**Observing Life**

**The Lord said, "Raise your eyes now,**

**and look from the place where you are,**

**northward and southward and eastward and westward.**

**(*Genesis 13:14)***

**Give me understanding and I shall keep thy law;**

**yea, I shall observe it with my whole heart.**

***(Psalm 139: 34)***

**The kingdom of God is not coming with things that can be observed;**

**nor will they say, “Look, here it is!” or “There it is!”**

**For, in fact, the kingdom of God is among you.**

***(St. Luke 17:20-21)***

**But I tell you, look around you,**

**and see how the fields are ripe for harvesting.**

***(St. John 4:35)***

**If only God would give me some clear sign! Like making a large deposit in my name at a Swiss bank. (Woody Allen)**

**Alexander Graham Bell thought you could educate yourself by continually putting three words into practice: “Observe, remember, compare.” *(L. M. Boyd)***

**You can observe a lot just by watching. *(Yogi Berra)***

**Nearly 45 percent of Montanans engage in bird-watching, which is tops in the U.S. (and more than twice the national average). And if you think bird-watching is a defunct pastime, you’re sorely mistaken. While it’s true that most of the participants are older, married persons, those same fans aren’t shy to dip into their pockets for binoculars, books and feeders to make the pursuit more enjoyable. Bird-watchers spend more than $30 billion annually on the hobby. *(Tidbits)***

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**Clarence Birdseye, an inveterate tinkerer who worked for the U.S. Biological Survey before taking up fox breeding, in northeastern Canada, hit on his packaging innovations after watching the Inuit preserve fish by exposing it to subzero temperatures immediately after catching it. Food distribution would never be the same. *(The Week magazine, June 8, 2012)***

**Lovers of frozen foods can thank an American taxidermist, Clarence Birdseye from Brooklyn, New York, for them. Having seen people in the Arctic preserving their fish and meat in barrels of seawater, which became quickly frozen, Birdseye realized that rapid freezing meant food would still be fresh when it was later thawed and cooked. Quick frozen foods first went on sale in 1930, in Massachusetts. In 1923 he spent seven dollars on an electric fan, buckets of brine, and cakes of ice. Six years later he sold his patents and trademarks for twenty-two million dollars. *(Hunter Davies’ Book of Lists, p. 40)***

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**By the time an American child is 3 years old, he or she can recognize, on average, 100 brands. As the popularity of digital devices grows among new parents, marketers are beginning to aggressively target products to the 0-3 age bracket. *(Adweek, as it appeared in The Week magazine, October 14, 2011)***

**In 1921, Elmer Cline of Taggart Baking Company in Indianapolis, Indiana, needed a name for the company’s new 1.5-pound loaf of bread. Inspiration struck when he saw a balloon race and felt a sense of wonder at the sky filled with colorful balloons – and Wonder Bread was born. *(American Profile magazine)***

**There is a way to break out, to escape the imprisonment of the ego that we have created. Eastern spiritual technology begins with the simple act of sitting, watching passing thoughts, counting breaths, witnessing. Study the ways you use to close and you will learn how to open. See how you erect your defense mechanisms. Follow the advice of Socrates: know thyself. Sit and observe your mind trips. Listen to your interior dialogues. Watch your routines, how you repeat yourself, day after day. Notice how you think, feel, do and imagine he same things over and over. How many times have you had the same fight with your mate? How many times have you given your children the same advice? How many times have you remembered the same traumatic event that explains (and justifies) how you are today? *(Sam Keen, in Reader’s Digest)***

**Chewing gum is made from chicle, a sticky substance found inside the sapodilla tree. In 1869, Thomas Adams of New York bought a large quantity of chicle with the intent of vulcanizing it and using it as a rubber substitute. The plan didn’t work, but he noticed that his employees enjoyed chewing the stuff, so he tried another tactic. He boiled the chicle and added licorice flavoring to it. He called his new chewing gum Black Jack, and it became the first flavored chewing gum sold in the United States. *(Tidbits of Denver)***

**A pair of married art students happened to notice that the vinyl they were using for a school project would automatically stick to the semi-gloss paint in their bathroom, so they cut out basic shapes and combined them to decorate the wall. They and their friends had so much fun adding to and rearranging the giant collage that they decided to scale down the idea and market it, calling their brainchild Colorforms. (David Hoffman, in Little-Known Facts about Well-Known Stuff, p. 74)**

