



71 of Our Favorite Facts of 2022

Each day, Times Insider editors scour the newspaper for the most interesting facts to appear in articles. Here are facts that surprised, enlightened or entertained us this year.

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Dec. 31, 2022

January

1. The “Star Trek” hand gesture for “live long and prosper” is derived from part of a Hebrew blessing that Leonard Nimoy first glimpsed at an Orthodox Jewish synagogue in Boston as a boy.

To Boldly Explore the Jewish Roots of ‘Star Trek’

2. In 1893, when the author Sir Arthur Conan Doyle temporarily killed off his iconic character, Sherlock Holmes, in an issue of The Strand Magazine, some 20,000 readers were so upset that they canceled their subscriptions.

A Sherlock Holmes Mystery at the Grolier Club

3. Some of the most recognizable and potent odors, like hydrogen sulfide, can be sensed at the tiniest concentrations, like one part per billion.

Sometimes, Life Stinks. So He Invented the Nasal Ranger.

4. Studies have shown that resisting arrest charges are filed disproportionately against Black New Yorkers and that a small percentage of officers account for many of the cases.

Bragg’s Policy Shift Causes Furor, Though Few Cases Would Be Affected

5. Lusia Harris entered the Basketball Hall of Fame as the first Black woman and the first female college player ever to be enshrined there. She was also the first woman to be officially drafted by an N.B.A. team.

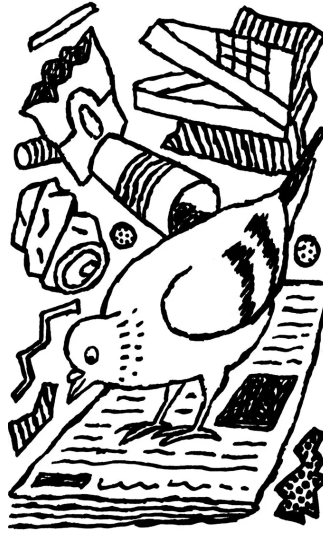
Lusia Harris, ‘Queen of Basketball,’ Dies at 66

6. The Jane Collective was a disparate, rotating group of women who ensured safe abortions for thousands of women in Chicago between 1968 and 1973.

At Sundance, Two Films Look at Abortion and the Jane Collective

7. In the 1950s, it took an average of 35 years for a word, once coined, to qualify for entry in the Merriam-Webster dictionary. Today, it is just 11 — or fewer.

'Jeuje,' 'Zhoosh,' 'Zhuzh': A Word of Many Spellings, and Meanings



February

8. The National Cancer Institute estimates that nearly 40 percent of men and women will be diagnosed with some type of cancer at some point during their lifetimes.

Biden Presents Ambitious Plan to Cut Cancer Death Rate in Half

9. Until the wire whisk was popularized in the 19th century, the vigorous mixing required to make meringue was often accomplished with birch branches, knives or bundles of straw.

The Magic of Meringues

10. Despite being a popular mainstay of American life, the U.S. Postal Service regularly fails to turn a profit, with 2020 marking the 14th consecutive year it incurred a net annual loss.

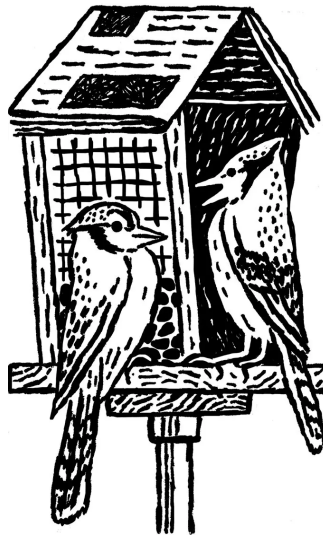
House Passes Bill to Shore Up Postal Service, Working to Avert Insolvency

11. New York City recycles less than 20 percent of the 3.1 million tons of garbage that its residents produce each year, a number well below that of other major cities, like Seattle and San Francisco, which have mandatory compost separation.

New York Was Set to Expand Composting. Now It's on the Chopping Block.

