

Opinion/Commentary

Fun Fact

“Carrier pigeons” have been used to relay written messages for thousands of years. As early as 3000 B.C., the Egyptians were using pigeons’ “homing” skills by having them carry written texts across great distances. Once pigeons have established their connection to a particular location, their instinctual navigation remains sharp, and they can return home even from very far distances, traveling up to 600 miles in a single day.



Source: luxwisp.com

Strange BUT TRUE

By Lucie Winborne

- Worldwide, blue is the most common favorite color.
- Medieval knights were given letters of protection that essentially provided them with a license to kill, as they granted the possessor full immunity from legal proceedings resulting from battles or necessary fatalities.
- The “Mona Lisa” has her own mailbox in the Louvre for all the flowers, poems and love letters she receives.
- Deipnophobia is the fear of dining with other people
- People have used dishwashers to clean hats, toothbrushes, sneakers and more. There are even tutorials on how to cook certain foods with a dishwasher.
- New Order’s classic song “Blue Monday” is the best-selling 12-inch single in history. Unfortunately, the band lost money on it since the cost of producing its unique cover was higher than its sale price.
- In 95% of cases, the first word someone writes with a new pen is their own name.
- Human fetuses have gills, fur and even a tail during development. The tail becomes the coccyx and the “gills,” which are temporary slits in the neck, develop into jaw and ear bones, while the fur disappears before birth or within a few weeks afterward.
- Despite more than 150 years worth of study and experimentation, no one really knows why ice is slippery.
- Sixty-eight percent of American adults buy shoes with foot pain in mind.
- The oldest known toilet, in the ancient city of Knossos on the island of Crete, has remained functional for approximately 4,000 years since its construction and was built with a seat and sophisticated drainage system.
- Eyelashes are considered the thick-

Trivia test by Fifi Rodriguez

- U.S. STATES: Which state is last, alphabetically?
- MOVIES: What does the acronym S.H.I.E.L.D. stand for in movies about Marvel characters?
- LITERATURE: Who wrote the short story “The Secret Life of Walter Mitty”?
- GAMES: How many cards are in a standard deck?
- TELEVISION: On which sitcom did the character Harry the Hat appear?
- BUSINESS: When did the first Kentucky Fried Chicken franchise open?
- GENERAL KNOWLEDGE: How many Nobel prizes are awarded every year?
- U.S. PRESIDENTS: Which president was the shortest at 5 foot 4 inches tall?
- ASTRONOMY: Who was the first woman to travel into space?
- ANIMAL KINGDOM: What is a baby platypus called?

Answers

- Wyoming.
- Strategic Homeland Intervention, Enforcement and Logistics Division.
- James Thurber.
- 52.
- “Cheers.”
- 1952 in Salt Lake City, Utah.
- Six.
- James Madison.
- Valentina Tereshkova.
- A platypup or puggle.

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Jim Miller presents:

THE SAVVY SENIOR



Dear Savvy Senior,

I am very concerned about Elon Musk and the so-called DOGE team getting access to my Social Security number and personal financial information through their government office raids. What can I personally do to help protect myself from this identity theft mess?

Worried Senior

Dear Worried,

It’s a great question! I’ve been hearing from many older readers around the country that are deeply troubled by the news that the Elon Musk-led Department of Government Efficiency (DOGE) has been granted access to millions of Americans’ Social Security records that include highly sensitive personal information.

The major concern among data privacy experts is what could happen if your Social Security number, bank account information or tax records somehow gets leaked or breeched in all the data shuffling. If your information gets in the wrong hands it could lead to identity theft, which means scammers could use your personal information to open credit card accounts, bank accounts, telephone service accounts, and make major purchases – all in your name.

If you’re concerned about the privacy of your personal information, the best way to protect yourself is to put a “fraud alert,” or better yet a “credit freeze” on your credit file.

A fraud alert is a notification placed on your credit report that signals to potential creditors to take extra steps to verify your identity before extending credit in your name. While a credit freeze completely restricts access to your credit report, essentially preventing anyone from opening new accounts in your name without your explicit authorization.

A credit freeze provides much stronger protection than a fraud alert, but there is a drawback. When you freeze your credit, you won’t be able to open new credit cards or get a new loan while the freeze is in place. It does not, however, prevent you from using the credit cards you

already have open.

If you do need to get a new credit card or some type of loan, you can always lift the freeze on your account until you get the card or loan approved, and then refreeze it.

You’ll also be happy to know that a credit freeze is completely free to put in place and lift, as are fraud alerts. And neither action will affect your credit score.

Fraud Alert Set-Up

To set up a fraud alert, you’ll need to contact one of the three major credit reporting bureaus – Equifax, Experian and TransUnion – either by phone, online or by mail. You only need to contact one of these agencies, and they will notify the other two. Here’s the phone and website contact information for each of the three bureaus.

- Equifax: 800-685-1111 or Equifax.com/personal/credit-report-services
- Experian: 888-397-3742 or Experian.com/help
- TransUnion: 888-909-8872 or TransUnion.com/credit-help

If you haven’t been a victim of identity theft, you’ll need to set up an “initial fraud alert,” which lasts for one year, although you can renew it for additional one-year periods.

