**Long-Lasting**

**Baby Boomers will still chuckle if you describe a song as “having a good beat” and saying that “it’s easy to dance to.” They’ll recognize that as the standard record review given each week on TV’s American Bandstand. Dick Clark, America’s eternal teenager, first hosted the televised dance party in 1952. It progressed from a local Philadelphia program to a national phenomenon. A wide variety of artists appeared on the show to promote their newest records, and Bandstand stayed on the air until 1989. *(Chifton Thorold-Stone, in Tidbits)***

**A report from a major insurance company shows that baseball players live longer than other people and that, among ballplayers, third basemen have the longest lives, and shortstops the shortest. *(Barbara Seuling, in You Can’t Sneeze with Your Eyes Open, p. 6)***

**The man inside Big Bird: When Caroll Spinney landed the role of Big Bird in 1969, he never imagined he'd be doing it 45 years later, said Moya Sarner in The Guardian (U.K.). But at the ripe old age of 81, Spinney still regularly dons the big yellow suit to play one of the nation's most beloved characters on PBS's Sesame Street. Spinney has been fascinated with puppets since he was 8 years old. "I collected some scrap wood and built myself a puppet theater," says Spinney. "I made 32 cents with my first show. That's when I knew I would be a puppeteer when I grew up." Today, he operates a more sophisticated puppet: Inside Big Bird, Spinney places his right arm up the bird's neck; his right hand moves its head and his little finger controls the eyebrows. "I can't see anything outside the suit when I'm in it, so I wear a little monitor strapped to my chest, which shows me what the viewers see at home." As Big Bird, Spinney has lived the life of a global superstar. He has met eight first ladies and sung with legends Michael Jackson and Ray Charles. "But I don't think it's changed me," Spinney says. "Perhaps the show keeps me young -- I'm still playing a 6-year-old even though I'm 81. I guess that makes me the world's oldest child star." *(The Week magazine, May 22, 2015)***

**Six books never out of print:**

**\* Dracula (since 1877)**

**\* Call of the Wild (since 1903)**

**\* Blue-Backed Speller (since 1783)**

**\* Boston Cooking-School Cook Book (since 1896)**

**\* Uncle Tom's Cabin (since 1898)**

**\* The Joy of Cooking (since 1931). *(World Features Syndicate)***

**When it comes to longevity, bristlecone pines edge out the venerable lichens. With a recorded lifespan of 4900 years, these trees survive the most brutal conditions nature can dish out. They cling to barren mountain slopes 11,000 feet up, braced against the elements. Bristlecone needles last up to 30 years and are always ready to soak up the sun’s energy. The growing period may be only 45 days during a good year and, with such slow growth, these pines actually erode along with the mountain. The lowest parts of their roots spread downward into the soil as the upper parts are sandblasted away. (Lowell P. Thomas, in Reader’s Digest)**

**Butter from 1000 B.C.: Workers in an Irish peat bog unearthed one of the oldest and best-preserved examples of packaged food: a 3,000-year-old oak barrel filled with butter. The barrel, which had been cut from a tree trunk, was 3 feet long, weighed nearly 80 pounds, and came with lid attached; the butter had long since turned into a white, waxy substance called adipocere. "We knelt down and felt something hard and started to dig it out with bare hands," John Fitzharris told the local paper, the Leinster Leader. "We could smell it, and it was attracting crows." Numerous well-preserved bodies, food items, and tools have been found in peat bogs, which are famously devoid of the oxygen and acids that cause decomposition. The barrel of ancient butter is now being analyzed at the National Museum of Ireland, where conservator Carol Smith said the testing does not include tasting. "It's a national treasure," she said. "You can't be going hacking bits of it off for your toast." (The Week magazine, September 18, 2009)**

**In 1987, a 1,400-year-old lump of still edible cheese was unearthed in Ireland. *(Noel Botham, in The Amazing Book of Useless Information, p. 168)***

**In 2007, British marine biologists discovered the oldest living animal, a clam more than 400 years old. (*Uncle John’s Bathroom Reader: Wise Up!, p. 251)***

**Clams can live at least 150 years. *(L. M. Boyd)***

**Brenda Starr, reporter, is closing her notebook for good. Her eponymous daily comic strip, created by Dale Messick in 1940, will run its last installment on January 2, 2011. It joins Little Orphan Annie – which first appeared in 1924 and finished its run in June – in the comics graveyard. *(Associated Press, as it appeared in The Week magazine, December 24, 2010 – January 7, 2011)***

**In 1903, St. Cloud, Minnesota, businessman and bicycle-store owner Stephen Tenvoorde, signed a dealership agreement with Ford Motor Company to sell cars. Today, Tenvoorde Ford is the world’s oldest Ford dealership. *(American Profile magazine, January 22, 2012)***

**The longest-lasting single earthquake of record was that Alaska shakeup of 1964. It went on for four minutes. *(L. M. Boyd)***