**David Gonzalez was gutting a fixer-upper in the town of Elbow Lake, Minnesota, when he spotted an old comic book tucked in with the newspapers used to insulate the wall. He figured the colorful discovery might be worth a little money, but was amazed to discover it was actually one of the rarest comic books of all time -- the 1938 Action Comics #1 that introduced the world to Superman. Gonzalez is likely to reap six-figure sum from the book's auction, which is not bad considering he bought in the dilapidated house for around $10,000. (The Week magazine, June 7, 2013)**

**COUGH DROPS: During the mid-1800s, candy-maker and restaurateur James Smith operated a restaurant in Poughkeepsie, New York. One day a patron noticed that Smith was being tormented by a heavy, hacking cough. The patron took a candy-like lozenge from his pocket and told him it could soothe sore throats and relieve coughs. The diner later gave Smith the formula, and he whipped up a batch of the medicinal candy. Seeing its commercial possibilities, Smith started packaging the drops and began an ad campaign in 1852. When James died, his sons William and Andrew inherited the business and, in 1866, it became the Smith Brothers Company. The famed Smith Brothers cough drops, now manufactured by F & F Laboratories, are still sold everywhere. (Wallechinsky/Wallace, in The Book of Lists - #3, p. 308)**

**Charles Darwin’s Origin of Species (1859) brings together twenty years of painstaking, minutely detailed observation ranging over the whole spectrum of organic life. Like Bacon, Darwin made little use of mathematical knowledge while at Cambridge. Nor was Darwin the sort of scientist whose observations depend on instruments. His four-volume study of barnacles – Cirripedia (1851-1854) – uses microscopy frequently, but much of his best work could have been written entirely on the basis of direct observation. *(O. B. Hardison, Jr., in Disappearing Through the Skylight, p. 22)***

**A desk is a dangerous place from which to watch the world. *(John le Carre)***

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**W. W. Johnson, a 62-year-old retired school teacher, was walking through the Crater of Diamonds State Park at Murfreesboro, Arkansas, in August 1975. He casually stooped over and picked up a flawless 16.37 carat diamond! The last one that size sold for $85,000. Mr. Johnson named his find the Amarillo Starlight. *(Bernie Smith, in The Joy of Trivia, p. 25)***

**Panning for diamonds in Arkansas: There’s a reason why the diamond is Arkansas’ state gem, said Katherine LaGrave in Afar. Crater of Diamonds State Park, the only active diamond mine in the U. S., is also the world’s only diamond-bearing site that allows visitors to try prospecting. “What you find, you can keep,” and some visitors have struck it rich – “really, really rich.” More than 34,000 diamonds have been found on site since the 911-acre park was established in 1972, including the Esperanza, a teardrop-shaped gem worth an estimated $1 million that was found in 2015. “You don’t need to be a professional gemologist to hunt diamonds.” Surface searching is strolling with an eye out for glinting gems, ideally after it rains. Dry sifting involves shoveling gravel onto a screen (rented from the park) to sift it. Wet sifting requires lugging soil to the park’s water troughs for cleaning. “It is monotonous work, though occasionally shot through with a streak of white-hot adrenaline.” And miracles do happen: Just last month, a visitor from California, found a 4.38-carat yellow diamond sitting on top of the ground. *(The Week magazine, October 29, 2021)***

***\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\**Walt Disney got his idea for Mickey Mouse because he was forced to work in a garage. Disney couldn’t afford an art studio when he started, so he set up shop in an old garage. He was watching mice play there one night, and got the inspiration for Mickey Mouse. (Charles Reichblum, in Knowledge in a Nutshell)**

**Alastair Pilkington noticed a film of fat floating in his wife's dishwasher. That idea hook inspired a process where molten glass is floated on a layer of melted metal to provide an otherwise unachievable smoothness. (Joe Griffith, in Speaker's Library of Business, p. 305)**

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**Take, for example, the instructors at the Pan Am International Flight Academy in Eagan, Minnesota. They had a Middle Eastern student who said he wanted to learn to fly a jet but didn't want to learn about landing or taking off -- skills most aspiring pilots are highly motivated to master. Because a couple of people listened to their intuition and called the FBI in August of 2001 (a month before our imaginations were so painfully expanded), and because the FBI took Zacarias Moussaoui into custody, we didn't have to find out the hard way exactly what it was he had in mind. It's fair to assume now that he was just a few weeks away from doing something terrible. (Gavin de Becker, in Fearless, p. 7)**

