Uncle John's
OLD FAITHFUL
BATHROOM READER

30th ANNIVERSARY

AN ALL NEW FOUNT OF FACTS!

BY THE BATHROOM READERS' INSTITUTE
YOU’RE MY INSPIRATION

It’s always interesting to see where the architects of pop culture get their ideas. Some of these may surprise you.

**The Star Wars Logo:** When a 22-year-old graphic designer named Suzy Rice met with director George Lucas in 1976 to create a title logo for his new space movie, he told her he wanted something “intimidating.” So Rice, who was studying German typefaces at the time, took inspiration from Nazi propaganda posters: “What I read was that (Joseph) Goebbels wanted a standardized font without variations to be used for all signage throughout. So it struck me as an indication of what I’d call ‘fascist’ design.” Rice came up with a modified Helvetica block font for the title. Lucas liked it…with one change: he wanted her to join the “S” and the “T” in “STAR” and the “R” and “S” in “WARS.”

**Biff Tannen:** For decades, it’s been rumored that in 1989’s *Back to the Future Part II*, the “future” version of Biff—a megalomaniacal real estate mogul—was based on real-life real estate mogul Donald Trump. In 2015, screenwriter Bob Gale confirmed that Biff, his high-rise casino, and the fact that he makes everyone call him “America’s Greatest Folk Hero” were all modeled after Donald Trump.

**Bullet Trains:** Ever wonder why bullet trains have pointy noses? When the trains travel at high speeds, air pressure builds up until it creates a small—but loud—sonic boom. In the 1990s, Japanese engineer Eiji Nakatsu noticed that a bird called a kingfisher could fly into the water at high speeds without disturbing the surface. Nakatsu redesigned the bullet train’s nose into a “50-foot-long steel kingfisher beak” that not only decreases noise but increases speed.

**Kate Moss:** Moss is one of the few supermodels who’s managed to stay famous for three decades, and a big reason for that is her sense of style, which *Vogue* described as “rock ’n’ roll bohemianism.” Inspirations: Mick Jagger and David Bowie. “They’re quite feminine but still with a tomboyish look, which I like.”

**The Sleeping Beauty Castle:** While traveling through Europe in the early 1950s, Walt Disney visited Neuschwanstein Castle in the Bavarian Alps. Nicknamed the “Fairy Tale Castle,” it was built in the late 19th century (the first castle we know of to have flushing toilets) by King Ludwig III. He wanted a colorful castle in a beautiful setting to honor his musical hero, Richard Wagner. Disney was so enamored by Neuschwanstein that he made it the basis for the Sleeping Beauty Castle at his brand new-theme park, Disneyland.
Why did the first coloring books use watercolor paints? Crayons hadn’t been invented yet.

TOURONS
Real questions asked by people on vacation.

...in Everglades National Park:
“Are the alligators real?”
“Are the baby alligators for sale?”
“What time does the two o’clock bus leave?”

...at the Grand Canyon:
“Was this man-made?”
“Do you light it up at night?”
“So is that Canada over there?”

...in Denali National Park:
“What time to you feed the bears?”
“What’s so wonderful about Wonder Lake?”
“Can you show me where the Yeti lives?”
“How often do you mow the tundra?”

...in Mesa Verde National Park:
“Did people build this, or did Indians?”
“Why did the Indians decide to live in Colorado?”

...in Yellowstone National Park:
“Does Old Faithful erupt at night?”
“How do you turn it on?”
“When does the guy who turns it on get to sleep?”

...at Carlsbad Caverns:
“How much of the cave is underground?”

...in Yosemite National Park:
“Where are the cages for the animals?”
“What happened to the other half of Half Dome?”
“Can I get a picture taken with the carving of President Clinton?”

...in Glacier National Park:
“When do the deer become elk?”
“When do the glaciers go by?”

...in Sutter’s Fort State Historic Park, Sacramento
“We cook over the fire here.”
“Don’t your pans melt?”
GOING POSTER

What’s the difference between a photo and a poster? A poster is a photo that’s been cropped, edited, blown up, edited, mass-produced on cheap paper…and purchased by millions.

Here’s a look behind some of the most famous and best-selling posters of all time.

CHE

In March 1960, leftist revolutionary Che Guevara, clad in a black beret, briefly joined Fidel Castro onstage at a memorial for those who lost their lives in the explosion of the munitions ship La Coubre when it was docked in Havana’s harbor. While Castro delivered a eulogy, Guevara stood off to the side, which is when photographer Alberto Korda took his picture. It was later published under the title Guerrillero Heroico, or “Heroic Guerrilla.” The simple, black-and-white photo became a poster eight years later when Irish artist Jim Fitzpatrick applied a two-tone treatment to make a striking, contrasting image of Guevara’s face, and he placed it against a red background. Fitzpatrick initially allowed his work to be distributed without a copyright to encourage its spread and the “power to the people” message of Guevara…but it was also widely reproduced by capitalists on T-shirts, postcards, coffee mugs…and posters. In 2011 Fitzpatrick told reporters that he wanted to copyright the image. Reason: he wants to give Guevara’s family control of its usage and reproduction.