**Have any of the girders on the Eiffel Tower been replaced? No, not even a bolt has been replaced. *(L. M. Boyd)***

**Good week for: Changing with the times, after Encyclopedia Britannica announced that after 244 years, it would no longer make its 32-volume print encyclopedia and instead focus on its digital business. *(The Week magazine, March 23, 2012)***

**Ancient Greek fishermen made gloves out of fibers taken from mussels. If they dried out, they wore out. So the fishermen stored them in buckets of seawater and they lasted longer than any other fiber of the time. Even were passed down from generation to generation. *(L. M. Boyd)***

**Astronauts' footprints and Lunar Rover tire tracks will stay on the Moon for millions of years as there is no wind to blow them away. *(Pam Beasant, in 1000 Facts about Space, p. 35)***

**Nelson: “Oh, man! I dropped the geode you gave me and now it’s all broken!” Grandpa: “That’s too bad, Nelson. But these things happen.”**

**Nelson: “How old did you say it was?” Grandpa: “Oh, about ten million years.” Nelson: “Well, it had a good long life.” *(Brian Crane, in Pickles comic strip)***

**Gold is virtually indestructible. About 85 percent of all the gold ever mined is still being used. (Don Voorhees, in The Essential Book of Useless Information, p. 136)**

**Kelsey Grammer, who played Frasier, ended up playing that character for twenty seasons (counting Frasier), which ties him with James Arness of Gunsmoke for being in the same role for the most years. *(Don Voorhees, in The Perfectly Useless Book of Useless Information, p. 100)***

**The Guiding Light began as a radio program in 1937 and was on TV since 1952, before finally being canceled in 2009. (Don Voorhees, in The Essential Book of Useless Information, p. 16)**

**Almost three hundred TV comedy and drama series have exceeded the one-hundred-episode mark. Eighty-three have gone past two hundred episodes, while only twenty have surpassed three hundred episodes. Seven have eclipsed four hundred episodes, four topped five hundred episodes, and only Gunsmoke made it above six hundred. (Don Voorhees, in The Essential Book of Useless Information, p. 3)**

**Donna, the world’s oldest hippopotamus in captivity, celebrated her 55th birthday in July at Evansville, Indiana’s Mesker Park Zoo and Botanic Garden. *(American Profile magazine, 2007)***

**Honey is the only food that does not spoil. Honey found in the tombs of Egyptian pharaohs has been tasted by archeologists and found edible. *(David Louis, in Fascinating Facts)***

**You’ve heard the notion that icebergs could be towed ocean-wide to supply fresh water to dry lands. Critics say the icebergs would melt. It’s a fact, though, that some icebergs have been known to last 225 years. *(L. M. Boyd)***

**President William Henry Harrison’s inaugural address lasted nearly two hours. (*Uncle John’s Bathroom Reader: Wise Up!, p. 257)***

**Apollo 17 astronaut Gene Cernan, the last man to walk on the moon, wrote his daughter's initials, TDC, in the dust. The initials should remain just as he wrote them for millions of years. *(The Daily Chronicle)***

**Bad week for: Getting to the point, after a Norwegian crime writer set a new record for the world's longest interview. Hans Olav Lahlum spoke for over 30 hours straight to journalist Mads Andersen on topics including U.S. politics, chess tactics, and kebab recipes. *(The Week magazine, June 7, 2013)***

**A man may die, nations may rise and fall, but an idea lives on. Ideas have endurance without death. *(John F. Kennedy)***

**Late Show With David Letterman: So long, Dave, you'll be missed. Back in 1982, David Letterman stepped into a sleepy late-night TV slot and began unpacking his slightly subversive comic sensibility. He dropped stuff from the roof to watch it smash. He donned an Alka-Seltzer suit and got lowered into a dunk tank. Thirty-three years later, Dave has been mainstreamed but not fully tamed, yet he's ready to sign off for good. The countdown has included a teary moment with Steve Martin and a heartfelt "We love you" from President Obama. (The Week magazine, May 22, 2015)**

**Antarctic explorers trek into a barren, ice-free mountain range and discover lichens flourishing in the fissures of porous rocks. In less-harsh regions these plants anchor themselves directly onto bare rock, often by etching the surface with acids and then growing into the pits they burn out. Lichens are tough and can survive being frozen most of the year. Frequently, their daily growing period lasts only an hour or two. No wonder they spread so slowly – it can take a lichen 25 years to reach a diameter of just one inch. Old age for a lichen may be 4500 years. These survivors are discovered in places you’d never expect to find life. (Lowell P. Thomas, in Reader’s Digest)**

**The longest game of Monopoly in history lasted 70 straight days. (WWW.MONOPOLY.COM)**

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**Some of the best-preserved mummies in history, found in bogs in Denmark, were about 2,000 years old and so well preserved that local police were able to take the mummies’ fingerprints. *(Barbara Seuling, in You Can’t Sneeze with Your Eyes Open, p. 21)***

**On December 6, 1910, the child Rosalia Lombardo died of the Spanish flu in Sicily. Alfredo Salafia, a famous embalmer, was enlisted to preserve the child's body. Lombardo was one of the last to be admitted to the famed Capuchin Catacombs of Palermo. Salafia's technique was so masterful that the body remains remarkably preserved even after 100 years, and has earned the name the "Sicilian Sleeping Beauty." Visitors still flock to the catacombs to see what has been called "the world's most beautiful mummy." *(The Daily Chronicle)***

