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<p class="western">*****</p>

WELCOME TO THE SHOW!

(THE JOCK SHOW) will air in just a moment -- and believe me, it could stand an airing.

New alarms I just set on my smart phone:

5:00AM - GET UP

5:05AM - GET UP, BRUSH TEETH IN SHOWER

5:15AM - GET UP, BRUSH TEETH, SKIP SHOWER

5:20AM - GET UP, SKIP SHOWER, SKIP BRUSHING OF TEETH

5:25AM - GET UP, DON'T BOTHER PEEING UNTIL YOU GET TO WORK

5:30AM - CALL IN SICK

PRESIDENTIAL WIT & WISDOM (click here to buy the book)

(None on the weekends.)

"Change will not come if we wait for some other person, or if we wait for some other time. We are the ones we've been waiting for. We are the change that we seek." – Barack Obama

BIBLE VERSE OF THE DAY

The Lord himself will give you a sign: The virgin will be with child and will give birth to a son, and will call him Immanuel. --*Isaiah 7:14*

"Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is Christ the Lord." — [Luke 2:11](#)

God sent his Son, born of a woman, born under law, to redeem those under law, that we might receive the full rights of sons. — [Galatians 4:4-5](#)

HEARTLIGHT DAILY VERSE, PRAYER & THOUGHT

(From VerseOfTheDay.com)

See to it that you do not refuse him who speaks. If they did not escape when they refused him who warned them on earth, how much less will we, if we turn away from him who warns us from heaven? — [Hebrews 12:25](#)

Thought: With the gift of Jesus comes an awesome responsibility: we must listen, follow, and honor him! If God demanded that his people obey his lesser messengers who were prophets or kings, what do you think the responsibility is for us to listen when he has emptied heaven of his Son's glory so that it might shine on us?

Prayer: Thank you, dear Father, for sending your Son and my Savior, Jesus. Please, dear LORD, I do not want to ever take that gift for granted. Please empower me and give me wisdom so that I can faithfully listen and serve Jesus, in whose name I pray. Amen.

The Thoughts and Prayers for Today's Verse are written by [Phil Ware](#). You can email questions or comments to phil@heartlight.org.

"BIRTHDAY VERSE" OF THE DAY (The chapter and verse correspond to the month and day!)

Hebrews 12:28 NIV = Therefore, since we are receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken, let us be thankful, and so worship God acceptably with reverence and awe.

TODAY IS THURSDAY – DECEMBER 28, 2017

(NOTE: Some holidays may be duplicated due to various calendars reporting conflicting dates)

WEIRD, WACKY, STRANGE, ZANY, ODD, BIZARRE, QUIRKY, UNUSUAL HOLIDAYS!

THERE ARE ONLY 362 SHOPPING DAYS UNTIL NEXT CHRISTMAS.

Today is **HOLY INNOCENTS DAY**, commemorating the massacre of children in Bethlehem ordered by King Herod in an attempt to kill the child Jesus.

Today is **RETURN A GIFT FOR COLD HARD CASH DAY**. ***Gift cards and in-store credit don't count – they have to give you cash back for your gift return... good luck with that!

Tonight is **TAKE A DRIVE AND ENJOY THE CHRISTMAS LIGHTS DAY**. ***You should see plenty as you try to return your gifts for cold hard cash.

Today is **THROW AWAY YOUR SUBLIMINAL MOTIVATION TAPES DAY**. ***Hmmm... so let's conduct a little experiment. I'm saying, vocally, that you should throw away your subliminal motivation tapes. But in the music I'm playing in the background, I've inserted a subliminal message to tell you NOT to throw them away! So which will win? Hmmm...

Today is **CHEWING GUM DAY**, patented on this day back in 1869 by William Semple.

Some chewing gum facts:

- A recent study shows a simple stick of gum can often fight heartburn just as well as over the counter medicines. Researchers at England's Kings College found that chewing gum half an hour after a meal can relieve symptoms of GERD (gastroesophageal reflux disease) -- commonly known as indigestion. Chewing gum stimulates saliva, which neutralizes acid in the esophagus.
- According to a small study by Andrew Scholey of the University of Northumbria in England, people who chewed gum throughout tests for both long- and short-term memory scored better on both tests than people who did not chew gum. One theory suggests that the act of chewing ups the heart rate, which, in turn, improves oxygen delivery to the brain.
- New research suggests chewing gum may not only help a woman conceive but may make her pregnancy safer and more successful. The study found that the act of chewing makes a woman's eggs more receptive to fertilization and helps balance hormones.
- Chewing gum could help you lose weight according to a study published in the New England Journal of Medicine. Researchers at the Mayo Clinic in Rochester, MI, have discovered that chewing gum raises your metabolic rate by about 20 percent, and an "all-day sugar-free gum chewer" burns off the equivalent of 11 pounds of extra weight per year. ***MARLAR: So don't think I'm rude if you hear me smackin' away while talking to you on the radio. I'm not being rude, I'm just doing my daily cardiovascular exercises.

TODAY IS ALSO...