12. About 56,000 romance scams — online schemes that involve feigning romantic interest to gain a victim's trust — were reported to the Federal Trade Commission in 2021, according to agency data. Those who paid with cryptocurrency lost about \$139 million.

Crypto Scammers' New Target: Dating Apps



March

13. Historians have said that Rio de Janeiro's Carnival celebration in 1919, after the Spanish flu ravaged much of the world, led to many of today's Carnival hallmarks, including the occasional kissing of a stranger.

In Glitter and Leotards, They Took a Stand: Carnival Must Go On

14. Over the past decade, California has added a little over three times as many people as housing units, driving its median home price over \$800,000, which is more than twice the national figure.

Legislators Find Way to Let U.C. Berkeley Increase Its Enrollment

15. Most office building thermostats follow a model developed in the 1960s that takes into account, among other factors, the resting metabolic rate of a 40-year-old man weighing 154 pounds.

A Two-Year, 50-Million-Person Experiment in Changing How We Work

16. Upon receiving the Academy Award for best supporting actress in 1962, Rita Moreno delivered one of the shortest acceptance speeches in Oscars history: "I can't believe it! Good Lord! I leave you with that."

Oscars Rewind: When Rita Moreno Made History and Thanked No One

17. If stars in the night sky are sparkling, it's a sign of atmospheric turbulence.

How to Spot Asteroids

18. The Clock of the Long Now, a huge mechanical clock being constructed inside a 6,000-foot mountain in southern Texas, is designed to keep time without human intervention for 10,000 years.

What the Silicon Valley Prophet Sees on the Horizon

19. In the history of American prisons, no one has been held in solitary confinement longer than three Black men, known as the Angola Three, who spent over four decades in solitary at Angola penitentiary in Louisiana.

In the Face of Black Pain, Elizabeth Alexander Turns to Art



April

20. Augusta National Golf Club began admitting female members in 2012.

For a Few Days at Augusta National, the Spotlight Shines on the Women

21. The TRAPPIST-1 solar system, which is 40 light-years from Earth, has four planets that are within the habitable zone — the region around a star where liquid water could exist.

Imagine Another World. Now Imagine 5,000 More.

22. Every year, California farmers produce more than three billion pounds of almonds, or about 80 percent of the world's supply.

How America's Farmers Got Cut Out of the Supply Chain

23. Most historical sources say Billy the Kid, the 19th-century gunslinger, killed anywhere from nine to 21 people, shooting at least one in the back.

In This 'Billy the Kid,' the Wounds Are Those You Cannot See

24. South Korea counts people's ages three ways, often adding a year or two to the international standard.

Millions of South Koreans Could Soon Get Younger (on Paper)



May

25. A study of the frequency of automobile fires in 2021 found that hybrid vehicles had the most fires per 100,000 vehicles: 3,475. Fully electric vehicles had the fewest: 25 per 100,000.

Hurdle to Broad Adoption of E.V.s: The Misperception They're Unsafe

26. The musician Bob Dylan wrote 17 known drafts of his cryptic 1983 song “Jokerman” before deciding on the final version.

The \$10 Million Bob Dylan Center Opens Up His Songwriting Secrets

27. Giving birth in the United States is more than 20 times as lethal as skydiving.

When Motherhood Is a Horror Show

28. A gasoline lawn mower generates as much pollution in an hour as a 300-mile car trip, according to the California Air Resources Board.

The Tesla Effect: Snowmobiles, Boats and Mowers Go Electric

29. The comedian Michael Che is the first Black person to become a head writer on “Saturday Night Live.”

Michael Che Is Still Trying to Crack the Code

30. Before the late 18th century, the territory that is now Ukraine was largely controlled by Cossacks, a warrior people who chose their leader, or hetman, in a democratic ballot.

How Ukraine's Greatest Novelist Is Fighting for His Country



June

31. There is more carbon dioxide in the atmosphere now than at any time in at least four million years, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration officials said.

Carbon Dioxide Levels Are Highest in Human History

32. At least 19 Indigenous groups are believed to still live without outside contact in the Brazilian Amazon's Javari Valley.

