**Starting Somewhere**

**His lord said to him,   
Well done, good and reliable servant;   
you have been faithful over a little,   
I will appoint you over much;   
enter into your master’s joy.  *(St. Matthew 25:21)***

**Richard DeVos and Jay van Andel of Amway fame started their company in their basements after running a drive-in restaurant. *(Paul Craig Roberts, in Reader’s Digest)***

**Start where you are. Use what you have. Do what you can. *(Arthur Ashe)***

**Several of these billion-dollar ideas were launched in basements or garages on shoestring budgets. Hewlett-Packard, the computer giant, came out of $538 worth of electronic parts in David Packard’s garage. Wal-Mart came out of a five-and-dime store in Newport, Arkansas. Richard DeVos and Jay Van Andel started Amway Corporation in their basements, from which distributed a biodegradable cleaner they bought from a Detroit chemist. *(Peter Lynch & John Rothchild, in Reader’s Digest)***

**Where they were born:   
Rudolph Nureyev -- born on Trans-Siberian train   
Sylvester Stallone -- in charity hospital   
Red Skelton -- in two-room shack   
Calvin Coolidge -- in back room of country store   
Babe Ruth -- in second-floor row house   
Mario Cuomo -- above family grocery store   
Dolly Parton -- in one-room shack (doctor was paid with sack of cornmeal). *(World Features Syndicate)  
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**Their business beginnings:   
Pepperidge Farms -- started as mail-order business   
Marriott -- began as nine-seat root beer stand   
Hewlett-Packard -- first four years in a garage   
Walt Disney -- made first film in uncle’s garage   
Penguin Books -- first housed in crypt of a church   
Smith Brothers Cough Drops -- first made in home kitchen. *(World Features Syndicate)*  
Business beginnings:  
Gucci -- was a saddlery company  
Hewlett-Packard -- two years before first employees hired  
Harrods -- was a grocery store  
Harley-Davidson -- made four motorcycles first year  
Zagat restaurant guides -- first survey made for friends only  
BMW -- 12 years before first car made (originally made aircraft engines and motorcycles). *(World Features Syndicate)*  
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**Walter Chrysler, another giant in the automobile industry, started as a shop apprentice for a western railroad and became superintendent of locomotive power at 33. At 35 he changed to another firm, at a lower salary. At 37 he changed again, to the Buick Motor Company, this time for exactly half his previous salary. Why did Chrysler keep changing jobs, making less money each time? Not because he was incompetent -- it was for love of the new job. *(Bits & Pieces)* 4279521  
  
Winston Churchill was born in a ladies’ cloakroom in the ancestral castle of Blenheim. His mother was attending a dance there when she prematurely delivered. *(Isaac Asimov’s Book of Facts, p. 425)***

**Where five well-known companies started:   
1. Reader’s Digest -- in Greenwich Village apartment   
2. Playboy -- at a card table in Hugh Hefner’s apartment  
3. J. D. Powers -- at founder’s kitchen table  
4. PC World magazine -- in founder’s spare bedroom  
5. Mars candy -- in room above kitchen. *(World Features Syndicate)***

**Miami Beach pharmacist Benjamin Green invented the first suntan lotion by cooking cocoa butter in a granite coffeepot on his wife’s stove, and then testing the batch on his own head. His invention was introduced as Coppertone Suntan Cream in 1944. *(Joe Edelman & David Samson, in Useless Knowledge, p. 104)***

**Edson de Castro set up Data General Corporation on kitchen tables inside an empty beauty salon in Hudsson, Massachusetts. The company sold more than $650 million worth of computers in 1981. *(Ripley’s Believe It or Not!: Book of Chance, p. 90)***

**Where they were developed:   
Photocopy machine -- in an apartment kitchen  
Marconi’s wireless telegraph -- did early work in his attic  
Ford’s first car -- in an investor’s garage  
Watt’s steam engine -- in corner of dad’s workshop; Electric car starter -- in hayloft  
Hewlett-Packard’s first products -- in rented garage (They glazed the instruments in a kitchen oven). *(World Features Syndicate)***

**Microbiologist Curt Jones invented Dippin” Dots Ice Cream in his garage in Grand Chain, Illinois (population 890), in 1987. The beads of flash-frozen ice cream are sold by franchises worldwide. *(American Profile)***

**In 1955, more than 200 drag racers revved up at an abandoned airstrip in Great Bend, Kansas (population 15,345), for the National Hot Rod Association’s first national event. *(American Profile)***

**In 2003, Estee Lauder Cos had 21,500 employees and an estimated worth of about $10 billion. Its products are sold in more than 130 countries across five continents. The company’s roots go back to the 1920s with facial creams concocted over a gas stove in a modest kitchen by her uncle, John Schotz. *(Richard Severo, in The New York Times)***

**When the Smithsonian asked me to conjure up a technological history of America, I simply replied “Garage.” “Come again?” they said. Build me garages in a vast, scientific vaudeville hall. Then invite your museum visitors to open the garage doors one by one. Open the first and find two bicycles repairmen  putting wings on a super-bike and flying it down the Kitty Hawk sand dunes. Fling wide the second and see Henry Ford climbing out from under his pet road-mobile. Third garage door? We’re in California, and we find a pale young man with a mustache drawing a cartoon mouse. Fourth “garage”: a gaggle of Caltech students in Pasadena horsing around with rockets to start the Jew Propulsion Lab. And fifth: Steve Wozniah in a Silicon Valley back-yard garage seeding Apples and harvesting communications. So many garages, so many toys, so many earthshaking devices. *(Ray Bradbury, in American Way)*  
A group of West Coast entrepreneurs met in a tavern over a few beers and came up with Genetech Ind. in 1976. It is now one of the leading companies in the development of new drugs and chemicals. *(Ripley’s Believe It or Not!: Book of Chance, p. 90)***

