**That’s Different!**

**In 1984, a Canadian farmer rented out ad space on his cows. (*Uncle John’s Bathroom Reader: Wise Up!, p. 258)***

**Russians like being poor, said Anna Arutunyan in Moscow’s Moskovskie novosti. We’re actually proud of it. According to a study out just last week, nearly half of us are ashamed that the country has so many nouveaux riches, while “an overwhelming majority do not want their children to be billionaires.” It’s not so much about having or not having money as it is “that Russians prize their right to be pathetic above everything else.” Nothing has changed since the days of that old Soviet joke about the man who was offered a wish by a genie. “My neighbor has a cow,” the man says. “Oh, so you want a cow also?” asks the genie. “No,” says the man. “I want his cow to die.” This sentiment explains why capitalism isn’t working here, even after 15 years of market forces. One foreign expert summed it up beautifully. “Russia has always been a lose/lose society,” he said. “Individuals agree to endure suffering in exchange for the right to cause others to suffer.” *(The Week magazine, May 6, 2005)***

**Astronaut Neil Armstrong got his pilot’s license before he got his driver’s license. *(L. M. Boyd)***

**At auctions in The Netherlands, buyers start high and bid down. *(L. M. Boyd)***

**The Aztecs dressed their ceremonial headdresses with popcorn. (L. M. Boyd)**

**Anybody here from Wisconsin? All right, put down the cheese for a second. I got to talk to you. Listen to this: A guy in Wisconsin, he created a ball of twine that weighs 19,000 lbs. Nineteen thousand pounds, a ball of twine – and guess what, girls? He’s single. *(David Letterman, in Time, 2006)***

**A barnacle's ovaries are in its head. (Boyd's Curiosity Shop, p. 251)**

**Actor John Barrymore kept a pet vulture named Maloney, which would sit on his knee and hiss. *(Noel Botham, in The Ultimate Book of Useless Information, p. 22)***

**Two Brooklyn baseball clubs in 1861 played a four-inning midwinter game on ice skates. Once. (L. M. Boyd)**

**Water lilies are a North American beaver’s favorite food. *(Don Voorhees, in The Perfectly Useless Book of Useless Information, p. 171)***

**German gentlemen wore bells in the 1300s. They trimmed their clothes with hundreds of little bells. (L. M. Boyd)**

**Some birds use ants to clean them. They sit with their feathers fluffed up and let the ants crawl over them. The ants squirt out an acid which kills the insects living on the birds. (The Diagram Group, in Funky, Freaky Facts, p. 136)**

**In certain Bedouin tribes it is considered impolite not to burp vigorously after a good meal. *(Don Voorhees, in The Essential Book of Useless Information, p. 238)***

**A couple in Belgium have given their 11 children names using different variations of the same four letters: a, e. l, and x. Gwenny Blanckaert and Marino Vaneeno landed on the novel strategy after naming their first child Alex and second one Axel. “We realized that they were the same letters, so we decided to continue like this,” said Gwenny. The next nine became Xela, Lexa, Xael, Xeal, Exla, Leax, Xale, Elax, and Alxe. No name has been selected for their 12th child, due in April, but they have 13 remaining combinations to choose from. *(The Week magazine, November 5, 2021)***

**Am told chrysanthemums do not tend to grow well where chrysanthemums were previously planted. They’re said to be allergic to what their forebears left in the soil, or something like that. *(L. M. Boyd)***

**Historians claim Cleopatra set her hair in rollers of baked mud. (L. M. Boyd)**

**How did colonial housewives keep their furniture and floors spic and span without today’s waxes and soaps? Easy. They simply spat on the floor and rubbed hard with stick brushes and reed brooms. That’s where we get “spit and polish.” (Bernie Smith, in The Joy of Trivia, p. 30)**

**Were you aware some people make a living selling cosmetics for horses? *(L. M. Boyd)***

**A German firm says it’s doing brisk business selling the odor of cow flatulence sealed in a can. Designer Daniela Dorrer says the product, which retails for $8, is aimed mainly at city dwellers who now pine for the aromas of their childhood. “We are planning other smells such as horse, straw, pigs, and manure,” said Dorrer. “But most people miss the smell of cows in the country – not really surprising as much of the smell is from cows.” *(The Week magazine, March 18, 2011)***

