

1.**1. Google Cop**

Dutch police have arrested twin brothers on suspicion of robbery. Their victim spotted a picture of them following him on Google's Street View map application. According to the police, the case was the first time Street View images had been used in a Dutch criminal investigation. It was certainly a unique situation for all.

A 14-year-old boy told police last September he had been robbed of €165 and his cell phone after two men dragged him off his bicycle in Groningen, 180 kilometres from Amsterdam. When he first reported the case, the boy could not give a proper description of the robbers, so there were no leads the police could follow.

The victim called again in March immediately after seeing an image of himself and the two men he believed were his attackers on Street View. Google needs to know why you want them to provide you with information. In this case, the photo could provide an important contribution to solving a crime. The company agreed, and a robbery squad detective immediately recognized one of the twins. Prosecutors will now decide whether to charge the suspects, whose identities were not released. According to some newspaper sources, the twins have been charged with similar crimes recently, which included mugging, burglary and pick-pocketing. As a police source has confirmed, the brothers were released from prison last month. If they are charged and convicted, they are likely to face a rather long sentence. A spokesman for Google in the Netherlands has not immediately commented on the case yet.

2. Luna Park

Melbourne's Luna Park is a historic amusement park located on the shore of Port Phillip Bay in St Kilda, Australia. It opened on 13 December, 1912, and has been operating almost continuously ever since. This was the first of the four Luna Parks that were built in Australia, but now only the Melbourne and the Sydney Luna Park, are still operating. The St Kilda Park was developed by American showman, J. D. Williams, together with the three Phillips brothers, who had all experience in the amusement and cinema industry in the US. Williams returned to the US in 1913 to help found First National Films, which then became Warner Brothers. The Phillips brothers stayed on and ran the park until their deaths in the 1950s. In the years after WWI the park was a great success, but it closed for the war and did not re-open until 1923 when they added new and improved attractions, such as the Big Dipper roller coaster, a Water Chute, a Noah's Ark, and a beautiful 4-row carousel. Between the wars, a number of new attractions were made, including Dodgem cars in 1926 to 1927 and in 1934 a Ghost Train. In the 1950s the park was refurbished, including the addition of The Rotor in 1951. The park remained popular throughout the 1950s, 1960s and into the late 1970s, when finally some of the earlier attractions began to be replaced by modern mechanical rides. A fire in 1981 destroyed the Giggle Palace, and in the same year the River Caves were declared unsafe, and demolished. In 1989 the Big Dipper was pulled down because of a new large roller coaster, which was never built. The main historic features of the park to remain include the iconic "Mr Moon" face entry and the flanking towers, the Scenic Railway which is the oldest continuously-operating roller coaster in the world, and the carousel. Other historic attractions include the Ghost Train, and the fairy-tale castle-style Dodgem's Building constructed in 1927. The park also includes many modern attractions such as the Metropolis roller-coaster, the Spider, a Ferris wheel, and other mechanical thrill-rides. The park remains popular with children and their parents who have fond memories of the park from their youth.

2.**1. The Matterhorn**

The Matterhorn is more than a wonder of creation. Through its shape, attractiveness and unique solitary position, it is considered the greatest mountain. But there's even more: there is no better-known mountain in the world whose natural shape comes as close to a pyramid as the Matterhorn. The pyramid shape symbolises the link between nature and culture, landscape and history. As a result of enormous forces, Africa moved closer to Europe 100 million years ago, and the ocean between the two continents began to become smaller. 50 million years later, large groups of rocks began to deform and fold, and the Matterhorn was born from the rock masses forcing their way upwards. It is a landmark and symbol of Switzerland, and the most beautiful and most photographed mountain in the world.

The Matterhorn was climbed for the first time on the 14th July 1865. Four of the seven men – led by the Englishman Edward Whymper – lost their lives as a result. Everyone was talking about the tragedy on the Matterhorn. The rope that connected Whymper and father and son Taugwalder to the rest of the unfortunate rope group, and which broke during the descent, is displayed in the Matterhorn Museum alongside other relics of the first ascent.

The German name "Matterhorn" first appears in the year 1682. The name is probably derived from the "Matte", meaning meadow, referring to the grassy extended valley which has now been almost completely covered by the village of Zermatt. The mountain is also known by the locals as "das Horn" which means 'the peak' in English.

2. The History of the US Dollar

The currency of the United States can be traced back to 1690 before the birth of the country when the region was still a patchwork of colonies. The Massachusetts Bay Colony used paper notes to finance military expeditions. After the introduction of paper currency in Massachusetts, the other colonies quickly followed. Various British restrictions on the colonial paper currencies were in place until they were outlawed. In 1775, when the colonists were preparing to go to war with the British, the Continental Congress introduced the Continental currency. However, it did not last long as there was insufficient financial backing and the notes were easily forged. Congress then chartered the First National Bank in Philadelphia to help with the government's finances. The dollar was chosen to become the monetary unit for the USA in 1785. A new law, the Coinage Act of 1792, helped put together an organised monetary system that introduced coinage in gold, silver, and copper. Paper notes or greenbacks were introduced into the system in 1861 to help finance the Civil War. The paper notes used several different techniques including a Treasury seal and engraved signatures to help diminish forgery. In 1863, Congress put together the national banking system that granted the US Treasury permission to oversee the issuance of National Bank notes. The Federal Reserve Act of 1913 created one central bank and organised a national banking system that could keep up with the changing financial needs of the country. The designs of the note would not be changed again until 1996 when a lot of improvements were carried out over a ten-year period. The United States Dollar has been adopted, and in some cases used as the official currency, in many different territories and countries. This process of incorporating the currency of one country into a different economic market is called 'dollarization'. Dollarization of the US Dollar has occurred in countries such as East Timor, Ecuador, El Salvador and in some others.