Threats, Then Guns: A Journalist and an Expert Vanish in the Amazon

33. The filmmaker Werner Herzog ate maggots to coach the actor Christian Bale, who had to eat them for a scene in the 2006 movie “Rescue Dawn.”

Werner Herzog's Fever Dreams

34. Adult women spend only about \$25 on a swimsuit in the United States, according to the market research analysts at the NPD Group.

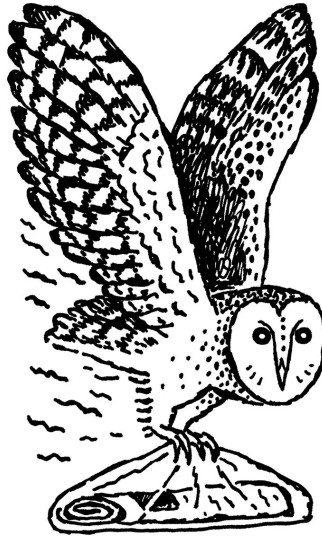
What Makes a Bathing Suit So Expensive?

35. A cheesemonger is to cheese roughly as a sommelier is to wine: not a producer, but a knowledgeable interpreter, adviser and seller.

Through Sweat and Tears, a Cheesemongering Champion Is Crowned

36. Lorraine Hansberry became the first Black woman to be produced on Broadway when “A Raisin in the Sun” premiered there in 1959, but she died just years later in 1965.

‘Raisin in the Sun’ and ‘The Harder They Come’ Part of Public Theater Season



July

37. The Yellowstone National Park region, which has warmed 2.3 degrees Fahrenheit between 1950 and 2018, is probably as warm as or warmer than it has been in 20,000 years, according to paleo-climate records cited in a study.

Yellowstone to Weigh Climate Change Risks When Rebuilding From Flood

38. Only about 25 percent of women in the Middle East participate in the labor force — the lowest such figure in the world, even as female university graduates in the region often outnumber their male counterparts.

Cooking Online, Arab Women Find Income and Community

39. Roughly one in three American adults have criminal records.

For People Just Leaving Prison, a Novel Kind of Support: Cash

40. The word “hot” became a synonym for “popular” or “in demand” around 1909, according to the sociolinguist Kelly E. Wright. In the 1920s, its meaning was extended to include sexual desirability.

Can’t Talk, I’m Busy Being Hot

41. “Mumia,” a practice of using ground-up mummified bones to soothe various ailments, was popular in 17th-century Western Europe.

A Taste for Cannibalism?

42. Nearly 40 million Americans — 28 million of them women and girls — get migraine headaches, making them the second most disabling condition in the world after low back pain.

Migraine Treatment Has Come a Long Way



August

43. Nicolas-Joseph Cugnot of France invented the world's first self-propelled vehicle, a steam-powered tricycle built like a wagon, in 1769.

Jacques Pépin, in Search of Lost Cars and Cuisine

44. Male honeybees, or drones, are equipped only to mate: Their tongues are too short to allow them to extract nectar, and they don't have stingers that would enable them to protect the hive.

Humans Know a Lot, This Author Concedes, and Most of It Is Useless

45. The U.S. Department of Agriculture estimates that \$161 billion worth of food is dumped into landfills each year.

Dented, Dated, Discontinued? At the Salvage Grocery, It's Called a Deal

46. Tank tops were first popularized in modern Western fashion during the early 20th century as part of bathing suits for both genders. The name may come from "tank suits," as swimming pools were often called tanks in England.

Reinventing the Humble Tank Top

47. Humans spend about 35 minutes a day chewing, chimpanzees chew for about 4.5 hours a day and orangutans, about 6.6 hours.

How Chewing Shaped Human Evolution

48. At depths of 1,000 feet, water pressure can reach about 440 pounds per square inch. Such pressure would crumple most human lungs immediately upon exposure, resulting in instant death.

A Personal Submarine for Every Orthodontist



September

49. In many Indian families, women are barred from the kitchen while menstruating or, in some communities, shunted to “menstruation huts” with leaky roofs and no toilets.

Step Right Up, Mr. Tough Guy, and Try Enduring Menstrual Cramps

50. An estimated 22 million to 26 million American adults provide care for family members or friends, most of them older people, who need help with daily activities.