Holy Innocents Day
Endangered Species Act Day
National Chocolate Day
Pledge of Allegiance Day

COMING UP NEXT (*Just a list, we are not endorsing the holidays posted below. Find more holidays and link to their websites at BrownieLocks.com*)

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 29

Tick Tock Day
YMCA Day

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 30

Bacon Day
Falling Needles Family Fest Day
No Interruptions Day

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 31

First Nights
Global Champagne Day
Look On The Bright Side Day
Make Up Your Mind Day
New Years Eve
New Year's Eve Banished Words List

New Year's Dishonor List
Universal Hour of Peace Day
World Healing Day
World Peace Meditation Day

MONDAY, JANUARY 01

Copyright Law Day
Commitment Day
Divorce Monday
Ellis Island Day
Euro Day
First Foot Day
Global Family Day
Mummer's Parade
New Years Day
New Year's Dishonor List Day
Polar Bear Plunge or Swim Day
Public Domain Day
Rose Bowl Game
Tournament of Roses Parade Day
World Day of Peace
Z Day

TUESDAY, JANUARY 02

55-MPH Speed Limit Day
Happy Mew Year for Cats Day
National Buffet Day
National Motivation and Inspiration Day
National Personal Trainer Awareness Day
National Science Fiction Day
Pet Travel and Safety Day

WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 03

Drinking Straw Day
Earth at Perihelion
J.R.R. Tolkien Day
Memento Mori "Remember You Die" Day
National Chocolate Covered Cherry Day

THURSDAY, JANUARY 04

Dimpled Chad Day
I Am A Mentor Day
Pop Music Chart Day
Tom Thumb Day
Trivia Day
World Braille Day
World Hypnotism Day

ON THIS DAY

1461: British King Edward the 4th's coronation originally scheduled for this day was postponed because in medieval times the date was considered very unlucky.

1869: William F. Semple of Mount Vernon, Ohio, patented chewing gum. ***The next day it was discovered that you could double your pleasure and double your fun by sticking the gum under a restaurant table.

1902: Syracuse defeated Philadelphia 6-0 in the first professional indoor football game at New York's Madison Square Garden.

1945: Congress officially recognized the patriotic "Pledge of Allegiance" to the U.S. flag.

1957: Hollywood's Robert Wagner and Natalie Wood were married. She died in a boating accident in 1981.

1969: The City of Detroit declared the day "Temptations Day," honoring the popular singing group.

1973: President Richard Nixon signed the Endangered Species Act into law.

1974: Los Angeles Laker center Elmore Smith shot three consecutive "air" balls in a 3-to-make-2 free throw situation, the only time it's ever happened in pro basketball.

1975: Trailing 14-10 with only 32 seconds left and no time outs, from 50 yards out Roger Staubach hit Drew Pearson in a crowd at the goal-line to give Dallas the NFC title over Minnesota. In a post-game interview, Staubach said, "You throw it and pray he catches it. I guess its sort of a 'Hail Mary' pass."

1999: Actor Clayton Moore, who rode to fame as television's Lone Ranger, died in West Hills, California at age 85.

2003: A 38-year-old jewel thief who swallowed a \$20,000 diamond ring in Clearwater, Florida, was forced by nature to give up the evidence. The woman was arrested after a surveillance tape showed her putting the 1.5 karat ring in her mouth at a jewelry store. An X-ray showed the ring inside the suspect.

TODAY IN CHRISTIAN HISTORY

(NONE TODAY)

HOLLYWOOD, SPORTS AND CELEBRITY FIGURE BIRTHDAYS

- o actress (*Nottingham, GI Joe: The Rise of Cobra, Stardust, Casanova*) Sienna Miller 37
- o actress (*Independence Day*) Lisa Jakub 39
- o actor (*Inside Man, Man on Fire, Fallen, The Preacher's Wife*) Denzel Washington 63
- o actress (Minerva McGonagall in the *Harry Potter* movies, Mother Superior in the *Sister Act* movies) Maggie Smith 83

BEE-BOP BIRTHDAYS

(Music Artist Birthdays From SongFacts.com)

1905 : Earl "Fatha" Hines

1910 : Billy Williams

1915 : Pops Staples ([The Staple Singers](#))

1921 : Johnny Otis

1932 : Dorsey Burnette

1938 : Charles Neville (The Neville Brothers)

1943 : Bobby Comstock

1946 : [Edgar Winter](#)

1947 : Dick Diamonde ([The Easybeats](#))

1948 : Ziggy Modeliste (The Meters)

1950 : Alex Chilton ([The Box Tops](#))

1961 : Christine Collister

1978 : [John Legend](#)

SECRETS OF THE UNIVERSE (Answering questions that have plagued mankind for minutes!)

Who started the custom of men wearing tuxedos on formal occasions?

In 1886 black tie and tails had been the accepted formal wear for a century. But that year Pierre Lorillard commissioned a tailor to create something less stiff – preferably tail-less - for a big social occasion where he lived, in Tuxedo Park, New York. But by the big night his enthusiasm for the new suit had tailed off, and he chickened out. However, his son and his friends wore it, and they started a new fad that itself became the standard for formal wear. In the process, they immortalized the name of their hometown.