3.**1. The Blue Sulphur Springs Resort**

The Blue Sulphur Springs Pavilion is a historic Greek structure in Blue Sulphur Springs, West Virginia. The Pavilion is the only surviving structure from the Blue Sulphur Springs Resort, a 19th century mineral spa, and was built to shelter the sulphur spring at the resort. The Pavilion consists of twelve columns holding up a square roof, and is primarily built with brick. It was constructed in 1834, the year the Blue Sulphur Springs Resort opened. George Washington Buster constructed the resort; it was named Blue Sulphur Springs for the colourful springs. The original resort included, along with the Pavilion, a three-storey hotel with 200 rooms and a bathhouse. The resort was visited by several famous guests in the 1840s, including several politicians and also two presidents. The resort was a prime spot for the promotion of relaxation and health, as the sulphur spring at the resort was considered to be a remedy for a number of diseases. It began to decline in the 1850s due to competition from other resorts and an economic crisis. The resort closed in 1859 and became Allegheny College, a school for Baptist ministers; the college closed in 1861. The resort buildings were used by both sides in the Civil War as a camp and hospital. In 1864, the northern army burned the resort to prevent the southern army from using it; only the Pavilion survived the fire.

The Pavilion is located in a valley at the junction of a creek and some valleys. It is located in the region of thermal mineral springs in the Appalachian Mountains, and is one of several mineral springs in the area. It is found in a rural landscape, and offers views of the surrounding valley. William Burke described the landscape as ‘a beautiful valley’, though he complained that the designer of the resort had blocked the view with buildings. It was added to the National Register of Historic Places on October 29, 1992.

2. The London Eye

The London Eye is a giant 135-metre tall Ferris wheel situated on the banks of the River Thames in the British capital. Since 20 January 2011, it has officially been known as the EDF Energy London Eye following a three-year sponsorship deal. It is the tallest Ferris wheel in Europe, and the most popular paid tourist attraction in the United Kingdom. It is visited by over 3.5 million people every year. When built in 1999, it was the tallest Ferris wheel in the world, until overtaken first by the 160 m Star of Nanchang in 2006, and then the 165 m Singapore Flyer in 2008. It is still described by its operators as “the world’s tallest cantilevered observation wheel”. It means that the wheel is supported by an A-frame on one side only, unlike the Nanchang and Singapore wheels. The wheel carries 32 sealed and air-conditioned egg-shaped passenger capsules. Each 10-tonne capsule holds 25 people, who are free to walk around inside the capsule, though seating is provided. It rotates at 26 cm per second so that one revolution takes about 30 minutes. The wheel does not usually stop to take on passengers; the rotation rate is slow enough to allow passengers to walk on and off the moving capsules at ground level. It is, however, stopped to allow disabled or elderly passengers time to embark and disembark safely. The London Eye was formally opened by the then Prime Minister, Tony Blair, on 31 December 1999, although it was not opened to the public until 9 March 2000 because of technical problems. Since its opening, the Eye has become a major landmark and tourist attraction. Since 1 January 2005, the Eye has been the focal point of London’s New Year celebrations, with 10-minute displays taking place involving fireworks fired from the wheel itself.

4.**1. Tips for Air-travellers**

- A:** What advice can you give us if a child travels alone on a plane?
- B:** If your child is travelling alone, you should write all the numbers that would be helpful for the child on a note, or in a little date book for when he or she arrives at the final destination. Don't count that your toddler will eat airline meals and snacks! Little chewy fruit snacks work great during take-off and landing for keeping his ears comfortable, and the different shapes keep him interested.
- A:** Are there any toys that you would recommend?
- B:** One of the best toys we have found for keeping our toddler occupied on trips is a travel-sized MagnaDoodle. When he drops the 'pen', it is attached by string; there are no pieces to lose; and he doesn't run out of paper. We write easy words on it, and he learns to read them, and gets really excited when he knows one ... or, we draw simple pictures and he figures those out. It should be great for kids of all ages - Mommy & Daddy have fun with it, too!
- A:** One of the most embarrassing things is to deal with accidents that might happen to a child. How would you prevent such accidents?
- B:** Look into purchasing some Goodnite diapers. These protect kids from accidents, which tend to happen often while travelling but are more like underwear. They fit kids up to 55 kg. Any kid who travels with you should wear them just in case. It can really save clothes and car interiors in heavy traffic. Goodnites can fit kids anywhere from 3 to 16 years old.
- A:** What are the best times to travel?
- B:** When travelling with children by air, book at non-peak times, that is late at night, midday and Monday to Wednesday. This gives you a chance at a free seat for your child to stretch out and sleep. Arrive at the airport early. Sprints down an endless terminal are difficult enough, but nearly impossible when packing a baby on your back and holding a small child's hand. When travelling by car and you bring along "treats", never give them out too fast!

2. The Amazon Rainforest

The Amazon Rainforest, also known as Amazonia or Amazon Jungle, is a moist, broadleaf forest that covers most of the Amazon Basin of South America. This basin includes seven million square kilometers, of which five and a half million square kilometers are covered by the rainforest. This region includes territory belonging to nine nations. The majority of the forest is contained within Brazil, with 60% of the rainforest, followed by Peru with 13%, and with minor amounts in Colombia, Venezuela, Ecuador, Bolivia, Guyana, Suriname and French Guiana. States or departments in four nations bear the name Amazonas after it. The Amazon represents over half of the planet's remaining rainforests, and it comprises the largest and most species-rich tropical rainforest in the world. The Amazon rainforest was short-listed in 2008 as a candidate to one of the New 7 Wonders of Nature by the New Seven Wonders of the World Foundation. As of February 2009, the Amazon was ranked first in Group E, the category for forests, national parks and nature reserves. The name Amazon is said to come from a war Francisco de Orellana fought with a tribe of Tapuyas and other tribes from South America. The women of the tribe fought alongside men, as was the custom among the entire tribe. Orellana's descriptions may have been accurate, but a few historians speculate that Orellana could have mistaken indigenous men wearing "grass skirts" for women. Orellana derived the name Amazonas from the ancient Amazons of Asia and Africa described by Herodotus in Greek legends. Another etymology for the word suggests that it came originally from a native word amazona. Environmentalists are concerned about the loss of animal and plant life that will result from destruction of the forest.