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**The “Peanuts” gang debuted in seven newspapers on October 2, 1950. Charles Schulz’s comic strip – an offshoot of his earlier “Li’l Folks” cartoons – starred lovable loser Charlie Brown. His travails with kites, footballs and his beagle Snoopy propelled “Peanuts” for 17,897 strips, inspired TV specials and spawned a licensing empire before Schulz’s death at age 77 in 2000. *(Alison McLean, in Smithsonian magazine)***

**The Welwitschia plant, found only in the Namib Desert of southern Africa, is believed to live for nearly 2,000 years. *(Jeff Harris, in Shortcuts)***

**Even dead plants are dangerous. A few botanists have gotten poison ivy from centuries-old herbarium specimens. (Emily & Per Ola D-Aulaire, in Reader's Digest)**

**A type of puppet theater in India and Indonesia is performed at special occasions and may last all night, from sunset to sunrise. (Jeff Harris, in Shortcuts)**

**"The Big Top is coming down -- for good," said Tamara Lush in the Associated Press. Feld Entertainment, owners of the Ringling Brothers and Barnum & Bailey Circus, has announced that "The Greatest Show on Earth" will close in May after a 146-year run. So ends a colorful chapter in the American story. From modest beginnings as a small zoo on wheels, the circus grew into a multi-ring extravaganza, wowing audiences with death-defying trapeze artists, lion and tiger tamers, and Jumbo, "the world's largest elephant." (The Week magazine, January 27, 2017)**

**Born in Dickinson, North Dakota, Dorothy Stickney (1896-1998) is best known for her role in Life with Father, which opened at the Empire Theater in New York in 1939 and ran for seven years with more than** **3,224 performances. *(American Profile magazine, 2005)***

**On February 8, 1969, the last issue of The Saturday Evening Post was published, ending a magazine tradition that began in 1821. *(The Daily Chronicle)***

**I stroked the fury hide of a remarkably preserved seal that had strayed from the sea and died. According to scientific dating analysis, it had been dead for 780 years. Some carcasses estimated to be 2000 years old have been found. Consequently, the scientists are careful to fly out every bit of trash, even dishwater. Where cold, dry air preserves raw flesh as long as two millennia, a paper cup, or a pool of oil would remain for an eternity. (John Dyson, in Reader’s Digest)**

**When asked how many inaugurations he's attended, former South Carolina Senator Strom Thurmond, age 100, replied, "All of them." *(Newsweek)***

**A pastor known for lengthy sermons saw a man leave in the middle of his message. He returned just before the end of the service. Afterward the pastor asked the man where he had gone. “I went to get a haircut,” the man replied. “Why didn’t you do that before the service?” “I didn’t need one then,” the man said. *(Rocky Mountain News)***

**The age of the oldest snake on record was twenty-nine years, forty-two days. *(E. C. McKenzie, in Tantalizing Facts, p. 36)***

**On January 7, 1950, Hank Snow made his first appearance on the Grand Ole Opry. He continued to perform at the Opry for 46 years. *(The Daily Chronicle)***

**Greer Garson delivered the longest acceptance speech ever in the history of the Academy Awards when she won the Oscar for Best Actress in Mrs. Miniver. Her speech lasted thirty minutes. *(Russ Edwards & Jack Kreismer, in The Bathroom Trivia Digest, p. 65)***

**How old do the oldest sturgeon get? Age 120 is the max, according to Science Digest experts. *(Boyd’s Curiosity Shop, p. 185)***

**My friend went to a self-help group for compulsive talkers. It’s called On & On Anon. (Reader’s Digest)**

**Our most distant missionary: On the 35th anniversary of its launch, the Voyager 1 spacecraft is close to becoming the first man-made object to escape our solar system. The spacecraft – run by a 1977 computer 100,000 times less powerful than an iPod Nano – is currently 11.3 billion miles away. In 2004, Voyager 1 entered the turbulent boundary zone beyond Pluto, where solar winds encounter plasma pushing back from interstellar space. Now, researchers say, the spacecraft has reached a surprising area of calm that could mean it’s at the solar system’s outermost edge, where solar winds are expected to finally peter out. “We’re anxious to get outside and find what’s out there,” Ed Stone, Voyager’s chief scientist, tells the Associated Press. Earlier in its travels, Voyager 1 – and its sister spacecraft, Voyager 2 – provided the first close-up views of Jupiter, Saturn, Uranus, and Neptune. Researchers predict that Voyager – which carries an audio-visual disc inscribed with greetings from Earth, photos of people and animals, and some Mozart – will exit the solar system within a year. It’s expected to continue sending information back to Earth for a decade before its batteries run out. *(The Week magazine, September 28, 2012)***

**A man who began working for a Ford dealership in England in 1930 was still working there at the age of ninety-two. *(Noel Botham, in The Best Book of Useless Information Ever, p. 97)***

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