PINK FLOYD’S BACK CATALOG

In 1996 graphic designer Storm Thorgerson and his design firm, Hipgnosis, were hired to make a TV commercial to advertise the re-release of the back catalog of British rock band Pink Floyd, including Atom Heart Mother, Dark Side of the Moon, Wish You Were Here, Animals, and The Wall. When Thorgerson suggested to the band’s label, EMI, that he wanted to take the suggestion literally—and film a bunch of young women with their bare backs painted with the cover art of a different Pink Floyd album—the executives loved it. But they thought it would be better as a promotional poster for record stores than as TV commercial. A body painter named Phyllis Cohen actually painted the images on the models—and

PINK FLOYD’S The Dark Side of the Moon stayed on the Billboard charts longer than any other album—741 weeks, which is about 15 years.
the women had to stay perfectly still for five or six hours while she worked. The finished product by photographer Tony May was so striking that EMI decided not to distribute the poster for free to record stores, but to sell it directly to fans.

**FARRAH FAWCETT**

Before she became the star of *Charlie’s Angels*, Fawcett was doing mostly TV commercials and modeling work. Her management team thought she might get the attention of more casting agents if her résumé included a picture of the blonde bombshell in a bikini, so in 1975 they hired photographer Bruce McBroom to take one. McBroom went to Fawcett’s house (where she lived with her husband, Lee Majors, star of *The Six-Million Dollar Man*), and had her pose by the pool in front of an old Southwestern-style blanket that McBroom had been using to cover the back seat of his car. Fawcett tried a number of swimsuits before deciding on a red one-piece because it covered a scar on her stomach. A year later, Fawcett landed the role on *Charlie’s Angels*, and the humble picture of Fawcett in a swimsuit was licensed out to poster publishers. It went on to sell 12 million copies—still a record for the best-selling poster of all time.

> The reason that the all-American boy prefers beauty to brains is that he can see better than he can think.

—Farrah Fawcett

**EINSTEIN WITH HIS TONGUE OUT**

The influential physicist Albert Einstein was being honored at an event at Princeton University in 1951 to mark his 72nd birthday. United Press International photographer Arthur Sasse tried but couldn’t get Einstein to smile for a photograph—the scientist said he’d been smiling for photographers all day and he was tired of it. But Sasse (and other photographers) kept insisting Einstein give them a grin. Annoyed, he stuck out his tongue instead, and Sasse caught the image of Einstein, along with scientist Dr. Frank Aydelotte and his wife. Ironically, the grouchy Einstein later found Sasse’s picture to be his favorite photo of himself. He contacted UPI and ordered reproductions of it, with the Aydelottes and everything that wasn’t his face and tongue cut out. Then he sent them as greeting cards to his friends. Knowing they had a good thing going, UPI then licensed the photo for use as a poster.
Since its discovery, Old Faithful has erupted more than one million times.

OLD FAITHFUL FACTS

Old Faithful the book takes a vacation to Old Faithful the geyser.

Half of Earth’s 1,000 geysers are located in Yellowstone National Park. Old Faithful is not only the most famous geyser in the park, but in the entire world.

Recipe for a geyser: groundwater flows through subterranean fissures into a chamber that’s being filled by superheated water. The superheated water boils the groundwater and converts it to steam, which has 1,600 times more volume than liquid water. There’s only one place for all that boiling water and steam to go: up.

Eruptions top out at about 140 feet, but some exceed 180 feet—the height of a 15-storey building.

In 2015, a young man named Zac Finley proposed to his girlfriend Laura Parkes in front of Old Faithful. He purposely chose a spot where his down-on-one-knee proposal would be caught on Yellowstone’s live webcam. Parkes said yes, and the video of the proposal has since gone viral.

A five-minute eruption of Old Faithful spews out as much water as an average household uses in three weeks.

One reason Old Faithful is so reliable: Unlike most geysers, it is not connected to—and therefore not affected by—any other thermal feature.

In 1903, President Theodore Roosevelt took a two week trip to Yellowstone. He was reportedly awestruck by the big game and the scenery, but according to his guide, the geysers “bored” him.

The water that spews out of the geyser is 204°F; the steam can exceed 350°F.

Predicting Old Faithful’s next eruption: If the previous one lasted more than 2-1/2 minutes, the next eruption will come in 91 minutes. If the previous eruption lasted less than 2-1/2 minutes, the next one will come in 65 minutes. (The timing has to do with how long it takes the underground chamber to fill up again.)

When the first white settlers discovered Old Faithful in 1870 (the Washburn Expedition), they used it to wash their dirty laundry. It reportedly tore wool garments to shreds, but worked just fine on linens and cottons.
VOTE FOR FATTMAN!

Politics may be contentious, but there’s still humor to be found in it…like the names of these real people who ran for office.

