**Philanthropy**

**Despite the absence of major nature disasters in 2006, charitable giving in the U.S. hit a record $295 billion last year. Their previous record of $283 billion, set in 2005, included $7.4 billion in donations raised to tsunami relief and Hurricane Katrina. (Financial Times, as it appeared in The Week magazine, July 13, 2007)**

**The required doubling of annual official development assistance to $135 billion in 2006, rising to $195 billion by 2015, pales beside the wealth of high-income countries -- and the world's military budget of $900 billion a year. *(United Nations Report, 2005)***

**Amazon CEO Jeff Bezos, contributed $2 billion to charity in 2018, topping the list of America's biggest donors. It's the first time the world's richest man has cracked the top-50 rankings, and he is well behind Bill Gates' lifetime $45 billion. Bezos came in ahead of No. 2, former New York Mayor Mike Bloomberg, who donated $767 million. *(The Guardian, as it appeared in The Week magazine, March 8, 2019)***

**New York City Mayor Michael Bloomberg, who is worth an estimated $20 billion, is the richest man ever to hold elective office in the U.S. Bloomberg recently gave $30 million of his own money to programs designed to keep minority kids in schools and help ex-convicts find jobs. (New York Post, as it appeared in The Week magazine, August 19-26, 2011)**

**Warren Buffett was America's biggest philanthropist in the five years between 2014 and 2018, giving away $14.7 billion, or 16.3 percent of his net worth, mostly to causes selected by his friends Bill and Melinda Gates, who gave $9.9 billion of their own. (Forbes, as it appeared in The Week magazine, January 31, 2020)**

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**Very few of us have realized the American Dream to the extent Andrew Carnegie did. He arrived from Scotland penniless, got a job in a Pittsburgh steel mill for $4.80 a month, and fifty years later retired with a guaranteed income of one million dollars per month. He gave away 90% of his fortune before he died in 1911, to good causes, of course . . . such as public libraries, among many others. (Bernie Smith, in The Joy of Trivia, p. 40)**

**About $330 million was donated by Andrew Carnegie to libraries, research projects, and world peace endeavors. *(Isaac Asimov’s Book of Facts, p. 56)***

**INDIANA -- From 1886 to 1919, industrialist Andrew Carnegie built 1,679 public libraries across the United States. Indiana reaped the most with 164 libraries. *(American Profile magazine)***

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**Charitable giving in the United States rose 4 percent after two years of big drops. Corporations and individuals donated about $290 billion in 2010, according to the Giving USA Foundation. The increase is one sign of a rebounding economy. *(The Washington Post, as it appeared in The Week magazine, July 1-8, 2011)***

**A year's supply of chocolate bars has been left to the young children of Westgate, England. In this small country village, a local farmer who died childless specified in his will that a bar of chocolate should be handed out every week, for a year from the date of his death, to each village child less than five years old. (Bertram B. Johansson, in The Christian Science Monitor)**

**To help raise funds for the starving poor of Berlin, Albert Einstein in 1930 sold his autograph for $3 a signature and autographed photographs for $5 each. *(Isaac Asimov’s Book of Facts, p. 56)***

**The first nation to receive foreign aid from the United States was Venezuela. In 1812, Venezuela, fighting for its independence from Spain, suffered a severe and damaging earthquake. Congress appropriated $50,000 to help the victims. (Isaac Asimov's Book of Facts, p. 448)**

**As postmaster general of the colonies in rebellion, Benjamin Franklin contributed his entire salary to help the American wounded. (James Meyers, in Mammoth Book of Trivia, p. 209)**

**Boy: “Hey, Sara, do you need some help with those fries?” Sara: “Naw. I can handle them.” Boy: “Well, if you change your mind, I’m here for you. Ready and willing to be of service.” Sara: “Fine. Have some.” Boy: “French fries bring out the philanthropist in me.” Sara: “Not the burger! Not the burger!” (Jerry Scott & Jim Borgman, in Zits comic strip)**

**Good week for: Bill Gates, who has ceded his Forbes ranking as the wealthiest man in the world by giving away more than $28 billion through his charitable foundation. (The Week magazine, March 18, 2011)**

**Bill and Melinda Gates topped the BusinessWeek list of the most generous philanthropists. The couple gave or pledged $10.1 billion between 2000 and 2004. Gordon and Betty Moore of Intel came in second, at $7 billion, while Warren Buffett took third, with $2.7 billion. (BusinessWeek, as it appeared in The Week magazine, December 3, 2004)**

**If you missed "Giving Tuesday," it's not too late to donate to charity this month, said Eleanor Mueller in USA Today. Nonprofits say they're on track for "an especially profitable holiday season," thanks to an increase in charitable giving this fall and "an increasingly prosperous economy." Charitable giving in the U.S. could actually hit a record this year, seven years after peaking at $350 billion, said David Gelles in The New York Times. Social media campaigns have been particularly helpful; the ALS Foundation raised $115 million as a result of its Ice Bucket Challenge this summer. It increasingly looks as though "the American people and the business community have largely shrugged off the financial crisis and resumed their charitable ways." (The Week magazine, December 12, 2014)**