5.**1. Penguins**

A: Is it true that penguins can be hot?

B: In contrast with general thinking, penguins often get too hot. Especially penguins from the warm, more northern regions. Overheating can be dangerous so there must be a way to lose that extra heat.

A: How is that possible?

B: The air between the feathers and the skin insulate so much that a penguin could easily overheat in the sun. When they move fast through the colony and the sunburns on their black feathers, the heat can't be lost fast enough. You can see them spreading their wings to increase the body surface. Some species even pump blood through their wings, and then you can notice a pink surface on the inside. This is almost the only part of the body, which isn't covered with feathers, therefore the only way to lose heat surplus.

A: What about penguins living in warmer climates?

B: The four species, which live in warm climate regions all have extra bare, which means they have no feathers or hair on the inside. In addition to that they also have pink parts around their bill, to lose heat.

A: Do penguins sleep?

B: A penguin also needs rest and has to sleep. On land you can see them standing with their head under a wing, or lying down on the ground. They often sleep but only for short naps, because they always have to be on the alert against predators. And while several penguin species spend a lot of days or weeks on the open sea, they have to sleep there too, but it is still unknown how they do that. It is thought that penguins float on the surface with their head on or between their flippers. While sleeping, their metabolism slows down to save energy. This is very important for survival during the days where they breed and have to fast!

2. Fuerteventura

Fuerteventura is the oldest island in the Canary Islands, dating back 20 million years to a volcanic eruption from the Canary hotspot. The majority of the island was created about 5 million years ago. Since then it has been eroded by wind and weather. On the seabed off the west coast of the island rests a block of rock which is 22 km long and 11 km wide. It appears to have slid off the island largely intact at some point in prehistory. The last volcanic activity in Fuerteventura was between 4,000 and 5,000 years ago. The highest point in Fuerteventura is Mount Jandía, with 807 metres in the southwest part of the island. The island is divided in two parts, the northern part which is Maxorata and the southwestern part called the Jandía peninsula. The island is the least settled in the Canary Islands. The climate on Fuerteventura is pleasant throughout the year. The island is also often referred to as the island of eternal spring. The sea adjusts the temperature making the hot Sahara winds blow away from the island. The island's name in English translates as 'strong fortune' or 'strong wind', the Spanish word for wind being 'viento'. During the winter months, temperatures average a high of 22 °C and a low of around 15 °C. In summer a mean high of 35 °C and a low of 20 °C can be expected. Rain is about 147 mm per year, most of which falls in autumn and winter. October is a month with the highest rainfall. A sandstorm known as the Calima - similar to the Sirocco wind that blows North from the Sahara into Europe - blows to the southwest from the Sahara desert and can cause high temperatures, low visibility and drying air. Temperatures during this phenomenon rise temporarily by approximately 10 degrees Celsius. The wind brings in fine white sand, visibility can drop to between 100 metres to 200 metres or even lower and can even bring African locusts to the island.

6.**1. Eating in China**

A: What traditions are found in Chinese eating?

B: Eating is a dominant aspect of Chinese culture. For instance, the Manchu Han Imperial Feast - a feast that consists of at least 108 unique dishes from the Manchu and Han cultures - has been a feature of Chinese cuisine for a long time.

A: Do people eat out a lot?

B: In China, eating out is one of the most accepted ways to invite guests. Similar to Westerners, who like to drink in a bar with friends, eating together in China is a way to socialize and deepen friendship.

A: What about table manners?

B: There are many traditions that govern table manners in China, such as the correct treatment of guests and how to use chopsticks correctly. Although each Chinese household has its own set of table manners and rules, the basic traditions to welcome guests are the same.

A: Are there any rules in China about inviting guests?

B: There are common rules for inviting guests. When the guest of honour enters the room, the hosts stand until the guest of honour is seated. The host then orders the dishes to be brought, and the guest should be silent. When the dishes arrive, the meal begins with a toast from a host, and the guests then make a toast in turn in the honour of the host. The guest of honour should be the first one to start the meal. The best food in a dish should be left for the guest of honour. When the hostess says her food is not good enough, the guest must be polite and tell her it is the best food he has ever tasted. Guests should never "split the bill" with the host. A guest who splits the bill is very rude and embarrassing to the host. However, it is expected that the guest will offer to pay for the meal many times, but ultimately allow the host to pay.

A: Do young Chinese people observe the same traditions?

B: Well, yes and no. It is mainly people in the cities that are not so strict about these traditions. With the appearance of western fast-food restaurants, a lot of youngsters have gradually forgotten about table manners.