- **Janelle Lawless**, circuit court judge in Michigan
- **Mark Reckless**, member of British Parliament, representing Wales
- **Ryan Fattman**, state senator in Massachusetts
- **Dick Swett**, U.S. congressman from New Hampshire
- **Young Boozer**, State treasurer of Alabama
- **Timothy Shotwell**, candidate for sheriff in Clark County, Washington
- **Butch Otter**, governor of Idaho
- **Steve Strait** defeated **Becky Gay** in the 2002 Republican primary race for a seat in Alaska’s state house (but didn’t win the general election)
- **Moe Cotton**, candidate for state senator in Guam (His signs read “Pick Moe Cotton.”)
- **Robin Rape**, constable in Brazoria County, Texas
- **Faye Ball** and **Don Cox** ran on the same ticket for seats on the Ewing Township, New Jersey, council
- **Dick Mountjoy**, California state assemblyman
- **Tiny Kox**, senator in the Netherlands (“Tiny” is a nickname; it’s short for “Martinus.”)
- **Harry Baals**, mayor of Fort Wayne, Indiana
- **Bill Boner**, mayor of Nashville, Tennessee
- **Frank Schmuck**, Arizona state senatorial candidate (he lost)
- **Diane Gooch**, Republican congressional primary candidate in New Jersey (she lost to a Tea Party candidate)
- **Ben Bushyhead**, county commissioner in North Carolina
- **Jay Walker**, write-in candidate for Pierce County, Georgia, tax assessor
- **Barb Queer**, county commissioner in Ashland, Ohio
- **Tripp Self**, judge on the Georgia Court of Appeals
- **Dave Obey**, U.S. congressman from Wisconsin
- **Krystal Ball**, Congressional candidate from Virginia in 2010 (who probably should’ve known she wouldn’t win)

Cities cover 2% of the world’s land area, but account for 70% of greenhouse-gas emissions.
THE HARDEST-WORKING PERSON IN...

Who says you have to retire? Here are some folks who’ve proven that you don’t.

...THE PAPERBOY BUSINESS

Honoree: Ted Ingram of Winterborne Monkton, England

Details: In 1942 Ingram, then 22, got a paper route to add to the income he made driving a tractor. He delivered the Dorset Echo for the next 72 years, more than 500,000 copies in all. And he delivered nearly all them on a bicycle, taking to his car only after hip replacement surgery. Knee troubles forced him to give up the route for good in 2013, at age 93. In all those years the world’s longest-serving paperboy took just two vacations, both in the 1960s, and one sick leave in 1950 after he broke his back.

...THE STOCK MARKET

Honoree: Irving Kahn of New York, New York

Details: Kahn began his Wall Street career as a 23-year-old “runner” (delivery boy) on the New York Stock Exchange in 1929. A few months later the stock market crashed, ushering in the Great Depression. Kahn survived (he made a handsome profit shorting stocks before the crash) and he rode out several more booms and busts over the years. A “value investor,” his strategy was to buy stocks he thought were underpriced, then hold onto them until their value increased, and sell them for a profit. In 1978 the 73-year-old founded Kahn Brothers Group with his sons Alan and Thomas; by 2014 the firm was managing nearly $1 billion in assets and Kahn, 108, was still coming in to work three days a week. He died in 2015, a month after turning 109, still picking stocks to the very end.

...MEDICINE

Honoree: Dr. Leila Denmark of Athens, Georgia

Details: Denmark, a pediatrician, began a medical internship in Atlanta’s Grady Hospital in 1928. In 1931 she opened her own practice and the following year she helped to develop a vaccine for whooping cough, which was often fatal to children. When her husband passed away in 1990, Denmark considered retiring after 62 years in practice, but decided against it. She continued on for another

When it snows, Japanese macaque monkeys make snowballs.
11 years, retiring at 103…but only because her eyes became too weak for her to perform certain medical exams. By then she was treating the great-grandchildren of her earliest patients. Denmark lived another 11 years. At the time of her death at age 114 in 2012, she was the fourth-oldest person in the world.

**...THE FEDERAL JUDICIARY**

**Honoree:** Judge Wesley Brown of the Federal District Court for Kansas

**Details:** Brown graduated from law school in 1933 and practiced law for three decades before President John F. Kennedy nominated him to the federal bench in 1962. The U.S. Constitution allows federal judges to remain on the bench for life, and Judge Brown did just that. He was still hearing cases when he died in 2012 at the age of 104.

**...THE AIR**

**Honoree:** Ron Akana of Boulder, Colorado

**Details:** Akana was a 21-year-old student at the University of Hawaii in 1949 when he saw an ad in the paper for flight steward jobs on United Airlines. A job that offered access to the mainland was a big deal in those days, so Akana (and 400 others) applied for the eight openings…and he got one of them. He worked for United for the next 63 years, and saw a lot of changes in that time. Flights became nonsmoking; prop planes gave way to jets, which cut travel time to the mainland in half; stewards and stewardesses became “flight attendants.” If you’ve ever flown United from Denver to Kauai or Maui, you may have been served by Akana. When he retired in 2012 at age 83, it was estimated that he’d flown more than 20 million miles—the equivalent of 40 trips to the moon and back.

