Power of One

**You cleared the ground for it;**

**it took deep root and filled the land.**

**The mountains were covered with its shade,**

**the mighty cedars with its branches.**

**(Psalm 80: 9-10)**

**Gray-headed albatrosses, famed for flocking to the South Georgia Islands near Antarctica to mate and raise chicks, routinely circle the globe between breeding seasons in a restless search for fish, British scientists discovered. For a study appearing this week in the journal Science, researchers for the British Antarctic Survey attached electronic locators to 22 birds. The researchers found that more than half of the birds flew completely around the world. One bird circled the globe three times in 18 months. *(Associated Press, as it appeared in Rocky Mountain News, January 14, 2005)***

**GREATEST MAN WHO EVER LIVED: American plant breeder Norman Borlaug may be the most important person who ever lived. During the mid-twentieth century, he developed high-yielding, disease-resistant grains and introduced moder n farming techniques to numerous Third World countries, saving an estimated 1 billion people from death by starvation. Oh, yes, he won the Nobel Prize for Peace in 1970. (Don Voorhees, in The Essential Book of Useless Information, p. 203)**

**When the Apollo 12 astronauts landed on the moon, the impact caused the moon’s surface to vibrate for fifty-five minutes. The vibrations were picked up by laboratory instruments, leading geologists to theorize that the moon’s surface is composed of many fragile layers of rock. *(David Louis, in Fascinating Facts, p. 174)***

**Researchers and astronauts testified last week before a Senate subcommittee about the potential threat of large asteroids striking the Earth. Among the testimony: 10% - The chance in this lifetime that a 60-meter asteroid will strike some part of Earth; 10 megatons of energy would be generated by the impact. 700 Hiroshima-sized bombs blasted simultaneously: The amount of damage such an impact could do. *(Scripps Howard News Service)***

**Bank error in your favor: The Commercial Bank of Ethiopia lost $40 million last week when an ATM glitch allowed customers to withdraw more money than they had in their accounts. The state-owned bank discovered the software problem after a few hours and halted all transactions, but by then college students had shared the news widely. The bank said it won’t press charges against the thousands of people who withdrew excess funds if they return the money voluntarily. A student at Jimma University Institute of Technology told the BBC he “didn’t believe it” when his friends messaged him about 1 a.m. on a Saturday about an ATM gone wild – adding that he didn’t know anyone who’d returned the surprise bonanza. *(The Week magazine, March 29, 2024)*  
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About 98 percent of Hiroshima’s construction was flattened by the atomic bomb. *(L. M. Boyd)***

**The first atomic bomb test blast, conducted in New Mexico in 1945, could be heard one hundred miles away. The light from the fireball could be seen 150 miles away, and windows were shattered 280 miles from the detonation. *(Don Voorhees, in The Indispensable Book of Useless Information, p. 181)***

***\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\**The upcoming birth of Prince William and Kate Middleton’s child is expected to generate a $380 million bump for the British economy, including the sale of millions of souvenirs and trinkets, and the opening of an estimated 3 million bottles of sparkling wine. *(Los Angeles Times, as it appeared in The Week magazine, July 5-12, 2013)***

**Good week for: Passive aggression, after Louisiana Family Eyecare offered to "GLADLY provide no-cost eye exams to all NFL officials," so other football fans don't "feel our pain." A blown pass-interference call in last week's NFC championship game cost the New Orleans Saints a place in the Super Bowl. *(The Week magazine, February 1, 2019)***

**About ten thousand years ago, the first person with blue eyes was born somewhere in northern Europe after a single genetic mutation. All blue-eyed people today can thank this one individual. (Don Voorhees, in The Essential Book of Useless Information, p. 138)**

**Remarkable how your body turns food into energy. With that efficiency, according to the experts, if you were a car, you’d get 900 miles to the gallon. *(L. M. Boyd)***

***\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\**The brain can record about 86 million bits of information each day. Every second, 100,000 chemical reactions occur in your brain. *(Uncle John’s Unstoppable Bathroom Reader, p. 389)***

**There are at least one hundred thousand chemical reactions going on in a normal human brain every second. (*Noel Botham, in The Ultimate Book of Useless Information, p. 65)***

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**An old professor was showing a new professor around campus. They came on**

**a group of students on their knees in a brick courtyard, pencils and paper in hand. “What are they doing?” the new professor asked. “Each year I ask the freshmen how many bricks it took to finish paving this courtyard. They never get it right.” “That doesn’t seem so difficult,” the new professor said. “What’s the answer?” “One,” the old professor said. *(Rocky Mountain News)***