2. Seven Years in Tibet by Heinrich Harrer

This is one of the most extraordinary stories one will ever read. Already a famous downhill skier and mountaineer, Harrer was captured by the British in India at the beginning of World War 2. Even without Harrer's adventures in Tibet, the story of his repeated attempts at escape would be amazing. Finally he managed to run away from the British, with his companion, by heading over the Himalayas into Tibet. At the time no foreigners were allowed into Tibet and the two wandered around the Tibetan hinterlands for years, being harassed by unfriendly nomads before eventually entering Lhasa in secret. If it wasn't enough to make a superb story, Harrer proceeds to become tutor to the young Dalai Lama and the reader is treated to an insight into the relationship between the two. The series of events that make up this story are incredible and the author describes many aspects of the Tibetan landscape and culture with superb clarity. Some have accused Harrer of making up some of the events in this epic, and it is likely that sometimes the truth is at least stretched, but somehow that does not matter - this is just a great story. Harrer's literary style is largely descriptive and not very emotive at all. This is simply an account of an epic adventure into a previously undescribed country with the added intrigue of Harrer's relationship with the Dalai Lama and the tragedy of the Chinese invasion and occupation of Tibet. This book is highly recommended to any reader who loves stories of adventure and unbelievable hardship described in detail. Readers after a story with poetic descriptions will perhaps be disappointed. However, I would urge everyone to read this epic adventure just for the facts alone.

7.**1. Father Hunting**

A 15-year-old girl used a hunting bow to shoot her father with an arrow after he grounded her and took her cell phone, then hid in the woods until she was arrested.

The man, who told officers about the Wednesday evening attack, was airlifted from the rural, forested Tahuya area to Harborview Medical Center in Seattle and was listed Thursday as in a serious condition. According to the hospital he was shot once in the torso.

The man told the sheriff's dispatcher that his daughter prevented him from calling for help after she shot him in their house. After she fled into the woods behind the home with the bow and arrows, he climbed out of a window, got in his truck and drove to the closest neighbour, about a third of a mile away.

A Special Weapons and Tactics team surrounded the girl in the woods and arrested her for attempted murder. The girl was not injured but was taken to hospital because she was depressed.

The man has sole custody of the girl and is apparently her only relative in the area, where they have lived for at least eight years. Her mother lives out of state and has no contact with the girl.

Authorities had not yet been able to interview the girl or get more information from the father on Thursday. It seems that the father was trying to discipline her. He took the cell phone away, grounded her and she shot him.

The police were not aware of any previous charges against the girl or whether she had been involved in any trouble at school. The principal of the school has refused to give an interview.

2. Tips for the Perfect Honeymoon

If you go on honeymoon, use a travel agent. Agents rarely charge for their services, and, thanks to their expertise and computerized systems, good travel agents almost always save their clients money as well as time. Begin planning early. The sooner the better. That way, you'll have plenty of time to research your trip and you'll be able to get exactly what you want. Share the planning. After all, this honeymoon is for both of you. If you make all the decisions, you'll feel guilty if things don't go perfectly. On the other hand, if you don't take part in planning, you may end up dissatisfied. Set an approximate budget. Take it easy on the first few days so you can recover from the post-wedding exhaustion and focus on each other. Don't try to do too much. Remember, you'll have lots of time to travel together, but only one honeymoon. Take advantage of free info. Call your destinations tourist board; many have toll-free telephone numbers and websites for free information on hotels, restaurants, activities and festive events. Some even provide discount-coupon books. Register for your honeymoon with a travel agent or tour operator. Gifts are put toward the total cost of your trip. The average couple who uses a registry gets \$500 to \$1,000, which can really make a difference. Planning to take your spouse's name? Unless you're taking a delayed honeymoon, you won't be able to amend your passport, driver's license, etc., until after you've returned from your honeymoon. Even though you'll be anxious to start using your married name, it can be a real nightmare if you haven't legally changed it yet. Instead, use your maiden name on visas, airline tickets, etc., so they match your name as it appears on your official documents. Pack a sense of humour. A bit of flexibility can go a long way on a honeymoon. Expect that things won't always go as planned. Do what you can to solve the problem, then relax and enjoy your honeymoon. Years, or even a few hours from now, you'll probably laugh. Tell the world you're honeymooners! Don't be ashamed about your status, because you'll probably enjoy special treatment such as complimentary champagne in-flight, or a gift basket in your room.

8.**1. The Tuskegee Airmen**

The Tuskegee Airmen is the popular name of a group of African American pilots who fought in World War II. Formally, they were the 332nd Fighter Group of the U.S. Army Air Corps.

The Tuskegee Airmen were the first African American military aviators in the United States armed forces. During World War II, African Americans in many U.S. states were still subject to racial laws. The American military was racially segregated, as was much of the federal government. The Tuskegee Airmen were subject to racial discrimination, both within and outside the army. Despite these hardships, they trained and flew in an outstanding way.

Although they “worked up” on North American B-25 Mitchell bombers, they never served in combat; the Tuskegee 332nd Fighter Group was the only operational unit. They were first sent overseas as part of Operation Torch, then they took part in action in Sicily and Italy, before they were deployed as bomber escorts in Europe where they were particularly successful in their missions.

When the pilots of the 332nd Fighter Group painted the tails of their P-47’s red, the nickname “Red Tails” was born. In all, 996 pilots were trained in Tuskegee from 1941 to 1946, approximately 445 were deployed overseas, and 150 airmen lost their lives in accidents or combat. The blood cost included sixty-six pilots killed in action or accidents, and thirty-two fell in into captivity as prisoners of war.

No one knows how many are still alive from the original crew member number of 996 pilots and about 15,000 ground personnel. Many of the surviving members of the Tuskegee Airmen participate annually in the Tuskegee Airmen Convention.

