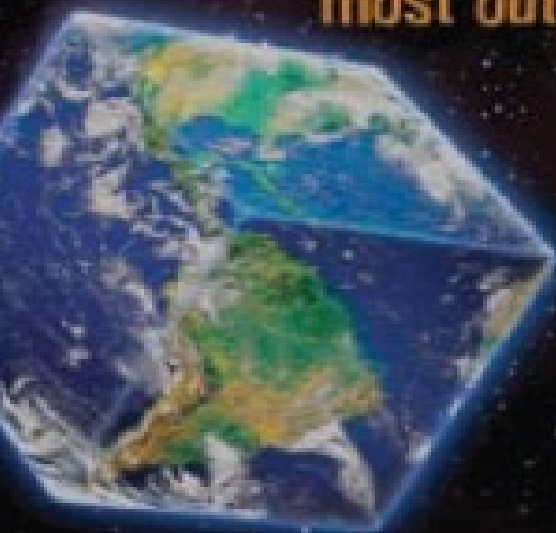


Uncle John's
**BATHROOM
READER**



The
**WORLD'S
GONE
CRAZY**

432 **ALL-NEW** pages of the strangest,
most outrageous stuff you'll ever read



by the **BATHROOM READERS' INSTITUTE**

Uncle John's
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The
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CRAZY**

By the
Bathroom Readers'
Institute

Bathroom Readers' Press
Ashland, Oregon

Dedicated to the memory of Zephyr the cat, who was crazy in all the right ways.

*UNCLE JOHN'S BATHROOM READER®
THE WORLD'S GONE CRAZY*

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ISBN-13: 978-1-60710-616-6
E-book edition: April 2012

Created in the United States of America

THANK YOU!

The Bathroom Readers' Institute sincerely thanks the people whose advice and assistance made this book possible.

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Publishers Group West

Raincoast Books

Porter the Wonder Dog

Thomas Crapper

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CRAZY TOWN

It's called "Planet Earth," and it may be the strangest place in the entire universe. The dedicated team of trivia nuts at the Bathroom Readers' Institute (led by yours truly, Uncle John) has spent more than 20 Earth years making *Bathroom Readers*. All our books are odd in their own special ways, but none has been odder than the one you hold in your hands right now (it's even odder than a book we did a few years ago called *The Wonderful World of Odd*).

Quite simply, this book turns the crazy dial up to 11. We plunged deep into the depths of pop culture, current events, and all-around oddballery to bring you strange-but-true stories of everything weird under the sun...and over the moon. Just flip this book open to any page. You never know what you'll find...

- **VSPs (very strange people):** Behold the man who thinks he's a carpet, the woman who spent two years in a tree, the teenager who wants to be a zombie, and the celebrated painter who's *blind*.
- **Arts and entertainment:** The Sinatra song to kill for, cheating on reality shows, Lady Gaga's true gender, and that homeless bum called Superman.
- **Conspiracy theories:** Is the government poisoning our skies? Is there a secret "Planet X" about to lay waste to our existence? Is the food in your refrigerator riddled with deadly chemicals?
- **Animal oddities:** A snake with a foot, gay penguins, a bear that ate an airplane, and a doctor's dose of medicinal parasitic worms.
- **Professionals gone crazy:** Lawyers, police officers, teachers, scientists, doctors, politicians, and the clergy. (No one gets a free pass.)
- **Science on the edge:** Human-animal hybrids, a human-caused earthquake, and a remote-control sphincter.
- **Myths and legends:** An elf school in Iceland, the Lemurians of Mt. Shasta, the Mayan Prophecy, alien deities, and how to capture irrefutable evidence of the paranormal. (Good luck.)
- **Looking crazy good:** Botox for your armpits, jewelry for your eyeballs, and bagels for your forehead.

There's so much more we could tell you about, but you'll have to dive in to see for yourself. And word of warning: Some of what you'll read may make you feel a bit...squeamish. Don't worry—it made us feel squeamish, too. But our goal was to seek out really weird stuff and then share what we found. So have fun, but read with caution.

As we're now mere hours away from sending this behemoth of a book off to the printer, I'd like to send a gigantic thank-you to my barely sane team of writers and editors for all of their hard work. (They were barely sane when we started. Now that we're finished, forget it.)

But as always, I save my last and biggest thanks for all of you. It is because of your quirky dedication and support of such a bizarre book series that we get to keep coming up with new ways to entertain you. We hope we've succeeded!

Happy reading and...

Go with the Flow!

**—Uncle John, the BRI Staff, and Porter the
Wonder Dog**

You'd be crazy not to visit us on the Web at www.bathroomreader.com.

A YEAR OF WEIRD

Real (and really odd) wall calendars we've spotted.