NEWS KICKERS

(None on weekends. Want a customizable version with your specific station tag, FREE? [Email me for more information!](#))

NEW NEWS KICKERS...

(Not posted on weekends and U.S. holidays.)

(This feature will be taking a break December 25th thru January 1st and will return Tuesday, January 2nd.)

NEWS KICKER EVERGREENS...

(Not posted on weekends and U.S. holidays.)

(This feature will be taking a break December 25th thru January 1st and will return Tuesday, January 2nd.)

AS THE JUNGLE TURNS

(Not updated on weekends and U.S. holidays.)

(This feature will be taking a break December 25th thru January 1st and will return Tuesday, January 2nd.)

[CLICK HERE](#) TO DOWNLOAD TUESDAY'S EPISODE – JANUARY 2nd, 2018

OPEN: And now, FancyMonkey.com, (Show Name), and (Station Call Letters) bring you As the Jungle Turns! Last time, the jungle animals were so busy trying to get so many things done that they didn't have time for anything else... meetings, planning, even talking to each other! They were getting annoyed with each other – and then, all at once, the animals shouted...

CLOSE: Do the turtles have a secret to staying calm, cool, and collected? Will they share the secret with the other animals? Tune in again next time, as FancyMonkey.com, (Show Name), and (Station Call Letters) bring you As the Jungle Turns!

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MOMENT OF DUH

The Christmas spirit didn't make it around to everyone.

In the St. Louis area, close to 200 teenagers went wild at the St. Clair movie theater on Christmas Day. Apparently it all started between two girls who were fighting over the same boy. Two hundred people had joined in the brawl before police finally broke it up.

INTERESTING SIDE NOTE: We recently had a story about something new called MOVIE RAGE! According to a poll of emergency rooms, more and more patients are going to the theater to see the latest flick and departing in an ambulance. "Movie Rage makes Road Rage look like child's play," says Dr. Jorge Gonzalez, an ER physician at Our Lady of Angles in The Outfield in San Diego. "Last Saturday night I patched up a woman who was viciously stabbed with a nail file. She kept answering her cell phone during the movie. The lady sitting next to her went berserk." The survey showed the behaviors most likely to result in assault are:

- o Talking
- o Crunching popcorn
- o Repeatedly sucking the last two dribbles of soda from a straw
- o Answering a cell phone
- o Rattling a plastic bag of candy
- o Tipping boxes of Raisinettes or SnoCaps so the contents slide back and forth
- o Blurting out the ending of the movie
- o Kicking the back of the person's seat in front of you

TOP TEN

TOP TEN REASONS TO ASK YOUR BOSS FOR A RAISE

10. You take your paycheck to the bank, and the teller bursts out in hysterical laughter.

9. The Red Cross calls and offers you emergency assistance.
8. Your only charge cards are for the Salvation Army, ARC, and DAV thrift stores.
7. You work full time and you still qualify for food stamps.
6. You empty out your piggy bank and then cook the bank and serve it for your Easter ham.
5. All you can think about morning, noon and night is clipping grocery coupons.
4. You file your income taxes and the IRS returns them stamped, "Charity Case -- Return To Sender."
3. You set the world record for mailing \$1.00 rebate requests to Young America, Minnesota.
2. You pay all your bills, put your remaining \$1 bill into your billfold and it goes into shock.
1. You get arrested for taking the coins out of the fountain in the mall.

THE FILES OF LAW & DISORDER

So you think you win the lottery and you're set for life, eh?

FILE #1: ...Not so it seems for one 49-year-old lottery winner from Germany. Although winning just under a million bucks a few years ago, he blew it all, and when the money ran out he turned to crime to finance his now luxurious lifestyle. Police believe he's responsible for dozens of burglaries and caught him red-handed during the latest break-in and found the equivalent of about \$12,000 in cash, along with mobile telephones, jewelry and watches on him. The cops believe the guy was behind at least 77 burglaries and he has admitted to at least some of the charges, which date back to October 2003.

FILE #2: A round-up of the year's dumbest calls to British police emergency lines was topped by a woman who called for an ambulance after she broke a fingernail in a nightclub.

FILE #3: 42-year-old David Allen Rodgers was arrested for driving a Christmas float while intoxicated during Anderson, South Carolina's annual holiday parade. According to reports, he ran a red light then led police on a three-mile chase with 19 passengers on board.

STRANGE LAW: In New York, a fine of \$25 can be levied for flirting. This old law specifically prohibits men from turning around on any city street and looking "at a woman in that way." A second conviction for a crime of this magnitude calls for the violating male to be forced to wear a "pair of horse-blinders" wherever and whenever he goes outside for a stroll.

THIS IS YOUR BRAIN ON DRUGS

"This Is Your Brain On Drugs" is about people doing dumb things under the influence, but addiction is no laughing matter. If you or someone you know needs help, there's a toll free number you can call 1-800-438-0380. That's the Addiction Hope and Help Line at 1-800-438-0380.

Some criminals use disguises, others just shave and hope not to be identified.

