

The Idle American

Commentary By Dr. Don Newbury

Razorbacks Rest their, uh, Case

We are fascinated, others are flabbergasted and "outsiders looking in" are merely amused. Hearing the news coming out of Arkansas these days, my old momma would have used a favorite line: "If that don't beat a hen a'peckin'!"

The peckin,' though, is from the beak of what may be the only ivory-billed woodpecker left in the whole wide world—humming "One is the Loneliest Number"— between pecks. Thought to be extinct for 60 years, the bird has been spotted 15 times recently during more than 7,000 hours of searching near Brinkley, AR (pop.: 4,000).

Ornithologists rushed to Arkansas by the droves (flocks/coveys/gaggles?), and the economy is popping. They're hawking ivory-billed burgers and woodpecker haircuts in Brinkley.

They may soon resurrect the old 1947 tune that Kay Kyser's band made famous, "The Woody Woodpecker Song." You remember it; it has all those "ho-ho-ho-ho's" in it.

The lyrics—typical of the day—had complete thoughts, with nouns and verbs and everything. Messages were simple, devoid of anything

subliminal. (We joked about country/western tunes played backwards. Guys got their sweethearts back, their pickups back and their dogs back.)

Now we can't get the tune out of our heads, can we? "He pecks a few holes in a tree to see if a redwood's really red, and it's nothing to him on the tiniest whim, to peck a few holes in your head."

And people said we wouldn't hear much about Arkansas after Clinton left office. Well, the fact is that there are TWO national spotlights shining there at this writing.

Within days of the woodpecker citing, Fort Smith (pop.: 85,000) was awarded the top prize nationally from ABR—"America's Best Restroom." Through magic of Internet voting, the award goes to Fort Smith Regional Airport.

Cintas Corporation, a firm big in manufacturing restroom supplies, sponsors the contest. Fort Smith edged out the Columbia Tower Club in Seattle, WA, for the title.

One wag, suspicious as all get-out, said, "Since 9/11, I don't know if anyone's been flying much in and out of Fort Smith, so the restrooms ought to be sparkling!"—Au contraire! About a half-

million people a year pass through the airport.

To keep "a leg up" on high standards, airport maintenance folks do some "straightening up" in the restrooms twice every hour. On their minds is Shakespeare's famous line: "Uneasy rests the head that wears the crown."

Maybe they'll come up with something to keep them in the hunt for top honors again next year. They might consider installing "Big Johns," super-sized toilet seats invented out in California. Five inches wider than the standard 14-inch model, the new one doesn't cave in to pressure, accommodating up to 1,200 pounds. Harrah's Hotel and Casino, famous for "heavy hitters," has placed an order.

Rather than snicker at the award, we should be thankful for Cintas' interest in putting a shine on public restrooms. The company contends that 75% of respondents say they will NOT return to a business if restrooms are not maintained, and that most patrons appreciate style and elegance.

I'm shocked that Shoji Tabuchi's theatre in Branson, MO, hasn't reaped such honors. In the men's lounge are pool tables, black lion head sinks, leather chairs and a walnut mirror. The ladies' powder room (I am told) is replete with wainscoting, 1890's ceilings, live orchids on granite and onyx pedestal sinks, jeweled, glass, and

magnificent chandeliers. The year's end features Christmas decorations to die for.

Come on, folks! Let's get on line and start the ball rolling. (First, maybe we need to make sure Tabuchi's comfort stations have Cintas products.)

Please understand—

I'm not trying to pass myself off as an expert on woodpeckers or airports. Still, Brinkley and Fort Smith are doing right well, particularly when the spotlight drops right in their laps, or close thereto.

About the only rule I have about smaller airports concerns snacks. I don't buy potato chips from vending machines at airports averaging four passengers daily.

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Sports Challenge

By Walter Branch

1. What quarterback was the highest paid NFL player in 1988?
2. What GM car was the "Official Car of the 1988 Olympic Team"?
3. With what airline did Australian Greg Norman have an endorsement contract in 1987?
4. How old was the youngest athlete to compete in the

When Time Stood Still

By J.B. Johnston, Carbon, TX.

Have you ever noticed how some philosophers try to prove miracles of the Bible in a scientific way? For instance, there are all kinds of explanations of how God parted the waters of the Red Sea to let the Israelites cross over. Then in the book of Joshua he made time stand still for what my Bible says was a day, and again in II Kings, according to my calculations, he turned back time about 40 minutes. The Quest Study Bible, New International version, has a note that says some folks believe that time didn't stand still for a day but it only seemed that way because so much was accomplished in one day, and then in II Kings when God made the shadow go back 10 degrees it might have been a solar phenomena that bent the light beams to give that image. Now I know that a lot of people will disagree with me on this, but I have always figured that the One who created this great universe could do about anything that He pleases with it, including making time stop or go back 10 degrees.

I've always thought, that

1. What National League West team's batters were skunked when Cincinnati's Tom Browning pitched a perfect game in 1988?

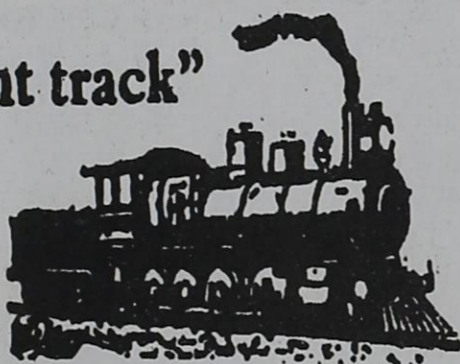
Answers

1. John Elway; 2. Buick; 3. Qantas; 4. 13. 5. The Los Angeles Dodgers.

if someone felt that everything that happened, according to the Bible, has to be proven scientifically, they might just be a little weak in their faith. This includes the so called big bang theory where out of nothing an explosion created the universe and evolution eventually created us. I've always felt that if God had wanted to do it that way He could have and would have but I'm confident that however he did it, it was His doing. I once read where a scientists and God were having a conversation and the scientist told God that he was obsolete because man had learned to do everything that God could do, and God asked him if he couldn't make a human out of clay. The scientist said, "Give me some clay and I'll show you." God said, "Make your own clay!"

There are too many unexplained things in this universe that could drive a person insane if dwelled upon too much. As people of this world get smarter and smarter we tend to rely upon our intellect and less and less upon God's word, and that's too is warned against in the Bible. Now I guess that it sounds as if I am preaching, and I do not intend to be best cause I am not qualified in that department, but I do believe the Bible means what it says. There is an old saying that says, "The Bible said it, I believe it, and that settles it." That about sums it up for me. I don't need a scientific explanation.

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