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Facts & Arguments

SOCIAL STUDIES A DAILY MISCELLANY OF INFORMATION BY MICHAEL KESTERTON

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Dads are forgiven

Trendwatcher Reginald Bibby of the University of Lethbridge, who conducts Canadian surveys, reports "Dads are a source of a lot of enjoyment" for about 70 per cent of Canadians between the ages of 18 and 34. The figure rises to 75 per cent for those between 35 and 54, and around 80 per cent for older adults whose fathers are still alive. "Close to 60 per cent of adults say that their appreciation of their fathers has increased since they were teenagers." Dads are grateful

Statistics from the U.S. National Men's Resource Center say that American families will spend about \$90-million (U.S.) on Father's Day gifts, while they spend \$105-million on gifts for Mother's Day. Mothers received 37 per cent more cards (150 million, compared with 95 million) than fathers can expect this year. "Those figures don't depress men," writes William VanSickle in the Chicago Tribune. "I already have my Father's Day present," adds this member of the Single and Custodial Fathers Network, an Internet support group. "He is seven years old." Water bombs

-- Last month, criminal charges were laid against three seniors at Duke University in Durham, N.C., who water-bombed two women seated outside their dormitory building. One woman suffered cuts and bruises around both her eyes, with blood collecting in her left eye.

-- Water bombs changed the life of Don Nakanishi, director of the Asian-American Studies Center at the University of California, Los Angeles. He told the Orange County register that, when he was in his freshman year of pre-med at Yale University, dorm mates water-bombed and soaked him that Dec. 7, chanting: "Bomb Pearl Harbor!" After the attack, he left medicine and began pursuing ethnic and Asian-American Studies.

Other source: news service. Stump a journalist

Readers' queries:

-- "I lived in Toronto for 25 years and never heard it referred to as 'the big smoke.' Now that I live in Kingston, people seem to use the expression all the time but cannot explain it," writes Ken O'Brien. "Can you?" (It may be a gibe. Despite their reputation for intelligence, literally dozens of Torontonians still smoke.)

-- "Is there a concept or word to describe a word, such as 'bedraggled,' where the word and its spelling, actually looks like the concept," asks Tony Hoffman of Toronto. "Another example might be 'Mississippi,' which looks for all the world like a winding river, what with all its s's." (I don't know, but I'll bet it looks oval.) Out of sites

The Museum of E-Failure, at www.disobey.com/ghostsites, is devoted to preserving the memory of sites that have landed in the dot.com graveyard. "Our goal is not to laugh at the fallen, but to preserve their last image," writes Steve Baldwin. Our gang

There are many animals that display absolute pitch skills, says **Daniel Levitin**, a professor of psychology at McGill and former California rock-music producer. "Wolves use absolute pitch to figure out who is in their pack and who is not," he told Classic FM magazine, "and some songbirds don't recognize their own songs if they are transposed and played back to them." Thought du jour

"Democracy tells us not to neglect a good man's opinion, even if he is our groom; tradition asks us not to neglect a good man's opinion, even if he is our father."

-- G. K. Chesterton. MKesterton@globeandmail.ca

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