

Trivia

In 1920, Babe Ruth hit more home runs than every American League baseball team.

The most common birthday in the United States is September 16th, which means that most babies are conceived during the early winter holiday season.

At any given time, there are 1,800 thunderstorms in progress over the earth's atmosphere.

Erosion at the base of Niagara Falls has caused the falls to recede approximately seven miles over the past 10,000 years.

The average snowflake falls at about three miles per hour.

Toxic house plants poison more children than household chemicals do.

The arctic fox, arctic hare, ptarmigan, barren-ground caribou, and ermine all turn white during winter.

The average person falls asleep in seven minutes.

Snakes are true carnivores as they eat nothing but other animals. They do not eat any type of plant material.

In England, the Speaker of the House is not allowed to speak.

In 1974, Russia hit -96°F (-71°C) in Siberia during winter, making Russia the coldest country in the world.

Emus and kangaroos cannot walk backwards and are on the Australian coat of arms for that reason.

"Chionophobia" is the persistent fear of snow, especially becoming trapped by snow.

Mt. Baker ski area in Washington state holds the world record for snowfall at 1,140 inches of snow during the 1998–1999 winter season.

The Chinese plum is one of the very few plants that bloom in the winter.

(factretriever.com, owlcation.com)

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Dates in History

1823 Oliver Pollock, an Irish merchant in Spanish-controlled New Orleans who used his fortune to help finance the American Revolution, is credited with creating the dollar sign in 1778. He is buried in Pinckneyville, IL, where he lived with his son-in-law prior to his death on December 17, 1823.

1897 "The Katzenjammer Kids," the pioneering comic strip created by Rudolph Dirks and drawn by Harold H. Knerer, debuted December 12 in the *American Humorist*, the Sunday supplement of the *New York Journal*. Dirks was the first cartoonist to regularly express dialogue in comic characters through the use of speech balloons.

1904 It all began at a *New York Times* party on Dec. 31, 1904. The *New York Times* newspaper had just moved from Lower Manhattan to a 24-story tower in Longacre Square, at the intersection of 42nd Street, Seventh Avenue and Broadway. Mayor George McClellan renamed it Times Square, and the publisher, Adolph S. Ochs, celebrated by putting on a New Year's Eve celebration with a band and fireworks. Three years later, the fireworks were replaced by a ball drop.

1923 A presidential address was broadcast on radio for the first time as President Calvin Coolidge spoke to a joint session of Congress on December 6, 1923.

1981 On December 8, in Norfolk, VA, Elizabeth Jordan Carr was the first American test-tube baby born from an in-vitro fertilization procedure.

On the Lighter Side

Q: How did Scrooge win the football game?
A: The ghost of Christmas passed.

My niece was dragged into court by a neighbor who complained about her barking dogs. At one point, the judge asked the neighbor a question. The neighbor didn't reply. "Sir, are you going to answer me?"

The neighbor leaped to his feet. "Are you talking to me?" he asked. "Sorry; I can't hear a darn thing."

The case was dismissed.

Q: How is the alphabet different on Christmas than any other day?

A: On Christmas, it has Noel.

The fourth birthday of my 3-year-old daughter, Amanda, was approaching. I reminded her that the day was on its way. After a couple of weeks, Amanda became exasperated, stomped her foot and with her hands on her hips asked, "Well, is it coming in the front door or the back door?"

Q: Why does Santa go down the chimney?

A: Because it soots him!

My husband was waterskiing when he fell into the river. As the boat circled to pick him up, he noticed a hunter sitting in a duck boat in the reeds. My husband put his hands in the air and joked, "Don't shoot!"

The hunter responded, "Don't quack."

Q: What's the technical name for a pot of coffee at work?

A: Break fluid

We've begun to long for the pitter-patter of little feet, so we bought a dog. It's cheaper, and you get more feet.