**...AN ICE-CREAM TRUCK**

**Honoree:** Allan Ganz of Boston, Massachusetts

**Details:** Ganz started working on his father’s ice-cream truck in the late 1940s when he was 10. He kept at it until he was 19, spent two years in the military, and then he went back to working with his dad. He didn’t buy his own truck until 1977, when he was 40. But he’s had it ever since. As of 2016, the 79-year-old had logged 67 years driving up and down the Massachusetts North Shore selling ice cream out of his or his father’s trucks, the longest career as an ice-cream man ever. He may have a few years left in him, too: his father didn’t give up his truck until he was 86.
THE LOOOONG EXPERIMENT

You’ve heard the expression “as slow as molasses moving uphill in winter”? Here’s the story of something even slower.

CRUDE EFFORT

In January 1961 a man named John Mainstone began a new job as a physics lecturer at the University of Queensland in Brisbane, Australia. On his first day, one of his colleagues showed him around the department, and in one room he pulled an experiment out of a cupboard. Still underway, it had been set up in the 1920s by Thomas Parnell, a physics professor long retired and now dead.

The experiment looked simple enough: it was a glass funnel filled with ordinary asphalt or “pitch,” a derivative of crude oil used to pave roads. The funnel sat on a stand, and beneath the stand was a glass beaker to catch any pitch that dripped from the funnel. A glass cover, called a bell jar, protected the apparatus from dust.

The “pitch drop experiment,” as it was called, had been sitting in the cupboard since the 1930s. In all that time, only three drops of the stuff had dripped from the funnel—the first in 1938, the second in 1947, and the third in 1954. A fourth was now hanging like a teardrop from the bottom of the funnel. It must have looked to Mainstone as if it could fall into the beaker at any moment, but as his colleague explained, years might pass before it finally did.

DRIP…

Professor Parnell had created the experiment back in 1927 by pouring heated, softened pitch into a sealed funnel and letting it settle there for three years. In 1930 he unsealed the bottom of the funnel and the pitch began to flow. The purpose of the experiment was to demonstrate to his students that some substances, like pitch, may appear solid at room temperature but are actually very slow-moving liquids. If you hit a slab of pitch with a hammer, for example, it will smash into pieces, just like a rock. But if you put it in a funnel as Parnell did, it will slowly flow out, like water dripping from a faucet, because it’s actually a liquid, albeit one with extremely high viscosity, or resistance to flow. The pitch that Parnell placed in the funnel was so viscous that it took, on average, eight years for a single drop to form and drip from the funnel.

The monkey puzzle tree is native to the South American Andes…where there are no monkeys.
**PITCHING IN**

Mainstone was fascinated by the experiment and agreed to become its custodian. His job: check the display once or twice a day to see how the fourth drop was progressing. He suggested that the experiment be taken out of the cupboard and placed on public display, so that other people could enjoy it as well.

The head of the physics department rejected the idea, insisting that “nobody would be the slightest bit interested.” There were even people who wanted to toss the display in the trash, but Mainstone managed to save it. It was still there in the cupboard in May 1962, when the fourth drop fell into the beaker…and no one was there to see it. It was still there eight years later in August 1970, when the fifth drop fell. Once again, nobody saw it. (In fact, no one had ever seen a drop of the pitch fall, because experiments like this one were rare, and it only takes about a tenth of a second for a drop of pitch to fall into a beaker. Managing to be there at just the right tenth of a second in that eight-year span takes persistence, dedication, and more than a little luck.)

**THE END IS NEAR**

A new head of the physics department took over in 1972, and he liked Mainstone’s suggestion of putting the pitch drop experiment on public display. So it was moved to the entrance hall of the physics building and set up in its own glass case. That’s where it was in April of 1979, when the sixth drop seemed close to falling.

Mainstone was determined to be there when it did fall. He wanted to understand the precise mechanical process that causes a drop to break free and fall into the beaker. He knew that in the final stages the drop hangs by three or four slender strands of pitch, and he theorized that the drop finally falls when one of those slender strands breaks, and the remaining strands are too weak to hold the drop any longer. But he couldn’t be sure until someone actually saw one fall.

One Saturday afternoon, the end appeared to be just days away. Mainstone had to decide whether to spend the rest of that day at work, in the off chance that it might drop, or go home, as he promised his wife, to help her around the house. After studying the drop carefully, he saw no signs of an imminent fall, and went home. He did not return Sunday, and by the time he arrived for work on Monday morning, the drop had fallen, again with no one to witness it.