**At a flight school in Florida, two men from the Middle East paid a lot of money to use a commercial-jet simulator even though they had logged nowhere near enough training hours to fly a commercial aircraft. It was not a joyride, for they were stern faced as they focused most of their time on steering. It might seem outrageous now that nobody called officials about Mohamed Atta and Marwan Al-Shehhi, but in fairness, the folks at the Florida flight school were among thousands of Americans who had literally thousands of encounters with the men who committed the mass murders of September 11. (Gavin de Becker, in Fearless, p. 15)**

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**Billy says to his Mom: “All the kids in my class are comin’ to our garage sale. They don’t have any money, but they like to watch.” *(Bil Keane, in The Family Circus comic strip)***

**While working on a better way to make glass, British inventor said, “Afraid there’s nothin’ I can do by lookin’ at it.” (Peggy Held, in Reader’s Digest)**

**In 1848 James Marshall, who was building a sawmill on California’s American River, noticed a glimmer in the water. “By god, boys, I think I found a gold mine,” he told his fellow workers. When word got out, the Great Gold Rush was on. *(Joseph A. Harriss, in Reader’s Digest)***

**On November 4, 1960, Jane Goodall observed chimpanzees in Tanzania using sticks as tools, the first-ever documented observation of tool usage in non-human animals. *(The Daily Chronicle)***

**Nothing is so rewarding as a stubborn examination of the obvious. *(Oliver Wendell Holmes)***

**Everyone knows Banting and Best discovered insulin in 1921, but one of the world’s greatest medical breakthroughs really depended on some chance tests on dog urine. Two researchers named Mehring and Minkowski noted that flies gathered around dog urine, and they wrote a paper in 1871 speculating that it contained sugar. Banting heard about their tests and eventually drew the conclusion that diabetes was connected with a chemical which controlled the sugar levels in the blood.  From there, it was a short but tricky step to isolating the hormone, insulin, in the pancreas, and then synthesizing it. *(Ripley’s Believe It or Not!: Book of Chance)***

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**Thomas Jefferson kept a garden journal from1766 to 1824 and a farm journal from 1774 to 1826. He noted all crops and many farm activities. Jefferson grew more than 150 varieties of fruit trees and 350 varieties of vegetables at one time. His garden book describes 50 varieties of peas, more than 30 varieties of cabbage and 54 varieties of beans. *(Robert C. Baron, historian)***

**Whenever you are to do a thing, though it can never be known but to yourself, ask yourself how you would act were all the world looking at you, and act accordingly. *(Thomas Jefferson)***

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**Observe what is with undivided awareness. (Bruce Lee)**

**Observations on life:**

**\* I went to school to become a wit, and only got halfway through.**

**\* It was all so different before everything changed.**

**\* A day without sunshine is like a day in Seattle.**

**\* I wish the buck stopped here. I could use a few.**

**\* It’s not the pace of life that concerns me, it’s the sudden stop at the end.**

**\* It’s hard to make a comeback when you haven’t been anywhere.**

**\* The only time the world beats a path to your door is when you’re in the bathroom. *(Rocky Mountain News)***

**Back home in Rome, Maria Montessori began caring for private patients and doing research at the University of Rome’s psychiatric clinic. At the asylum, she came in contact with children labeled “deficient and insane,” though most were more likely autistic or retarded. Locked all day in barren rooms, they would scuffle over crumbs of bread on the floor. Observing them, Montessori realized that the children were starved not for food but for stimulation. That set her to reading widely, in philosophy, anthropology and educational theory. Mental deficiency, she decided, was often a pedagogical problem. Experimenting with various materials, she developed a sensory-rich environment, designing letters, beads and puzzles that children could manipulate, and simple tasks such as mat weaving that prepared them for more challenging ones. After working with Montessori for two years, some of the “deficient” children were able to read, write and pass standard public-school tests. *(Nancy Shute, in Smithsonian magazine)***

**Good week for: Narcissism, after a British survey revealed that the average woman spends two years of her life studying herself in mirrors, store windows, and other reflective surfaces. Men, who take quicker peeks, only spend six months per lifetime checking out how they look. *(The Week magazine, October 6, 2006)***