2. Antarctic

The Nimrod Expedition was the first of three expeditions to the Antarctic led by Ernest Shackleton. Its main target, among a range of geographical and scientific objectives, was to be first to the South Pole. This was not achieved, but the expedition’s southern march reached a farthest south latitude just 97.5 nautical miles from the pole. This was the longest southern polar journey to that date and a record on either Pole. A separate group led by Welsh Australian geology professor David Edgeworth, reached the estimated location of the South Magnetic Pole, and the expedition also achieved the first climb of Mount Erebus, Antarctica’s second highest volcano. The expedition lacked governmental or institutional support, and relied on private loans and individual help. There were financial problems and its preparations were hurried. Its ship, Nimrod, was less than half the size of Robert Falcon Scott’s 1901–04 expedition ship Discovery, and Shackleton’s crew lacked relevant experience. Controversy arose from Shackleton’s decision to base the expedition in McMurdo Sound, close to Scott’s old headquarters. Although the expedition’s profile was initially much lower than that of Scott’s six years earlier, its achievements attracted nationwide interest and made a public hero out of Shackleton. The scientific team carried out extensive geological, zoological and meteorological work. On his return, Shackleton received many public honours, including a knighthood from King Edward VII. He made little financial gain from the expedition and eventually depended on a government grant to cover its costs. Within three years his southernmost record was broken, as first Amundsen and then Scott reached the South Pole. In his own moment of triumph, Amundsen observed: “Sir Ernest Shackleton’s name will always be written in the annals of Antarctic exploration in letters of fire.”

9**1. Disabled Discrimination**

According to a Swiss report, about 15 per cent of the world's population -- 1 billion people -- is disabled and subject to discrimination.

Despite the disability rights movement, disabled people still experience "significant difficulties" concerning healthcare and employment. The report found disabled people in developing countries are three times more likely to be denied healthcare than other people.

The disabilities include impairment, blindness, limb loss, chronic pain and mental retardation. Children with disabilities are less likely to start or stay in school than other children. Employment rates among the disabled were at 44 per cent, compared with 75 per cent employment rates for non-disabled people in the 34 Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development countries.

People with disabilities face barriers such as discrimination, lack of adequate healthcare and rehabilitation services, and inaccessible transport, buildings and information. The report also found that there is no country that has got it right.

Dr. Margaret Chan, WHO director general, said disability is part of life. "Almost every one of us will be permanently or temporarily disabled at some point in life," Chan said. "We must do more to break the barriers which segregate people with disabilities, in many cases forcing them to the margins of society." According to the UN, one of the main factors that contribute to discrimination is the lack of education in schools. Students are not taught how to deal with disabled people. Most children have no idea how to approach a blind person in the street or on a bus. Schools should be the places where we can open the eyes of youngsters to the dangers of discrimination.

2. Children's Reading Abilities

As summer arrives, many parents may be looking at how to keep their kids reading over the summer. A study that came out last year found that students' reading scores dropped between 14 and 18 points from the end of the school year to the next. The study was done to look into the reading scores of third and fourth graders. It found parental support and less time watching TV and playing video games had a positive effect to more time reading and higher reading scores in the fall. Another new study that came out this month shows leisure time in front of computers has a negative impact on children's time spent reading. "Our study shows that the entry of computers into the home has contributed to changing children's habits in such a manner that their reading does not develop to the same extent as previously," said a lead researcher. The study of 9- to 10-year-olds by the University of Gothenburg, looked at reading habits of children in Hungary, Italy, the U.S. and Sweden since the 1970s. Researchers found that while reading ability has improved steadily in Hungary and Italy, it has fallen rapidly since 1991 in the U.S. and Sweden. In the last two countries there was a "large increase" in children using computers during their free time. It was found that there are less high-performing readers in the U.S. and Sweden because of this shift, as "leisure time" is an important time for students to develop their reading skills. It was reported in an article on Wednesday that American children aged 8-18 are spending on average 7.5 hours connected to some sort of electronic media every day. And according to the U.S. Department of Health, about 1.5 hours of that is spent in front of a computer and more than one-third of youth have a computer in their bedroom. But while many news outlets say spending time outside and exercising is important to do instead of sitting in front of a computer or TV screen, reading is an important alternative as well. The study explains that reading is important for children because they need to use reading to learn all of their other subjects. Without strong reading skills, children may struggle in math, science, social studies and even arts. As adults, they will read everyday no matter what type of job they have.

10.**1. McFathers**

A U.S. study indicates fathers are more likely to influence what and where a child eats than mothers. It is said that lenient fathers allow children more trips to fast-food restaurants, which has been linked to obesity in children.

Dads who think that dinner time is a special family time certainly do not see a fast-food restaurant as an appropriate place for that special family time, so this means that his kids are spending less time in those places. Dads who have no trouble eating food in a fast-food restaurant are going to be more likely to have kids who do so.

The researchers had children write down in a diary what they ate and whether it was at home or outside the home. The study found it was fathers' time spent at fast-food restaurants – not mothers' time spent there – that was associated with kids' time spent in a fast-food place.

The only instances of mothers being lax on the use of fast-food are those who are negligent and those who are highly committed to their work.

Traditionally it was believed that mothers should be blamed for everything that goes wrong with children, especially when it comes to food, but the new study has found that fathers have a substantial influence over what children are eating.

However, one thing forgotten in these researches is the fact that fathers cannot cook. If the wife works overtime, the only place to take the child is a fast-food restaurant. It is true that it doesn't happen every day, only about once or twice a week, but it is still better than if the father cooked something that would probably be inedible.

