**Timing**

**To everything there is a season,**

**and a time for every purpose under the sun.**

***(Ecclesiastes 3:1)***

**He has made everything beautiful in its time.**

***(Ecclesiastes 3:l1)***

**Artist Thomas Hart Benton had just finished a mural for the Country Music Hall of Fame in Nashville, Tennessee, when he died at his easel in 1975 in Kansas City, Missouri. *(American Profile magazine)***

**Mating season for bats is autumn. But the females don’t become pregnant until spring. They retain the wherewithal through a sort of dormant period until they’re ready. *(L. M. Boyd)***

**Despite appearances, bees do not wander aimlessly from flower to flower in search of nectar. Many flowers produce nectar at only certain times of the day, and bees follow a timetable which brings them to the right flower at just the right time. A bee's busy day may begin with a dandelion at nine in the morning, continue with a blue cornflower at eleven o'clock, then a red clover at one o'clock, and a viper at about three--for those are the hours at which each of these flowers is most generous with its nectar. *(Timothy T. Fullerton, in Triviata, p. 44)***

**Life is carbon-based. Carbon is one of the elements cooked up, from helium, inside stars through nuclear fusion. To form carbon, three of the helium nuclei whizzing around a star need to collide simultaneously -- same place, same time. That occurs even less frequently with nuclei than it does with three friends meeting at a multiplex: It just doesn't happen that the three of you show up at precisely the same moment. But when the carbon nuclei have a specific energy, called a resonance, the chance of a triple encounter rises significantly, much as three friends are more likely to assemble at the same instant if they all step off the same bus at the same time and walk at the same speed to their rendezvous point. (*Sharon Begley, in Catholic Digest)***

**Good week for: Irony, after passengers who were on the Costa Concordia said that the Celine Dion song "My Heart Will Go On" -- the theme song of the 1997 film Titanic -- was playing in one of the Italian cruise ship's restaurants when it hit a rock and began to sing. *(The Week magazine, February 3, 2012)***

**In July 1862, in the midst of the Civil War, Abraham Lincoln summoned his Cabinet members to the White House to inform them of a decision he had made. The President read aloud to them the Emancipation Proclamation, intended for freeing the slaves in the Southern states at war with the Union. When he finished, the Cabinet members were silent. It was a radical idea for the time and bound to stir controversy even in the North. Then Secretary of State William Seward spoke up. The Confederates had recently routed the Union Army, Seward said, and Lincoln's proclamation might be interpreted as a desperate move. Why not wait until the picture was brighter? Lincoln welcomed Seward's advice and delayed the proclamation until September, when the battle of Antietam had stopped a Confederate advance. The decision was then well received by supporters of the Union. *(Edwin Jr. & Sally Valente Kiester, in Reader's Digest)***

**John Adams and Thomas Jefferson both died on July 4, 1826 -- exactly 50 years after signing the Declaration of Independence. *(dailycognition.com)***

**Timing is everything. It’s as important to know when as to know how. *(Arnold H. Glasow)***

**Male splendid fairy-wrens sing a special song when they hear the call of a butcherbird, their predator. The behavior would seem to paint a target on the fairy-wren. But University of Chicago scientists report the males are actually issuing a mating call. They are choosing a moment when fearful females are most attentive, the researchers found. The effect may be like that of a scary movie on humans, in which fear brings a date closer. *(Megan Gambino, in Smithsonian magazine)***

**The sex life of seaweed seems at first glance haphazard -- sperm and eggs spill into the water, to either fuse or die. But University of Maine ecologists Ester Serrao, Gareth Pearson, and their colleagues have found that for the common bladder wrack, or Fucus vesiculosus, fertilization is anything but hit or miss. This northern coastal seaweed shuns sex when the sea is rough and can carry its gametes -- the sperm and eggs -- away. When shaken in the lab, or when thrashed by turbulent currents in its natural habitat, the seaweed's two sexes hold on to their gametes, releasing them only when the water is tranquil. In calm water, says Pearson, fertilization is nearly 100 percent successful. (Discover magazine, *99618)***

**Faith in gold: Gold still glitters in the eyes of investors, said Jordan Weissmann in TheAtlantic.com. When Gallup asked Americans what they considered the safest asset, 28 percent named gold, 20 percent preferred real estate, and 19 percent chose stocks. So are the gold bugs right? Not surprisingly, it’s a question of timing. If you bought gold in 2000, when it was selling for $277 an ounce, you would have realized a stellar return of 495 percent by selling at today’s price of $1,649. But if you’d bought in 1980, the last time gold prices surged, you would have done better putting your money in an interest-bearing checking account. When real interest rates are low, as they are currently, “investors don’t have much to lose, and possibly a lot to gain, by piling into gold.” But then another question of timing looms: When is it best to sell? *(The Week magazine, May 18, 2012)***

**In the midst of great joy, do not promise anyone anything. In the midst of great anger, do not answer anyone's letter. *(Chinese proverb)***

**On January 1, 1863, Abraham Lincoln spent the entire morning meeting dignitaries, shaking their hands, and spreading goodwill. Exhausted by his nonstop morning, Lincoln finally returned to his office at noon. With a deep sigh, he settled in his chair, only to be interrupted by William Seward, the secretary of state. Lincoln was presented with the final draft of the Emancipation Proclamation for his signature. Twice the president picked up his pen to sign it, but his hand shook so badly that he finally put his pen down. He turned to Seward and said, “I've had an exhausting morning. In fact, I've been shaking hands since nine this morning, and my right arm almost feels paralyzed. I don't want to sign this document until my hand is more steady. If my name ever goes into history, it will be for this act, and I want you to know that my whole soul is in it. So you see, if my hand trembles when I sign the proclamation, all who examine it thereafter will say, ‘He hesitated -- look at his handwriting.’” A short time afterward, the president took up his pen with a strong and steady hand and firmly wrote, “Abraham Lincoln.” That historic act endeared Lincoln to the world as the Great Emancipator. *(Glenn Van Ekeren, in The Speaker's Sourcebook)***

**Abraham Lincoln created the Secret Service on April 14, 1865 -- the very same day he was shot at Ford's Theatre. *(dailycognition.com)***

**Improving the timing of the nation’s traffic lights could cut traffic delays by 20 percent and gas consumption by 10 percent. *(USA Today, as it appeared in The Week magazine, May 6, 2005)***

**Mark Twain was born during an appearance of Halley's Comet in 1835 and died on the day of its next appearance in 1910. *(dailycognition.com)***

**According to a new report by the National Institute of Standards and Technology, if the 9/11 hijackers had hit the World Trade towers later in the day, when the building was fully occupied, the death toll could have reached 14,000. *(Associated Press, in The Week magazine, July 15, 2005)***

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