Mainstone’s next chance came in the summer of 1988, when the seventh drop was getting near. This time he kept a close watch on the experiment. But as he recounted to an interviewer in 2013, at some point “I decided that I needed a cup of tea or something like that, walked away, came back, and lo and behold
it had dropped. One becomes a bit philosophical about this, and I just said, ‘Oh well, let’s be patient.’ ”

**PITCH IMPERFECT**

The wait for the eighth drop to fall took even longer, because the university installed air conditioning in the physics building, and cooler temperatures made the pitch flow more slowly. This time Mainstone had to wait 12 years, until November 2000, for the drop to fall. By then he was semi-retired and traveling in the UK when he received an e-mail from a colleague warning that the fall might happen at any moment. Mainstone was disappointed that he wouldn’t be there to see it in person, but he took comfort in knowing that the physics department had set up a camera to record the event...that is, until two more e-mails arrived. The first reported that the drop had fallen; the second reported that the camera had malfunctioned and failed to film the fall. Four times since 1962, drops had fallen into the beaker. Mainstone missed them all.

**TO THE LAST DROP**

By the summer of 2013, Mainstone was in his late 70s. He was still the custodian of the pitch drop experiment, and he hoped to be there to see the ninth drop fall, perhaps in 2014. This time, not one but three cameras were set up to film the drop, so that one camera would film the action even if two others failed. But Mainstone didn’t make it. He died in August 2013, before the drop fell.

Mainstone did have one consolation before he died: Trinity College in Dublin had their own pitch drop experiment, dating to 1944. It had been long ignored, but the growing interest in Mainstone’s experiment convinced the faculty at Trinity to pull theirs off the shelf, where it sat beneath decades of accumulated dust. A number of drops had already fallen, but no one knew when, because no one had paid any attention. This time would be different: When someone noticed in April 2013 that a drop looked like it was about to fall, a camera was set up to record it. At about 5:00 p.m. on July 11, it filmed the pitch as it fell into the beaker. Mainstone saw the footage; it was “tantalizing,” he told his colleagues. He died six weeks later.

Even if Mainstone had lived, he wouldn’t have seen the ninth drop fall. The beaker was so full of pitch from the first eight drops, that in April 2014 Mainstone’s successor decided to replace it with an empty one. But when he lifted the bell jar, the base wobbled and the ninth drop just snapped off. Don’t despair, though: the tenth drop should fall sometime in 2028, and there’s enough pitch in the funnel to last another 100 years.
The ominous da-da-da of the *Jaws* theme is played on a tuba.

...BREAKING: weird roadkill news on UJBR Radio... BREAKING: weird roadkill news on UJBR Radio...BREAKING: weird roadkill news on UJBR...

**ROADKILL REPORT**

**ROADKILL? SOUNDS FISHY.**

In December 2015, a man named Arthur Boyt found a dead dolphin on a beach near his hometown of Davidstow, in the far southeast of England. He took the carcass home...and ate it for Christmas dinner. Boyt, 76, insists he's been collecting, cooking, and eating roadkill since he was a teenager. The animals he's eaten include badgers, weasels, hedgehogs, squirrels, otters, foxes, rabbits, sparrows, deer, pigeons—and a bat. The 2015 Christmas feast was special, though: it was the first time he'd ever found a dolphin. How would he rate the meal? “I’ve got to admit, it’s nothing to write home about,” he told the *Guardian*. “It’s not very fishy or oily. I fried it up and it was quite tough.” When news got out about Boyt’s plan to eat a dolphin, he was informed that it is actually illegal to eat dolphin—because all dolphins in the UK are “royal fish” that belong to the British crown. Boyt’s reply: “I don’t suppose the Queen will be interested in getting back a dolphin that has been dead for a month or more.”

**ROADKILL COUTURE**

In 2013 Pamela Paquin, an unemployed single mom in Jaffrey, New Hampshire, came up with a unique way to earn a living: she got a “fur buyer’s license” so that she could sell animal furs. Then she went to a local taxidermist to learn how to skin and prepare animal skin...and started collecting and skinning roadkill she found near her home. And then she worked with a seamstress to turn the furs into clothing—muffs, scarves, hats, wraps, leg warmers, and more. She took samples of her roadkill-fur clothes to New York City—and they were an instant hit. Today her company, Petite Mort Fur (“little death”), is based in Boston and sells roadkill clothing to clients all over the world. The animals collected and skinned for the furs include foxes, rabbits, otters, raccoons, beavers, deer, mink—and even bears. Paquin says using the pelts of roadkill animals is an ethical way to produce fur, unlike the farming of fur animals, a practice she opposes. “All this fur is being thrown away,” Paquin says. “If we can pick that up, we never have to kill another fur-bearing animal again.” Prices for her items range from $45 for coyote fur pom-pom earrings, to $2,500 for a fawn scarf and belt. (Bonus: every Petit Mort product comes with a note telling where and when the animal was found.)
“We are all born ignorant, but one must work hard to remain stupid.”
—Benjamin Franklin

“Stupid people are ruining America.”
—Herman Cain

“Evil is relatively rare; ignorance is epidemic.”
—Jon Stewart

“TALK SENSE TO A FOOL AND HE CALLS YOU FOOLISH.”
—Euripides

“Intelligence is totally subjective; it’s like sexiness.”
—David Fincher

“People who boast about their I.Q. are losers.”
—Stephen Hawking

“A brainiac notices everything, an ignoramus comments about everything.”
—Heinrich Heine

“We’re all idiots when we’re young. We don’t think we are, but we are.”
—Helen Mirren

“One of the painful things about our time is that those who feel certainty are stupid, and those with any imagination and understanding are filled with doubt and indecision.”
—Bertrand Russell

People may have known him as “Scarface,” but Al Capone’s friends called him “Snorky.”
Hey, Ebbets!

