**So Many Choices**

**A father whose children were young adults set up this answering- machine message: “If you require financial assistance, press one. If you are in emotional turmoil over an impending breakup with a romantic partner and require a few hours of sympathetic discussion, press two. If you are being treated unfairly at work or school and wish to displace your anger to a nuclear-family member, press three. If your car or household appliances need immediate repair or replacement, press four. If you are telephoning to inquire about our well-being or to pass a few moments of pleasant conversation, please check the number you intended to dial.” *(Quoted by Enid Nemy, in New York Times)***

**In the 1910s, there were about 300 auto companies in business in the United States. Today, just a small number of companies (primarily General Motors, Ford, Chrysler, and American Motors) put out “the American dream.” (Isaac Asimov's Book of Facts, p. 65)**

**I just hooked up my new satellite dish to my TV. I now have hundreds of channels at my fingertips! Ah, so many channels, so little time! *(Art & Chip Sansom, in The Born Loser comic strip)***

**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)***

**Once, in India, a group of 100,000 Hindus voted to become Christian. But there were 37 denominations at work in their area, so they gave up their plan through inability to agree on which denomination to be identified with. *(Christian Advocate)***

**Seventy-three parties were on the ballot for an election in Italy in 1968. One was Friends of the Moon, which sported exactly one candidate. (*Isaac Asimov's Book of Facts, p. 337)***  
  
**There are many exciting activities always available, if you don’t mind how quickly you leave the world. *(Ashleigh Brilliant, in Pot Shots)***

**Too many choices: Are your investment options overwhelming you? asked Carl Richards in The New York Times. The sheer number of available choices for parking your cash can make your head spin. There are almost 25,000 investment options among mutual funds and exchange-traded funds alone. “Realistically, you could spend your entire life looking for the perfect investment.” Don’t drive yourself crazy; just “use a broadly diversified, low-cost index fund” and call it a day. Excessive choice can be a paralyzing trap in any financial scenario, whether you’re buying a house or a new insurance policy. “We could spend the rest of our lives researching an ever-increasing number of choices and searching for perfect, but to what end? We have better things to do.” *(The Week magazine, February 14, 2014)***

**A plain bar of iron is worth about $5. This same bar of iron, made into horseshoes, is worth $10.50. If made into needles, it becomes worth $3,285, and if turned into balance springs for watches, it attains a worth of $250,000! The same is true of another kind of material – man -- whose value is determined by what he makes of himself. *(Minot Messenger, Minot Dental Laboratory)***

**While a student at Santa Fe Community College in Gainesville, Florida, I took a course called “Introduction to the New Testament.” It was taught by a minister with a reputation for difficult exams and impossible grading curves. After handing us our first test, the professor announced, “You may look up for inspiration, or down in desperation --but not to the side for information.” *(William D. Olson, in Reader's Digest)***

Nearly 28,000 different ways to lose weight have been tried, according to U. S. government data. The oldest is fasting, “the ultimate diet.” (Isaac Asimov's Book of Facts, p. 94)

**As I was browsing in a new-car showroom, an enterprising young salesman spotted my Roman collar and approached me. “Father,” he volunteered, “this car comes in clerical black, Madonna blue, cardinal red and papal white.” *(The Rev. Ted Bradley, in Catholic Digest)***

**Ten different potential Republican presidential candidates have at some point finished first in polls of GOP voters this year. Among those who led in at least one poll: Sarah Palin, Donald Trump, Mike Huckabee, and Rudi Giuliani. *(NYTimes.com, as it appeared in The Week magazine, October 21, 2011)***

**By 1918 no less than 340 different safety razors using disposable blades had appeared on the market. *(Robert W. Pelton, in The Elks Magazine)***

**Spelling it out clearly: Lady Godiva – 117 different last-name spellings.**

**good – 20 different spellings in 800 years. *(World Features Syndicate)***

**This is a strange country we live in. When it comes to electing a President, we get two choices. But when we have to select a Miss America, we get 50! *(Jay Leno, “Tonight Show,” NBC)***

**There are 2 million different combinations of sandwiches that can be created from a Subway menu. *(Noel Botham, in The Amazing Book of Useless Information, p. 177)***

**“Did you have a good holiday season?” Carol asked Joan. “Sure did. Our family invited a lawyer, a stock analyst, a politician and my mother-in-law over to eat. It was great. We had our choice of turkeys.” *(American Legion magazine)***

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**The Arabian Bedouin has 160 words for “camel.” No, “cigaret” isn’t one of them. *(Boyd’s Curiosity Shop, p. 30)***

**The Romans had 11 words for drunkenness. *(L. M. Boyd)***

**Eskimos have more than 100 words for ice. *(Boyd’s Curiosity Shop, p. 20)***

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**Words with most meanings in the Oxford English Dictionary:**

**“set” – 464 meanings**

**“run” – 396 meanings**

**“go” – 368 meanings**

**“take – 343 meanings**

**“stand” – 334 meanings**

**“get” – 289 meanings**

**“turn” – 288 meanings**

**“put” – 268 meanings. *(World Features Syndicate)***

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