The Quiet Cost of Family Caregiving

51. In 1928, Tobia Nicotra, a notorious forger, hoodwinked the U.S. Library of Congress into paying \$60 for a fake Mozart manuscript, which was later believed to have been composed by Nicotra himself.

Galileo Forgery's Trail Leads to Web of Mistresses and Manuscripts

52. A thousand land snail species are known to be at risk of extinction.

To Search for a Near-Extinct Snail, Tread Lightly

53. By the end of 2008, when Roger Federer was just 27 years old, he had already won 13 Grand Slam tournament titles.

Roger Federer Came Along When Tennis Desperately Needed Him

54. The U.S. carceral system imprisons an estimated two million people annually — a 500 percent increase since 1970.

From Prison to the Art Gallery



October

55. A 2020 study found that up to 30 million workers had the skills to realistically move to new jobs that paid, on average, 70 percent more than their jobs at the time.

These Job-Training Programs Work, and May Show Others the Way

56. The richest 20 percent of people worldwide take 80 percent of all flights, according to estimates by the International Council on Clean Transportation.

Nations Agree to Curb Emissions From Flying by 2050

57. The 19th-century Empress Elisabeth of Austria had a shoulder tattoo, drank wine with breakfast and wore leather masks filled with raw veal as part of her skin care routine.

An Empress Ahead of Her Time Is Having a Pop Culture Moment

58. Pickleball was invented in the mid-1960s by three dads who were trying to entertain their bored children while vacationing on Bainbridge Island in Washington.

Pickleball Is Expanding. Tennis Is Mad.

59. Scientists think bananas were domesticated more than 7,000 years ago on the island of New Guinea.

The Search Is on for Mysterious Banana Ancestors

60. Since there is only one active official cemetery in Manhattan, the borough's most popular final resting place may be Central Park — a legal site for the scattering of human ashes.

Where the Bodies Are Buried



November

61. The pop-music parodist Weird Al Yankovic acquired his first accordion from a traveling salesman and recorded his first hit in a public bathroom.

'Weird: The Al Yankovic Story' Review: Any Odd? He Beat It.

62. George Washington grew cannabis sativa on his plantation, and Thomas Jefferson came up with new ways of threshing the fibrous, fast-growing plant, which they cultivated for hemp.

For These New York Farmers, Harvest Time Means High Times

63. Nearly half of all millennials have tattoos, compared with 13 percent of the baby boomer generation, according to a 2015 survey by the Harris Poll.

A 10-Year-Old Got a Tattoo. His Mother Was Arrested.

64. Beyoncé's career total of 88 Grammy nominations ties that of Jay-Z, her husband, for the most received by any artist in the history of the awards.

Beyoncé, Kendrick Lamar and Adele Lead 2023 Grammy Nominations

65. Millions of people in Britain bought their first television in 1953, expressly to watch Queen Elizabeth II's coronation live.

'The Crown' and the Appeal of a Royal TV Interview



December

66. In 1965, Lowndes County in Alabama had no registered Black voters, despite its population being 80 percent Black.

'Lowndes County and the Road to Black Power' Review: A Movement That Changed America

67. In addition to diaper-changing, sewing and food prep, students at Norland College, a prestigious nanny school in England, receive training in martial arts and evasive driving techniques.

Where Did the Royals Find Prince George's Nanny?

68. More than half of working Turks earn around the minimum wage, which is worth less than \$300 a month because of the Turkish lira's vast devaluation against the dollar.

Skyrocketing Prices in Turkey Hurt Families and Tarnish Erdogan

69. Gudetama, a melancholic, genderless egg character, was introduced by Sanrio in 2013, not long after Hello Kitty, the company's biggest star, started to underperform.

Gudetama, the Incredible, Miserable Egg

70. Argentina's national soccer team brought 1,100 pounds of yerba mate — a strong and often bitter drink brewed from the leaves of a plant native to South America — to Qatar for the World Cup.

What's Powering Argentina at the World Cup? 1,100 Pounds of Yerba Mate.

71. Only eight countries have won the World Cup.

Why Don't More Underdogs Contend for the World Cup Title?