Credit Freeze Set-Up

To set up a credit freeze you’ll need to contact each of the three previously listed credit reporting bureaus – Equifax, Experian and TransUnion. A credit freeze lasts until you unfreeze it.

But remember, before you apply for new credit card or loan, you’ll need to temporarily lift the security freeze by following the procedures from each of the credit reporting bureaus where you placed the freeze.

If, however, you don’t want to set up a fraud alert or credit freeze, you can still keep an eye on your credit file by reviewing your credit report regularly. You can get a free credit report each week from Equifax, Experian and TransUnion by going to AnnualCreditReport.com.

How to Protect Yourself from Identity Theft Scams

Send your senior questions to: Savvy Senior, P.O. Box 5443, Norman, OK 73070, or visit SavvySenior.org. Jim Miller is a contributor to the NBC Today show and author of “The Savvy Senior” book.

Americanisms



“Mother is a verb. It’s something you do. Not just who you are.” — Cheryl Lacey Donovan



J.C. in Florida writes: “The one thing I might add [to your tips about preparing deviled eggs] is making sure the eggs are point down during storage so that the yolks are centered if stuffing.” Great point! A little vinegar in the boiling water will help to keep egg in the shell if it cracks.

“I love to put photos of family on the fridge. But I found that the photos were getting ruined from grease and moisture in the air. To get around that — and to really preserve them — I cleaned and laminated them. Afterward, I hot-glued little magnets to the backs, and now I can move them around to accommodate new photos. There are so many, and it gives me pleasure to look at them.” — C.R. in Oklahoma

This is classic money-saving advice as well as safety advice: Lower your water heater temperature from 140 F to 120 F. You will save money on heating water, and you will reduce your risk of scalding from hot temperatures.

“Add a cinnamon stick or softener sheet to your vacuum bag when you change it. While you clean, you will distribute the good smell throughout your home.” — F.H. in Colorado

Got a squeak in your hardwood floors? Dust a sprinkling of baby powder at the source of the squeak, and use a brush to get it in the cracks. The powder can help to lubricate the boards and remove the squeak.

If you need to clean stained plastic storage containers or takeout containers that you’ll use again, do it with baking soda. Get the item wet, and use a liberal amount of baking soda as a scrub. It’s abrasive but gentle, and super safe for food containers.

Send your tips to Now Here’s a Tip, 628 Virginia Drive, Orlando, FL 32803.

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USEFUL THINKING with Bill Patrie

Holding elected officials accountable

A contractor from Max, North Dakota erected a post frame building for me. I live in the Missouri River Valley North of Bismarck. It took me nearly a year to get a building permit. I had to get a zoning variance because the number of square feet in the proposed building was 400 more than the current zoning regulations would allow.

I became so frustrated with zoning officials I asked them to talk with my wife, instead of me. I gathered signatures from my neighbors to indicate to the board of adjustment that they did not object to the additional 400 square feet.

I am zoned “city agriculture” even though I am outside the city and my neighbor to the North of me and I are the only two residences tucked neatly into the very South West corner of the section that has been land leveled and produces irrigated corn.

I hold a master’s degree in public administration and in an earlier life worked for a regional planning council. In that capacity I helped communities write zoning ordinances. Officials in the zoning offices wanted me to switch zoning from agriculture to rural residential. Rural residential zoning would allow me to have horses but not chickens, and it would allow me to build the post frame building without the square feet restrictions of city agriculture.

I talked with my neighbor and we agreed to stick with our current zoning of agriculture rather than rural residential. I told zoning officials they couldn’t condition a building permit on my agreement to switch zoning.

My wife and I did raise chickens and sell eggs for seven years. Well, the building is up and functional. It protects my 1941 S Case Tractor, my 2010 Massey Ferguson 1529 Compact tractor with a loader, my 1949 International KB2 pickup truck, my R Pod camper, a 1980 446 Case Garden tractor with tiller, two canoes, a kayak and my Spectrum boat.

Sometimes I sit in a chair in that building with the doors open and simply enjoy the result of the fulfillment of a childhood dream. And when I close those two doors, together they are 16 feet wide, and 10 feet high, I notice every time that the doors match the opening to 1/32nd of an inch.

The contractor from Max, ND and his crew of three people completely finished that building in 11 hours. He had drilled the post holes in the fall, and had the materials delivered to the site. He pulled into the yard with all of his equipment and started work around noon. His crew worked until it was getting dark.

They came back in the morning and finished before noon. I took videos of this most amazing construction feat I have ever seen. His calculations were accurate, his every motion efficient and well-rehearsed, and his price extremely fair.

He lived up to and surpassed my every expectation.

I think we should expect our elected officials to engage in similar constructive thinking when designing laws, and running government. They may not be able to get within 1/32nd of an inch, but there is no excuse for incompetency in any level of government.

The four corner post holes were drilled with the point of the auger matching up with the head of a nail driven in the ground. The accuracy of the placement of those nails made everything else work.

The first test of good government is an accurate assessment of reality. We should insist on it.

Bill Patrie is a retired planner and economic developer having worked in regional and statewide positions. He is the author of "Creating Co-op Fever" printed by USDA as a service bulletin, and "100 Stories of Hope" a book about his interviews with 100 people in poverty.

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