Naked Clowns Calendar: Good news: It's published by San Francisco Clown College, and proceeds go to multiple sclerosis research. Bad news: It's pictures of naked clowns, with their faces painted and their naughty parts obscured.

Odd-Eyed Cats Calendar: Each month features a cat with crossed eyes, strange-looking eyes, or eyes that are different colors.

My Zombie Pin-Up: Dressed in vintage 1940s and '50s clothing, blood-covered, gore-oozing men and women pretend to be happy zombies posing with their dead victims.

Pets Rock: Dogs and cats are dressed in costumes and makeup to look like famous rock stars, such as Elvis Presley and KISS.

From Girls Calendar: *Association Fromages de Terroirs* is a French organization devoted to "cheese awareness." This annual calendar is part of their campaign and depicts female dairy farm workers and farmers' wives in revealing outfits, holding their favorite kinds of cheese.

Men on a Mission: This calendar features young, male Mormons who have gone on their required religious mission and have now returned home...to pose shirtless.

Credit Crunch Calendar: Produced in England, this one features photos that symbolize the economic recession, including abandoned factories, jobless people, and boarded-up businesses.

The Lindner Calendar: Lindner is a Polish casket manufacturer. Each year they put out a promotional calendar featuring young women in swimsuits or underwear posing on top of the year's hottest new coffins.

Toilets of the World: Just johns—modern, primitive, and exotic.

Pointless Calendar: Indeed, it's completely nonfunctional. Each month has 40 days, each week consists of 10 days, and no days of the week are listed. For each month, there's a photo of a random object, like a peeling wooden wall or a pile of bricks.

Every hour of every day, gamblers lose \$696,000 in Las Vegas casinos.

21st-CENTURY FADS

Uncle John told us he just doesn't get all these new fads, so we told him to go pet his pet rock.

BAGEL HEADS

This “beauty treatment” fad got its start in Tokyo dance clubs in 2009. Using disposable syringes, teenagers inject saline solution (a common hydrating fluid) into their foreheads. A few moments later, the saline disfigures the forehead, creating a large, bulbous growth with an indentation in the middle. In other words, it looks like a giant bagel (or possibly a tumor) growing out of the forehead. Food coloring is sometimes added to the saline to turn the “bagel” green or blue. Thankfully, it’s not permanent—the bulge deflates in about a day.

IKEA DINNER PARTIES

IKEA sells modern-looking furniture that’s very popular with the young and hip. So popular, in fact, that some can’t wait to get home to enjoy IKEA merchandise. In Sacramento in 2008, a small group of young people began holding “dinner parties” inside an IKEA store, and the fad has since caught on at locations around the U.S. After dining on lingonberry jam and meatballs in the store’s Swedish-themed cafeteria, parties retire to the living-room furniture displays to play board games. IKEA managers don’t seem to mind—the partygoers are paying customers, after all, and the publicity doesn’t hurt.

FINGER MUSTACHE TATTOOS

In a trend that’s taken off around Brooklyn, New York, college-age men and women get a permanent tattoo of a tiny handlebar mustache on one side of their index finger. Why? When they hold it up to their face, above the lip, it looks like they have a tiny, silly mustache. (*Superbad* star Jonah Hill showed his off on *Saturday Night Live*.) The one drawback to a finger mustache tattoo (other than actually having a finger mustache tattoo) is that the joke doesn’t work if you’re wearing gloves. Problem solved: You can now buy gloves preprinted with a mustache.

South Africa fad: Some boys in Cape Town have their upper front teeth extracted to look cool.

CELEBRITY ISSUES

1. *Become famous.* 2. *Act weird.* 3. *Get mentioned in a Bathroom Reader.*

EW! Actor Ryan O’Neal was the longtime companion of Farrah Fawcett. Moments after Fawcett’s burial service in 2009, O’Neal was taken aback when “a beautiful blond woman” came up and hugged him. Despite having just put the love of his life in the ground, O’Neal asked the woman if she wanted to go get a drink. She did not. “Daddy, it’s me,” replied actress Tatum O’Neal, his estranged daughter.

UNCAGED. Nicolas Cage once collected rare and exotic animals, including an octopus, a saltwater shark, and two king cobras named Moby and Sheba. He would probably still own them today had he not mentioned his collection during an appearance on *The Tonight Show*. Cage’s neighbors saw the interview and notified animal control, who came and took his pets away.

HEY, BABY. In 2010 workers at the Mondrian Hotel in Los Angeles reported that one of the strange guests they’d ever had was Britney Spears. While living in the penthouse, she watched the DVD box set of the Fox cartoon *Family Guy*. For days, Spears would speak only in the voice of Stewie, the sarcastic, football-headed, English-accented baby. “It’s a bit weird,” said a hotel worker, “especially when she’s in the gym speaking like a Brit.”

HAAW MINNY RUADS MUSS AMANN WAWK DEWN?