When the Brooklyn Dodgers first started playing at Ebbets Field in 1913, baseball wasn’t yet the massively popular sport it became a decade or two later. The stadium, located in the Brooklyn neighborhood called Flatbush, sat 18,000 fans when it opened, but was slowly expanded to a maximum of 32,000 seats by the mid-1950s—which, as far as Dodgers owner Walter O’Malley was concerned, was still too small to host a team of such stature; the Dodgers had appeared in nine World Series by that point.

So, much like professional sports team owners do today, O’Malley started considering the possibilities of a new stadium—and he wanted the City of New York to pay for it. The commissioner of the New York City Parks Department, Robert Moses, was happy to oblige…provided that he and the municipal government got to decide where the stadium would be built. Moses wanted to put the new ballpark in Flushing Meadows in Queens. The city would pay for it, and the city would own it. What a deal!

No Deal

Not for O’Malley. Before owning the Dodgers, he’d made his fortune as a real-estate developer. He knew that part of the financial benefits of owning a sports franchise was owning the stadium, so he rejected Moses’s offer. His counteroffer: He wanted Moses to condemn a large parcel of land along Brooklyn’s Atlantic Railroad Yards under a federal law called Title I, which allowed the city to condemn unused land for public works projects. Then, O’Malley figured, he could buy the land from the city at a bargain rate. Moses wasn’t having any of it, in part because he thought (correctly) that O’Malley was just trying to get a good deal on the land, but also because he didn’t believe a baseball stadium fell under the category of “public-works.” Moses had a stricter interpretation—he defined public works to mean projects like playgrounds, bridges, and subsidized housing.
But O’Malley simply didn’t want to move the Brooklyn Dodgers to Flushing Meadows. He told Moses, “If my team is forced to play in the borough of Queens, they will no longer be the Brooklyn Dodgers.” Apparently that didn’t matter to Moses, and he basically gave O’Malley an ultimatum: the only way the city would pay for a new ballpark was if it was the one in Flushing Meadows. Moses didn’t want a gigantic new stadium anywhere in Brooklyn, citing concerns over traffic and a need to redo subway and streetcar schedules and routes. Also factoring into Moses’ rejection of O’Malley’s plan was that on those four city blocks of abandoned land in downtown Brooklyn, O’Malley wanted to build a domed stadium—the first domed stadium.

A DOME IDEA

Domed stadiums became the rage in professional sports after the Houston Astrodome opened in 1965. It was a way to host outdoor sporting events for tens of thousands of spectators in regions where rain, snow, or heat were a factor. Some of the most famous domes in sports history: the Kingdome in rainy Seattle, the Metdome in snowy Minneapolis, and the Astrodome in scorching Houston. In the 1950s, the idea of building a domed ballpark was scoffed at. It would be an architectural novelty—maybe even an impossibility.

In May 1955, after architect Norman Bel Geddes politely rejected O’Malley’s request to devise an Ebbets Field renovation plan that included building a roof over it, O’Malley wrote to quirky architect and inventor Buckminster Fuller. Fuller was known for creating domed structures, and at one point proposed building a dome over midtown Manhattan. But when given the chance to build one over a stadium, Fuller jumped at the idea and turned the task over to students in the graduate-level architecture class he taught at Princeton University. Led by a budding architect named T. William Kleinsasser, the students designed a plan for a domed stadium in Brooklyn.

Among the proposed features of the dome, which would have opened on O’Malley’s favored site in 1960:

- It would seat 52,000 people.
- It would use a real grass playing surface.
- It would be 300 feet tall and 750 feet in diameter.
- It would be covered in a transparent domed top.
- The roof would be retractable.
- It would be air-conditioned.

There weren’t enough life boats on the Titanic because the president of the White Star Line thought they would clutter up the deck.
In the Revolutionary War, an American spy named Anna Strong sent messages by hanging petticoats and handkerchiefs on a clothesline.

- Bordering the stadium: a village with new shops and restaurants.
- Under the stadium: a 5,000-car parking garage with four entrances.
- The cost: $6 million, but privately funded.

**OUT OF TOWN**

Moses was right to have reservations about squeezing all of that into four city blocks in the heart of Brooklyn. The city wouldn’t permit it, and O’Malley had no choice but to move the team, especially after he’d already made a deal to sell Ebbets Field to a real-estate developer, in part to force action on the new stadium.

