

Additional Information Regarding the E-mails

Q1. "A deer crashed through the windshield of a Dodge Durango."

A1. These pictures are real. The identity of the unfortunate motorist is unknown, but the local police have verified that an occurrence like the one depicted in the photographs took place on Interstate Hwy 394 near the Minnesota town of Wayzata (just west of Minneapolis) when a deer fell or was knocked off the Highway 101 bridge/overpass and landed on top a passing Dodge Durango, crashing through the windshield and onto the front seat. The driver was fortunate to have escaped with only minor injuries.

Q2. Digital Camera for sale -Good quality picture and good cause. Interested?

I'm trying to help a good friend out by selling his digital camera, a Fuji 2500, and I'll take whatever I can get. Sadly, he's in the hospital now and will probably be there for a while. He needs the money to pay for medical bills.

He doesn't have much, but this is a great camera. To show you the quality it's capable of, attached is the last picture he took with it when he was seriously injured during his dream trip to Spain.

Let me know if you are interested.

A2. This picture comes from the Fiesta de San Fermina. One of the highlights of the festival — and the event most well-known to the rest of the world — is the "running of the bulls."

Many festival celebrants (mostly young males) choose to demonstrate their courage and physical prowess by donning white garb, tying red handkerchiefs about their necks, and running ahead of the group of charging bulls for as long as they can. Others opt for somewhat safer ways to experience the thrill of participation: running only a very short portion of the course, running behind the bulls, standing in the street and ducking safely into doorways just as the bulls run past, or simply lining the streets for close-up views of the proceedings.

The image shown above was taken by a photographer during the 2002 San Fermín festival and distributed by the Reuters news agency. According to a representative for Reuters, the photographer who snapped this remarkable picture was not injured in any way. The photo was taken with a camera operated via remote control.

Q3. "Biggest woman in the world: she is from Holland, measures a little over 7'4" and weighs 320 pounds."

A3. "Biggest woman in the world"? Not quite. This is yet another case of an e-mail forward that includes real photographs but an inaccurate description of what they depict.

Heather Greene, the woman shown in the photographs above, is indeed a real person, but she's not from Holland, nor is she the tallest woman in the world. Heather lives in Las Vegas, and although she is quite tall and passes the 7-foot mark in heels, she is "only" 6' 5½" in her stocking feet, well short of the record for the world's tallest woman.

The picture conveys a false impression of Heather's true height because she is paired with a person who is shorter than average (the woman is 5' 1"), and she is posing while wearing shoes with several-inch heels.

Since 1976, the tallest living woman in the world (as recognized by the Guinness Book of World Records) has been 47-year-old Sandy Allen of Shelbyville, Indiana, who reached a height of 7 feet 7 1/4 inches as a teenager before undergoing pituitary surgery to control her growth.

Q4. This is a picture of the winner of the "World's Ugliest Dog" contest.

A4. Sam, the pictured canine, is a 14-year-old pedigreed Chinese Crested owned by Susie Lockheed of Santa Barbara, California. In June 2005, Sam won the "World's Ugliest Dog" title at the Sonoma-Marín Fair contest for the third consecutive year.

The *Associated Press* described Sam as follows:

"The tiny dog has no hair, if you don't count the yellowish-white tuft erupting from his head. His wrinkled brown skin is covered with splotches, a line of warts marches down his snout, his blind eyes are an alien, milky white, and a fleshy flap of skin hangs from his withered neck. And then there are the Austin Powers teeth that jut at odd angles. He's so ugly that even the judges recoiled when he was placed on the judging table..."

Unfortunately, Sam was suffering from a number of age-related ailments (congestive heart failure, lung and kidney problems) and reports indicate that Sam went to doggie heaven in mid-November 2005.

Q5. Rodger Degagne may be embarking on a new career as a Feline Breeder. Relaxing in his spacious home on the shores of the Ottawa River, Mr. Degagne recalls how in her 9 years Snowball's size has seemed to snowball. Put simply, Snowball is no ordinary cat, she measures 69 inches from nose to tail and weighs in at 87 lbs.