**Artist Georgia O'Keefe paints close to nature and enjoys the often violent aspects of a desert climate. According to writer Christopher Isherwood, one time when he was a guest, she said, "Now we'll go out and watch the thunderstorm." The assemblage sat on chairs on the roof of her adobe house for hours, "as if at a theatrical performance," he notes, watching the boiling black clouds and jagged lightning bolts in the distance. *(Laurie Lisle, in Portrait of an Artist)***

**Good week for: Going to the zoo, after a study at Australia’s Melbourne Zoo found that orangutans enjoy watching people as much as people enjoy watching them. When given a choice to hide or view human visitors at a window, the orangutans chose the window. *(The Week magazine, June 25, 2010)***

**If we’re really being observed by people from outer space, why don’t we hear them giggling? *(Orben’s Comedy Fillers)***

**According to author L. Frank Baum, the name Oz was thought up when he looked at his filing cabinet and noticed one drawer marked A-G, a second tagged H-N, and a third labeled O-Z. *(David Hoffman, in Who Knew?, p. 82)***

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**In the early 1700s, the French physicist Rene de Reaumur discovered the concept of making paper from wood after watching wasps chewing wood, turning it to pulp with their saliva, and spreading it on their nests, where it dried into “paper” when exposed to air. *(Isaac Asimov’s Book of Facts, p. 189)***

**A British artist who made a paper-mache sculpture from paper he found in a dumpster later discovered he'd cut up rare comics worth $30,000. Steve Eyre, a comic-store owner, was visiting an art exhibition in northern England when he noticed pages from a first edition of The Avengers -- worth $15,000 -- stuck to the leg of Andrew Vicker's sculpture Paperboy, alongside several other rare comics. "It would have been cheaper for Andrew to make this out of Italian marble," said Eyre. Vickers laughed off the mistake, saying "money has not got such a value to me!" *(The Week magazine, July 19, 2013)***

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**For years I’ve noticed that the universe speaks to us in whispers. If we ignore the whispers, we get pebbles of warnings. If we still don’t pay attention, we get bricks of problems, and if we’re really hardhearted, eventually the entire brick wall comes crashing down. This is a pattern I’ve seen repeated so often in every area of life that I know for sure when you don’t pay attention to the pebbles, it’s just a matter of time before the bricks show up. (Oprah Winfrey)**

**Scottish bacteriologist Alexander Fleming returned to St. Mary’s Hospital in London from a holiday on September 3, 1928, to find mold growing on one of his staphylococcus cultures. Noting that no staphylococci were growing near the mold, Fleming investigated. He named the “mould juice” penicillin, for the penicillium mold that produced it. Fleming published his discovery in 1929, but it was a decade before Oxford scientists Howard Florey and Ernst Boris Chain isolated and purified it for use as an antibiotic. Fleming died in 1955 at age 73. (Alison McLean, in Smithsonian magazine)**

**If you observe people long enough, you'll realize that the self-made ones have an abundance of working parts. (Bob Talbert, in Detroit Free Press)**

**“To observe attentively is to remember distinctly,” Edgar Allan Poe wrote in “The Murders in the Rue Morgue,” published April 20, 1841. In what many consider the first modern detective story, sleuth C. Auguste Dupin used observation and analysis to solve a grisly murder in a locked room – the butler didn’t do it. Poe followed the success with two more Dupin stories. He died at age 40 in 1849. (Alison McLean, in Smithsonian magazine)**

**Herman Hollerith, a college graduate with a degree in engineering, helped compile the 1880 national census. It took 7 years of tedious, routine work to gather and tabulate all the information. Hollerith was sure there must be a quicker way. One day, while riding on a train, he noticed the conductor punch holes in a railway ticket to record the bearer's destination and the fare. Using the idea, Hollerith designed a punch to record a person's vital statistics by means of holes in a card. The cards were then read with an electromagnet. Because of this punch card invention, the 1990 census took only 3 years to complete, with a saving of $5 million. His device was a forerunner of today's computer. (Bits & Pieces)**

**One of the qualities of successful leaders in all walks of life is keen observation. They notice things about people, human nature, and the general world around them. Most of us, unfortunately, go through life with our eyes half closed. The first hint Sir Isaac Newton had leading to his important optical discoveries originated from a child’s soap bubble. The idea of printing was suggested by initials cut into the bark of a tree. The telescope was the outcome of a boy’s amusement with two pieces of glass in his father’s shop. (Bits & Pieces)**