**Google has bought the Menlo Park, California, house where co-founders Larry Page and Sergey Brin rented a garage eight years ago as they worked on their Internet search engine. “We plan to preserve the property as a part of our living legacy,” said a Google spokesman. *(Los Angeles Times, as it appeared in The Week magazine, October 13, 2006)*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\***

**Harley-Davidson just started a yearlong celebration of its 100th birthday with motorcycle festivals around the world. In 1903, William Harley and Arthur Davidson built their first cycle in a wooden shed. Last year, the company earned $423.7 million. *(Rocky Mountain News, July 25, 2002)***

**It’s been 100 years since Harley-Davidson made its first motorcycle in a one-room shack in Milwaukee. The company built more than 300,000 bikes in 2003. *(Dave Philipps, in Colorado Springs Gazette)*  
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**William Hewlett and David Packard did their best thinking in a garage. They started tinkering with electronics in the shed behind Packard’s tiny rented California home in 1938 and built a company, Hewlett-Packard, which in 1980 had sales of $3.1 billion and a work force of 57,000. *(Ripley’s Believe It or Not!: Book of Chance, p. 90)***

**The jukebox has been around since 1889, when the machine made its debut at a saloon in San Francisco. (Thought it wasn’t called a jukebox then; at the time, it was known as a “nickel-in-the-slot player.”) And it wasn’t exactly like the music players we’re familiar with today. It was simply a wooden cabinet with a phonograph player inside. Four tubes that resembled stethoscopes were attached to the cabinet, so no more than four people could enjoy the music at any given time -- and each of those four people had to deposit five cents to activate the listening tube. *(Samantha Weaver, in Tidbits of Loveland)***

**On September 24, 1952, fast food chain Kentucky Fried Chicken opened its first franchise location in Salt Lake City, Utah. KFC now has more than 23,000 restaurants worldwide. *(The Daily Chronicle)  
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**Where six famous people lived as children:   
Oprah Winfrey -- in farmhouse with no indoor plumbing  
George Gershwin -- in 28 apartments   
Charlie Chaplin -- in an orphanage  
Coco Chanel -- in a convent   
Estee Lauder -- above father’s hardware store   
Elvis Presley -- in house with no running water. *(World Features Syndicate)***

**Where they lived while growing up:   
Leslie Nielsen -- log cabin near Arctic Circle  
Richard Pryor -- in a brothel   
Rock Hudson -- 11 people in one-bedroom apartment   
Victor Mature -- in rented garage and tent   
Ann-Margret -- in an extra room in funeral parlor. *(World features Syndicate)  
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**Marilyn Monroe was crowned Miss California Artichoke Queen in 1947. *(Don Voorhees, in The Essential Book of Useless Information, p. 233)***

**The birth of Nike:**

**first name -- Blue Ribbon Sports**

**first shipment -- kept in parents’ garage**

**first investment -- $500 each by two founders**

**first shoe sole inspiration -- from waffles**

**first years sales -- $8,000 (Year was 1964; in 1998, Nike’s sales were $9 billion)*. (Nike Corporation)*  
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**Where six famous products were first made:   
S.O.S. pads -- in inventor’s basement   
Tampax -- on home sewing machine  
Post-It Notes -- in inventor’s basement   
Oster hair clippers -- in inventor’s basement  
Rollerblades -- in inventor’s parents’ basement  
Fritos -- in inventor’s mom’s kitchen. *(World Features Syndicate)*  
  
Where products were first made:   
Breyer’s ice cream -- in inventor’s kitchen  
Champion spark plugs -- in inventor’s garage   
Welch’s grape juice -- in inventor’s kitchen  
Lauder cosmetics -- in granddad’s basement   
Health Bars -- in inventor’s kitchen   
Steinway piano -- in inventor’s kitchen. *(World Features Syndicate)*  
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**Where originally published:   
Winnie-the-Pooh -- short story in London paper   
Madame Bovary -- installments in French magazine   
Silent Spring -- article in magazine   
The Story of Babar -- began as bedtime story   
Superman -- a strip in creator’s high school paper. *(World Features Syndicate)*  
When they started, the Ringling Brothers Circus had no money for anything fancy. Their first wild animal was a blind hyena. When they made more money, they imported a giraffe to America, claiming it was the last one on Earth. *(Betty Debnam, in Denver Rocky Mountain News)***

**Somewhere, something incredible is waiting to be known. *(Carl Sagan, American scientist)***

**Actress Sharon Stone’s first role in a feature film was a cameo in Woody Allen’s 1980 comedy, Stardust Meoories. She is credited only as “Pretty Girl on Train.” *(Harry Bright & Harlan Briscoe, in So, Now You Know, p. 115)***

**Where six popular tunes were written:   
1. Only the Lonely -- in a car   
2. Dancing in the Street -- in an attic   
3. Oh, What a Beautiful Morning -- on a porch   
4. Stars and Stripes Forever -- on a ship   
5. Sh-Boomn -- in a convertible   
6. The Night Before Christmas -- written in head while shopping for a turkey. *(World Features Syndicate)***

**Where they started:  
CliffsNotes -- started in editor’s basement;  
Crutchfield Electronics -- in mom’s basement;  
Electric hair clippers -- in inventor’s basement;  
Carson Optical --in mom’s basement;  
Manischewitz -- in his basement;  
UPS -- in founder’s basement. *(World Features Syndicate)***

**Chester F. Carlson, the founder of the Xerox machine, set up shop in the kitchen of his apartment in Queens, N.Y. *(Ira Flatow, in They All Laughed, p. 112)***

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