

the simple list

Your monthly dose of useful tidbits, timely trivia, and catchy conversation starters



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The number of words Alexander Graham Bell said during the world's first telephone call. On March 10, 1876, Bell rang his assistant, who was in another room, and said: "Mr. Watson, come here. I want to see you." (Apparently, Bell was no Neil Armstrong when it came to famous first lines.) Over a century later, in 1984, the first cell phone was introduced. The Motorola DynaTAC weighed close to two pounds and took up to 10 hours to recharge. Still, people went crazy for it, lining up to pay the \$3,995 price tag.

1st

Where the United States ranks in total bottled-water consumption. In honor of World Water Day, on the 22nd, put down the plastic and turn on the tap. (It takes up to 2,000 times more energy to produce a bottle of water than to run the faucet.) Want to see how your city's green efforts stack up against those of other U.S. cities? Go to leastwastefulcities.com for the winners (nicely done, San Francisco) and losers (*ahem*, Houston).

2,221,766

The total acreage of Yellowstone (bigger than Rhode Island and Delaware combined). The world's first national park was established on March 1, 1872, by President Ulysses S. Grant. Insiders know the best time to visit is late April through mid-June. The small spring crowds allow for up-close-and-personal access to more than 300 geysers, including Old Faithful, still erupting after all these years.



50

Barbie's main squeeze, Ken, turns the big 5-0 on March 11. Ken Carson hails from the (fictional) town of Willows, Wisconsin, and originally cost \$3.50 (a steal compared with a diamond-clad Barbie that recently sold at auction for \$302,500). Ken has sported some memorable looks over the years: For his 1961 debut, his sandals (or *mandals*) matched his fiery red swim trunks, and in 1978 he donned an electric blue jumpsuit.



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Years between the 1814 debut of "The Star-Spangled Banner" and the day Congress declared it the national anthem, on March 3, 1931. "O say can you see" began military ceremonies and, from the turn of the century on, sporting events, too, where singers continue to fumble over the lyrics. (You can find the worst offenders on YouTube.)

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The number of women who have won the Nobel Prize for literature. Toni Morrison was the last American woman to claim the honor, in 1993. This March, during Women's History Month, pick up one of her inspirational novels (like *Beloved* or *The Bluest Eye*), or encourage your book club to select from the other female winners, listed at nobelprize.org.