**Investment Returns**

**And Jesus said, “With what can we compare the kingdom of God,**

**or what parable shall we use for it?**

**It is like a grain of mustard seed, which,**

**when sown upon the ground, is the smallest of all the seeds on earth;**

**yet when it is sown it grows up and becomes the greatest of all shrubs, and puts forth large branches,**

**so that the birds of the air can make nests in its shade.”**

***(St. Mark 4:30-32)***

**Give, and it will be given to you;
Good measure shaken down and running over
they will pour into your robe.
For with the measure that you measure,
it will be measured to you. *(St. Luke 6: 36-38)***

**There is a boy here who has with him five barley loaves and two fish;**

**but what are these for all of them?**

**And Jesus took the bread and blessed it,**

**and distributed it to those who were sitting down;**

**likewise the fish also, as much as they wanted.**

**When they were filled, he said to his disciples,**

**Gather up the broken pieces which are left over, so that nothing is lost.**

**And they gathered them up,**

**and filled twelve baskets with broken pieces**

**which were left over by those who ate from five barley loaves.**

***(St. John 6:9-13)***

**Overheard: “My accountant is worth every penny he charges because of the time he saves me. This year, for example, he probably saved me five to ten years in prison.” *(Speaker's Idea File)***

***\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\**America purchased Alaska from Russia for $7,200,000 – about 2 cents an acre. *(David Louis, in Fascinating Facts, p. 176)***

**The United States government paid Russia $7,200,000 for Alaska -- which comes to slightly less than two cents an acre. *(Bruce D. Witherspoon, in Astounding Facts, p. 50)***

***\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\**An artist had a dog that meant more to him than anything in the world. One day he broke his leg and the artist was panic-stricken. He ran to the telephone and called an acquaintance, a famous surgeon. “It’s an emergency,” he yelled, “a matter of life and death. Come quick!” The startled surgeon dropped everything and rushed to the home of the artist, expecting the worst. When confronted with the dog, the surgeon, with masterful self-control, said not a word but proceeded to treat the dog with the same skill he would have used on a human being. Then he picked up his instruments and left. Weeks passed, the dog got well, yet the artist never received a bill from the surgeon. The longer he waited the more guilty he felt. Surely he had lost the surgeon’s friendship forever. A few days later, therefore, he made his way to the surgeon’s office, intending to pay all that was asked. The surgeon would not accept his check. “You’re a painter, aren’t you?” he asked. “Certainly.” “Very well, if you will just put a coat of white paint on that cabinet over there, we will call the debt settled.” The artist, a good-natured man, was amused by the doctor’s clever idea of revenge. He smiled and started to work at once. But when the job was completed, instead of a coat of white paint, the panels of the surgeon’s cabinet bore two of the artist’s greatest masterpieces, worth thousands of dollars apiece. *(Bits & Pieces)***

**Although astronauts seem glamorous to most earthbound beings, Apollo 16 crewman Clarlie Duke reveals that fortune does not necessarily accompany fame: Astronauts were paid according to their rank. We did, however, get a little extra, as space flight was considered TDY, or temporary duty. The per diem for TDY at that time was $25. To claim credit, we had to fill out an itinerary. Mine read: Houston to Kennedy Space Center to moon, moon to Pacific Ocean, Pacific Ocean to Houston. The moon trip last 11 days, so that was $275 in extra money. However, as the government provided quarters and meals, that was deducted. I believe I made $1.25 for each day on the trip. *(Charlie Duke with Dotty Duke, in Moonwalker)***

**The Tampa Bay Rays reached the 2008 World Series with the second-lowest payroll among Major League Baseball’s 30 teams -- $44 million. In fact, the Rays paid their entire roster of 25 players less than the New York Yankees paid just two players this season – Alex Rodriguez ($28 million) and Jason Giambi ($23 million). *(Jacksonville, Fla., Times-Union, as it appeared in The Week magazine, October 31, 2008)***

**A small boy brought a dog home and said to his annoyed mother, “Mommy, it only cost me a nickel, and for that we got a dog who's going to have puppies!” *(Milton Berle)***

**Lovers of frozen foods can thank an American taxidermist, Clarence Birdseye from Brooklyn, New York, for them. Having seen people in the Arctic preserving their fish and meat in barrels of seawater, which became quickly frozen, Birdseye realized that rapid freezing meant food would still be fresh when it was later thawed and cooked. In 1923 he spent seven dollars on an electric fan, buckets of brine, and cakes of ice. Six years later he sold his patents and trademarks for twenty-two million dollars. *(Hunter Davies’ Book of Lists, p. 40)***