**Since 1950, Rev. Billy Graham has accepted no speaking fees or honoraria and has given away the royalties on 15 of his 17 books.
(Colin Greer, in Parade magazine)**

**Habitat for Humanity, the philanthropy that builds housing for low-income families, is now the eighth-largest home builder in the U.S., says Builder Magazine. It’s ranked just behind Hovnanian Enterprises and ahead of Ryland Homes, two traditional for-profit builders. (The Wall Street Journal, as it appeared in The Week magazine, July 16, 2010)**

**For his entire forty-seven years in government, Herbert Hoover turned over each of his Federal salary checks to charity. He had become independently wealthy before entering politics. (David Louis, in Fascinating Facts, p. 136)**

**Individual charitable giving fell by 3.4 percent last year to $292 billion, after growing by 2.4 percent or more in each of the previous four years. The decrease was spurred by changes in the tax law, as the number of filers itemizing deductions fell from 37 million to 16 million. (The Wall Street Journal, as it appeared in The Week magazine, June 28, 2019)**

**A Kentucky businessman has bought up the entire inventory of a closing Kmart store and donated it to charity. Rankin Paynter, 77, initially scooped up the goods as a business proposition. But on reflection, he decided that the poor around the town of Winchester needed the $200,000 worth of goods more than he did the money. A local community service says Paynter’s donation will help to clothe every struggling family in the area through next winter. “We’ve all been put on this earth to help each other through,” Paynter said. “If I can help people through, I’m happy.” (The Week magazine, June 1, 2012)**

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**After the British burned down Washington in the War of 1812, Thomas Jefferson gave his personal library, which became the foundation of the Library of Congress. (Robert C. Baron, historian)**

**After the Library of Congress burned down in 1814, Thomas Jefferson replenished it with his own 6,000-book collection. (*Uncle John’s Bathroom Reader: Wise Up!, p. 257)***

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**Alfred Nobel, who established the Nobel prizes, owned a factory that manufactured nitroglycerine commercially for the first time. He was an inventor with 129 patents. When he died in 1896 he left more than $9,000,000 to establish and perpetuate the world's most prestigious prizes. (Bernie Smith, in The Joy of Trivia, p. 39)**

**A humanitarian is always a hypocrite. (George Orwell)**

**The charity of the poor: Poor people are naturally more charitable than the rich, new research has found. In a series of social experiments, researchers at the University of California at Berkeley found that people from lower socioeconomic levels consistently are more generous with their money than their upper-class counterparts are. Subjects were given 10 credits, worth actual money, and the choice of keeping them or sharing them with an anonymous partner in another room, in whatever percentage they wished. People who were ranked at the lower end of the socioeconomic scale, which factored in education as well as income, gave away nearly 50 percent more of their credits than did those at the top. When asked what percentage of one's income should be donated to charity, the average response of lower class individuals was 5.6 percent; the average of the wealthiest was just 2.1 percent. "Counterintuitively, psychologist and study author Paul Piff tells The Economist, "the needy or the relatively less wealthy are actually more generous." People lower in society's pecking order, Piff theorizes, know they are more dependent on other people to get by; for them, altruism and compassion are a form of currency that helps build a social network "that instead of money is going to be the resource they can turn to in times of hardship and need." (The Week magazine, August 20, 2010)**

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**Even as a teen, before he became rich, John D. Rockefeller donated 6 percent of his salary to charity. At age twenty, he upped it to 10 percent.**

**(Don Voorhees, in The Super Book of Useless Information, p. 229)**

**John D. Rockefeller made his first contribution to a philanthropic cause at the age of sixteen, which was in 1855. By the time he died, eighty-two years later, the oil magnate had given away $531,326,842. *(Isaac Asimov’s Book of Facts, p. 55)***

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**J. K. Rowling, the author of the beloved “Harry Potter” series, became the first billionaire author in history. However, she fell off the Forbes billionaires list due to her charitable giving and Britain’s high tax rates. She has donated millions to various charities, particularly those supporting single-parent families and multiple sclerosis research. *(2024 Mind-Bending Facts for Curious People, p. 7)***

**Taxpayers reporting less than $50,000 in income provide 19 percent of the money given to charity, but receive only 5 percent of the tax write-offs for donations, according to the Congressional Budget Office. About 70 percent of Americans do not have enough deductions to itemize on their returns, so the vast majority of charitable deductions go to the wealthy. (The Washington Post, as it appeared in The Week magazine, December 14, 2012)**

**Total charitable donations rose 5 percent to $471.4 billion in 2020, a record level, according to the annual Giving USA Foundation report. Giving by companies fell 6.1 percent to 16.9 billion, which the report attributed to a decline in corporate profits and the economic slump. (The New York Times, as it appeared in The Week magazine, June 25, 2021)**

**Minimum number of times the United States has deployed troops abroad in its 226-year history: 277. *(Harper's Index, as it appeared in the Rocky Mountain News, December 5, 2002)***

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