook. Let me know how you like it!” Hagar: “But aren’t these last night’s leftovers?” Helga: “Yes, I wanted to start her off slowly.” *(Dik Browne, in Hagar the Horrible comic strip)*
A high school English teacher says she was impressed one day by one of her student’s answers when she asked him to define “subtlety.” The boy thought for a minute, then replied, “Subtlety is when somebody asks you what you really think and you tell them in such a way that you are gone before they understand exactly what you said.” *(James Dent, in Charleston, W.V. Gazette)***

**The Dec. 26 Sumatra earthquake that caused a deadly tsunami throughout South Asia was three times larger than originally thought, Northwestern University seismologists say. Seth Stein and Emile Okal, both professors of geological sciences at Northwestern, calculated that the earthquake’s magnitude measured 9.3, not 9.0, and thus was three times larger. They said original calculations did not take into account “slow slip,” where the fault shifted more slowly. Energy from slow slip helped generate the tsunami, they said. The largest earthquake ever recorded, which measured 9.5, was in Chile on May 22, 1960. *(Todd Neff, in Boulder Daily Camera, February 2, 2005)***

**Western Europe is sinking at the rate of one inch every ten years. *(Jack Kreismer, in The Bathroom Trivia Book, p. 85)***

**Husband says to wife: “My doctor told me to start my exercise program very gradually. Today I drove past a store that sells sweat pants. *(Glasbergen cartoon, in Catholic Digest)***

**Remember the old story about how to cook a frog? If you put a frog in hot water, it’ll jump out, immediately recognizing a nasty situation. Should you, however, place the frog in lukewarm water, it settles in and gets comfortable. Then you turn up the heat a little at a time until the frog boils to death. *(Mary Manin Morrissey)***

**Iran has salt glaciers. They move the same way ice glaciers move -- slowly downward from high ground. *(L. M. Boyd)***

**Alfred J. Marrow, a company president with a Ph. D. in psychology, once set up an interesting experiment in his factory. Marrow was interested, as are most businessmen, in having new employees reach optimum performance as quickly as possible. He began to try different methods of motivating his new and unskilled employees to reach standards of skilled performance. With one group, Marrow set a goal that was difficult to achieve. He ordered the unskilled workers to reach their quota within 12 weeks after they were employed. Interestingly, after 14 weeks the group had reached only 66 percent of standard performance. The individuals of this group missed their goals by about one-third. With the second group that was equally unskilled, Marrow established weekly goals. The goals were progressive; that is, each was slightly more ambitious than the goal of the previous week. As the level of the employees’ proficiency increased, the goals were advanced. At the end of 14 weeks, the average member of the second group had reached a standard of proficiency equal to that of a skilled operator? *(Mortimer R. Feinberg, in Effective Psychology for Managers)***

**That which grows fast withers as rapidly; and that which grows slow endures. *(Josiah Gilbert Holland, poet)***

**Make haste slowly. *(Augustus Caesar, first Roman emperor)***

**The other evening I met an attractive and not unintelligent woman whose only fault was that she was intolerable. She wanted to be liked and appreciated too fast. She burned out like a firecracker between the soup and the dessert. One of the most characteristic failings of such people is their desperate need to make an impression. But people need to be unwrapped, slowly and deliciously. Those who tear off their own ribbons and rip open their own covers lose the very appreciation they are trying so desperately to win. *(Sydney J. Harris, Field Newspaper Syndicate)***

**Here’s why improvement comes slowly: It’s hard to make a change which benefits everyone, without hurting anyone. *(Ashleigh Brilliant, in Pot Shots)***

**Moving land masses (the earth rotates 1.7 seconds slower yearly): Los Angeles – moves north-northwest 3 inches yearly; Hawaii – moves 3 inches closer to Japan yearly; Venice – sinks 1 inch yearly; The Himalayas -- rise .4 inches yearly; North America – moves .8 inches away from Europe yearly. *(World Features Syndicate)***

**That’s right, limestone can change to marble. But you’ve got to be patient. *(L. M. Boyd)*
The more efficient a force is, the more silent and the more subtle it is. Love is the most subtle force in the world. *(Lewis Fischer, in The Essential Gandhi)***

**Mount Everest is a foot higher today than it was a century ago, and it may be growing at an accelerating rate. *(Isaac Asimov’s Book of Facts, p. 330)***

**The Niagara Falls have eroded their way 10 miles upstream since they were first formed some 10,000 years ago. The tremendous amount of water tends to eat through its limestone base relatively rapidly, and if erosion continues at its present rate, geologists estimate that the falls will disappear completely in 22,000 years. *(David Louis, in Fascinating Facts, p. 117)***

**First man: “What’s that you’re having?” Second man: “Oatmeal.” First man: “For lunch?” Second man: “I’ve been working on it since breakfast.” *(Jerry Bittle, in Geech comic strip)***

**1,000: Estimated number of years a plastic grocery bag takes to decompose. About 100 billion plastic bags are distributed annually worldwide. *(Progressive Bag Alliance, as it appeared in Time, April 16, 2007)*
Those who are slowest in making a promise are often the most faithful in its performance. *(Bits & Pieces)***

**The Rockies are shrinking in some places by about a half-inch a year. *(Joseph B. Verrengia, in Rocky Mountain News)***

**When sales were slow: Oldsmobile – sold four cars in first four years; VW – sold two “Beetles” first year in U.S.; Otis – sold three elevators first two years; Harley-Davidson – sold eight cycles first three years; Duryea Bros. (first commercial auto dealer) – sold 13 cars first two years. *(World Features Syndicate)***

**Sound travels slowly. Sometimes the things you say when your kids are teen-agers don’t reach them till they’re in their 40s. *(Orben’s Current Comedy)***

**Darwin concluded that species evolved slowly, through the accumulation of tiny changes and through the competition that “edited out” those individuals not well adapted to their environment. *(Lowell Ponte, in Reader’s Digest)*
How long does it take a sponge to grow to bath size? About 50 years. *(L. M. Boyd)***

**The fastest tectonic movement on Earth is 240 millimeters per year, at the Tonga microplate near Samoa. (Noel Botham, in The Amazing Book of Useless Information, p. 130)**

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**It takes 4.5 billion years for half the uranium in a zircon crystal to turn into lead. *(Isaac Asimov, in Rocky Mountain News)*Scientists tell us that it takes some six billion years for uranium to disintegrate and become lead. *(Charles Fillmore, Atom-Smashing Power of Mind, p. 51)***

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**Gravity of the sun and moon and the resulting tidal friction on earth acts as a brake on our spinning planet. Yep, our little old world is slowing down . . . about a second a century. If this keeps up, in another five billion years, TV is going to have to find another name for that interminable daytime soap opera, “As the World Turns.” *(Bernie Smith, in The Joy of Trivia, p. 173)***

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