2. Rain Price

No matter how cool a teenager's mom and dad might be, few teens get through high school without feeling their parents embarrassed them. And one teen has his dad to thank for embarrassing him the entire school year. When the high school's bus routes changed this year, 16-year-old Rain Price soon found out he'd be going right past his house every single morning. Much to his pain, he also found out his dad would be standing outside, waving. When he did it the first day, the boy was in shock. It was his first day of his sophomore year." The embarrassment was a thrill for his father. The second day of school, there he was again, only this time Dale Price was wearing a San Diego Chargers helmet and jersey. Day three, it was an Anakin Skywalker helmet, and the next day, swim trunks and a snorkel mask. Other kids started to take note. Most of them like it, and they would roll down the windows and wave. The father admits it took a lot of effort to keep it up, but said it was a way of letting him know that they really cared about him, but do something a little different. He described it as "a father's way" of saying I love you. It ended up being a daily tradition for him, with a new costume each and every day. No recycling costumes, that was the rule for the father. Interesting, "or embarrassing," according to Rain. He doesn't plan on thanking his dad at all. The elder Price could be seen — rain or shine — on the front porch of their home nearly every day of the school year, wearing feathers, wigs, flip flops, suits, boots and even fur. He wore well-known costumes such as that of Batgirl, the scarecrow from the Wizard of Oz, Elvis, the Little Mermaid, Princess Leia, Santa Claus and more. And never did his dad use the same character more than once. Several props aided interpretation as well. Like the day he hauled a porcelain toilet onto the porch. One of the days he was sick, so a cardboard cut-out of a Lord of the Rings character stood outside in his place. "I hope this lives with him for the rest of his life," Price said. "He can use it against his kids and tell them, 'If you think you are embarrassed by me, you should have seen your grandfather.'"

11**1. What Is Your Nightcap?**

- A:** We've all done the obvious stuff—cut out late-night caffeine, made sure our bedroom is dark and comfortable, avoided scary movies or struggle with our to-do list right before bed. So why are we still tossing and turning?
- B:** The answer is that certain habits you're unaware of could be blocking your sleep. And, as you may know, lack of sleep doesn't just leave you foggy the next day: Chronic, long-term insufficient sleep increases your chances of diabetes, depression, heart disease, even weight gain. So what to do? Try my unexpected tips, and wake up feeling incredibly well-rested.
- A:** What are the tips that you recommend?
- B:** It's a no-brainer that drinking coffee or tea right before you go to bed won't do you any sleep favours. But you also need to watch your afternoon drinks. Love your 4 p.m. peach tea? It's got caffeine, and so do some flavoured waters and even orange sodas. Check the labels on your favourite midday drinks—any that boast energy-boosting benefits are likely to be responsible. Then, if possible, stop sipping them after 2 p.m., so there's time for their effects to disappear.
- A:** What about meals?
- B:** While it's important to avoid a big, heavy meal right before bed (a full stomach will disturb your sleep), some foods may actually help you snooze. If you've had a few nights of restless sleep, make a light whole-wheat-pasta dish with fresh vegetables, a little steamed chicken breast, tomato sauce, and a sprinkle of Parmesan cheese for dinner. This meal contains a sleep-friendly combination of protein and tryptophan, an amino acid that converts to sleep-promoting serotonin in the body. If your stomach's growling late at night, try a small bowl of cottage cheese with banana slices, another dish that serves up tryptophan.

2. Foundation for Animal Protection

Zsanett Molnar heads up the foundation in Fuzesabony which was established in 2006 to help stray dogs and cats that are on the roads, thrown out by careless owners, run over by cars, or tied to trees, living only on one-meter-long chains without any shelter, food or water during the hot summer or cold winter time. The situation is extremely bad in the country, especially in the Eastern part of Hungary, where neither organizations for animal rights nor civilized last-chance kennels exist. Reporting a crime to the police is out of the question as local people don't usually care about giving evidence. Unfortunately, the number of abandoned, neglected, and scattered animals is tremendous over here. The Foundation in Fuzesabony does not function as an animal shelter. Zsanett is trying to find foster homes for stray animals after they have gone through a veterinary check up. Basically, she is doing the job of the authorities, when taking care of injured or abused stray dogs or cats and transporting them to the animal hospital in Eger. After four extremely hard years, Zsanett is proud to say that she has been able to find a new home for 100 dogs and 20 cats. For one year she was responsible for the administrative and operational tasks alone, in addition to her eight-hour job. She is always in need of financial support as animal care and surgery costs are usually very expensive and the Foundation relies on donations, most of which derive from the 1% of the personal income tax, which tax payers in Hungary can decide on for themselves. Zsanett has many plans for the future. Castration campaigns, for example, for which the budget is too tight at the moment, and further donations are welcome. She is always looking for foster homes, either in Budapest or in the country. Zsanett asks animal lovers to help with advertising and popularizing the Foundation, either in Hungary or abroad. As there is only little interest in adopting dogs or cats in Hungary, she is always looking for new partnerships with similar organizations abroad.

12.**1. Facebook Party**

Facebook is one powerful tool, and a 16-year-old German girl found that out the hard way, after she forgot to set her Facebook birthday party invitation as private and had her celebration crashed by 1,500 strangers.

The girl, known only as Thessa, had originally planned to invite only a few friends over at her house in Hamburg-Bramfeld, but mistakenly published the invitation on Facebook so that everyone could see it. Before long, the invitation went viral and around 15,000 people confirmed they would come to the party, even though they didn't even know the girl. When Thessa's parents found out, they made her cancel the invitation, called the police and hired a private security firm to guard their house on the big day.

Even though public announcements that the party had been cancelled were made in Hamburg, some 1,500 people showed up in front of Thessa's house ready to party. Some of them had banners asking 'Where is Thessa?' Others brought presents, home-made cake, and plenty of alcohol, but they were all ready for a good time, and the 100 policemen present on the scene weren't going to stop them. They started singing 'Thessa, celebrating a birthday is not a crime', in relation with the massive police presence, and although eleven people were arrested, a police officer was injured and dozens of girls wearing flip-flops cut their feet on broken glass, Thessa's party was a big hit.

Unfortunately, the birthday girl didn't get to enjoy her own birthday party, as German newspapers report she was out celebrating with her grandparents, at an undisclosed location.

