

Eye on the World

Oct. 7 and 14, 2017

This compilation of a as a service to the Churches of God. The views stated in the material are those of the writers or sources quoted by the writers, and do not necessarily reflect the views of the members of the Church of God Big Sandy. The following articles were posted at churchofgodbigandy.com for the weekends of October 7 and 14, 2017.

Compiled by Dave Havir

Luke 21:34-36—“But take heed to yourselves, lest your souls be weighed down with self-indulgence, and drunkenness, or the anxieties of this life, and that day come on you suddenly, like a falling trap; for it will come on all dwellers on the face of the whole earth. But beware of slumbering; and every moment pray that you may be fully strengthened to escape from all these coming evils, and to take your stand in the presence of the Son of Man” (Weymouth New Testament).



An article titled “A-Bombs and H-Bombs Explained” was posted at yahoo.com on Sept. 22, 2017. Following is the article.

The world’s nuclear arsenals are comprised mainly of two types of warheads—atomic bombs, also called A-bombs, and the more powerful hydrogen or H-bombs.

North Korea, escalating its war of rhetoric with the United States, on Friday hinted it may explode an H-bomb over the Pacific, having already carried out underground tests of atomic and hydrogen bombs.

Here is a rundown on both types of weapon.

The A-bomb

This weapons have only been used twice in conflict, when the United States bombed Japan in the final days of World War II, although they have been tested several hundred times.

Atomic bombs work on the principle of nuclear fission where energy is released by splitting atoms of enriched uranium or plutonium encased in a warhead.

The first-ever explosion of an A-bomb was in a test in the deserts of the US state of New Mexico on July 16, 1945—the culmination of the secretive Man-

hattan project to develop such a weapon in the belief that Nazi Germany was doing the same.

On August 6, the United States dropped an atomic bomb on the southern Japanese city of Hiroshima, killing 140,000 people, according to estimates.

Three days later, a second bomb devastated Nagasaki, killing an estimated 74,000 people. Japan surrendered, bringing World War II to an end.

These bombs produced an explosive yield of roughly 20 kilotons, the equivalent to 20,000 tons of TNT.

The shock wave demolished buildings of reinforced concrete and the intense heat vaporised people near the centre of the blast. Others were badly burned or succumbed to radiation-related illnesses weeks, months or years later.

The Soviet Union was the second country to test an atomic bomb in 1949; Britain became the world's third nuclear power with a test in 1952.

China, France, India, North Korea and Pakistan are also confirmed to possess nuclear weapons. Israel is considered to be an undeclared nuclear power, refusing to confirm or deny that it has such weapons.

The H-bomb

Many times more powerful than the atomic bomb, the hydrogen or thermonuclear bomb works on the principle of the fusion of isotopes of hydrogen and generates temperatures on the order of those found at the sun's core.

While no H-bomb has been used in a conflict so far, the world's nuclear arsenals are comprised for the most part of such weapons.

The bomb has a two-stage process with a nuclear explosion triggering a huge increase in temperature that in turn provokes nuclear fusion, setting off a powerful explosion.

The US army tested the first H-bomb in 1952 in an explosion that was almost 700 times more powerful than an atomic bomb.

A year later the Soviet Union tested its own H-bomb. In 1961 it carried out the most powerful blast to date, exploding the "Tsar Bomba" in the Arctic with a force of around 57,000 kilotons (57 megatons).

North Korea said it tested a miniaturised H-bomb in January 2016, although scientists said the six-kiloton yield achieved then was far too low for a thermonuclear device.

It said that its September 3 nuclear test, its sixth, was also of a hydrogen bomb. The underground blast triggered landslides in the detonation area.



An article by Patrick Goodenough titled “Dunford: North Korea’s Ability to Target US With Nuclear-Tipped ICBM ‘A Very Short Time’ Away” was posted at cnsnews.com on Sept. 26, 2017. Following is the article.

Whether it’s three, six or eighteen months, North Korea’s capability to reach the United States with a nuclear-tipped ballistic missile is only “a matter of a very short time” away, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Marine Gen. Joseph Dunford said Tuesday.

Testifying before a Senate Armed Services Committee hearing on his reappointment to the top Pentagon post, Dunford was asked about recent military assessments of Kim Jong-un’s ability to threaten the U.S. with nuclear weapons.

Sen. James Inhofe (R-Okla.) noted that U.S. Strategic Command commander Air Force Gen. John Hyten has said that “he views North Korea’s ability to deliver a nuclear weapon on an ICBM as a matter of when, not if.”

The Defense Intelligence Agency, Inhofe continued, “assesses that North Korea would be able to reliably range U.S. mainland with nuclear ICBMs by the end of 2018.”

Dunford said those assessments reflected “the collective judgment” of the Department of Defense senior leadership.

“Whether it’s three months, six months or 18 months, it is soon,” he said. “And we ought to conduct ourselves as though it’s just a matter of time—and a matter of a very short time—before North Korea has that capability.”