**A San Francisco woman started with a single bobby pin and in a series of 28 trades flipped it into a house near Nashville. Inspired by a Canadian blogger’s similar 2006 journey, Demi Skipper, 30, documented on social media how she leveraged the original trade of the pin for such items as a pair of earrings, a diamond necklace, several cars, a solar-powered trailer, and finally the two-bedroom house. She’ll move in along with her husband in January. “It’s been so surreal,” Skipper said. “I wake up and think, ‘Is this actually real? Is this actually my house.’” *(The Week magazine, December 31, 2021 / January 7, 2022)***

**Above the fireplace in the home of the original Henry Ford was inscribed this line: “Chop your own wood and it will warm you twice.” *(L. M. Boyd)***

**For the monarchs’ investment of $6,000 in Columbus’s first voyage, Spain had a return of $1,750,000 in gold after only one century. *(Isaac Asimov's Book of Facts, p.***

***\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\**$4,000: The price for which a comic-book collector in Knoxville, Tennessee, recently sold his copy of Amazing Fantasy, issue No. 15 -- featuring the first appearance of Spider-Man. 12 cents: How much the collector paid for the comic nearly 40 years ago at a drugstore. *(Rocky Mountain News, July 19, 2002)***

**A rare edition of a comic in which Superman made his first-ever appearance sold at an online auction house for a record $3.25 million. There are thought to be only 100 remaining copies of that issue, Action Comics #1, which sold for 10 cents when it was released in 1938. *(BBC.com, as it appeared in The Week magazine, April 23, 2021)***

***\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\**A black cook named Tillman commandeered the last prize ship taken by a Confederate privateer during the Civil War. One night, Tillman killed the captain and mates of the prize crew with an ax, and then forced the survivors to sail to Sandy Hook in New York Harbor, where he turned them in. The feat gained him and his ax a job with Barnum’s circus. *(Isaac Asimov’s Book of Facts, p. 418)***

**In 1938, J. F. McCullough and his son, Alex, tested their soft-serve ice cream with an “all-you-can-eat-for-a-dime” special and sold 1,600 servings in two hours. They opened their first store to sell the “queen among dairy products” – Dairy Queen – in 1940 in Joliet, Illinois. *(American Profile Magazine)***

**The cost of such perfection was high. Walt Disney had made Snow White for $1.5 million; the bill for Pinocchio soared to $2.6 million. But, as Walt once said, “If the show is good enough, the public will pay us back for it.” *(John Culhane, in Reader’s Digest)***

**The Internet domain name Pizza.com pulled in $2.6 million at auction. Software entrepreneur Chris Clark registered the name 14 years ago for $20. *(CNET.com, as it appeared in The Week magazine, April 18, 2008)***

**The total cost of constructing the Eiffel Tower in Paris was recovered from sightseers’ fees during the first year after the Tower’s completion. *(Denver P. Tarle, in A Treasury of Trivia, p. 176)***

**Put yourself wholeheartedly into something, and energy grows. It seems inexhaustible. If, on the other hand, you are divided and conflicted about what you are doing, you create anxiety. And the amount of physical and emotional energy consumed by anxiety is exorbitant. *(Dr. Helen De Rosis, in Quote magazine)***

***\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\**The Blair Witch Project, which cost only $22,000 to make, grossed $248 million, making it the film with the highest box office sales to production cost ratio of all time. (Don Voorhees, in The Essential Book of Useless Information, p. 22)**

**For Oscar this year, cheap is chic. Four of the five films nominated for Best Picture cost under $15 million to make, less than a fifth of the average Hollywood budget. Of them, the very cheapest was Crash, which cost $6.5 million and earned six Oscar nods, including three for writer-director-producer Paul Haggis. (Richard Corliss, in Time magazine, 2006)**

***\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\**A financial secretary appended this note to her final annual report: “I wish to express my appreciation for the opportunity of serving as financial secretary for the past five years. I have truly received much more than I have given.” *(Mark W. Radecke, in The Lutheran)***

**Pro football teams tend to overpay to get the top draft pick, according to a new study that examined results from 1988 to 2004. Case in point: Last year, the New York Giants traded several current and future draft picks to the San Diego Chargers for No. 1 pick Eli Manning. The Chargers went on to win their division, while the Giants dropped 10 of 16 games. *(Forbes, as it appeared in The Week magazine, June 17, 2005)***