**When the Efremov family of Olenyok, Russia, took their vacation in distant Yakutsk this summer, they brought along their beloved 2-year-old cat, Kuzya. But Kuzya ran away, and after weeks of fruitless searching, the family returned home, assuming he was dead. Three months later, Kuzya turned up on their doorstep, having apparently trekked 1,300 miles east, across Siberia. “There were bite marks on the cat’s tail and his claws had been worn away to nothing,” said one family member. “It’s unbelievable that he made it across Siberian woods and hills, and crossed rivers and lakes to get home.” *(The Week magazine, January 7, 2005)***

**Children are very adept at comprehending modern statistics. When they say, “Everyone else is allowed to,” it is usually based on a survey of one. *(Paul Sweeney, in The Quarterly)***

**It turned out to be the worst war in American history. It was called the Civil War, but there was nothing civil about it. More than 620,000 Americans died; cities were destroyed, farms burned, and homes leveled. On one bloody day at a place called Antietam, more men were killed than on any other day in our history. The total deaths were almost as many in all of our other wars combined. *(Joy Hakim, in Freedom: A History of Us, p. 124)***

**In 1540, a European first witnessed the glory now known as the Grand Canyon. Two hundred twenty-seven miles of stone were etched one mile deep by the Colorado River. The canyon’s most popular sites include the Flaming Gorge, Disaster Falls, and Marble Canyon. A glass-bottomed skywalk allows viewing 70 feet out and 4000 feet above the Colorado. *(Mary A. Hamilton, in Tidbits)***

**The first person to put colored lights on a Christmas tree was Edward Johnson, an executive at Edison’s electric company, who adorned the evergreen in his parlor with them in 1882. This created such a buzz that by 1890, Edison began selling the lights commercially.(Don Voorhees, in The Essential Book of Useless Information, p. 63)**

**The Macintosh computer was introduced to the world in a TV commercial that ran just once, during halftime of the Super Bowl in 1984. It is considered to be the greatest commercial of all time by Advertising Age. (Don Voorhees, in The Essential Book of Useless Information, p. 18)**

**Covid-19 robbed a total of 5.5 million years of life from the Americans it killed in 2020, according to a Pew Research Center analysis. Covid deaths shortened victims' lives by an average of 14 years. *(The Hill.com, as it appeared in The Week magazine, July 2, 2021)***

**\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*One golden day redeems a weary year. *(Celia Thaxter, poet)***

**Faced with dwindling mail volume and rising costs, the U.S. Postal Service could be forced to cut out one day of mail delivery, Postmaster General John Potter told Congress, asking lawmakers to lift the requirement that the agency deliver mail six days a week. A Postal Service study estimated that going from six-day to five-day delivery would save $3.5 billion. *(Associated Press, as it appeared in the Rocky Mountain News, January 29, 2009)***

***\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\**Americans opened around 650,000 credit union accounts between September 29 – the day Bank of America announced its now-cancelled $5 debit fee – and early November, according to the Credit Union National Association. Credit unions took on about 600,000 new customers in all of last year. *(Time.com, as it appeared in The Week magazine, November 18, 2011)***

***\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\**How debt went out of control: How did the U.S. run up so much debt? The crucial turning point came back in 2001, said Lori Montgomery. At the time, Uncle Sam was actually running surpluses, and “the outlook was so rosy” that forecasters were predicting the U.S. could pay back every dime it had ever borrowed. That’s when President George W. Bush made a pivotal decision: Rather than use surpluses to pay down the national debt or fix Social Security, Bush elected to push through two massive tax cuts, on the grounds that “the surplus is the people’s money.” Bush and Congress then financed two wars at the cost of $1.3 trillion, spent $272 billion on a Medicare prescription benefit, and expanded other defense and domestic spending. When the economy cratered in 2008, it cut deeply into revenues already diminished by Bush’s tax cuts. All told, Congressional Budget Office statistics show, Bush’s policies account for more than $7 trillion of the debt the U.S. has accumulated over the past decade. President Obama’s policies, including his $719 billion stimulus program, have added $1.7 trillion to that debt. Today, future budget forecasts “are unrelievedly gloomy, showing huge deficits essentially forever.” And it all began with a choice, 10 years ago, to cut taxes to their lowest level in 60 years, with no cuts in spending. *(The Week magazine, August 19-26, 2011)***