Police in Somerset County, Pennsylvania stopped 50-year-old Robert Sadlon for a broken taillight. However before they could talk to him or identify him, Robert fled the scene on foot. He apparently ran straight home, shaved his mustache and changed his clothes, and then called in and reported the truck he was driving as stolen. So the same officer that stopped him then went to Robert's home to investigate the reported theft. There, he found a just-shaven Robert in different clothes. But the not-so-clever disguise didn't really fool anybody and he was arrested for drunken driving, escape and related charges.

PHONER PHUN

What's the smallest amount you've ever put on a credit card? What was it for?

What's your funniest Christmas gift story?

BIBLE BRAIN BUSTER!

QUESTION: In what city was the tabernacle set up?

ANSWER: Shiloh (Joshua 18:1)

QUESTION IMPOSSIBLE

How quickly does human hair grow?

Hair grows about 1/72nd of an inch per day, or about 1/2-inch per month. Age affects the growth of hair--the fastest growth is between ages 15 and 30, with a sharp decline between ages 50 and 60.

TRUE OR FALSE

Pay attention! If our next player doesn't answer all ten T/F questions correctly we start all over from question #1! First person to answer question #10 correctly is our winner!

1. Texas produces more wool than any other state in the country. (True)
2. Your hair is as strong as aluminum (True)
3. You take almost 8 billion breaths in just one year. (False... it's closer to about 7.8 million)
4. Your skin makes up about 16 percent of your total body weight. (True... and I'm only as heavy as I am because I have too much skin - right?)
5. If the sun stopped shining suddenly, it would take 22 minutes for Earth to be in the dark. (False... it would take eight minutes)
6. The only country in the Middle East that does not have a desert is Iran. (False... it's Lebanon)
7. If you toss a penny 10,000 times, it will be heads 5,000 times. (False... more like 4950. The heads picture weighs more, so it ends up on the bottom.)
8. Only one person in two billion will live to be 116 or older. (True)
9. Peter Rabbit's three siblings were Flopsy, Mopsy and Cottontail. (True)
10. St. Charles Place belongs to the Bright Red color on a standard U.S. Monopoly board. (False... it's light purple)

TABLOID MATCH GAME

You have to match the blank in the tabloid headline with the word or phrase that has been removed!

DOG MAYOR FACES _____ FOR CORRUPTION CHARGES (POUND)

In the small town of Chatsworth, Ill., one public official is facing big problems. Bulldog Gus Bonesly, who took mayoral office after what was supposed to be a joke candidacy, has come under fire for unsavory tactics in his leadership of the town. Embezzlement, voter intimidation, drug peddling — these kinds of charges have been seen in local government before, but never at the hands (or paws) of a canine mayor.

“It’s unprecedented,” said one member of Chatsworth City Council, who asked to not be named. “This guy has just lifted his leg and soiled all over the law. He may get the pound for this.”

Opponents said they began to question the Bonesly’s integrity after an alleged assault that took place during a private office meeting. Bonesly and a staffer were playing a game of political — and reportedly, literal — tug-of-war in the office when the animal snapped at the other’s hand. Since then, officials have supposedly been trying to come up as many charges as possible since the young mayor can literally not defend himself.

“It’s pathetic,” says Dollie Burdette, former owner of Bonesly before he took office. “He’s always been the sweetest boy. I think his opponents are just sore after losing to him. He can not respond to these charges — he can’t speak. Most of us think he’s brought the town together, if anything. Tell you what, it’s going to come back to bite his opponents.”

If convicted, Bonesly will most certainly be sent to a local shelter for his actions, though lawmakers have assured the public that this would be a “no-kill” shelter.

THE WAY TOO EARLY IN THE MORNING TO UNDERSTAND THE PUNCHLINE EVEN AFTER TWO CUPS OF COFFEE JOKE OF THE DAY

JOKE #1

A man goes to a restaurant, orders some takeout, and sits down to wait for his food.

While he waits, he grabs a handful of peanuts from the bowl on the counter, and as he starts to chew, he hears a voice say, "That's a beautiful tie, is that silk? Very NICE choice!"

Wondering who made the comment, he looks around and doesn't see anyone nearby who could be speaking to him.

With a shrug, he pops a few more peanuts into his mouth.

Next he hears the voice say, "Those shoes are stylin', my man. Are they Italian leather? They look GRRREAT!"

He whirls around again but sees no one near him. He glances nervously around and then at his shoes, which he tucks self-consciously under the stool.

A little freaked out, he grabs another handful of peanuts. This time the voice continues with, "That suit looks FANTASTIC! Is it an Armani? Very nice!"

He immediately calls the waiter over and says, "Look. I keep hearing these voices telling me how great my tie, my shoes, and my suit look - what's up with that? Am I GOING CRAZY??"

"Oh," the waiter nonchalantly replies. "It's just the peanuts."

"The PEANUTS?!?" the astonished man asks, staring at the bowl beside him.

"Yes," replies the waiter, "They're complimentary."

JOKE #2

Bidding at a local auction was proceeding furiously when the auctioneer suddenly announced, "A gentleman in this room has lost a wallet containing \$10,000. If it is returned, he will pay a reward of \$2,000."