**Henry Ford shocked his fellow capitalists by more than doubling the daily wages of most of his workers in 1914, eleven years after he had established his first automobile factory. He knew what he was doing. The buying power of his workers was increased, and their raised consumption stimulated buying elsewhere. Ford called it the “wage motive.” *(Isaac Asimov's Book of Facts, p. 62)***

**Frankenstein grossed more than $12 million during the Depression but cost only $275,000 to shoot. *(Ripley’s Believe It or Not!: Book of Chance, p. 18)***

**An investment in knowledge always pays the best interest. *(Benjamin Franklin)***

**They planted a small backyard garden; bought peat moss, fertilizer, and lime. Many young plants and seeds, and tools to dig weeds, and gave it long hours of their time. While they battled the weeds and the insects, their pride and distress were both valid. Still their victory was sweet when they sat down to eat the world’s most expensive fresh salad. *(Sonia L. Fries, in The Saturday Evening Post)***

**A fat lady got on a scale and the hand went all the way around. The little girl watching gasped and said, “Don't tell me you get all that for a penny.” (C. Kennedy)**

**One of the best investments in history was made by twenty individuals who, in 1901, paid $250 each for 500 shares in a new company organized by an erstwhile sidewalk vendor named King C. Gillette. The company manufactured safety razors. In 1903, only fifty-three safety razors were sold in the United States. If you'd made that original investment--and held onto your stock -- today you'd be worth about $50 million. *(Bernie Smith, in The Joy of Trivia, p. 341)*
A woman stockbroker had made millions of dollars for an Arabian oil sheik. He was so pleased he offered her rubies, gold and a silver-plated Rolls-Royce. She declined the gifts, telling him she had merely done her job. But the sheik insisted. “Well,” the woman said, “I've recently taken up golf. A set of golf clubs would be a fine gift.” Weeks went by. One morning the stockbroker received a letter from him. “So far I have bought you three golf clubs,” it said, “but I hope you will not be disappointed because only two of them have swimming pools.” *(Alex Thien, in Milwaukee Sentinel)***

**Two lawyers walked into the office one Monday morning talking about their weekends. “I got a dog for my kids this weekend,” said one. The other attorney replied, “Good trade.” *(Charles M. Nelms, in Reader’s Digest)***

**Just be glad you’re not getting all the government you’re paying for. *(Will Rogers, Jr.)***

**MBAs and JDs get the most bang for their graduate school buck. After paying about $45,000 for school, MBAs earn an average starting salary of $50,835. JDs, after paying about $65,000 for school, pocket an average of $80,000 in their first year. MDs, by contrast, pay about $135,000 for school and start out at $124,000 a year. *(Consumer Reports Money Adviser, as it appeared in The Week magazine, September 9, 2005)***

**Lawyer says to client: “Your guess is as good as mine. That’ll be $350!” *(Reader’s Digest cartoon)***

**On a stormy night many years ago, an elderly man and his wife entered the lobby of a small hotel in Philadelphia. “All the big hotels are filled up,” said the man. “Could you possibly give us a room here?” The clerk explained that there were three conventions in town, and that there were no rooms to be had anywhere. “All our rooms are filled too,” he said, “still I simply can’t send a nice couple like you out in the rain at one o’clock in the morning. Would you perhaps be willing to sleep in my room?” The couple replied that they couldn’t do that, but the clerk insisted. “Don’t worry about me; I’ll make out just fine,” he told them. Next morning, as he paid his bill, the elderly man said to the clerk, “You are the kind of manager who should be the boss of the best hotel in the United States. Maybe someday I’ll build one for you.” The clerk looked at the man and his wife and smiled. The three had a good laugh over the old man’s little joke, and then the clerk helped them with their bags to the street. Two years passed and the clerk had nearly forgotten the incident when he received a letter from the man. It recalled that night and enclosed a round-trip ticket to New York, asking the young man to pay them a visit. When he reached New York the old man led him to the corner of Fifth Avenue and Thirty-fourth Street and pointed to a great new building there, a palace of reddish stone, with turrets and watchtowers, like a castle from fairyland thrusting up into the sky. “That,” said the older man, “is the hotel I have just built for you to manage.” “You must be joking,” the young man said, not quite knowing whether to believe his friend or not. “I most assuredly am not,” said the older man, a sly smile playing around his mouth. The man’s name was William Waldorf Astor. The hotel was the original Waldorf-Astoria and the young clerk, who became its first manager, was George C. Boldt. *(Bits & Pieces)***