**Since the Roe vs. Wade decision in 1973, more than 25 million American women have had abortions. *(The New York Times, as it appeared in The Week magazine, September 30, 2005)***

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**In the 1400s, China built huge ships and led all seafaring nations. Suddenly by decree, rulers outlawed shipbuilding and turned isolationist. Worldwide exploration was taken over by Portugal, Spain, Holland and England. Were it not for that decree, historians say, China would have dominated the oceans, and so the world. *(L. M. Boyd)***

**One Sayyio Said ruled Zanzibar Island in the mid-1900s. He decreed that three clove trees be planted every time one palm tree fell. It was this order, largely, that caused Zanzibar eventually to become known as “Spice Island.” (L. M. Boyd)**

***\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\**The 2004 Indian Ocean earthquake that caused the deadliest tsunami on record released 550 million times more energy than the Hiroshima bomb, or enough energy to power the United States for 370 years. The explosion was so powerful that it altered the Earth’s rotation, shortening the length of the day by 2.68 microseconds. *(Harry Bright & Jakob Anser, in Are You Kidding Me?, p. 95)***

**Japan’s 9.0 magnitude earthquake released so much energy that it shifted the position of the Earth’s axis by about 6.5 inches, according to estimates by the Jet Propulsion Laboratory in California. The massive quake, caused by the sudden slipping of one giant tectonic plate under another, moved Japan 12 feet closer to North America. *(Los Angeles Times, as it appeared in The Week magazine, March 25, 2011)***

***\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\**On January 19, 1953, 44 million viewers, a full 72 percent of all U.S. homes with a television, tuned in to episode No. 56 of the popular ‘50s television sitcom “I Love Lucy.” In “Lucy goes to the Hospital,” Lucy Ricardo, famously played by Lucille Ball, gives birth to a son. *(MOMENTS IN TIME – The History Channel)***

**The April eruption of Iceland’s Eyjafjallajokull volcano, which snarled air travel over Europe for more than a week, stranded more than 310,000 business travelers and forced the cancellation of about 5,600 business meetings. (Los Angeles Times, as it appeared in The Week magazine, May 14, 2010)**

**After an advisor to Mitt Romney suggested that the candidate’s general election campaign could start afresh after the primary – “almost like an Etch-A-Sketch” – Amazon sales for the toy soared more than 2,000 percent and the stock price of its maker, Ohio Art Company, more than doubled. *(Politico.com, as it appeared in The Week magazine, April 6, 2012)***

**DNA studies have determined that all humans alive today are related to one female nicknamed “African Eve,” who lived in northeastern Africa about 140,000 years ago. (Don Voorhees, in The Essential Book of Useless Information, p. 138)**

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**Cuts to U.S. foreign aid have “slammed humanitarian projects worldwide,” said Gerald Imray in the Associated Press, and will inflict suffering on untold millions. Having ordered a 90-day freeze and review of all foreign assistance in January, the Trump administration announced last week that it was terminating 90 percent of USAID’s contracts and cutting $60 billion in U.S. assistance. The assault has “stunned” nonprofits whose efforts to fight hunger, disease, and instability are now shuttering. Among the 10,000 contracts canceled was funding for a nutrition program run by U.S. based NGO Alight, which fed 1,700 malnourished children daily in Somalia. Some “absolutely” will die, said Alight head Jocelyn Wyatt. Food assistance for more than 1 million Ethiopians has been halted, as have maternal health-care programs in Syria, refugee assistance in Thailand, and HIV prevention efforts that have saved millions of lives in Africa. “Wee are being pushed off a cliff,” said an HIV doctor in South Africa. (The Week magazine, March 14, 2025)**

**Elon Musk thinks it’s wonderful to take a chain saw to the federal government and workforce – like playing Doom or Grand Theft Auto, with his fanboys cheering every fatal dismemberment. But in the real world, his DOGE gang’s reckless butchery, enabled and cheered on by President Trump, is going to not only cost tens of thousands of public servants their livelihoods but also cost many people their lives. In coming years, the Trump administration’s indifference, ignorance, and sadistic cruelty will quite literally kill hundreds of thousands here and abroad, and cause enormous suffering. The misery has already begun. Nicholas Enrich, a senior administrator at USAID, estimated in a memo leaked this week that the gutting of the agency’s staff and programs – which constitute less than 1 percent of federal spending – would cause 166,000 additional malaria deaths, 200,000 children to be paralyzed by polio, and 1 million children to suffer severe malnutrition. The freeze on $6.5 billion in funding for HIV treatment in Africa has cut off life-saving medication to at least 5.5 million people, and may cause a resurgence in the virus’ spread. So what? Says Musk. It’s time for USAID “to die.” Americans, too, will die, as funding is stripped for cancer research, infectious-disease prevention, hurricane forecasting, climate change response, Medicaid, and veterans’ care. (William Falk, in The Week magazine, March 14, 2025)**