2. Flights

Nearly a quarter of domestic airline flights arrived late to the gate in April as severe thunderstorms shut down major airports. The 16 airlines required to report operational results to the Transportation Department recorded an overall on-time arrival rate of 75.5% in April. That's down from 85.5% a year ago and from March's 79.2%. A flight is considered on time if it arrives within 15 minutes of schedule. Storms ripped through the nation in April and forced airlines to hold or cancel flights in key hubs such as Atlanta, Orlando and Chicago. Other factors that contribute to delays — late-arriving aircraft, aviation system delays and maintenance problems — also worsened in April. Flight cancellations rose in April from a year before, with 2% of scheduled flights called off. In April 2010, only 0.7% were cancelled. Weather favoured airlines with operations concentrated in western and northern regions. Hawaiian Airlines, which flies mostly among the islands, delivered more than 94% of flights on time and claimed its usual top spot in on-time performance. Seattle-based Alaska Airlines followed with 89.5%. Despite severe weather, only four planes were stuck on the runway for more than three hours in April. There were Delta flights in Atlanta on April 27, when wind and thunderstorms forced numerous cancellations at the world's busiest airport. In April last year, the Transportation Department enforced a rule that imposes fines up to \$27,500 per passenger for flights that sit on the runway for more than three hours without allowing passengers to disembark. Since then, only 20 such delays of more than three hours have been reported. On the one-year anniversary of the rule, it's clear that it has been accomplished that there are fewer planes that leave travellers stranded without access to food, water or working lavatories for hours on end. This is a giant step forward for the rights of air travellers. In opposing the rule, airlines warned it would trigger more cancellations, saying carriers would rather cancel a flight than face big fines, especially during bad weather and busy holidays.

13.**1. Iron-Man**

Wang Kang, a 25-year-old office worker from Shanghai, China, surprised his colleagues a few days ago, when he came to work wearing a homemade Iron Man suit.

It happened on June 3rd, 2011. Kang walked into his office building wearing a metallic-looking costume and was immediately stopped by security. After explaining to them that he was actually an employee, they allowed him to go through to the office area where all his work mates stopped what they were doing and stared at the real-life Iron Man who just walked in. Everyone was speechless at first, but proceeded to congratulate Wang Kang for his incredible achievement, and started taking pictures. One of these ended up on China's Twitter-like platform, Weibo, and the young self-taught costume maker became an Internet sensation.

Wang Kang got the idea of making his own Iron Man costume after seeing the 2008 blockbuster starring Robert Downey Junior, but actually started working on it on February 26, 2011, right in the living room of his rented apartment. The costume is mainly made of high density foam, wires and tubes, for which he only paid around \$460. The whole thing took him three months to finish, but the reactions on his colleagues' faces were totally worth the time and effort. After the office test, Kang took to the streets where he left everyone stunned as well.

The realistic-looking Iron Man suit created by Wang Kang is around 1.85 meters tall, weighs 50 kilograms and is relatively easy to put on. Its creator says it takes him about 10 minutes to slip into the body armour.

2. China's One-dog Policy

In a sign of China's growing affluence, the city of Shanghai this month instituted a "one-dog policy" to control the number of pets. The one canine per household quota comes as pedigree dogs have become a common sight on Chinese streets, along with a rising number of strays. As of May 15, Shanghai families are limited to one dog per household and are required to register the animal. China Central TV reports fewer than 25 per cent of the city's estimated 800,000 pet dogs are registered. To get people to register their pets license fees were slashed, now ranging from \$46 to \$300 depending on what part of the city or suburbs they live in. This will surely encourage dog owners to get their pet registered for a license. The new regulations also forbid abusing or abandoning dogs and ban certain breeds including bulldogs, mastiffs, Rottweilers and German shepherds. Families that already have more than one licensed dog will be allowed to keep their other animals, but households that have multiple unlicensed dogs will only be allowed to register one. For the first time, laws require dogs to be leashed in public and dog owners to clean up after their animals. Violations carry fines ranging from \$768 to \$7,680. Beijing once banned all pet dogs, and several other major Chinese cities have similar pet regulations. There are restrictions in other countries as well. Palm Beach County in Florida has banned owners from tying pets outside unless they are present to monitor the pet. The ordinance also requires an outdoor kennel to have a minimum dimension of 100 square feet and 50 square feet for each additional dog. The law toughens regulations for pet stores and outlaws bestiality. Although Toronto may be considering scrapping pet licenses entirely, for the time being, animal owners not in compliance can expect a knock on the door. The Toronto Star says animal control officers are out in the neighbourhoods carrying wireless credit card readers asking pet owners to renew their \$25 dog licenses. The city has been debating dropping pet licenses because it costs \$2 million a year to collect \$2.4 million in annual revenues. Toronto has eight full-time animal control officers. The animal services department estimates 90 per cent of the city's domestic cats and 70 percent of the pet dogs are unlicensed.

14.**1. LEGO Building**

A: Inspired by fantasy buildings featured in sagas like Star Wars and The Lord of the Rings, LEGO fan Gerry Burrows has built an astonishing giant structure called the Garrison of Moriah. Where did you get the idea?

B: Ever since I was just a kid, I dreamed of building something big using LEGO bricks, but it was only after finishing college that I realized I finally had the freedom to do it. I began thinking about how. I finally had the space and the financial freedom to fulfil my childhood dream without my little sister destroying my Lego creations.

A: So what happened next?

B: I called my estate agent and told him I needed a LEGO room. As soon as I bought my first house, I unpacked a box of my old LEGO bricks.

A: How did you manage to create the Garrison of Moriah with so little planning?

B: I made no initial plans, on paper or computer, but simply started assembling the bricks, focusing on individual structures. As I kept building, I got inspiration on what direction to take to make my masterpiece look as cool as possible. Amazingly enough I suffered no disasters during the entire building process.