There was a moment's silence, and then from the back of the room came the cry, "Two thousand five hundred!"

JOKE #3

Tommy attended church for the first time with his buddy, Jimmy. As the pastor got up to preach, he took off his watch and laid it on the pulpit.

Tommy asked in a whisper, "What does that mean?"

Jimmy replied, "Unfortunately, nothing!"

USELESS FACTS

The planet Saturn has a density lower than water. If there was a bathtub large enough to hold it, Saturn would float.

*** I've been looking for a bathtub that large for quite some time now for my own personal use – they don't make them.

The dromedary camel can drink as much as 100 liters of water in just 10 minutes. ***Dromedary is a Greek word that means "I'd rather be drinking beer."

FEATURED FUNNIES

SIGNS THAT IT IS FOOTBALL SEASON

- After you say "Pass the potatoes" someone actually does
- When someone says "the Giants," you think New York instead of San Francisco
- You arrive at work an hour early every day so you can tailgate first
- You make all major decisions with a coin toss

IT MUST BE TRUE BECAUSE I HEARD IT ON THE RADIO!

If your car is stolen, and then you see it on the street one day what would you do? You'd call the police, right?

One woman wishes she'd never called the police.

If you steal a car back from the people who stole it from you in the first place, is it still considered stealing? You be the judge after hearing this story. A woman recently stumbled across her stolen car parked on the street, which still had her belongings in it and her tax documents, but which had the steering wheel lock changed. She figured this was a clear opportunity for the police to catch the thieves and she would get her car back. But she was stunned when she called the police to let them know that they had an opportunity to catch the thieves. You won't believe what they told her. They told her that they were too busy and suggested that SHE STEAL BACK THE CAR HERSELF! The POLICE are telling her to do this! They suggested she hacksaw off the new steering lock and drive the car home. Which, in the end, she had no other choice but to do because the police refused to show up! After she stole her car back, the police did take the plates for fingerprinting (the plates were changed). They said they couldn't stake out the car because they don't have the resources, there would be no guarantee the person approaching the car is the one who stole it (what,

do police no longer question anyone anymore? Are investigations no longer allowed?), and "we would also be in danger of having to start a pursuit, which we always try to avoid." Apparently, among other things they try to avoid.... like their jobs.

INSPIRATIONAL INSPIRATION

LINCOLN AND STANTON'S HARSH LETTER

When the darkest clouds of the Civil War were hovering over the capital, many things done by the generals were not approved by either Lincoln or Secretary Stanton. Lincoln would take a long time to ponder over those situations, but Stanton would, at times, lose his temper and explode.

One day Stanton came to see Lincoln about the doings of a certain general. Listening quietly, Lincoln let Stanton show his anger, and when the latter exclaimed, "I would like to write him a letter and tell him what I think of him!" Lincoln remarked quietly, "Well, why not do so? Sit down and write him a letter, saying all you have said to me." Stanton was surprised for he thought that President Lincoln would object to this. He declared that he would take the President at his word.

Two days later he brought Lincoln the letter he had written, and read it to him. When Stanton had finished, Lincoln smiled and remarked, "That is all right. You have said all you told me you would. Now, what are you going to do with this letter?"

"Why, I am going to give it to him, of course."

"I wouldn't," replied the President quietly. "Throw it in the wastebasket."

"What, after spending two days on it," exclaimed Stanton.

"Yes. It took you two days to write it, and it did you a lot of good. You feel a great deal better now, and that is all that is necessary."

The letter went to the wastebasket, and Stanton learned an important lesson.

DRIVE TIME DEVOTIONAL

ALL THE PROTECTION YOU NEED

Read: Psalm 25

May integrity and uprightness protect me. --Psalm 25:21

Are you ever scared? Really scared? I'm pretty careful about where I go, but I've been in some scary situations. While in Israel, some friends and I decided to walk through a section of the old city of Jerusalem where Christians are not welcome. That was a bit disconcerting. It was a no-way-out situation, and there were a lot of people around with guns. While in Washington, DC, to cover an athletic event, I took a pretty long and spooky walk back through the city streets to my hotel at night.

And there was the time the car our family was in almost slid off the side of a Colorado mountain. My kids never let me forget that one.

Of course, there are millions of other ways to be scared. Scared of a professor who seems to live to flunk students. Scared of an assignment that you simply don't know if you can do. Scared of not getting a date. Scared of getting a date. Scared of not having enough money. Scared of the future. Scared of driving your car home because the radiator is overheating.

Scared.

Although Psalm 25 can't help you with the details of the things that make you tremble, it does promise a lot of protection. It offers protection from:

- * Loneliness
- * Affliction
- * Troubles
- * Anguish
- * Distress
- * Sin
- * Enemies

And how does the protection come? Some of it comes from the way we respond to God: We must fear Him (v.14), focus on Him (v.15), cry out to Him (vv.16-20), practice integrity and uprightness (v.21), and hope in God (v.22).

Read through Psalm 25 again (or for the first time). See how God protects and cares for you. Then remember it the next time you're scared. Really scared. --DB

LEFTOVERS

CHARACTER ASSASSINATION

A California teacher's attempt to come up with an assignment that related to an Edgar Allan Poe story got him fired.