**$340 million: The second-biggest jackpot in U.S. lottery history claimed by two couples in Salem, Oregon. Lottery officials confirmed that Steve West, 48, a landscaper, his wife, Carolyn, 47, and his in-laws, Bob and Frances Chaney, held the winning ticket in October 19 Powerball drawing. The four, who live in southern Oregon, had gone in together on $40 worth of tickets. *(Associated Press, as it appeared in the Rocky Mountain News in 2005)***

**The area sold by France to the United States in the Louisiana Purchase was first offered to England, who refused it. The price paid by the United States for the land, some 100 million acres, averaged out to 4 cents an acre. *(David Louis, in Fascinating Facts, p.. 175)***

**About the $24 Peter Minuet paid to the American Indians for Manhattan – invested at 8% compounded daily, that money would be worth more than 30 trillion dollars today. *(Russ Edwards & Jack Kreismer, in The Bathroom Trivia Digest, p. 59)***

**A 1952 Mickey Mantle rookie card graded in mint-plus condition sold for a record $12.6 million, becoming the most valuable piece of sports memorabilia to be sold at auction. The previous owner bought the card in 1991 for $50,000. *(The New York Times, as it appeared in The Week magazine, September 9-16, 2022)***

**If you’d spent $2,250 on 100 shares of McDonald’s stock when it went public in 1965, your shares would have been worth over $1.8 million as of December 31, 2003. *(Uncle John’s Bathroom Reader: Extraordinary Book of Facts, p. 253)***

**Between 1980 and 2010, the median value in a single-family house in California rose from $99,550 to $296,820, or an average of 3.6 percent per year. If the buyer of that median house had opted in 1980 to put the 20 percent down payment of $19,910 in a Dow Jones Industrial Index fund instead, the value of his or her portfolio in 2010 would have been $1.8 million -- $1.5 million more than the house. *(The Week magazine, July 22, 2011)***

**For its investment of $400,000 in the Broadway production My Fair Lady, the Columbia Broadcasting System has earned more than $40 million. *(Isaac Asimov's Book of Facts, p. 60, 1981)***

**In the Netherlands of 1636, you could have paid for a house with three choice tulip bulbs. *(L. M. Boyd)***

**And then there's the shop-a-holic whose friend complimented her on her new car. “Oh, thanks,” the woman replied. “It's very economical. I'm getting about 20 malls per gallon!” *(Nuggets)***

**There is some speculation that if the New York Yankees win the World Series, George Steinbrenner will sell the team. He’s 68, and the franchise’s worth would reach an all-time high, estimated anywhere from $550 million to $900 million. Not bad considering his own personal investment in 1977 was $148,000. *(John Henderson, in The Denver Post, October 18, 1998)*One morning I opened the door to get the newspaper and was surprised to see a strange little dog with our paper in his mouth. Delighted with this unexpected “delivery service,” I fed him some treats. The following morning I was horrified to see the same dog sitting in front of our door, wagging his tail, surrounded by eight newspapers. I spent the rest of that morning returning the papers to their owners. *(Marion Gilbert, in Reminisce magazine)***

**The miracle is the more we share, the more we have. *(Leonard Nimoy)***

**Kyle MacDonald of Montreal wanted to test the barter power of the Internet. So he posted a red paper clip on Craigslist.org in the hope of trading it for something better. Soon, he was offered a fish-shaped pen. MacDonald then exchanged the pen for a smiley-face ceramic doorknob. The doorknob went to someone who gave MacDonald a Coleman camping stove. MacDonald has since bartered his way up to a year’s free rent on a home in Phoenix, and he’s not stopping until he can trade for the deed to a house of his own. “It’s this obsessive thing,” he said. *(The Week magazine, May 5, 2006)***

**If you invested one penny at the time of Christ’s birth and earned five percent interest per year, by 1466 you would have had enough money to buy a ball of gold equal to the weight of the Earth. *(Harry Bright & Jakob Anser, in Are You Kidding Me?, p. 115)*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*
Big surprise – 95 percent of the price of a tub of popcorn at the movies is profit. (Don Voorhees, in The Essential Book of Useless Information, p. 23)**

**Thirty dollars’ worth of raw popcorn can generate $3,000 in sales at a movie theater concession stand. (Los Angeles Times, as it appeared in The Week magazine, March 31, 2006)**

