

# Uncle John's 28th Fact-troduction

**W**elcome one and all to our 28th annual edition—*Uncle John's FACTASTIC Bathroom Reader*! Happy to have you with us. Now, in keeping with the book's theme, let me start off this year's introduction with a VSF (Very Special Fact):

**The most valuable bathtub in the world is valued at \$5 million. It is solid gold.**

That was our very first “running foot”—the little fact that ran underneath the very first article in the very first *Uncle John's Bathroom Reader*, published way back in 1988.

And the fact that we're still around 28 years later is a testament to the power of great facts. They truly are the building blocks of *Uncle John's Bathroom Reader*, the atoms that bind this whole series together. You'll find thousands of facts throughout this book on everything from anatomy to baseball to ballet to whatever else piques our curiosity.

And to pique *your* curiosity, we thought we'd do something a little different this year and riffle through the manuscript and find some fascinating facts to share right here. (Because, after all, I'm not just the boss of the Bathroom Readers' Institute, I'm also a fan.) So here goes.

- Flipping to “3-D Printing” on page 191, you'll read that **NASA uses 3-D printers to make pizzas for astronauts.**
- From page 177, “The Only Two States”: **The only two states where you can't pump your own gas are New Jersey and Oregon.** (Another fun fact: Uncle John's never pumped gas—he grew up in New Jersey and now lives in Oregon.)
- Trivia quiz: **What ubiquitous piece of technology was patented in the 1960s as an “X/Y Position Indicator”?** (Answer on next page.)
- **The guy who invented the game Operation was so broke late in his life that he couldn't afford an...operation.** More ironies on page 114.
- For history buffs, on page 131 is the inspiring story of **J. E. Hanger—the first Civil War soldier to lose a leg—who invented the modern prosthetic limb.**

- **Why did author Peter Benchley become a shark conservationist late in life? He regretted the fact that his bestselling 1975 novel *Jaws* made people afraid of sharks.** More authors who regretted their books on page 154.
- In “Weird Baby Facts” on page 80, it says that **babies in the womb are covered with hair. (And they pee.)**
- **A common paint color called “Mummy Brown” was made from real powdered Egyptian mummies.** More “True Colors” on page 91.
- I love the pages of slang in this book. Here’s one from page 305: **During the Civil War, soldiers from Georgia were called “goober grabbers.”**
- From “Tunnel Vision” on page 234, **only 45 percent of the London Underground is actually underground.**

I could keep going, but I have to stop before I run out of room, even though I haven’t even scratched the surface of what you’ll find in *FACTASTIC*. And rest assured that, as in any great Uncle John’s tome, there’s much more than fascinating facts. We’ve amassed our usual array of odd news, wordplay, science, quotations, how-to tips, and all sorts of other goodies.

As our regular readers have no doubt noticed, this book has a new look—it’s larger than past annual editions, and we’ve even updated the style. Our goal was to cram even more great bathroom reading onto every page without making it look too daunting. What that means for you: your new *Bathroom Reader* has a lot more facts than previous editions!

I’ll end this introduction with one final fact: this book could not have been made without the unwavering dedication of our unwavering staff. Great job, team! Keep not wavering. As for you, dear reader, it’s time for me to shut up and for you to embark on your...*FACTASTIC* Journey.

As always: Go with the Flow!

—Uncle John, Felix the dog, and the BRI staff

*Answer to the trivia quiz on the previous page:* It’s the computer mouse.  
(More office origins on page 27.)