Two homeowners in Long Branch, New Jersey, called police during an August 2009 rainstorm after spotting a ratty-haired, disheveled man peeking in through the windows of a home for sale across the street. Cops questioned the drifter, who turned out to be Bob Dylan. He said he was just “looking around.”

HE COULD PLAY CENTAUR FIELD. New York Yankees shortstop Alex Rodriguez has two paintings of himself hanging on the wall over his bed. In both, Rodriguez is depicted as a centaur—the half-man, half-horse creature from Greek mythology.

At last count, the U.S. had 612,020 fast-food cooks and only 393,730 farm workers.

END ALIEN MIND CONTROL NOW!

Get out of my head, you damn dirty alien!

PROTECTION

In 1998 Michael Menkin, a former technical writer for NASA, invented the “Thought Screen Helmet,” a hat made out of Velostat, a kind of metallized plastic produced by 3M. On his “public service, nonprofit website,” www.stopabductions.com, Menkin offers instructions for building your own helmet. Here are a few excerpts from the site.

THE THOUGHT SCREEN HELMET STOPS ALIENS FROM ABDUCTING HUMANS. IT’S A TESTED DEVICE THAT WORKS.

- Aliens cannot immobilize people wearing thought screens nor can they control their minds or communicate with them using their telepathy. When aliens can’t communicate or control humans, they do not take them.
- Adults and children all over America, all over Australia, in Canada, the United Kingdom, and in the Republic of South Africa are wearing thought screen helmets to stop alien abductions.
- Only four failures from standard thought screen helmets have been reported since 1998. A third failure in 2005 was from a cloth helmet with a smaller square area of Velostat and a Velcro strap which was easily removed by an alien-human hybrid.
- Other shielding material was tried in previous models with less success. Only thought screen helmets using Velostat are effective. Large leather aviator hats lined with Velostat with secure straps are recommended for making effective helmets.
- You can make a thought screen helmet (or thought screen baseball cap) for \$30 if you purchase Velostat by the yard.

Here’s a customer testimonial from John Locke, alien abductee:

“Since trying Michael Menkin’s helmet, I have not been bothered by alien mind control. Now my thoughts are my own. I have achieved meaningful work and am contributing to society. My life is better than ever before. Thank you, Michael, for the work you are doing to save all humanity.”

Did they tank the Academy? Sean Connery and Lionel Richie both keep their Oscars in the bathroom.

WHAT A VERY STRANGE PERSON

You may consider yourself a strange and unusual person. If so, see how you measure up against these oddballs.

Strange Person: Nileen Namita of Brighton, England

Background: In the late 1980s, Namita became convinced that she was a reincarnation of the ancient-Egyptian queen Nefertiti.

Very Strange: Namita decided that being a reincarnation of Nefertiti wasn't enough; she had to also look like her. So she started having plastic surgeries. Using the famous 3,300-year-old bust of Nefertiti, which sits in a Berlin's Neues Museum, as a model, Namita has had eight nose jobs, three chin implants, nine facelifts, two lip surgeries, five eye surgeries, and several other facial procedures—adding up to 51 operations in all. She turned 49 in 2009, and so far has spent more than \$330,000 in her quest to look like the ancient queen. Did it work? By all accounts, no. She looks like...well, someone who's had a lot of plastic surgery.

Strange Person: Japanese truck driver Yuuki Oshima

Background: One day in August 2009, 22-year-old Oshima was driving through the city of Noda when he saw a woman walking...and fell instantly in love with her. He discreetly followed her to her apartment, and over the next couple of months, tried to get up the courage to tell her his feelings...but he was too shy to do it face to face. Then he got an idea.

Very Strange: Oshima went to the woman's house in the middle of the night...and peed through the mail slot in her door. That, not surprisingly, didn't cause the woman to fall in love with him. She called police. Oshima was arrested, and explained, "I absolutely went crazy for her the first time I saw her, and just did it." He was charged with property damage.

Strange Person: Rick Murray, a teenager from Montreal, Canada

Background: "When I was a kid, I wanted to be a Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtle and live in the sewers," said Murray, "But as I got older, I fell in love with zombies and wanted to become one."

A heated jawbreaker can explode when bitten into.

Very Strange: Now Murray is known as "Zombie Boy." His entire body is covered with tattoos that make him look like a zombie. Black ink surrounds Murray's eyes; his "teeth" and "jawbones" can be seen beneath his cheeks, his "brain" appears from beneath his bald head; and his "guts," "skeleton," and several ghoulish designs are inked all over the rest of his body. When asked if people are bothered by his appearance, Murray said, "It's like if you met someone with purple hair, after 10 minutes you'd think, 'Oh yeah, they have purple hair. So what?'" He's not done yet—Murray said that he's planning on removing one of his ear lobes as well as the tip of his nose to complete the look of the undead.