A: The Garrison of Moriah is currently 8.5-meters-long, covering a third of Burrows' basement, stands between 2 and 3.5 meters tall and has a depth of between 60 and 150 centimetres.

B: I believe that I have used between 200,000 and 250,000 LEGO bricks so far, because it's currently a work in progress.

2. Working Mothers

Just six months after the birth of my first daughter, I faced the most difficult decision any mother has to make. The live-in nanny I had engaged so I could return to work, left for a higher-paying job, and my husband said he wasn't able to adjust his schedule to allow the employment of a part-time babysitter. I was given the choice of finding another full-time nanny or quitting my job as a writer and producer at a radio station. All of a sudden I was facing the kind of life-changing decision that Robert Frost wrote about in "The Road Not Taken." And like the character in Frost's poem, I ended up choosing "the road less travelled" for a woman in the 1970s. In the dawn of the women's liberation movement, women who stayed at home to raise children were viewed as intellectually and socially inferior. Career women would invariably ask their stay-at-home sisters, usually in a condescending tone, "What do you do all day?" Even men saw working women as superior. When I told my boss at the radio station that I was quitting to stay at home with a baby, he didn't believe I was serious. He thought it was a ploy to get better hours and offered to change my schedule to any shift I wanted. It took awhile to convince him that I wasn't seeking a better assignment. Overnight, I became a non-person because my identity was completely tied to my job. Since I was no longer a working journalist, I had become a nobody in the truest sense of the word. That fact was driven home to me while attending a bureau meeting in Washington for the news magazine for which my husband wrote. I was talking with the Los Angeles bureau chief at a cocktail party, when she suddenly asked me for what publication I worked. I meekly told her I was home raising a child and with that she turned and walked away, leaving me so stunned, my mouth dropped open. I came away from that incident realizing I had to develop an entirely new persona, that of a helicopter mom! I was going to tackle the job of motherhood the same way I would tackle any journalism assignment. I read everything I could about child rearing and saw to it that my daughter and her younger sister had every non-monetary advantage. Even though being a stay-at-home mother placed me in the minority for my generation, I discovered other women on the same path. There were lawyers, Harvard MBAs and even a doctor or two who ditched their careers to care for their children. As Robert Frost so brilliantly wrote: "I shall be telling this with a sigh somewhere ages and ages hence: Two roads diverged in a wood, and I took the one less travelled by, and that has made all the difference."

15.**1. Natural Healers**

India is known for the wide variety of folk remedies for various illnesses, and one of the most popular right now is the raw-fish-swallowing therapy practiced by the Goud family in Hyderabad.

Asthma is one of the most serious respiratory conditions a person can have, and since conventional medicine doesn't offer a permanent cure, many are willing to try any kind of treatment, no matter how bizarre. One of these is the fish-swallowing cure offered by the Goud family for the last 166 years. Every year, during the month of June, hundreds of thousands of people flock to Hyderabad to try this unusual remedy. Around 500 volunteers administer the miracle cure: live 2-inch to 3-inch long murrel fish which have been fed a drop of the secret herbal formula which the Gouds claim cures asthma within three years.

Ingredients for the medicine are collected two to three months before the big day, mixed the day before using water from the Goud's family well, and administered to asthma sufferers free of charge. The patient is advised not to eat or drink anything for four hours before swallowing the raw fish and two hours after. Also, he must be aware that he must come back for the cure in the next three years, if he wants to get rid of the asthma forever.

The ingredients of the medicinal formula are a closely guarded secret so it's practically impossible to know what effects it has on certain people, or if it actually works in any way. If you ask some of the people who have tried this raw-fish treatment, many of them will say it gives them great relief, but there have been cases when the patient suffered severe asthma attacks, and physicians warn that the fish itself could cause an allergic reaction.

2. Rhodes

It was the best vacation ever. I didn't have high expectations at first. All I knew was that I was going to spend a week in Rhodes, Greece. To tell the truth, I made no preparations. I did not even bother to look up what was on the island, what sights were worth visiting. After the plane landed, we were welcomed by a young man who drove us to the hotel, which was about one hour from the airport. When we arrived, it turned out that the man was actually the owner of the place. He runs the hotel together with his wife. The name of the hotel was Ampelia Beach Hotel. It was located in Gennadi, which is on the south-eastern coast of the island. It is a small village with not much to do, but in the nearby places, there were lots of facilities. On our first day we went to the southern tip of Rhodes, where the Mediterranean and the Aegean Sea meet. It is a gorgeous spot. It is the perfect place for windsurfers and kite surfers as well. For an hour I was just staring at the surfers who were riding the waves. After we went back to the hotel, we spent most of the afternoon by the pool sipping cocktails and swimming. On the second day we went kayaking in the sea. It wasn't as easy as doing the same thing on a river. Much more strength was needed, and we got tired after about two hours. After lunch we just felt that we wanted to rest for the whole afternoon. On the next day we travelled to the other side of the island, to some ruins, from which the view was spectacular. Our guide also took us to see an Orthodox church, which I personally disliked, for the decoration was too much. Then came one of the best parts of the holiday. We went to a gorge where we tried some rock-climbing. It was dangerous but cool. The other cool thing about our stay was when we went swimming in and out of caves. We jumped off some cliffs as well. My son loved looking down into the sea searching for fish. On one of the last days, Andrew, the man who runs the hotel, took us to a local market, where he showed us how to bargain for the best prices. We bought a lot of local produce and later on we had the chance to visit an ancient Olympic stadium. My fiancée would have run a lap if she had not been wearing a skirt. Well, I didn't feel like running in that heat. Overall, our holiday was very good. I can highly recommend the island to everybody. Also the hotel and its staff were very kind, and their hospitality made our stay even more pleasant.