...Andrew Phillips, an English teacher at Covina High School, assigned his students to devise an assassination plan and explanation of how they would get away with it. Phillips instructed students to write the assignment as a journal entry in conjunction with the reading of Edgar Allan Poe's short story "The Pit and the Pendulum." He told them to choose someone to kill, give reasons why and detail how to keep it secret. According to his students, the only requirement was that the person to be assassinated could not be anyone at Covina High School. Students who didn't want to do the assignment were offered an alternative assignment: describe eight to 10 motives for killing another human being. ***MARLAR: Motive #1 – being given inappropriate homework assignments.

LIFE... LIVE IT **FISH PEDICURE**

Want to rid your feet of scaly, dry patches? Catch yourself a carp.

A salon in Virginia is offering fish pedicures, where clients' feet are submerged in tubs containing "doctor fish." The treatment replaces razors, which have been deemed "unsanitary." Clients report the procedure is ticklish. It is followed by a typical pedicure, which is reportedly easier because the skin is softened by the fish.

JUST FOR FUN **BOWLED OVER**

If you have a loved one who loves football, you might want to watch them closely with all the college bowl games and the NFL playoff games in the next week or so.

A new study has found that deaths from heart attacks jumped a whopping 50% during a Dutch football match in 1996 when the Netherlands lost to France and were shut out of the European championship. The researchers attribute the deaths to the increase in stress the men may have experienced. Scientists at the University Medical Center Utrecht in the Netherlands evaluated the number of deaths that occurred on the day of the fateful football match and compared it with the figures recorded 5 days before and after the match and in the same period in 1995 and 1997. In men, (death from heart attack) or stroke was significantly increased on the day of the football match compared with the 5 days on either side. ***MARLAR: I understand. I get chest pains every time I watch (LOCAL TEAM) play. My stomach turns sour too.

FUN LIST

NEW HIGH SCHOOL EXIT EXAM (four correct answers required in order to pass this test)

- 1) How long did the Hundred Years' War last?
- 2) Which country makes Panama hats?
- 3) From which animal do we get cat gut?
- 4) In which month do Russians celebrate the October Revolution?
- 5) What is a camel's hair brush made of?
- 6) The Canary Islands in the Pacific are named after what animal?
- 7) What was King George VI's first name?
- 8) What color is a purple finch?
- 9) Where are Chinese gooseberries from?
- 10) What is the color of the black box in a commercial airplane?

Remember, you need 4 correct answers to pass. Check your answers below .

ANSWERS TO THE QUIZ

- 1) How long did the Hundred Years War last? *116 years*

- 2) Which country makes Panama hats? *Ecuador*
- 3) From which animal do we get cat gut? *Sheep and Horses*
- 4) In which month do Russians celebrate the October Revolution? *November*
- 5) What is a camel's hair brush made of? *Squirrel fur*
- 6) The Canary Islands in the Pacific are named after what animal? *Dogs*
- 7) What was King George VI's first name? *Albert*
- 8) What color is a purple finch? *Crimson*
- 9) Where are Chinese gooseberries from? *New Zealand*
- 10) What is the color of the black box in a commercial airplane? *Orange*

MORE SHOW PREP STUFF...

Who knew that bowling is bad for your health?

The Health and Safety Commission of Great Britain have spent -- or should we say wasted-- \$500,000 on a two-year study that has determined that bowling alleys are "a very dangerous environment for families." Yup, the so-called safety experts concluded that it was too easy for children or teenagers to run down lanes and get trapped in machinery that sets up the pins-- even though there has not been even one reported case of this ever happening. John Ashbridge, of The Ten-Pin Bowling Proprietors Association, said he had watched HSE inspectors examining a bowling alley and found their attempts to detect possible dangers "hilarious." The bizarre Health and Safety Executive report also said that bowlers would be at risk if they walked along the 60-foot lanes to knock over pins by hand -- even though there has not been even one reported case of this ever happening. The commission considered ordering every bowling alley in England to put barriers across the lanes but they were forced to admit defeat after realizing that bowlers must be able to see what they are aiming at. (Daily Mail)

OTHER STUFF I WANT TO CRAM INTO TODAY'S PREP

(Not posted on weekends and U.S. holidays.)

(PERENNIAL) Do you plan to party hearty this New Years? When you wake up the next day with a headache, nausea, extreme thirst and a cotton mouth, you know have a hangover. Ugh. If you hate that feeling, here is a 100 percent guaranteed way to prevent it from happening again: Don't drink too much. Here is a cold, hard fact: If you drink to excess, you will have a hangover. You can count on that, reports HealthDay News of research from Utrecht University in the Netherlands. "The more you drink, the more likely you are to get a hangover," said Joris Verster, a professor of pharmaceutical sciences, pharmacology, and psychopharmacology at Utrecht University in the Netherlands. Here is a second cold, hard fact: All those hangover "cures" -- from chugging lots of water to popping vitamin B pills -- don't work and will do little to make you feel better, insists Verster. The study: He and his team interviewed 825 Dutch students about their latest bout of big drinking and the hangover that followed. They tallied the number of drinks and noted whether food and/or water were consumed immediately after the binge drinking or the next morning. The results: 55 percent of the students ate food after drinking and before going to bed, but there was no clinical difference in the way they rated the severity of their hangover, compared with those who did not eat. 45 percent ate a large breakfast the morning after -- while the hangover was well underway -- but they saw little reduction in the severity of their hangover. 34 percent of the students consumed an excess of fatty foods in an attempt to battle a hangover, but there was little actual relief. The conclusion: Food and water have no relevant effect on hangover relief. If you want to prevent a hangover, stop binge drinking.