So what does a 87 pound cat eat? Snowball goes through about 3 lbs. of cat food a day, along with cooked chicken, supplemented with deer and moose that Rodger hunts in the fall. "She likes pike a lot, so I don't throw them back any more." Snowball often accompanies Rodger fishing on the Ottawa, eagerly peering over the side of the boat as soon as his line goes tight.

So what do the Degagne's attribute Snowball's size to? Rodger says, "Well, the vet thinks it could be her thyroid, but she isn't fat, she's just a real big cat. I think maybe her parents got into something at Chalk River that they shouldn't have."

A5. No, the photo isn't real, nor does it depict what the accompanying text claims. The explanation was somebody's attempt at a bit of creative writing (added to the photo after the fact).

Turning to our *Guinness Book of World Records*, we find that they list the world's largest domestic cat as a male Queensland, Australia, tabby named Himmy who tipped the scales at just under 47 lbs. and was 38 inches long.

According to the *Ottawa Citizen*, the picture actually shows an Edmonds, Washington, man named Cordell Hauglie and his cat Jumper, and the photo was manipulated with PhotoShop to create the effect of a feline of much larger-than-ordinary size. According to Mr. Hauglie:

"My daughter wanted to send an electronic photo of her cat to her friend. I got a little carried away. When we sent it to her friend, we never dreamed anyone would believe the photo was real."

Q6. Believe it or not....

If you fly a plane this statement is worth a look! The guy who tilled this message in his soil is a Wells County farmer with a message for everyone! He says that on Dec. 6, 1946, corn was \$1.47 per bushel. The day he tilled this in the soil, it was \$1.45 per bushel! Go figure!

This field is located in Wells County in North Dakota. The farmer did it with no GPS system or anything! It almost looks like it is a retouched photo, but it is NOT!

It was taken Sunday, April 10, 2005! He plans to seed the field to sunflowers in May, so the message's days are numbered.

A6. In November 2004, a 46-year-old, third-generation North Dakota farmer named Curtis Wiesz was poring over some of his great uncle's records from 1946, and he discovered that corn sold for \$1.45 a bushel that year — the very same price his corn crop had fetched in 2004. Frustrated by this seeming lack of economic progress, Wiesz decided to make a point about it by hopping on his tractor and carving a giant message in his 160-acre harvested barley field.

Wiesz spent about two hours making two passes with a 40-foot-wide tillage tool (a mechanized plow) to create his message and accomplished the feat without the aid of any Global Positioning System (GPS) device. He initially declined to own up to his handiwork ("People suspected me, but I tried to blame it on those aliens that do the crop circles," he told the *Associated Press*), but after a crop-spraying friend took him up for an aerial view in April 2005 and he saw how well his efforts had turned out, he finally began to acknowledge his work.

Wiesz says he doesn't have any plans to etch more messages in the landscape if farming picks up. But if it doesn't, he says he already has another big message in mind: "Send Money."

Q7. FISH STORY FROM WICHITA EAGLE NEWSPAPER

This was a pretty interesting story from The Sunday Wichita Eagle Newspaper a couple of weeks ago. It was in a housing development around 119th St. South and Maple. Anyhow, a resident in the area saw a ball bouncing around kind of strange in the development's pond and when he went to investigate, it was a flathead catfish who had obviously tried to swallow a child's basketball which became stuck in its mouth. The fish was totally exhausted from trying to dive but unable to because the ball would always bring him back up to the surface. The resident tried numerous times to get the ball out but was unsuccessful. He finally had his wife cut the ball in order to deflate it and release the catfish.

A7. Yes, these photographs are real, taken at Sandalwood Lake in Kansas on May 28, 2004. An account of the circumstances under which the pictures were taken appeared in the *Wichita Eagle* on 30 May 2004:

From Panama to the Great Lakes, Bill Driver's done pretty well fishing over the past 50 years. Now he's wondering if he'd have done even better with a different kind of bait. "I never considered using a kid's basketball," Driver said. "Maybe I should have."

