

THINGS

No One Ever Tells You

by Jim Aylward

People who know me don't understand me. I'm a working writer. I write this LEADERS column.

I write a newspaper column for the *St. Petersburg Times*. And I don't have, and have never had, a computer.

"How do you do it?" they ask. "Slowly," I say. "Carefully. And with a lot of Liquid Paper and even occasional handwriting."

Oh, I have a typewriter – an electric. And I have paper and pencils and old cups of tea. I have encyclopedias, dictionaries, books, and files on the floor near my desk, and files on my bed near my desk. Well, I may have to lie down and contemplate sometimes, so I really need a bed. But, I don't need a computer. I don't take inventory. I don't care to stock or re-stock. I never Google. I just assume everybody's there somewhere and I'm still here, doing my routine the way I did it in 1953. It still works.

So having put all of these words together for this introduction to Things No One Ever Tells You, I think I'm ready now for a little nap.

The insurance company AIG is expanding into rural India, and will soon offer a policy on the life of a cow for a \$10 annual premium. For many rural Indians, cows are their most valuable asset.

I wonder if you call AIG in India, if you're automatically connected to an American operator in Kentucky?

Bulgarian transit authorities have started screening soft-core porno films at a station in Sofia "to take minds off the cold, while waiting for a bus."

"I suddenly feel warm all over!"

Ms. Jesse Hale says she has always had the desire to play the cello nude. Hale, a music major at Austin Peay State University in Clarksville, Tennessee, and a member of the CJ Boyd Sexttet of nude cellists, says she's been playing nude since the sixth grade. She told the local paper that "cellists make full-body contact with their instrument." She says their legs even wrap around it, so "it just seems natural!"

"Yes, Jesse was always the experimental one in the family!"

Some 95 percent of workers procrastinate sometimes, a University of Calgary study finds. Some 15 to 20 percent are chronic procrastinators.

"Honey, tomorrow is another day!"

A motorist in Germany found himself wedged upside down in a drainage pipe, after trying to retrieve his car keys. When the keys fell in the hole, he removed the manhole cover, reached down inside, and fell in head first.

Airlines spend 30 percent less on food today than they did years ago. The amount per passenger in 2006 was \$3.38, down from almost \$6 in 1992.

"No sir! We haven't had peanuts since 1994!"

An item from the *Morning Sentinel*, Waterville, Maine: "6 PM – A woman said she suspected her washing machine was sabotaged by someone. A police investigation concluded an unbalanced laundry load had caused the shaking."

One person out of every four in America worries about money.

The other three say they don't.

An Australian bride thought it was funny when she said, "I don't!" when the Justice of the Peace asked "Do you take this man to be your lawfully wedded spouse?" Under Australian law, when that happens, the wedding must be cancelled and can't be rescheduled for another 10 days. Tina Albrech said, "In retrospect, it probably was not funny."

Maybe you had to be there.

They're all upset about the name of a pet shop in Wallingford, Washington. Lori Pacchiano, cofounder of the shop, says, "It's just a word. It's what vets call female dogs. It's how the American Kennel Club refers to girl dogs." Her shop is called "High Maintenance Bitch."

The United States Postal Service has attacked the problem of long wait times in post offices by removing all the post office clocks.

That should do it.

The average bumblebee has a stinger three hundred thousand, one hundred twenty-five ten thousandths of an inch in length.

The other four inches are just your imagination.

A new online shop in China specializes in selling excuses to people. Excuses are available for situations from breaking off a relationship to ending a marriage to borrowing money. Some excuses cost as little as one dollar.

I understand this month they're having a two for one sale on "the devil made me do it" and "it came from outer space."

Raymond Snouffer Jr. of Minnesota won the \$25,000 state lottery two days in a row. That's luck that officials say defies incalculable odds.

"I'll have whatever he's having."

A University of Vienna study found that when men slept alongside their female partners, they woke the next day less rested and with impaired cognitive functions.

Yes, and with only one-third of the bed clothes.

A Brazilian woman found the cause of her continual stomachache – 23 years of it – was a scalpel left in her abdomen after an operation back in 1984. Maria Abadia Dias, 47, says she is considering legal action. “Doctors,” she says, “always told me I had nothing at all, and that it was just a question of age.”

“Lady, if you’re in your 40s, you have to expect that feeling of a knife in your belly. Everybody feels that way!”