**U.S. strands employees: The Trump administration’s freeze on USAID funding last month put the lives of American workers and their families in Congo in danger, USAID workers charged this week in multiple lawsuits. The workers were ordered to return to the U.S. on their own, with no government assistance, while Kinshasa had erupted in riots and looters were overrunning their homes. Some say they had to flee with just a backpack, leaving all their possessions behind, even the family dog. One worker said he had to pay thousands of dollars to get his family out in a harrowing journey by boat and plane. Another worker whose pregnant wife began hemorrhaging was told USAID had no money for medical evacuations; she remains in a local hospital. Because of the funding freeze, none of the workers have been reimbursed. The government has “completely failed,” said Randall Chester of the foreign service workers’ union. (The Week magazine, March 14, 2025)**

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**Where was the first U.S. Gold Rush? Not California – North Carolina, in 1803. (Started when a boy found a 17-pound nugget on his father’s farm.) It supplied all the gold for the nation’s mints until 1829. *(Uncle John’s Unstoppable Bathroom Reader, p. 16)***

**Emerson once said, “The creation of a thousand forests is in one acorn.” Our heart, which is no larger than a fist, pumps enough blood every day to fill an ordinary railroad tank car. The large is made up of the little. Little events and happenings are shaping our lives. Let us take care of little things. *(Rev. Paul S. Osumi)***

**The future of the nation was at stake. Would the grand American experiment last? Or would this union of states -- this federal republic -- end up in history books as an idealistic scheme that failed? If so, then the skeptics would be right: ideas like equality, self-government, and justice for all don’t work long in the real world. We were trying something that was outside the chain of history. Born of an idea, not of ancient peoples and established procedures, it had taken hubris, and a bit of luck, to establish the American nation. There was nothing inevitable about our continued existence. All we had was the power of an idea. *(Joy Hakim, in Freedom: A History of Us, p. 125)***

**Charlie Brown: “It only takes one to hit it. It only takes one to hit it! The game is never over until the last man is out! I can still be a hero. It only takes one to hit it! Strike three! That wasn’t the one!” *(Charles Schulz, in Peanuts comic strip)***

**With the success of his new movie, Space Jam, basketball superstar LeBron James has now earned over $700 million in his off-the-court endeavors in addition to $346 million in contracts from the NBA. He is the first U. S. athlete**

**in the four major sports to accumulate $1 billion in earnings while still active in the game. *(MarketWatch.com, as it appeared in The Week magazine, August 13, 2021)***

**When I got cut from the varsity team as a sophomore in high school, I**

**learned something. I knew I never wanted to feel that bad again. I never wanted to have that taste in my mouth, that hole in my stomach. So I set a goal of becoming a starter on the varsity. *(Michael Jordan, basketball star)***

**Presidential touch of gold? John F. Kennedy loved spy novels. At a chance encounter during a press conference JFK mentioned to Ian Fleming, author of the James Bond series, how much he enjoyed the books. Shortly afterward book sales soared and were turned in to the 007 series of movies. *(Charlotte Lowe, in Useless History Fact-O-Pedia, p. 153)***

**In 1221, Genghis Khan killed 1,748,000 people at Nishapur in one hour. *(David Louis, in Fascinating Facts, p. 179)***

**Did I tell you a lightning bolt is five times hotter than the surface of the sun? *(Boyd's Curiosity Shop, p. 171)*  
A man’s testicles produce 72 million sperm a day – enough in six weeks to impregnate the entire world’s female population. *(Noel Botham, in The World’s Greatest Book of Useless Information, p. 105)***

**In their encyclopedia, “Elements of Mathematics,” a group of French mathematicians working under the collective pseudonym of Nicholas Bourbaki spent 200 pages just introducing matters relating to the number 1. *(Isaac Asimov's Book of Facts, p. 296)***