It's bad enough when co-workers swipe your sandwich from the lunchroom fridge or your stapler off your desk, 1 in 4 people say their cronies have stolen their on the job ideas and gotten credit for it. But while researchers discovered that having a great notion pirated by a peer happens often, those who are victimized usually let it slide. In fact, more than half say they don't even bother telling anyone about their brush with a "thought thief." That actually may be wise as the study cautions that people should be very careful to have the facts in order before accusing co-workers of stealing ideas. "Being proactive in sharing your vision with your manager and colleagues early on can help ensure others know the concept originated with you," advises Robert Hosking, executive director of Office Team, which conducted the survey.

Talk about emotional eating: People who regularly ate fast food over six years were 41 percent more likely to become depressed than those who avoided the greasy grub, reports the journal Public Health Nutrition. Scientists believe the high trans fat content may interfere with the brain's ability to produce certain mood stabilizing neurotransmitters. For your physical and mental health, limit your drive through trips and eat more fruits and vegetables.

Bacon is a super trendy (and some might even say beloved) food. Perfectly paired with breakfast, delicious crumbled on salads and sometimes sprinkled on desserts like ice cream, bacon can be a pretty versatile food. However, a new study may have you thinking twice about adding bacon to all kinds of meals. Research has found that the nitrates, sulfites and sodium in bacon can lead to inflammation, which could harm your skin. Normally, inflammation is just another one of the body's immune responses, according to YouBeauty. However, when inflammation becomes a constant, it can wreak havoc on your skin, causing problems from rosacea to acne and wrinkles. According to the Physicians Committee for Responsible Medicine, the average American eats 18 pounds of bacon a year, so you may very well have reason to worry. If you're thinking that just trading in the bacon for sausage will eliminate your problem, you'd be wrong. Processed meats in general have high rates of sodium and nitrates, and another study found that eating just three ounces of them a day can cause higher rates of stomach cancer. ***Yeah, whatever. Who wants a bacon cheeseburger?

Think you can manage just fine on five or six hours of sleep? Think again. If you don't sleep seven to eight hours every night, you could be digging yourself an early grave. Yes, sleep deprivation is that serious, reports The New York Times. Specifically, not getting enough shut-eye on a regular basis -- from wee babes to the elderly--profoundly impacts your memory, learning, creativity, productivity, emotional stability and physical health. Inadequate sleep wreaks havoc with the heart, lungs and kidneys; appetite, metabolism and weight control; immune function and disease resistance; sensitivity to pain, reaction time, mood and brain function. And if that's not enough, poor sleep can also increase the risk of depression and substance abuse. Who is most at risk? The elderly. Since this age group is typically not working and caring for young children, they may have more time to sleep, but they don't sleep as well because their circadian rhythms aren't as strong. That is, the body isn't receiving the necessary signals to sleep. Perhaps worst of all, not sleeping enough can lead to weight gain. In addition to having more awake hours to eat, drink and be merry, night owls' hormone levels are skewed. Specifically, there are lower levels of leptin, a hormone that tells the brain enough food has been eaten. Translation: The sleep-deprived eat more.

SOUL-GLO

(Feel-good stories! Only posted as new stories come available. Not posted on weekends and U.S. holidays.)

A Michigan doctor went above and beyond when the snow kept one of his patients from making it to his office for treatment. In a moving Facebook post, Marie Havenga recounted moment when Dr. Yosef Gindzin, an ophthalmologist in Walker, Michigan, carried her mother, Lillian Havenga, through a snow-filled parking lot on Sunday when she couldn't make it through in her wheelchair. Havenga wrote that if her mother goes without her injections for over four weeks, "her eye can bleed and she can permanently lose her vision."

<http://peoplem.ag/ZQByUNJ>

TOTALLY OUTRAGEOUS!

(Only posted as stories come available. Not posted on weekends and U.S. holidays.)

The FBI is investigating after a 70-year-old Oklahoma woman said she was duped out of more than \$225,000 by someone posing online as a US Army general stationed in Syria. Phyllis Lindsey says she was contacted on Facebook by someone alleging to be "Gen. Lester Holmes." The widow says they began talking and a "romance happened really fast." You can guess what happened next. An FBI affidavit says Lindsey made four wire transfers in October. She believed the money was being used as payments for the delivery of luggage containing his discharge papers and money. The fourth wire transfer was frozen after Lindsey's son found she was being scammed and contacted the FBI. Records show the transfer for \$100,000 was recovered this month from an Atlanta bank. (The Oklahoman)

AND I LEAVE YOU WITH THIS THOUGHT

You can feel a real letdown after Christmas—especially when all you have to look forward to is keeping your New Year's resolutions. And we all know how well that goes every year!