Moses and the city of New York essentially called O’Malley’s bluff. The city council of Los Angeles, following the news of the new stadium developments, reached out to the Dodgers owner in 1955 and again in 1956, suggesting he make the Dodgers the first Major League Baseball team to play in Los Angeles. After the dome deal fell through, O’Malley accepted the offer and the Dodgers played their last game in Brooklyn on September 24, 1957. In the 1958 season, the Brooklyn Dodgers became the Los Angeles Dodgers.

What New Yorkers didn’t count on was that at the same time the Dodgers left New York, the New York Giants were moving to San Francisco. (The owner, Horace Stoneham, was planning to move to Minneapolis, but O’Malley and others convinced him to move to the West Coast instead.) Suddenly, the biggest city in the United States, which had once fielded three Major League Baseball teams, had only one, the New York Yankees.

Major League Baseball quickly scrambled to fill that void, and in 1962 awarded the city an expansion team, the New York Mets. Initially, the Mets played in the Giants’ old stadium, the Polo Grounds, but two years later they were playing in Shea Stadium—a stadium built by the city and owned by the city. It was built on the exact parcel of land in Flushing Meadows that Moses had offered O’Malley as a new stadium for the Dodgers.

Oddly enough, right across the street from where the Brooklyn dome would’ve sat is the Barclays Center. The arena is home to the Brooklyn Nets of the NBA.

In addition to the New York Giants’ move to San Francisco, lots of other sports teams headed west in the early ‘60s. The Washington Senators relocated to become the Minnesota Twins in 1961, and in the NBA the Minneapolis Lakers moved to Los Angeles, and the Philadelphia Warriors moved to San Francisco.
KENTUCKY FRIED COLONELS

You’ve heard of Colonel Harland Sanders, founder of the Kentucky Fried Chicken empire. (His story is on page 123.) Sanders did serve in the U.S. Army, but he never earned the rank of colonel. So how’d he get it? Here’s the story of a Kentucky tradition more than 200 years old.

MAN OF WAR
Isaac Shelby (1750–1826) was a Revolutionary War hero and Kentucky’s first governor. He served his first term from 1792 to 1796, and a second term from 1812 to 1816. He made it clear that he would have preferred not to serve the second term, but the War of 1812 was looming, and he agreed to come out of retirement and see the state through the national crisis.

In July 1813, General William Henry Harrison asked Governor Shelby to raise a force of Kentucky soldiers and lead them into battle against the British. Shelby agreed, and on October 15, 1813, his force of 3,500 volunteers helped win the Battle of the Thames, in what is now the province of Ontario, Canada.

After the war, Shelby appointed one of his former officers, Charles Todd, to serve as an aide-de-camp on his staff with the rank of colonel—the first official “Kentucky colonel.” As Todd’s rank implied, he served the governor as a military aide. The time when Kentucky governors needed military aides on their staff would soon pass, but the tradition of awarding prominent citizens with the title was just getting started. More than 200 years later, awarding someone a commission of Kentucky colonel remains the highest honor a governor of Kentucky can bestow. More than 140,000 people have received the title since 1813, an average of nearly 700 per year.

FIGUREHEADS
In the 1820s, Kentucky colonels served as uniformed bodyguards, assigned to protect the governors as they went about their official duties. But as the years passed, the job became entirely ceremonial, with no bodyguarding required. Kentucky Fried Chicken founder Colonel Harland Sanders, the most famous Kentucky colonel of them all, owes his colonelcy not to his secret recipe for fried chicken but to the fact that he was a political supporter of Ruby Laffoon, who was the state’s governor from 1931 to 1935. Laffoon commissioned more than 5,000 colonels during his four years in office, or about five times the number awarded by all of his predecessors combined. Laffoon’s successor, Governor

Mini-golf was originally called “Tom Thumb Golf.”
Happy Chandler, was not impressed; he reverted to tradition by appointing only about a dozen new colonels each year, and always on the first Saturday in May, during the running of the Kentucky Derby. (Tickets to the derby and to a special derby eve colonels’ banquet are two of the perks of being appointed a Kentucky colonel; a third is the right to be addressed as “Honorable.” Most colonels decline the “Honorable” honor and humbly prefer to be addressed simply as “Colonel.”)

Since then, governors have alternated between issuing scads of commissions, like Ruby Laffoon, or only a handful, and only to the most deserving nominees “in recognition of noteworthy accomplishments and outstanding service to a community, state or the nation.” How many to award is left entirely to the discretion of the sitting governor, who then forwards the names to the secretary of state’s office, which is responsible for printing the commission certificates. Governor Steve Beshear (2007–2015) awarded so many colonels’ commissions—about 16,000 each year—that the state reduced the size of the paper on which the commission certificate was printed, in order to save money.