**Learn from others’ mistakes. We don’t have the time to make them all ourselves. *(Eleanor Roosevelt)***

**On February 17, 1876, Julius Wolff opened the first sardine canning factory in Eastport, Maine. He saw a business opportunity when the Franco-Prussian War interrupted importation of the delicacy. (*The Daily Chronicle)***

**To acquire knowledge, one must study; but to acquire wisdom, one must observe. *(Marilyn vos Savant, columnist)***

**To a scientist, a forest is a laboratory. And to a great scientist, every square inch is a test tube. Louis Agassiz, the great Swiss naturalist and teacher who made his home in America, once told a friend: “I spent the summer traveling. I got halfway across my backyard.” *(Bernie Smith, in The Joy of Trivia, p. 45)***

**In Hamilton, Ohio, not long ago, a struggling young manufacturer named Herbert Piker sat staring at a fisherman’s minnow bucket (one bucket fits inside another). Suddenly he got an idea. Why not put insulation between those two cans? With ice cubes inside, it would be a perfect picnic box to keep food and drinks cold. That was the origin of the now-famous Scotch Kooler. In four years Piker’s company jumped from a rundown maker of strongboxes – the business he had inherited from his father – to a concern grossing five million dollars a year. *(Bits & Pieces, February, 1988)***

**The power of accurate observation is often called cynicism by those that do not have it. *(George Bernard Shaw)***

**I taught a “gifted and talented” class made up of particularly bright fifth-and-sixth graders. In the midst of a lesson on the power of observation, I realized that I was wearing two different styles of shoes. Trying to be as inconspicuous as possible, I moved behind my desk and concluded the lesson from there, thankful that the students didn’t seem to have noticed. The next day, I discovered that my lesson had been learned all to well. Before me sat a class of bright, smiling students – each wearing mismatched shoes. (Cheryl C. Nestor, in Reader’s Digest)**

**The creator of Silly Bandz – silicone bracelets shaped like animals, letters and other objects – is Robert Croak, owner of BCP Imports in Toledo, Ohio. Croak saw a similar product being marketed as rubber bands, made some adjustments and began marketing them as bracelets. Popular with children, Silly Bandz have been banned by some schools for being a distraction. *(American Profile magazine)***

**Life in the midst of every kind of human complexity becomes a simple act. All forcing, striving, manipulating, and controlling disappear as you become an observer of your life. Carried along by the gentle strength of the Spirit of God within you, your life unfolds like perfect petals of a blossoming rose. *(Richard & Mary-Alice Jafolla, in The Quest, p. 402)***

**A friend of mine worked in a lab experimenting with a new solar material gallium arsenide. Her job was to make precision cuts in the material with a high-speed wafer saw. Every time she did so, the material cracked. At home, she was watching her husband make wooden cabinets and noticed that, when he wanted to make precision cuts on certain types of wood, he reduced his saw's speed. She tried that on the gallium arsenide and it worked. (Roger von Oech)**

**When you are looking at someone you love, your pupils dilate; they do the same when you are looking at someone you hate. *(Noel Botham, in The Best Book of Useless Information Ever, p. 106)***

**The sport of parkour, which involves speedy and efficient movement through an obstacle course, began with the volcanic eruption of Mount Pelee on Martinique in 1902. French naval lieutenant George Herbert watched as the Caribbean locals evacuated over the fallen debris with grace and speed, while the Europeans were clumsy and slow. This inspired Herbert to develop a unique system of movement for the French military. In 1988, Raymond Belle, a retired French Special Forces veteran, transformed the training into the sport of parkour, where participants run, climb, swing, jump, roll, and vault over obstacles. *(The Daily Chronicle)***

**Stare. It is the way to educate your eye, and more. Stare, pry, listen, eavesdrop. Die knowing something. You are not here long. *(Walker Evans)***

**It does every one of us good occasionally to have a long, steady look at our real selves, and ask if we are nice to know and what we are doing about improvements. Personality takes you far in this world. My father could getanything out of anybody because he had such infinite charm and tact. Once he said to me, "I wasn't born this way, you know. I thought it was worth cultivating." *(Morris Mandel, in The Jewish Press)***

