



Wandering & Wondering

John Maybury

DO YOU BELIEVE IN MAGIC?

According to a 2012 study of adults done by the University of Texas at Austin (cited in AARP Magazine, November 2013):

- Only 14 percent of those over 50 believe in aliens, but 27 percent of those aged 18 to 34 do.
- Only 18 percent of those over 50 believe in ghosts, but a third of those aged 18 to 34 do.
- Only 12 percent of those over 65 believe in Bigfoot (Sasquatch), but 22 percent of those aged 18 to 29 do.
- Only 10 percent of those over 50 believe in astrology, but 19 percent of those aged 18 to 34 do.
- But here's a surprise: Some 57 percent of those over 50 believe in angels, but only 46 percent of those aged 35 to 49 do. And 68 percent of those over 50 believe in heaven, but only 56 percent of those aged 35 to 49 do. AARP says the study shows that as we age and have to deal with more life-and-death matters, we tend to become more religious and less skeptical.

ALANDROME

As Pacificans await news of their first poet laureate, Pacifica palindrome lovers offer this poetic reminder: "Emanate, O Pacifica poet; a name!" (Alan Wald)

EL TORO LOCO: FARMWORKER BENEFIT

Carolyn Jaramillo writes: "I invite my friends to remember and thank farmworkers across the country by making a donation to the National Farm Worker Ministry (NFWM). The more than 2 million immigrant and migrant farmworkers in this country work long hours under difficult conditions for an average annual income of about \$10,000. Each day we enjoy the fruits and vegetables they plant, harvest, and pack; yet farmworkers are often unable to adequately feed their own families. Please attend the El Toro Loco (Francisco and Paloma) fundraising event on Thursday, November 7. Si, se puede!"

SWAMI SEZ

- "Never kick a cow chip on a hot day." (Will Rogers)
- "Horse sense is the thing a horse has which keeps it from betting on people." (W.C. Fields)

ANSWERS: QUIZ FOR SMART PEOPLE

1. Sport where neither spectators nor participants know the score or the leader until the contest ends: boxing.
2. North American landmark constantly moving backward: Niagara Falls' rim is worn down about two and a half feet each

year because of millions of gallons of water that rush over it every minute.

3. Only two vegetables live to produce on their own for several growing seasons: asparagus and rhubarb.
4. Fruit with seeds on the outside: strawberry.
5. How does the pear get inside the brandy bottle? It grew inside the bottle. The bottles are placed over pear buds when they are small, and are wired in place on the tree. The bottle is left in place for the entire growing season. When the pears ripen, they are snipped off at the stems.
6. Three English words begin with dw: dwarf, dwell, dwindle. (Pierre Messerli got all three, plus extra credit for "dweeb.")
7. English grammar punctuation marks: period, comma, colon, semicolon, dash, hyphen, apostrophe, question mark, exclamation point, quotation mark, bracket, parenthesis, ellipses.
8. Only vegetable or fruit never sold frozen, canned, processed, cooked, or in any other form but fresh: lettuce.
9. Things you wear on your feet beginning with "s": shoes, socks, sandals, sneakers, slippers, skis, skates, snowshoes, stockings, stilts.

HORSE SENSE

"Horse sense" is a robust form of common sense believed to be found in poorly educated but shrewd people. Horses wouldn't seem to be the obvious choice of animal to act as a yardstick for mental discernment. Owls, foxes, or dolphins maybe, but not horses. Indeed, the person who coined the term "horsefeathers" (meaning nonsense, stupidity) went the more conventional route in associating horses with a certain lack of refined intellect. Given the animal's important place in the lives of the people of medieval England, where present-day English was largely formed, it's not surprising that we now have numerous expressions that refer to horses. These usually allude to the hefty, coarse, or even vulgar nature of the working hacks of the Middle Ages. This perceived lack of sophistication is apparent in the way that rural language was formed. Any plant that resembled another but was large and coarse would be known as horse[plant name of choice]. Example: horseradish. (phrases.org.uk)

SITSEER

- Math humor (no, that is not an oxymoron): xkcd.com
- Zoom everything: htwins.net/scale2
- First-person accounts: eyewitnessstohistory.com
- Dollarocracy (John Nichols' book will make your blood boil)
- American history in color: Google "Colorized History" and "Photo Chopshop"
- Climate change equals extinction: lasthours.org

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