Friday afternoon, Driver was standing on the deck of his house near 119th Street West and Central when he saw an eight-inch ball floating in Sandalwood Lake.

Noticing the ball wasn't floating normally, Driver wandered to his dock for a closer look. A catfish had its mouth stuck around the ball. Driver hollered for his wife, Pam, to get a camera while he unrigged the sail from his nine-foot boat, waded into the lake and corralled the fish toward shore

with the sail.

Several times, the flathead tried to dive, only to have the ball buoy it back to the surface. The fish appeared to be exhausted and offered little resistance once in the shallows.

"I just couldn't pull that ball out of its mouth," Driver said. "I was lifting up out of the water as best I could by the ball. I finally sent my wife to the house to get a knife." Driver carefully deflated the ball. Estimated at 50 pounds, the fish swam toward the deepest part of the lake.

Driver has no plans of targeting the fish in the near future. Instead, he'll probably continue to fish for the bass and panfish that swim within the one-acre lake. "I guess I might try fishing with a golf ball," Driver said. "Smaller fish, smaller bait."

Q8. Would you like fries with that?

A 6 lb. Burger! Where's the beef? It's at a Pennsylvania pub that serves the world's biggest burger — weighing in with all the fixings at NINE lip-smacking pounds! That's no whopper — you can actually get this meat monster for \$23.95, loaded with: Two whole tomatoes, a half-head of lettuce, 12 slices of American cheese, a full cup of peppers, two entire onions, plus a river of mayonnaise, ketchup, and mustard.

A8. Denny's Beer Barrel Pub in Clearfield, Pennsylvania, does offer several varieties of "large" for the extreme burger enthusiast: a 2-pound Challenger, a 3-pound Baby Boy, and, as displayed in the pictures shown, a 6-pound Ye Olde 96er (so named because it contains 96 ounces of meat). As advertised on the pub's web site, a 96er sells for \$23.95 and includes all the fixings mentioned in the e-mail.

Denny's (not to be confused with the national chain restaurants of the same name) offers prizes for customers who can completely consume the 96er within three hours: a T-shirt, a certificate, and, of course, Denny's picks up the bill.

Q9. Photograph captures President George W. Bush holding a book upside-down in a classroom.

A9. The photo was digitally edited for comedic effect. The original photo was taken during an appearance President Bush made with the Governor of Texas, Rick Perry, at the George Sanchez Charter School in Houston during the summer of 2002.

Q10. Bill owns a company that manufactures and installs car wash systems. Bill's company installed a car wash system in Fredericksburg, Virginia for a gentleman. Now understand that these are a complete system including the money changer and money taking machines.

The problem started when the new owner complained to Bill that he was losing significant amounts of money from his coin machines each week. Sometimes the machines were up to several hundred dollars short. He went as far as to accuse Bill's employees of having a key to the boxes and ripping him off. Bill just couldn't believe that his people would do that. So they setup a trap for the thief.

Well they caught the thief in the act! A bird was going inside the machine and removing the quarters!

A10. The car wash pictured is actually in Fredericksburg, Virginia. Bill Dougherty at Magic Wand Inc., the car wash outfit that installs and maintains these machines, confirmed that birds had indeed been making off with hundreds of quarters per day.

As described in the e-mail, after Mr. Dougherty discovered the Fredericksburg car wash machine was coming up several hundred dollars short per week, he initially suspected his employees of using pass keys to loot the machine. When he undertook a surveillance mission with a camera in hand to catch the thieves in action, he did indeed manage to snap pictures of the perpetrators in the act, but they weren't quite what he expected. Not only were the "thieves" who were stealing the quarters birds; they were working in tandem to do so: one bird would go up inside the machine to jimmy coins loose, and the other birds would grab them and fly off with them.