**One puff of nicotine will, within eight to 10 seconds, create a powerful dopamine explosion in your brain that your mind pathways will make nearly impossible to forget. This means that smokers who are trying to quit are not battling a full pack or even a single cigarette, but that single puff of nicotine will undermine their hard work and greatly increase their odds for a relapse. (Christopher S. Bowlin)**

**Where was the first U.S. Gold Rush? Not California – North Carolina, in 1803. (Started when a boy found a 17-pound nugget on his father’s farm.) It supplied all the gold for the nation’s mints until 1829. *(Uncle John’s Unstoppable Bathroom Reder, on page 16)***

**Sir William Osler, visiting one of London’s leading children’s hospitals, noticed that in a convalescent ward all the children were clustered at one end of the room dressing their dolls, playing games and playing in the sandbox – all except for one little girl, who sat forlornly on the edge of her high, narrow bed, clutching a cheap doll. The great physician looked at the lonely little figure, then at the ward nurse. “We’ve tried to get Susan to play,” the nurse whispered, “but the other children just won’t have anything to do with her. You see, no one comes to see her. Her mother is dead, and her father has been here just once – he brought her that doll. The children have a strange code. Visitors mean so much. If you don’t get visitors, you are ignored. Sir William walked over to the child’s bed and asked her in a voice enough for the others to hear, “May I sit down, please?” The little girl’s eyes lit up. “I can’t stay very long this visit,” Osler went on, “but I have wanted to see you so badly.” For five minutes he sat talking to her, even inquiring about her doll’s health and solemnly pulling out his stethoscope to listen to the doll’s chest. And as he left, he turned to the youngster and said in a carrying voice, “You won’t forget our secret, will you? And mind, don’t tell anyone.” At the door he looked back. His new friend was now the center of a curious and admiring throng. *(Bits & Pieces)***

**One chance is all you need. *(Jesse Owens, Olympic gold medal winner)***

**WHAT’S THE HURRY?: 6 – The number of days (as of today) that Al, a plump little barn owl chick, has held up construction on the $35 million Simi Valley Hospital Patient Care Tower in California. Discovered in a nest on a second-floor stairwell, the chick, although not an endangered species, is protected by the federal government and can only be removed after the proper permits are obtained. Officials hope to take Al to the Ojai Raptor Center. *(Los Angeles Daily News, as it appeared in the Rocky Mountain News, May 11, 2005)***

**What one pair produces: Cockroaches -- 30,000 young in one year; Termites -- 30,000 in one day; Frogs -- 250,000 in lifetime; Red crabs -- 3,000 at one time; Locusts -- 1,000 at one time; Army ants -- 100,000 at one time. *(World Features Syndicate)***

***\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\**Annie was employed by the nation’s largest clothing manufacturer, Hart, Schaffner & Marx. When the company announced a salary cut for its employees, Annie walked out--just walked off the job. Annie Shapiro took sixteen other garment workers with her. And so began one of the toughest strikes in Chicago history. As contract shops went, it was not a bad working environment. The walkout was clearly the result of a recent cut in pay. As for the salary cut at Hart. Schaffner & Marx’s shop number five, the reduction in pay which had inspired Annie Shapiro and her friends to walk out in the first place, that salary cut stood. Annie and her fellow workers returned to work under virtually the same conditions they had fled. Students of social history maintain that the garment workers’ strike of 1910 led, at least indirectly, to the establishment of the Amalgamated Clothing Workers of America. Mostly forgotten is this: Annie Shapiro had been sewing pockets in men’s pants for four cents apiece. Her employer reduced that wage rate to three and three-quarters cents. That means Annie walked out, and tens of thousands struck in sympathy, and a half-dozen people were killed--over one-fourth of one penny. *(Paul Aurandt, in Destiny & 102 Other Real Life Mysteries, p. 84)*  
Every one-penny rise in the cost of a gallon of gas takes $1 billion of consumer spending away from other goods in the course of a year, according to an analysis by Credit Suisse bank. A 50-cent increase this year would thus divert $50 billion away from consumer spending. *(Bloomberg Businessweek, as it appeared in The Week magazine, March 30, 2012)***

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**In 1992, Pepsi ran a contest in the Philippines offering 1 million pesos to anyone finding a bottle cap with the number 349 on it. Somehow, the company printed half a million such caps. The potential payout would have been about $18 billion. Instead, Pepsi paid out nineteen dollars per cap. The end result was not good. Pepsi still paid out $10 million, had their bottling plant attacked, and some of their execs had to flee the country. (Don Voorhees, in *The Perfectly Useless Book of Useless Information, p. 121)***