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**The oil-rich nation of Qatar spent $200 billion on the World Cup soccer tournament, in return becoming “the center of the world” for a month. The thrilling and joyous final will never be forgotten, giving the host country a public relations success “no amount of Qatar wealth could buy.” *(The Week magazine, December 30, 2022 / January 6, 2023)***

**The quickest way to double your money is to fold it over and put it back in your pocket. *(Will Rogers)***

**A romantic comedy with indie-film credibility and big-studio profits? The stars of “My Big Fat Greek Wedding” are having their cake and eating it too. Nia Vardalos, John Corbett and producers Tom Hanks and Rita Wilson made the film for $5 million and change, then watched it become the biggest indie hit in U.S. history, pulling in more than $215 million at the box office. Now that's a wedding present to love. *(Time magazine)***

**Did you know that if a person saves $13 a month beginning at birth, they could be a millionaire by the time they reach the age of 65? If they wait until they are age 25, they would have to save $159 a month, and starting at age 40, they would have to save $759 a month! These figures are based on a 10% return, according to the Young Americans Center for Financial Education, and they show that when kids start saving money at an early age, time is clearly on their side. *(Suzy Buglewicz, in Kids’ Pages, 2006)***

**Don’t limit investing to the financial world. Invest something of yourself, and you will be richly rewarded. *(Charles R. Schwab, in You’re Fifty – Now What)***

**Treasure hunter Mel Fisher, born in Hobart, Indiana, searched 16 years before discovering the Atocha, a Spanish galleon lost in 1622 off the coast of Florida. The ship’s treasures, found in 1985, are valued at $400 million. *(Marti Attoun, in American Profile magazine)***

**The law in Atlantic City, N. J., decrees that slot machines there must pay players 83 percent of the take. The slots reportedly are set up to kick out that much in winnings over 8000 revolutions, which normally amount to about a day and a half of play. *(Boyd’s Curiosity Shop, p. 170)***

**On January 31, 1940, Ida May Fuller of Ludlow, Vermont, was the first person to receive a retirement check from the Social Security Administration. She paid $24.75 in taxes during the three years she worked after the inception of the program. She lived to be 100 years old and collected $22,888 in benefits. *(The Daily Chronicles)***

**Your garden soil is like your bank account: In the long run, you can’t afford to withdraw more than you deposit. Whenever you harvest fruits, vegetables, or flowers, you’re making withdrawals. Whenever you dig amendment into the soil or add mulch to the surface, you’re making deposits. Organic amendments – compost and rotted manure, for example – fatten up the soil bank. They rejuvenate poor soil, allow excess water to drain away while leaving enough moisture for roots, and retain nutrients until feeder roots need them. *(Jim McCausland, in Sunset magazine)***

**Most people have heard the expression about selling something for a song. To those who may never have heard it, it means that a sale was for little money, or far less than the actual value involved. The term’s origin undoubtedly goes back many years and whoever first used it certainly didn’t envision the worth of the song Yesterday. Yesterday was written in 1965 by Paul McCartney, who shared the credits with the late John Lennon, as the two did on all their Beatles songs. Those who keep track of such things say that Yesterday has been played live or broadcast on radio and television more than six million times, making it the most frequently performed pop song in history. Entertainer Michael Jackson bought ATV Music in 1985 for $47.5 million, winning the rights to all McCartney-Lennon songs. He outbid McCartney, who had sold his publishing rights in 1969. According to the arrangement, Jackson, as the new publisher, began getting 50 percent of the royalties from McCartney-Lennon songs while McCartney and the Lennon estate (John Lennon was fatally shot outside his New York City apartment in 1980) share about 50 percent, according to one news report. Reportedly McCartney still gets more than $25,000 a year from Yesterday royalties alone. All this for a song. *(Bits & Pieces)***

**In 1908 a young cowboy named Nathan Howard “Jack” Thorp printed “Little Joe,” together with other songs, in a slim volume titled Songs of the Cowboys. Though the collection lacked melody lines, it nonetheless was the first of its kind. Jack sold all the copies he could of the 2,000 he’d had printed, charging 50 cents apiece. What he couldn’t sell, he gave away, not knowing that at the century’s end they’d sell for thousands of dollars each. *(Christine Schultz, in The Old Farmer’s Almanac - 1995)***

**How we spend our days is, of course, how we spend our lives. *(Annie Dillard, in The Writing Life)***

**Did you know: One share of Wal-Mart stock purchased in 1970 for $16.50 is worth 2,048 shares today. A share of McDonald’s stock purchased for $22.50 in 1965 is worth $11,700 today. *(Suzy Buglewicz, in Kids’ Pages, 2006)***

