

DID YOU KNOW...?

It's April Fool's! Can you find the three items in this week's column that were totally made up?

By Jack Bagley didyouknowcolumn@gmail.com

Monday was April 1. You know what that means, at least as far as this column is concerned. It's time for the annual April Fool's edition!

Hidden in plain sight in this column are three items that are totally made up. Your mission, should you choose to accept it, is to find out which ones they are.

No prizes are offered, as I am a cheapskate in the classic Jack Benny mold. You just get that deep-down satisfaction of knowing I can't fool you.

Want to check your work? E-mail me your guesses at didyouknowcolumn@gmail.com and I'll let you know how many you correctly found. Answers will be in the introduction of next week's column. No cheating by using Google, please.

The game's afoot, Watson! Have fun.

Did you know ...

... an actor was left a fortune by a fan? Actor Charles Bronson (1921-2003) must have been very surprised when Audrey Knauer (1943-1997) of Louisville, Kentucky, passed away and left her entire fortune - \$300,000 - to him in her handwritten will. Knauer had never met Bronson; she was just a fan of the rugged actor. Knauer's sister challenged the will in court, and she and the actor settled on a division of the amount. (It helps to know people, doesn't it? Even if you don't know them.)

... a fruit exists that is really, really small? I'm talking tiny. The wolffia globosa, a kind of duckweed, is actually about the same size as a grain of salt. It is also known as Asian watermeal. (Imagine how many you'd have to eat just to get a taste!)

... a gag by a playwright caused his play to flop? George Bernard Shaw (1856-1950) was arguably one of the most influential playwrights of the late 19th and early 20th Centuries. But one of his plays was a total flop because of its title. In the years following World War I, Shaw was said to have written a play about the destruction of the war and the long road of reconstruction, and Shaw playfully titled it Closed for Remodeling. However, when the play was first produced, the title on the theatre marquee fooled audiences into thinking the theatre was actually shut down, and nobody came to see it. (That, friends, is why titles matter!)

... you may have a liripipe hanging in your closet? Don't panic, it's nothing unusual - if you have a hooded garment, anyway. A liripipe is the long, hanging tail at the end of a hood. Nowadays we mostly see them on the hoods of academic dress. They were associated with medieval fashion as well, so if you like to dress up in clothing styles from the Middle Ages, you might have one. (You see them a lot at Renaissance Festivals, I think.)

... students in Denmark get paid to go to college? Every Danish college student receives 5,839 kroner (about \$900 in U.S. dollars) per month under a plan called Statens Uddannelsesstøtte, or SU. The financial support does not have to be paid back, even if the student drops out of college. The only requirement for the stipend is that the student not live with their parents. Funds are paid for a maximum of six years beginning at age 18, and those who are particularly successful in school get extra money. (Where was that when I went to college? I know, in Denmark. Sheesh.)

... police in Japan have an unusual method of handling unsolved murders? In many cases, if a murder goes unsolved for a length of time, the police will declare the murder a suicide. This saves face for the department, and helps keep crime statistics artificially low. (It's an idea, anyway.)

... a forest in Utah covers 107 acres - and is made up of just one tree? In Utah's Fishlake National Forest, you'll find 47,000 aspen trees that share one single root system. Thus, they can be considered just one tree. Botanists say the system could be up to a million years old. (A technicality, I concede, but nonetheless, one tree.)

... the removal of your tonsils may not be permanent? In most cases, of course, having a tonsillectomy is a one-and-done operation. However, if by some chance any of the tonsil tissue was left behind in the extraction, they can grow back. (And it would be just my luck, too.)

... sugar in children's diets causes hyperactivity? Every mother reading this column will, of course, swear to this. The sugar is quickly broken down in the child's bloodstream and provides more energy to their muscles, which they just have to work out as fast as they can. Thus, the situation - give your kids a sugary drink and within minutes, they're climbing the walls. (I can attest to this ... it certainly worked for me!)

... flowers were once used as currency? In 1634, tulips were considered one of Holland's media of exchange, or money, in land deals. Actual pieces of property were exchanged for handfuls of tulip bulbs, and as the deals turned out to be profitable, the practice spread. (So money didn't grow on trees, it grew in gardens.)

... keeping a secret can be a real burden? Studies conducted by researchers at Columbia University, published in 2012, have shown that people keeping a secret feel physically burdened by what they know. The sensation of being burdened even affects the secret-keeper's social life. (I guess it really does wear you down.)

Now ... you know!



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Lanier County News

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