**The worst plague of all time – that is, the one that killed the most people in the shortest period of time – was not the bubonic plague of the fourteenth century; it was the Spanish Flu pandemic of 1918-1919, which took more than 20 million lives in a matter of months. *(Harry Bright & Harlan Briscoe, in So, Now You Know, p. 155)***

**About two dozen people were evacuated from Grand Junction’s airport Sunday night after authorities found a suspicious item in a man’s suitcase. Transportation Safety Authority workers spotted a plastic container filled with liquid that had what looked like wires sticking out of it. What was this suspicious item? It turned out to be a water balloon toy. And the wires? Spigots to spray water. The airport opened 45 minutes later, and no charges were filed. *(Rocky Mountain News, January 18, 2005)***

**Roman Catholic clergymen were not forbidden to marry until 385 A.D., when Pope Siricius decreed that it would be a good discipline for bishops, priests, and deacons. Those who were married at the time were expected to separate. Many did not agree and left the priesthood. Ironically, the first Pope, Peter, was himself a husband. *(Jeff Rovin, in The Unbelievable Truth!, p. 22)*  
  
In 1904, there was a debate in the U.S. Congress over whether to build a canal in Nicaragua or Panama. Opponents of Nicaragua showed members of Congress a Nicaraguan stamp. That stamp pictured a volcano in Nicaragua. Congress was afraid the volcano in Nicaragua might someday destroy the canal. So, Congress voted instead to build the canal in Panama -- all because of a postage stamp. (Charles Reichblum, in Knowledge in a Nutshell)**

**The patient went to his doctor for a check-up and the doctor wrote out a prescription for him in his usual illegible writing. The patient put it in his pocket, but he forgot to have it filled. Every morning for two years he showed it to the conductor as a railroad pass. Twice it got him into the movies, once into a baseball park and once into the symphony. He got a raise at work by showing it as a note from the boss. One day he mislaid it. His daughter picked it up, played it on the piano and won a scholarship to a conservatory of music. (Tal D. Bonham, in Another Treasury of Clean Jokes)**

**Most people never heard of a man who should be one of the great heroes of America. Caesar Rodney rode eighty miles on horseback to resolve a deadlock in the Delaware delegation, and thus enable the Continental Congress to vote for independence. Had he not made it in time, the vote would have been indecisive. So here’s to Rodney, the one man who triggered the birth of a nation. (Bernie Smith, in The Joy of Trivia, p. 241)**

**Nine out of 10 car crackups wouldn’t happen if drivers could step on the brakes one second sooner. So claims Mercedes-Benz President Karl Heinz Faber. *(L. M. Boyd)***

**Ladies’ Home Journal lost 75,000 subscribers in 1906, when they ran a series of articles on venereal disease.(Don Voorhees, in The Essential Book of Useless Information, p. 133)**

**A Catholic priest in Phoenix used a single incorrect word in baptism ceremonies over his 20-year career – invalidating the rite for thousands of people. As he poured the holy water, the Rev. Andres Arango said “We baptize you,” rather than “I baptize.” Bishop Thomas Olmsted of the Diocese of Phoenix sent out a message to parishioners notifying them they will need to be re-baptized. “If you were baptized using the wrong words, that means your baptism is invalid,” he said. Arango apologized and asked for “forgiveness and understanding.” *(The Week magazine, March 4, 2022)***

**Tom Fuller, a slave brought to America when he was fourteen years old, could tell the exact number of seconds in any given length of time. Once, when asked to give the precise number of seconds in seventy years, he obliged in less than one and a half minutes. Yet Fuller could neither read nor write. (David Louis, in Fascinating Facts, p. 121)**

***\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\**An inch of snow falling evenly on 1 acre of ground is equivalent to about 2,715 gallons of water. (Noel Botham, in The Book of Useless Information, p. 188)**

**“Tell me the weight of a snowflake,” a coal-mouse asked a wild dove. “Nothing more than nothing,” was the answer. “In that case, I must tell you a marvelous story,” the coal-mouse said. “I sat on the branch of a fir, close to its trunk, when it began to snow – not heavily, not in a raging blizzard – no, just like in a dream, without a sound and without any violence. Since I did not have anything better to do, I counted the snowflakes settling on the twigs and needles of my branch. Their number was exactly 3,741,952. When the 3,741,953rd dropped onto the branch, nothing more than nothing, as you say – the branch broke off.” Having said that, the coal-mouse flew away. The dove, since Noah’s time an authority on the matter, thought about the story for awhile, and finally said to herself, “Perhaps there is only one person’s voice lacking for peace to come to the world.” *(Kurt Kauter, in New Fables, Thus Spoke The Carabou) 53***