Strange Person: Melanie Renfrew of Burbank, California

Background: In 2007 Renfrew, 54, saw local meteorologist Fritz Coleman on television. Renfrew, a

geography professor at Los Angeles Harbor College, called the station to tell Coleman that he had confused “onshore” winds, which blow in from the sea, with “offshore” winds, which blow out. (She was right.)

Very Strange: When she got no response, Renfrew called again, demanding an apology. When *that* didn’t work, Renfrew became obsessed—and over the next year called and e-mailed Coleman thousands of times, trying to get him to apologize to her on the air. In March 2008, Coleman got a restraining order against Renfrew, preventing her from coming within 100 feet of him, e-mailing him or calling him. Renfrew kept harassing him anyway, and in October 2009 was convicted of violating the restraining order. She was given a year to comply, after which time, if she is still harassing the weatherman, she could be sentenced to jail. “I don’t feel obsessive,” she said in an interview. “It’s about the truth.” (She added that she is currently working on a book, titled *What It Took to Convince NBC the Winds are Coming From the West*.)

* * *

“You’re only given a little spark of madness; you mustn’t lose it.”

—Robin Williams

Exhibits at Washington, DC’s Newseum include the Unabomber’s cabin & Saddam Hussein’s poetry.

DANCING BALONEY

A few of the latest phrases that have made their way, mostly via office workers and the Internet, into the English language.

GOOD Job: This acronym refers to a “Get Out Of Debt job”—a decent-paying job that you take just to pay down your debt, then quit.

Social Jet Lag: The exhaustion felt after staying up too late doing social networking on sites like Facebook.

PEBCAK: When your tech person grumbles this, the “Problem Exists Between Chair And Keyboard.” And if the problem is an “ID-Ten-T,” they’re calling you an “ID10T.”

Seagull Manager: A manager who flies in, makes a lot of noise, poops on everything, and then leaves.

Chips and Salsa: Nicknames for hardware (chips) and software (salsa), e.g., “Is the problem in the chips or the salsa?”

Keyboard Plaque: The disgusting stuff that builds up on your computer keys.

Chainsaw Consultant: Hired by a company to figure out the easiest way to reduce the number of employees.

Telephone Number Salary: The kind of salary we all wish for: one with seven digits.

Yuppie Food Stamps: The \$20 bills that are spewed out of ATMs, as in “Oh dear! I didn’t know the Chard and brie were going to cost so much! Better go get some more yuppie food stamps.”

Nomophobia: Short for “nomobile phobia,” this is the terror that takes hold when you’re without your mobile phone, or simply out of signal range.

Assmosis: A way to soak up success—not by doing actual work, but by being very good at kissing the boss’s ass.

Crapplet: An “applet” is a computer application written to perform one task. (Example: the QuickTime movie player.) A “crapplet” is a crappy applet.

Dancing Baloney: Unnecessary and garish animation on a Web site, which amateur designers love—and the rest of the world hates.

Uninstalled: Fired.

Studies show that covering a wart with duct tape is more effective than having a doctor remove it.

BACON FLOSS

Even though we're told it's bad for us, bacon seems to be more popular than ever.

- **Bacon salt.** This is the product that launched the fad in 2007: flavored salt crystals that “make everything taste like bacon.”
- **Gummy bacon.** It's just like gummy bears or gummy worms, but it looks like bacon (and, fortunately, tastes like candy).
- **Bacon vodka.** For years, vodka has been available in berry- and vanilla-flavored versions. But now there's Bakon: premium vodka infused with the flavor of bacon. Maybe it's not such a stretch—vodka is often made from potatoes, which do taste great with bacon.
- **Bacon-flavored envelopes.** Instead of getting a taste of glue whenever you lick the flap of one of these pink-and-white-swirled envelopes, you get a mouthful of artificial bacon flavor.
- **Bacon-flavored dental floss and toothpicks.** Because bacon tastes better than string and wood.
- **Bacon wristbands.** A parody of the yellow Lance Armstrong “Livestrong” cancer-awareness bracelets, these are marbled pink and white, and emblazoned with the word “bacon” to promote awareness of...bacon.
- **Bacon soap.** At one time, most soap was made from animal fat, and bacon is just salted pork fat and meat. Fragrances and chemicals are added, so you shouldn't eat it, but it's still bacon you can wash with.
- **Baconnaise.** Two of the world's unhealthiest foods—bacon and mayonnaise—combined into one fatty concoction.
- **Bacon action figures.** These come in a set of two: the heroic, all-American, strip-shaped “Mr. Bacon” and his nemesis, the evil, cube-shaped “Monsieur Tofu.”

France's Villa Hamster hotel lets guests live as hamsters: They eat grain run on a wheel, and sleep on hay.

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