**If you had bought McDonald’s stock in 1981, your shares would have quadrupled in value by 1989. If you had invested $10,000 in Dunkin” Donuts in 1982, you’d have made some $47,000 over the next four years. If you had bought Toys R Us stock in 1978 at $1 per share, you’d have made 25 times your money by 1985. If you’d invested the price of a Subaru car into Subaru stock back in 1977 and sold it in 1986, you’d have been a millionaire. Then again, ask me about Tele-Communications, Inc., and I’ll tell you I wish I’d bought more shares of it. This cable company sold for 12 cents a share in 1977 and $31 a share ten years later--up 250-fold. *(Peter Lynch & John Rothchild, in Reader’s Digest)***

**You must use your talent, whatever it may be, in order to increase it. *(Charles Fillmore, in Prosperity)***

**Goodness is the only investment that never fails. *(Henry David Thoreau)*By a quirk of nature, I lost my last baby tooth when I was past 40. Since the tooth fairy had regularly left quarters for our children’s teeth when they were little, I announced within earshot of my husband that the tooth fairy would owe me “big time.” That night I put my tooth under my pillow. The next morning when I got out of bed, a piece of paper fluttered to the floor. It was a check for $10,000. It was signed “The Tooth Fairy.” *(Michaela Anne Dzurisin, in Reader’s Digest) 39540* As a missionary for the Methodist Church, I hire interpreters to translate for me when I travel to remote areas of the world. When I was in Swaziland in southern Africa, I noticed my translator was going on and on, despite the short statements I was delivering. Finally I stopped and said, “It seems to be taking you a lot longer to say what takes me only seconds. Are you sure you’re translating exactly?” “Oh, no sir!” he said proudly. “I am greatly improving upon what you are saying.” *(D. C. Hightower, in Reader’s Digest) 99514***

**A clothing store in a mid-western city set aside 200 umbrellas for the use of pedestrians on rainy days. Any person could walk in and ask for one without leaving a deposit. He simply left his name and address. At the end of eight months a count showed: umbrellas on hand, 197; storm casualties, one; stolen by the public, two; new accounts opened, many. *(Bits & Pieces)***

**One evening one of the members of the Board arose and announced quietly that he had decided to mortgage everything that he owned in order to provide Unity with the funds needed to buy a lot and begin the erection of a building. He was not a rich man and he had a wife and four little children to provide for, but he had been attending the meetings for several years, and the Fillmores had inspired in him the same kind of faith that they had. He believed in their ideas and felt that it was important that those ideas be carried to as many people as possible. His business associates tried to dissuade him from taking the step. To them Unity was not a good risk. But he was not to be dissuaded. Through him, Unity obtained the money needed. The house and lot at 913 Tracy Avenue were purchased. The plans for the new building were pushed ahead. The man who had mortgaged his property did not lose one cent because he had been willing to stand behind Unity in its need and in a short time he was the owner of a much more successful business than he had had before. *(James Dillet Freeman, in The Story of Unity, p. 121)***

**One of my favorite people of all time is the late Sam Walton, the mastermind behind the Wal-Mart empire. According to Forbes magazine, he was the richest man in America -- until he split up his holdings among his children. Then he and they became the richest, what was it, four or five people in America! You have seen that annual list, haven’t you? Number 10, 9, 8, 7, 6 -- they all have names like Rockefeller and Mellon and Hunt. Then, up at the top of the list, it’s usually Walton, Walton, Walton, Walton, Walton. Fabulous wealth. Incredible riches. *(Jess Gibson, in Can A Lawn Chair Fly?, p. 150)***

**Incorporated in 1886, Strang, Nebraska, is named for a windmill salesman, A. L. Strang, who offered the community, formerly known as Media and Bixby, a free windmill if they would name the town after him. *(American Profile magazine)***

**The worst defense against a menacing yellow-jacket wasp may be the squashing body blow. It could incite nearby wasps into frenzied attack. Entomologist Peter J. Landolt and chemist Robert R. Heath of the USDA’s research station in Gainesville, Fla., have discovered a chemical “alarm pheromone” in the venom of Southern yellow jackets. “If you smash a wasp,” says Landolt, “its venom sac breaks and the pheromone goes into the air. This can provoke guard wasps to attack from nearby nests.” *(New York Times)***

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