***\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\**A single large solar flare achieves searing temperatures of tens of millions of degrees, and exhibits an explosive power equivalent to a billion hydrogen bombs, all fired at once. So power-packed are such flares that they can cause disruption on earth more than 90 million miles away. Compass needles swing madly, navigation goes haywire, electrical equipment misbehaves and short-wave radio is blotted out or badly distorted. Above the North and South poles, high-energy atomic fragments seem to set the sky on fire; the night burns with the auroras the ancients ascribed to angry gods or mischievous devils. *(Lennard Bickel, in Reader’s Digest)***

**Elon Musk versus the sun: SpaceX lost 40 satellites to a surprise solar storm, said Jackie Wattles in CNN.com. Elon Musk’s space-exploration startup launched 49 of its small Starlink communication satellites on Feb. 3. But before they were able to completely exit the atmosphere, they were knocked out of commission last week. “Streams of energized particles, or solar winds, emitted from the sun” days earlier thickened the Earth’s upper atmosphere. The storm added enough atmospheric drag that the satellites “weren’t able to reach their intended orbit” and are expected to disintegrate. Astronomers say the sun is entering an active period of its solar cycle, producing more “solar flares and mass ejection events” that could interfere with future space launches. *(The Week magazine, February 25, 2022)***

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**Who wrote the song Happy Birthday? This, possibly the best-known song ever written, was composed by Mildred Hill, a pianist and teacher in Kentucky, and published in 1893. The original words were “Good Morning to All,” written by Mildred’s sister Patty, also a teacher, as a daily classroom greeting. The birthday lyrics were added later by Patty. Today, Warner/Chappell Music owns the copyright. Each time the song is played on air or film, the company and a foundation created by the Hill family receive a fee, generating roughly $2 million every year. *(Reader’s Digest, in the April, 2000 issue, on page 145)***

**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)***

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**Only takes the space shuttle about two minutes to get out of what we call “air.” *(L. M. Boyd)*  
The British Department of Education had to pulp 48,000 copies of a pamphlet designed to improve literacy in the year 2000 . . . because of a spelling mistake. The word “vocabulary” had been spelled incorrectly. *(Geoff Tibballs, in The Giant Bathroom Book of Dumbology, p. 61)***

**In just one second, the sun releases more energy than mankind has produced since the creation, including all the engines, power plants, and bombs ever constructed. *(Donald B. DeYoung, in* Astronomy *and the Bible, p. 55)***

**Pop superstar Taylor Swift endorsed Vice President Kamala Harris' presidential candidacy on Tuesday night after the high-stakes debate with former President Donald Trump, calling the Democratic nominee a "steady-handed, gifted leader.""I will be casting my vote for Kamala Harris and Tim Walz in the 2024 Presidential Election," Swift said in a post on Instagram to her more than 283 million followers. "I’m voting for @kamalaharris because she fights for the rights and causes I believe need a warrior to champion them. I think she is a steady-handed, gifted leader and I believe we can accomplish so much more in this country if we are led by calm and not chaos." *(***[***Daniel Arkin***](https://www.nbcnews.com/author/daniel-arkin-ncpn1206)***, September 10, 2024)***

**Indiana University’s greatest swimmer was Mark Spitz, who won seven gold medals in the 1972 Olympic games. No other Olympic athlete has won so many gold medals in a single year. *(Peter Fossel, in American Profile magazine, March 28, 2004)***

**A teardrop can kill a million germs. (L. M. Boyd)**

**An unvaccinated elementary school teacher in Marin County, California, infected half the students in her class of 24 after she briefly took her mask off to read a story. Most of the students infected were in the two rows closest to her desk, according to a CDC case study – and many of them spread the virus to their family members. *(The Washington Post, as it appeared in The Week magazine, September 10/September 17, 2021)***

**A record $279 million award was given by the SEC last month to the whistle-blower who exposed a bribery scandal involving the telecom company Ericsson. The company settled with U.S. authorities for $1.1 billion in 2019. *(The Wall Street Journal, as it appeared in The Week magazine, June 9, 2023)***

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