THE TICKET Movie Reviews with MARIE ASNER

Marie Asner has been reviewing films for over 35 years. Her outlets include radio, print and Internet. For more in-depth movie reviews of the following films, visit www.Tollbooth.org. Ratings from 1 (Low) to 5 (High).

DECEMBER 22-25, 2017...

Bright---How about living in a fantasy world where humans and fantasy creatures have co-existed for eons. This is an alternate Earth, and policeman Will Smith and his Orc partner, Joel Edgerton, are on duty. However, there is evil afoot and they have to find a magic wand before anyone else. Also in the cast are Noomi Rapace and Lucy Fry. "Bright" is rated PG 13. No rating.

Downsizing---Bet you thought this term mean problems in the work force. Think again. In this film, it concerns shrinking people (shades of "The Incredible Shrinking Man.") There is a purpose in this movie, though, and that is if you want to control populations and have the environment last, make the people smaller. Hmm, does that mean family pets, too? One swipe of that paw and....! To begin the experiment, a group of people are purposely shrunk to four inches and live together, but then problems come forth. Stars are Matt Damon, Christoph Waltz, Udo Kier and Kristen Wiig. "Downsizing" is rated PG 13. Rating of 2 for fans.

Happy End---This is a depressing film about a family with poisoning and suicides in their past. The story centers on a teenage girl named Eve (Fantine Hardoin) with a troubled past and uncertain future. She eventually lives with her aunt (Isabelle Huppert) and still has problems. Others in the cast are Toby Jones and Jean-Louis Trintignant. French language film. "Happy End" is rated R. No rating.

Father Figures (also called "Bastards")---This film stars Owen Wilson and Ed Helms as fraternal twins. Their Mom is Glenn Close and they, as adult, find she doesn't know who their biological father(s) are. What to do? The search is on. Also in the cast are Christopher Walken and J. K. Simmons. "Father Figures" is rated PG 13. No rating.

Hostiles---Christian Bale stars in this western as an army officer in 1892, who agrees to escort a Native American tribal chief and his family back to their family ground. Of course, there are problems along the way with outsiders and weather. The cast includes Wes Studi, Adam Beach and Rosamund Pike. "Hostiles" is rated R. No rating.

Pitch Perfect 3---This is supposed to be the last film in the series, but then everyone says that. The group goes separate ways after winning their championship. Trouble is, they are bored, so along comes a chance to join the USO and entertain troops abroad. But, of course, they get into trouble. The stars include Hailee Steinfeld, Anna Kendrick, Rebel Wilson, Ruby Rose and Elizabeth Banks. "Pitch Perfect 3" is rated PG 13. No rating.

The Greatest Showman---Hugh Jackman is quite the performer, from "Wolverine" to Broadway. Here he takes on the role of P. T. Barnum and how he put together his wonderful circus. There are animals, clowns and trapeze artists, which brings us to singer, Zendaya, who plays Anne Wheeler. She is a trapeze artist who falls for P. T. Barnum's partner, played by Zac Efron. Zandaya did most of her own stunts in this film. Also in the cast are Rebecca Ferguson and Michelle Williams. Music by John Debney and Justin Paul. How to put a show together? The Big Top has it all. "The Greatest Showman" is rated PG. Rating of 2 for fans. For children over age ten.

The Phantom Thread---Daniel Day Lewis submerses himself in his acting roles. From "My Right Foot" to "The Last of the Mohicans" and now a fashion designer in "The Phantom Thread." Lewis has said that this is his final film and then he will retire from acting. However, sometimes a tempting role does come along... A phantom thread is a part of fabric/design in which, if you have the right thread, can unravel the garment. Much like a government, in which one small detail can bring the house down. In this film, set in the 1950's in London, Daniel Day-Lewis is a couture fashion designer to nobility, along with his sister (Lesley Manville) and they have a structured life. Enter the outspoken, Alma (Vicky Krieps) who gives new fashion inspiration to Daniel, but his sister begins to see the facade crack and doesn't know how her brother will handle, perhaps, love? Jonny Greenwood composed the score and the film was written and directed by Paul Thomas Anderson. "The Phantom Thread" is rated PG-13. Rating of 3 for fans of fashion and the stars.

DECEMBER 29, 2017...

Film Stars Don't Die In Liverpool---An odd title for a movie, but then this film isn't about your usual actress. It is about Gloria Grahame, an actress in the 1950's who won a Best Supporting Actress Award for "The Bad and the Beautiful." Other memorable roles were in "Oklahoma," "Sudden Fear" and "It's A Wonderful Life." Annette Bening takes on the role of Gloria Grahame, whose regular life was more colorful than her screen life. She had several husbands and married her step-son, here played by Jamie Bell. Also in the cast are Vanessa Redgrave and Julie Walters. "Film Stars Don't Die In Liverpool" is rated R. Rating of 2 for fans.

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