**Unlike other fruits, cranberries do not show their ripeness with color. Instead, they are sorted by bouncing; good cranberries bounce and bad ones don’t. *(Harry Bright & Jakob Anser, in That’s A Fact, Jack!, p. 11)***

**In the 1840s, French criminals couldn’t be arrested from sundown to sunrise. (*Uncle John’s Bathroom Reader: Wise Up!, p. 152)***

**In Alaska, I’m told, the spring dandelions are called “mountain mums” and are pointed out with some pride to tourists. *(L. M. Boyd)***

**It was in 1948 before no-fault divorces that one Bernice Claxton won her divorce in Los Angeles after telling the court her husband made her unscrew and screw in the light bulbs to save wear and tear on the light switches. *(L. M. Boyd)***

**Thomas Edison had a collection of more than five thousand birds. *(Noel Botham, in The Book of Useless Information, p. 15)***

**\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*Priests in ancient Egyptian temples plucked every hair from their bodies, including their eyebrows and eyelashes. (David Louis, in Fascinating Facts, p. 146)**

**The ancient Egyptians bought jewelry for their pet crocodiles. (*Uncle John’s Bathroom Reader: Wise Up!, p. 244)***

**The old Egyptians kept household weasels before they kept household cats. *(L. M. Boyd)***

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**I met my husband while I was working in a science library. He came in every week to read the latest journals and eventually decided to take out the librarian instead of the books. After a year and a half of dating, he showed up at the library and started rummaging through my desk. I asked what he was looking for, but he didn’t answer. Finally he unearthed one of the rubber stamps I used to identify reference books. “Since I couldn’t find the right engagement ring,” he said, “this will have to do,” and he firmly stamped my hand. Across my knuckles, in capital letters, it read “NOT FOR CIRCULATION.” *(Ruth E. Chodrow, in Reader’s Digest)***

**Man: “Your eyes, honey-brown orbs with a cunning aperture to see through, slightly glazed over, can't help but remind me of doughnuts.” Woman: “No one's ever said that to me before.” (Tom Toles, in Randolph Itch 2 a.m. comic strip)**

**Flamingos like company. Claim is they won’t even mate except in flocks of at least 20 or so birds. (L. M. Boyd)**

**Of all the 250,000 species of flowering plants, there are just two that don’t need water from the soil. One is the pygmy cedar and the other is the caper plant of the Sahara. Both take all the moisture they need from the night air. *(Bernie Smith, in The Joy of Trivia, P. 235)***

**Stapelia flowers smell like rotting meat, and the leaves look like the skin of a dead animal. This attracts flies that feed on decaying flesh. The hungry flies then pollinate the flowers. (The Diagram Group, in Funky, Freaky Facts, p. 42)**

**Actress Jodie Foster put her Oscar (Best Actress for her performance in Silence of the Lambs) in her bathroom next to the tub. *(Russ Edwards & Jack Kreismer, in The Bathroom Trivia Digest, p. 98)***

**Benjamin Franklin wanted to make the turkey, not the eagle, America’s national bird. He believed the bald eagle didn’t live its life “honestly” and considered the turkey a more “respectable” bird. (*Uncle John’s Bathroom Reader: Wise Up!, p. 244)***

**A grasshopper’s blood is white. *(Russ Edwards & Jack Kreismer, in The Bathroom Trivia Digest, p. 96)***

**You now can buy a greeting card for your dog to send to another dog. (L. M. Boyd)**

**Near Malaga off the coast of Spain is an underwater hostelry called the La Parra Hotel. It accommodates 12 guests in a glass bubble -- about 49 feet down. You swim there. (L. M. Boyd)**

**Victor Hugo ate unpeeled oranges daily. (L. M. Boyd)**

**Japanese books run the footnotes at the tops of the pages. (L. M. Boyd)**

**Chung Lin-Tao has an unusual job -- he makes a living in Taiwan repairing music boxes on garbage trucks. It all started when the Taipei city government decided some years ago to buy garbage trucks and to dispense with the services of several thousand garbage-cart pullers. But there was the problem of picking up garbage from apartment buildings that have no trash chutes and from houses surrounded by walls. So the sanitation commissioner decided to put loudspeakers on his trucks. They play a century-old melody called “Maiden's Prayer.” The song drifting through the window is the signal to bring out the trash. This signal system works so well that it's essential to keep the music boxes in good order. That's why Chung has a job. (Associated Press)**