**Separated from his family on a weekend hike in the Ashley National Forest of northern Utah, 9-year-old Grayson Wynne began to panic. But then he remembered the lessons he had learned from watching Man vs. Wild, a Discovery Channel program that teaches survival techniques. Tearing up his yellow rain slicker, he tied the bits to trees as markers. On Saturday night he slept in a small shelter he built. And on Sunday he followed a creek in search of help. Finally, after 18 hours, rescuers on horseback spotted him. “It was such a good feeling that I was going to be all right,” he said. *(The Week magazine, July 3-10, 2009)***

**TEA BAGS: In 1908, a New York tea importer mailed his customers free samples of tea, which he packaged in tiny silk bags. When customers wrote back asking for more of the bags, the importer realized they were using them to steep the tea. . . and began packaging all his tea that way. *(Uncle John's Unstoppable Bathroom Reader, p. 28)***

**Good week for: Duane Jackson, the Times Square handbag vendor who first called attention to a terrorist car bomb. His sales are up 30 percent. “People came by because they’ve seen me on the news,” he said, “and they want to buy something to thank me.” *(The Week magazine, May 21, 2010)***

**A theater is an interesting place to analyze someone new in your life. Does he have a phobia about sitting on the aisle? When everyone else is sniffling and crying, is he busy unwrapping licorice and covering up emotions. Does he hog the communal armrest? Does he put his feet on the seat in front? Is he reluctant to ask people to move over one seat so the two of you can sit together? Everything you want to know about your potential mate can be discerned during a movie. *(Kathleen Kroll Driscoll, in Rockland, Mass., South Shore News)***

**Tinkertoy was invented by a tombstone designer and salesman who decided to try his hand at toy making when he noticed how much fun his own children had sticking pencils into empty spools of thread then haphazardly assembling them into all sorts of abstract forms. (David Hoffman, in Little-Known Facts about Well-Known Stuff, p. 86)**

**To whom that watches, everything is revealed. (Italian proverb)**

**Velcro, 1950: The name comes from the French for velvet, “velours,” and for hook, “crochet.” Swiss inventor George de Mestral noticed how plant burrs clung to his dog, but it took him fifteen years of research to find a way of creating the same effect. *Hunter Davies’ Book of Lists, p. 105)***

**The pharmaceutical company Pfizer Inc. sells about nine Viagra pills every second. Before the “little blue pill” became one of the most recognizable prescription drugs ever, it was a bust as a treatment for hypertension and angina. The scientists at Pfizer were ready to give up on the drug when they observed an unusual side effect during a toleration study. *(Harry Bright & Harlan Briscoe, in So, Now You Know, p. 162)***

**A waist is a terrible thing to mind. *(Jane Caminos, cartoonist)***

**A PIECE OF TAPE: In the early morning of June 17, 1972, an $80-a-week security guard named Frank Wills was patrolling the parking garage of an office complex in Washington, D.C., when he noticed that someone had used adhesive tape to prevent a stairwell door from latching. Wills removed the tape and continued on his rounds, but when he returned to the same door at 2:00 a.m., he saw it had been taped again. So he called the police, who discovered a team of burglars planting bugs in an office leased by the Democratic National Committee. This “third-rate burglary” – and the coverup that followed – grew into the Watergate scandal that forced President Richard M. Nixon to resign from office in 1974. *(Uncle John’s Unstoppable Bathroom Reader, p. 26)***

**Weed Eaters: In 1971, an automatic car wash's spinning brushes caught the attention of George Ballas, a 60-year-old Texan, and he imagined something similar to get rid of dandelions. (Owen Edwards & Andrew Nelson, in Special Report)  
As a child, Robin Williams spent a lot of time alone. His late father, Robert, was an automotive executive, and when his older half-siblings moved away, Williams was often lonely. To amuse himself, he put together a make-believe world, a precursor perhaps to the creation of the hilarious characters that define his comedy routines today. When Robin's not up, is he down? “When people see that I'm quiet, they think something's wrong,” he says. “In down times I like to go for a long bike ride or run. The other thing I'm doing in that quiet time is just observing. But I'm also recharging. The truth is I'm probably addicted to laughter. My energy has been described as manic, but it's more like that of a kid having a great time.” (Jonathan Alter, in USA Weekend)**

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