If you seem to be only half-alive on the job most of the time, there could be a good reason for that. Scientists at Dalhousie University in Halifax, Nova Scotia, say the human brain may work in 90-minute cycles. Your peak performance comes for just a minute or so every cycle. That means during an average day you may be at your mental best for only 15 or 20 minutes. And this is not one of them.

An unidentified man fled after an unsuccessful attempt at robbing a Git-N-Go convenience store in Des Moines, Iowa. It was foiled when the clerk noticed the man’s thumb was visible from his pocket, where he was holding his hand pretending he had a weapon. The clerk said he actually had to argue it was a gun. Clerk Terry Cook said, “I know what a gun looks like.”

“Sir, please don’t shoot your thumb at me!”

Morgan Conatser, 29, was arrested a short time after making his way awkwardly out to the parking lot of the Guitars and Cadillacs store in De Queen, Arizona, with a guitar stuffed inside his clothes. The manager stopped him, recovered the guitar, and then let him go, but decided to call the sheriff when he realized the man had probably also hidden a wireless sound system inside his pants.

“Man, you should hear the acoustics!”

A new study of 1,000 American women finds that most value their clothes more than a night of sexual activity. Most said they would gladly abstain for 15 months in exchange for an entirely new wardrobe.

“Not tonight, dear!”

An unidentified man washing windows while tethered to security ropes on the 20th floor of the Fifth Third Bank building in Nashville, Tennessee, attracted attention when he remained motionless for about a half hour. It turned out he was just taking a nap. When rescue vehicles arrived, the noise awakened him, and he lowered himself to the street unharmed. “I feel better now!”

An Iowa woman was denied unemployment benefits after being fired from her job with Sheraton Hotels in Des Moines for writing a journal at work, detailing her efforts to avoid any. Emalee Bauer, 25, wrote on her computer, “This typing thing seems to be doing the trick. It just looks like I’m hard at work on something very important.”

She also wrote, “I haven’t really accomplished anything in a long while.”

Just 10 percent of beer drinkers consume 43 percent of all the beer sold. These “core” drinkers average nearly a gallon a day. “Hey, let’s have another gallon over here!”

California’s Golden State Fence Company, which has a contract to build part of the United States’ immigration-impeding barrier on the Mexican border, has agreed to pay fines of nearly \$5 million because it hired illegal immigrants to do the job.

Michigan residents Franck and Ludivine Larmande were waiting for pieces of a table to be delivered, when DHL dropped off packages containing a human liver and part of a head.

“Well, it’s interesting, but it doesn’t really fit in with our other furniture.”

A brothel in Germany has announced a 50 percent discount to senior citizens. A spokesperson says, “All clients need to do is show us some proof of age.”

There’s something about his hair conditioner. For just \$100, London’s Hari’s Salon will lather your head with bull semen and other good stuff. Hari Salem says, “It leaves your hair looking wonderfully soft and thick.”

Yes, but Hari, maybe that’s just a lot of bull.

A girl’s memory is 8 percent better than a boy’s memory, but I forget why.

Nielson Media Research says the typical American household now gets 104 television channels.

And every channel has a promo for “Dancing With The Stars” – at the same time.

Under-Tec, the underwear maker, has unveiled a new line of underpants. The company says its “gas-eater” pants have an airtight design, allowing the wearer to break wind without bystanders noticing.

It must be that new charcoal filter.

Condoms are proving such an attractive target for shoplifters, the *Arizona Republic* says, some stores are putting them in locked cases that require a customer to call a clerk for help. However, as an official of the Arizona Public Health Association pointed out, condoms are a purchase customers choose to make in low profile. A spokesperson for a condom maker told of an incident in a CVS pharmacy in which a clerk, assisting a customer, shouted out several times, “Who’s got the keys to the condoms?”

A nine-country study of husbands by the European Community says British, Dutch, and Danish men make the best hubbies. Italian husbands are the worst. Italian men won’t wash a dish, won’t change the diapers, and will never iron clothes.

Italian husbands say a woman’s work is never done – by them.

A 110-year-old man in Saudi Arabia has taken a second wife because his first, aged 85, can no longer satisfy his needs. A news report did not reveal which of his needs are going unfulfilled, but did point out his new wife is only 30.

And, I understand the 85-year-old wife said, “One hundred and ten years old and it’s still ‘me, me, me!’” ●