**Last names in China are always one syllable. *(Russ Edwards & Jack Kreismer, in The Bathroom Trivia Digest, p. 95)***

**In Soest, Germany, is a 15th century church with a stained glass window depicting “The Last Supper.” On the table are pumpernickel bread, Westphalian ham and beer. (L. M. Boyd)**

**Riding a green lawn chair supported by more than 150 helium-filled party balloons, Kent Couch flew from central Oregon to Idaho last July. Couch kissed his wife and kids goodbye, patted their Chihuahua, and rose out of the parking lot of his gas station into the morning sky. He was cheered by spectators. “If I had the time, I’d do this every weekend,” Couch said of his 230-mile, 9-hour trip. “He’s crazy,” said his wife, Susan. “It’s never been a dull moment since I married him.” *(Parade magazine, December 28, 2008)***

**One in every 3.4 million lobsters is born a brilliant luminous blue, and if it gets to grow up, turns royal blue. (L. M. Boyd)**

**Frank: “Here comes my friend Ernie. He always puts a positive spin on everything. Just listen while we ask him about his love life. Hi, Ernie, how's the dating scene going?” Ernie: “Terrific! Look at all these love notes I got!” Frank: “Uh, Ernie, Victoria says she'd never be seen in public with you!” Ernie: “Obviously, she wants a hush-hush affair.” Frank: “Caroline says she's having nightmares about you!” Ernie: “She thinks I'm the man of her dreams.” Frank: “But I think my favorite is Christy! Christy! She says she's never met a loser like you before!” Ernie: “Yeah! Isn't that great! She must think I'm one of a kind!” (Bob Thaves, in Frank & Ernest comic strip)**

**All the young men in Polynesia’s Pitcairn Island in the South Pacific traditionally are married by age 19. (L. M. Boyd)**

**Researchers have discovered in a California mine a supermicrobe that eats iron and thrives in the equivalent of battery acid. The microbe, reported in the journal Science, is a previously unknown organism that somehow took up residence in the Iron Mountain Mine near Redding, CA., said Katrina J. Edwards, a geomicrobiologist at Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution and co-author of the study. Researchers gathering samples 1,500 feet down in the mine had to wear protective clothing and occasionally suffered burns when water where the microbe lived was splashed onto bare skin. Even though the toxic broth in the mine was lethal to most forms of life, for the acid-loving microbe it is home. (Associated Press)**

**Each dwarf mongoose of East Africa lives in a colony of several dozen. It’s run by a female. She has one boyfriend. Together, they produce all the colony’s offspring. *(L. M. Boyd)***

**Among proboscis monkeys, the larger the male’s nose, the more attractive he is to females, say the naturalists. (L. M. Boyd)**

**A moth hears through its hair. *(L. M. Boyd)***

**Folks in Columbia eat fried ant bellies at the movies. (Don Voorhees, in The Essential Book of Useless Information, p. 24)**

**“Tuna” may seem like a funny name for a girl, but that was the name of the heroine in Finland’s version of Cinderella. *(L. M. Boyd)***

**Nurse Florence Nightingale usually carried around a pet owl in her pocket. (L. M. Boyd)**

**Some primitive life forms get all the nutrition they need from eating single, obscure elements such as platinum. More advanced creatures, such as the famous drugstore beetle, can live in, breathe and consume highly toxic substances that would kill other animals in seconds. Bacteria, and even some fish, live in waters that approach boiling, while the glacier flea of the deep Arctic is capable of subsisting on, well . . . glaciers. (Bartleby Nash, in Mother Nature's Greatest Hits, p. 3)**

**Panama (because of a bend in the isthmus) is the only place in the world where one can see the sun rise on the Pacific Ocean and set on the Atlantic. (David Louis, in Fascinating Facts, p. 70)**

**There are people who make pancake flour out of cattails. (L. M. Boyd)**

**A penguin only drinks saltwater. *(L. M. Boyd)***

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**Could be you don’t eat heated dill pickles. But many do. Dill slices spread atop steaming pizza. Corn is said to be one of the preferred pizza toppings in Japan. (L. M. Boyd)**