**SOME FAMOUS KENTUCKY COLONELS**

- Colonel Elvis Presley  
- Colonel Shirley Temple  
- Colonel Pope John Paul II  
- Colonel Bill Clinton  
- Colonel Whoopi Goldberg  
- Colonel Wayne Newton  
- Colonel Tiger Woods  
- Colonel Betty White  
- Colonel Johnny Depp  
- Colonel Hunter S. Thompson  
- Colonel John Glenn  
- Colonel General Norman Schwarzkopf

One famous colonel who’s not a Kentucky colonel is Colonel Tom Parker, Colonel Elvis Presley’s longtime manager. Reason: He’s a Louisiana colonel. In 1948 Parker was awarded a colonel’s commission in the Louisiana State Militia by Governor Jimmie Davis, a former country singer who won his gubernatorial election with Parker’s help in 1944.

**NICE TRY**

“There’s something mystical about the Kentucky colonel that other states have tried to create, and it has not been successful,” says Colonel Glen Bastin.

In Germany to tell someone “Schwein haben” (to have a pig) is to tell them they are lucky.
You can’t lose! A horseshoe pointing up above your door supposedly catches the luck....a horseshoe pointing down over your door pours luck down on those who enter.

BETWEEN THE PAGES

In case you don’t happen to have a bookmark on hand, here are a few things your fellow readers have used as handy placeholders.

A librarian from Georgia found a taco pressed like a flower in the middle of a library book. It was squeezed so flat, she had no idea it was there until she opened the book.

Inside an old copy of A Wrinkle in Time, a Goodreads patron from Utah found a photo of his dad and his sixth-grade teacher, together at the prom.

The Hallelujah songbook was published in 1854. The book is subtitled A Book for the Service of Song in the House of the Lord. Inside? A rare-books dealer in New York found a hand-drawn bull’s-eye, used for target practice and dated 1902. Eight bullet holes were a testament to how well the owner could handle a Marlin repeating rifle. Conclusion: Not very well. Only two shots made it into the inner circle.

While working in the children’s department, a Salt Lake City librarian found a baby carrot flattened inside a copy of a children’s book written by Marc Brown. The book’s title: D.W. the Picky Eater.

A Michigan man found a $500 savings bond inside a ratty old book about soccer and tracked down its owner through the names inscribed inside. Turns out the recipient had been given the bond as a birthday present before using it as a bookmark. The family had torn the house apart looking for the bond but never found it. Somewhere along the line, the book was donated to charity. Eleven years later, the man who bought the book returned the bond to the girl—now a college student—who used it to pay some of her expenses.

A California college student found everything he needed to roll a joint inside an old medical textbook: marijuana leaves (neatly dried and pressed) along with a pack of No. 7 rolling papers.

An Oregon woman found a tuition receipt from Southern Oregon College (now Southern Oregon University) made out to her mother in a book she inherited. Cost of one semester’s tuition for the 1965–66 school year: $124.
Australia’s first police force was made up of the most well-behaved convicts.

**Inside a tattered first edition** of *Exodus* by Leon Uris, a gleeful used-book buyer found a yellowed 1961 program from a meeting of the Atlanta Jewish Welfare Fund. Listed on the program as giving the address: Leon Uris. The program had been signed by Uris himself before being stuck inside the book and promptly—or so it seems—forgotten.

**A Utah public librarian** found a ten-page letter (single-spaced), addressed jointly to President Obama and the Vatican, stuffed inside a copy of Gabriel Garcia Márquez’s *Love in the Time of Cholera*. The letter’s topic: the need for more religious books in libraries. Ironically, the book is about a man who has 622 illicit love affairs.

**A New York bookseller** found a tiny bright orange life vest in a kids’ book titled *Bats in the Dark* (1972). The vest once belonged to an Action Jackson action figure—a toy that was made by Mego Toys in the early 1970s to compete with Hasbro’s more popular G.I. Joe. (It flopped.)

**A Brooklyn woman** found a copy of *Rock This!* by Chris Rock in an abandoned shopping cart. It seemed like a good subway read, so she took the book aboard with her. Inside the pages? $200 cash.

**A Macon, Georgia, library worker** was hefting the *Chilton Car Repair Guide* onto a shelf when a wrench fell out and landed on her (Ouch!) foot.

**A researcher in Norfolk,** England, opened a 17th-century scientific pamphlet on Halley’s comet. Out fell a fried egg so old that it shed blue spores all over his shoes before it bounced across the floor.

**An out-of-towner** bought a treasure of a cookbook from the Cat’s Meow, a used bookstore in New Mexico. What made it special? The forty $1,000 bills hidden among the recipes. The book had been part of a large collection from a wealthy woman’s estate. Since the $1,000 note hasn’t been printed since 1934, each bill would have been worth up to seven times its face value.

**Inside a copy of** *The Thundering Herd* by Zane Grey (1925), a rare-books dealer from Oneonta, New York, found a pass for someone named C. Robert Rau to visit the House of Representatives. It was dated July 12, 1955, and signed by Massachusetts representative John W. Heselton. Too bad it wasn’t signed by one of two other Massachusetts representatives to the 84th Congress—John F. Kennedy or Tip O’Neill.