Current tensions with Pyongyang featured prominently in Tuesday’s hearing. Regime officials accuse the Trump administration of declaring war on North Korea, and have threatened to shoot down U.S. military aircraft even if flying in international airspace—as U.S. Air Force B-1B Lancers did off North Korea’s east coast at the weekend.

Also at the weekend, North Korean propaganda sites released a video clip depicting missiles striking U.S. bombers and an aircraft carrier.

And in response to President Trump’s speech at the U.N. last week, the regime’s foreign minister warned that it could test a hydrogen bomb in the Pacific. All of the previous six tests, between 2006 and early this month—were conducted underground.

Despite the tensions and threats, Dunford told the panel the U.S. has not detected changes in the North Korean military posture, something which he said was being watched “very carefully.”

He also spoke to the U.S.’s ability to defend the mainland as well as Hawaii and Guam in the face of the missile threat.

“As the capacity of the threat increases—that is the size, not just the lethality, not just the fact that North Korea can reach us, but the numbers of missiles that they possess that can reach us—then what we need to be con-

cerned about is ensuring that our ballistic missile defense capability keeps pace with that threat," he said.

Asked about the risks entailed in a North Korean nuclear test in the Earth's atmosphere over the Pacific, Dunford pointed to examples of accidental nuclear radiation—the 1986 accident at Chernobyl in Ukraine, and the earthquake-induced reactor leakage in Japan in 2011.

"Even with something that isn't anywhere near what the North Koreans are suggesting, we had significant health challenges for many, many years, and obviously a loss of life," he said.

"It would be an incredibly provocative thing for them to conduct a nuclear test in the Pacific as they have suggested," Dunford added. "I think the North Korean people would have to realize how serious that would be, not only for the United States but for the international community."

According to the private security consultancy Stratfor, the last time an atmospheric nuclear test was conducted anywhere was in 1980, when China did so in its remote western Xinjiang region.

"Such a test today would mark a violation of long-established bans on nuclear testing beyond just the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty," it said.



A Reuters article titled "North Korea Seen Moving Missiles From Development Center: South Korean Broadcaster" was posted at reuters.com on Sept. 29, 2017. Following is the article.

Several North Korean missiles were recently spotted moved from a rocket facility in the capital Pyongyang, South Korea's Korean Broadcasting System (KBS) reported late Friday amid speculation that the North was preparing to take more provocative actions.

The report cited an unnamed intelligence source saying South Korean and U.S. intelligence officials detected missiles being transported away from North Korea's Missile Research and Development Facility at Sanum-dong in the northern part of Pyongyang.

The report did not say when or where they had been moved.

The missiles could be either intermediate range Hwasong-12 or intercontinental ballistic Hwasong-14 missiles, according to the report, though the missile facility at Sanum-dong has been dedicated to the production of intercontinental ballistic missiles.

A source from South Korea's defense ministry said he could not confirm details of the report or whether there has been any unusual activities in the area mentioned.

South Korean officials have voiced concerns that North Korea could conduct more provocative acts near the anniversary of the founding of its communist party on Oct. 10, or possibly when China holds its Communist Party Congress on Oct. 18.

Amid heightened tensions on the Korean Peninsula, South Korea and U.S. forces recently held their first joint short range air defense training exercise in South Korea, according to a statement released by the U.S. Pacific Command on Friday.

The statement did not give the date of the exercise, but said the next exercise is scheduled to take place over the next few months as the two forces become more familiar with each other's capabilities.



An article titled "Austria's 'Burqa Ban' Law Comes Into Force" was posted at foxnews.com on Oct. 1, 2017. Following is the article.

A law known as the "Burqa Ban" took effect Sunday in Austria, the latest European country to wrestle over national security and its effect on the freedoms of Muslim women.

The rule forbids any type of full-face covering—niqabs and burqas among them. Wearing a ski mask off the slopes, a surgical mask outside hospitals and party masks in public is also prohibited.

The same day the law took effect, police commanded a woman to remove her niqab in Zell Am See, Metro reported.

Violations carry a possible fine of nearly \$180, and police have the authority to use force if people resist showing their faces.

Only a small number of Muslim women in Austria wear full-face veils, but they have become a target for right-wing groups and political parties.

France and Belgium have similar laws. The nationalist Alternative for Germany party is calling for one there, too.

In December at a Christian Democratic Union (CDU) conference, German Chancellor Angela Merkel also advocated a burqa ban.

"The full veil is not appropriate here, it should be forbidden wherever that is legally possible," she said at the time. "It does not belong to us."

"It is every woman's right to always dress how she wants, that is my opinion on the matter," Austria's president, the left-leaning Alexander Van der Bellen, said earlier this year.



A Reuters article titled "Egypt 'hunting down' gays, conducting forced anal exams: Amnesty" was posted at reuters.com on Sept. 30, 2017. Following is the article.

