



## Facts are fun

BY AMOS ARTHUR HOLMES

When I was a young man my intellectual pursuit was described by my parents as being a labored crawl. My mind was filled with baseball and girls, football and girls, and (quite often) simply girls. My teachers tried valiantly to instill within my brain those nonessentials such as reading, writing, and arithmetic. But I defeated their every effort.

And then...in my early twenties...I discovered that smoking had killed off my athletic prowess. I also discovered that girls had a unique and constant ability to resist my charms. And there I was... in the prime of life...with lungs that wouldn't function, with female companionship unobtainable, and with a head that could be accurately described as a vacuum.

I knew that it was too late to master intellectual things and so, to better myself, I concentrated on trivia. Wouldn't it be wonderful if I were the only person at a party who knew why grasshoppers hop? Couldn't I spice up a festive affair by talking about the sex habits of worms, or snails, or elephants?

And so I studied my Guinness Book of Records, my almanacs, and my encyclopedias. I stuffed my brain with so

many small facts that I was later known as, "The man who knows everything." My mailbox, dreadfully empty before, began filling with party invitations.

So...in today's column...I would like to share with you some of the facts and knowledge I have gained over the years.

First of all...everybody knows a centaur is a mythical creature that was half man and half horse. Now I'll ask you a simple question. What is a censor? A censor, my dear vacuum heads, is a vessel in which incense is burned during religious ceremonies.

A full grown centipede may have 170 pairs of legs. Can you imagine how wonderful it would be if you were a male centipede who was a "leg" man? Wow!

The chameleon, a lizard, shoots out its tongue like a streak of lightning. As the tongue shoots out the sticky knoblike tip swells out so that it can trap its victim. Gosh! The same thing happens when my wife drinks martinis.

Charade is a popular game in which one player dramatizes a word or phrase and the others try to guess what it is. Must be a hell of a lot like a commissioner's meeting.

What am I talking about when I mention these names: Chantecler, Dominique, Java, Brahma, Cochin, Dorking, Orpington, Sussex, Ancona, Buttercup, and Mirorca? Would you do any better if I added the name Wyandotte? Well, all the names listed here are breeds of chickens. I was surprised with this fact because the only chickens I had ever heard of were Plymouth Rocks, Rhode Island Reds, and White Leghorns. I can hardly wait until someone asks me what I had for supper. I'll answer, "We had baked Orpington, and it was delicious."

Frederic Francois Chopin, a famous Polish composer, did magnificent work writing 4 scherzos, 40 mazurkas, more than 25 etudes, a barcarolle, a berceuse, a fantaisie-impromptu, a tarantelle and a rondos. Wheeeeeee! No wonder he was so famous. Gee! I wish I could write a fantaisie-impromptu. All I can manage are a few dirty limericks.

The Chat is one of the largest birds of the wood-warbler family. During the mating season the male Chat shows off by dangling his legs and flopping his wings. I dangle my legs but I don't flop my wings. Mixing martinis is better than flopping wings. At least it has worked better for me.

Catarrh is a thick mucus that collects in the throat. That's very interesting but I think I'm getting sick to my stomach.

Castanets are small percussion instruments made of hard wood. They get their name from the fact they look like chestnuts. Of course that doesn't make any sense until we realize that the Latin word for chestnut is castanea. And then it still doesn't make any sense.

There are three large cats whose names begin with the letter "L". Can you name them? There's the lion, the leopard, and the...uh...uh...lynx. Beginning with the letter "C" there are also three large cats. The caracal, the cheetah, and the look it up for yourself.

A catapult is a machine that acts like a slingshot. It will throw things across the room with great velocity. Gosh? That sounds like my wife when the alarm goes off in the morning.

A cow's stomach has four sections. That's nothing. My stomach has sixteen sections. And each section (constantly) filled to capacity.

Well...my dear friends...if you have imbibed all this information you will then be as smart as I am.

Or, to be more honest, as smart as my encyclopedia.