**Squid is a common topping on pizzas in Japan. Tuna is a popular topping in many European countries. (Jeff Harris, in Shortcuts)**

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**Edgar Allan Poe often wrote his works with his cat seated on his shoulder. *(Russ Edwards & Jack Kreismer, in The Bathroom Trivia Digest, p. 65)***

**Pumpkin pickles are big in Afghanistan, I’m told. (L. M. Boyd)**

**In 1955, Quaker Oats gave away deeds to one square inch of Yukon land with boxes of its cereal. (*Uncle John’s Bathroom Reader: Wise Up!, p. 258)***

**At Quaker weddings, all the guests sign the marriage certificate. (Boyd's Curiosity Shop, p. 165)**

**Numerous Tibetans escaped the Chinese by going to Switzerland. What those refugees missed most when they got there was yak butter. Cow butter cost too much, so they settled for oleo. They put it in their tea. (L. M. Boyd)**

**You can rent bees. Farmers do it all the time. So do fruit growers. *(L. M. Boyd)***

**Actress Susan Sarandon proudly displays her Oscars and other awards in the bathroom. *(Russ Edwards & Jack Kreismer, in The Bathroom Trivia Digest, p. 54)***

**A snake can hear with its tongue. *(Russ Edwards & Jack Kreismer, in The Bathroom Trivia Digest, p. 55)***

**Spanish moss, the gray lacelike plant that decorates trees in the swamps and bayou of the South, is neither Spanish nor moss. It is an epiphyte, has no roots of any kind, does not collect water, and lives entirely on the drops of rain or fog that may be expected in such locations. *(Bernie Smith, in The Joy of Trivia, P. 234)***

**As a film and television writer in Hollywood for 25 years, I have often marveled at the many people in the entertainment industry who are slaves to status symbols. This fact was demonstrated when amid the Mercedes, BMWs and Cadillacs cruising down Sunset Boulevard, I spotted a young agent I knew, wearing a designer suit, shoes and silk tie, riding a Honda scooter -- while speaking on a cellular phone. (Stephen Lord, in Reader's Digest)**

**The strawberry is the only agricultural product that bears its seeds on the outside. Nature painted them a bright red so that birds could find them from the air. The birds eat the berries and later eliminate them in flight. The indigestible seeds sprout, take root, and that’s how strawberries propagate themselves. *(Bernie Smith, in The Joy of Trivia, P. 232)***

**Researchers have discovered in a California mine a super-microbe that eats iron and thrives in the equivalent of battery acid. The microbe, reported in the journal Science, is a previously unknown organism that somehow took up residence in the Iron Mountain Mine near Redding, CA., said Katrina J. Edwards, a geomicrobiologist at Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution and co-author of the study. Researchers gathering samples 1,500 feet down in the mine had to wear protective clothing and occasionally suffered burns when water where the microbe lived was splashed onto bare skin. Even though the toxic broth in the mine was lethal to most forms of life, for the acid-loving microbe it is home. (Associated Press)**

**Not all stogie smokers saved their cigar ashes a century ago, but a lot of them did – to use as toothpowder. For awhile there, it was the thing to do. (L. M. Boyd)**

**One city only in this world routinely takes visitors on tours of its sewer system -- Paris. (Boyd's Curiosity Shop, p. 245)
Jupiter has a moon called Europa. And Europa has a volcano that spews out neither hot gases nor lava. It erupts snowflakes and chunks of ice. (L. M. Boyd)**

**You know how you get a waitress’s attention in a restaurant in Japan? You hiss at her. At least that’s how most do it there. (L. M. Boyd)**

**The walrus feeds while standing on its head in the water. (L. M. Boyd)**

**It’s the fashion now in China for the well-dressed bride and groom to wear sunglasses at their wedding. (L. M. Boyd)**

**Thin girls used to write to Ladies’ Home Journal for advice on how to gain weight. (Don Voorhees, in The Essential Book of Useless Information, p. 120)**

**1961 was a year that read the same upside down. That won’t happen again for over 4000 years – 6009. *(Charles Reichblum, in Knowledge in a Nutshell, p. 230)***

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