Starlings, the birds pictured here, are often attracted to bright, shiny objects and will collect them for nesting or mate-attraction purposes whenever the opportunity presents itself. Most likely one or more starlings was attracted by the glint of overlooked quarters in the change cup and made off with them; other starlings saw where the quarters were coming from and imitated the behavior, learning in the process how to work as teams to retrieve coins from inside the machine itself.

Q11. Look at this! That dude's about to get munched by a shark!

A11. The photograph displayed is indeed real, but it doesn't depict the hair-raising scene most viewers think it does.

This picture was taken by photographer Kurt Jones on April 9, 2003 at Surfrider Beach in Malibu, one of California's premier surfing beaches. But the version of the photograph posted on the web indicates that the ominous-looking finned creature lurking just beneath the surface of the waves is actually a dolphin (possibly a bottlenose), not a shark.

A subsequent picture of the animal snapped later in the day by the same photographer demonstrates conclusively that it was in fact a dolphin.

Q12. Photograph shows jets spelling out 'USA' over Randolph Air Force Base.

A12. Randolph Air Force Base, located just outside of San Antonio, Texas, may be the "Showplace of the Air Force," an Air Education & Training Command site where innumerable pilots -- and pilot instructors -- have been trained as members of the world's premier air force, but this photograph is not a genuine testament to their flying skill.

When we queried the public affairs people at Randolph AFB, they responded by saying yes, they'd seen the picture and everyone thought it was marvelous, but no, it's a manufactured image that does not represent any type of jet formation flying that ever took place at Randolph.

Q13. The stupidity of some people in this world never fails to amaze me. This picture is real -- not doctored in any way -- and was taken last week in Waldorf, MD by a Transportation Supervisor for a company that delivers building materials for 84 Lumber. When he saw it there in the parking lot of IHOP, he went and bought a camera to take pictures. The car is still running as can be witnessed by the exhaust.

A woman is either asleep or otherwise out in the front seat passenger side. The driver finally came back after the police were there and was getting down at the back to cut the twine around the load. They told him to get back until it was taken off.

The materials were loaded at Home Depot. The Home Depot store manager made the customer sign a waiver before loading. Both back tires are trashed. The back shocks were driven up through the floorboard. On the roof are many 2X4s, 4X4s and sheets of lumber. The load isn't all that meets the eye either. In the back seat were ten 80-pound bags of concrete! They estimated the load weight at 3,000 lbs.

A13. This one has been verified by people who were in Waldorf, MD that day (including employees of the Home Depot store where the building materials were purchased and the IHoP restaurant seen in the background of the photo) and actually saw the car. Some of them even took their own pictures of it. A reporter tracked the hapless couple down through their license plate. He wasn't able to get any good information from them, but his story was accompanied by even more photographs, including a close-up of the snoozing woman in the passenger's seat. Not *everything* is too weird to be true.

Tiebreaker: Today you'll find a remarkable light bulb burning bright at a fire station in Livermore, California. It hasn't been turned off since _____.

TB Answer: The *Guinness Book of World Records*, *Ripley's Believe It Or Not* and General Electric agree the bulb, of unknown wattage, was first turned on in 1901. It is the longest-living in history, despite two moves and a few power outages during its lifetime.

The bulb was donated to the department in 1901 by Dennis Bernal, a pioneer in the area who owned the Livermore Power and Light Co. It was hung as a night light in a downtown garage that served as both a police and fire department five years before the great San Francisco earthquake and fire in 1906. A few years later, the bulb found its way to the "new" pre-Depression City Hall that also housed the two departments and twenty-odd years ago was moved for a final time to Station One in Livermore.

Five successive fire chiefs have had the light as their lucky charm. "Nobody wants that darn bulb to go out on their watch," says fire chief Gary Stewart. "If that thing goes out while I'm still chief it will be a career's worth of bad luck."

Previous chiefs have had standing orders that if any firefighter, for whatever reason, accidentally broke the light, that person would suddenly find plenty of time to update his résumé.