Six Egyptian men arrested for “promoting sexual deviancy” and “debauchery” on social media will be subjected to anal examinations ahead of their Oct. 1 trial, Amnesty International said on Saturday.

Their arrest is part of a wider crackdown against homosexuality that started last week when a group of people were seen raising a rainbow flag at a concert, a rare public show of support for lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender rights in the conservative Muslim country.

At least 11 people have since been arrested, Amnesty said, and one man has been sentenced to six years in jail after local media launched a highly critical campaign against those who raised the rainbow flag at a Mashrou' Leila concert, a popular Lebanese alternative rock band whose lead singer is openly gay.

Amnesty said the Forensic Medical Authority was due to subject the six men to anal examinations to determine whether they have had homosexual sex.

Judicial sources said any defendant accused of “debauchery” or “sexual deviancy,” a euphemism for homosexuality in Egypt, is subjected to a medical examination based on an order from the Public Prosecutor.

“Allegations of torturing or insulting those medically examined are lies not worth responding to. The examinations are carried out by a forensic doctor who swore to respect his profession and its ethics,” one judicial source said.

Amnesty said such examinations violate the prohibition of torture and other ill-treatment under international law.

“The fact that Egypt’s Public Prosecutor is prioritizing hunting down people based on their perceived sexual orientation is utterly deplorable. These men should be released immediately and unconditionally—not put on trial,” said Najia Bounaim, North Africa Campaigns Director at Amnesty International.

“Forced anal examinations are abhorrent and amount to torture. The Egyptian authorities have an appalling track record of using invasive physical tests which amount to torture against detainees in their custody. All plans to carry out such tests on these men must be stopped immediately.”

Egypt’s Muslim religious establishment is voicing its support for the government’s moves against homosexuals.

“Al Azhar will stand against calls for sexual perversion the same way it has stood against extremist groups,” a preacher at the 1,000-year-old seat of Sunni Muslim learning said in his Friday prayers sermon.

Although homosexuality is not specifically outlawed in Egypt, it is a conservative society and discrimination is rife. Gay men are frequently arrested and typically charged with debauchery, immorality or blasphemy.

The largest crackdown on homosexuals took place in 2001, when police raided a floating disco called the Queen Boat. Fifty-two men were tried in the case.



An article titled "At Least 59 Dead in Las Vegas Concert Shooting, the Deadliest in US History" was posted at abc13.com on Oct. 2, 2017. Following are excerpts of the article.

The rapid-fire popping sounded like firecrackers at first, so many in the crowd of 22,000 country music fans didn't understand what was happening when the band stopped playing and singer Jason Aldean bolted off the stage.

"That's gunshots," a man could be heard saying emphatically on a cellphone video in the nearly half-minute of silence and confusion that followed. A woman pleaded with others: "Get down! Get down! Stay down!"

Then the bang-bang-bang sounds resumed. And pure terror set in.

"People start screaming and yelling and we start running," said Andrew Akiyoshi, who provided the cellphone video to The Associated Press. "You could feel the panic. You could feel like the bullets were flying above us. Everybody's ducking down, running low to the ground."

While some concertgoers hit the ground, others started pushing for the crowded exits, shoving through narrow gates and climbing over fences as 40- to 50-round bursts of what may have been automatic weapons fire rained down on them from the 32nd floor of the Mandalay Bay casino hotel.

By Monday afternoon, 58 people were dead and 515 wounded in the deadliest mass shooting in modern U.S. history.

"You just didn't know what to do," Akiyoshi said. "Your heart is racing and you're thinking, 'I'm going to die.' "

The gunman, identified as Stephen Craig Paddock, a 64-year-old retiree from Mesquite, Nevada, killed himself before officers stormed Room 135 in the gold-colored glass skyscraper. He had 10 guns in the room where had been staying since Thursday.

Asked about the motive for the attack, Sheriff Joseph Lombardo said: "I can't get into the mind of a psychopath at this point."

The FBI said it found nothing so far to suggest the attack was connected to international terrorism, despite a claim of responsibility from the Islamic State group, which said Paddock was a "soldier" who had recently converted to Islam.

With hospitals jammed with victims, authorities put out a call for blood donations and set up a hotline to report missing people and speed the identification of the dead and wounded. They also opened a "family reunification center" for people to find loved ones.

The shooting began at 10:08 p.m., and the gunman appeared to fire unhindered for more than 10 minutes, according to radio traffic. Police frantically

tried to locate him and determine whether the gunfire was coming from Mandalay Bay or the neighboring Luxor hotel.

At 10:14 p.m., an officer said on his radio that he was pinned down against a wall on Las Vegas Boulevard with 40 to 50 people.

"We can't worry about the victims," an officer said at 10:15 p.m. "We need to stop the shooter before we have more victims. Anybody have eyes on him . . . stop the shooter."

Near the stage, Dylan Schneider, a country singer who performed earlier in the day, huddled with others under the VIP bleachers, where he turned to his manager and asked, "Dude, what do we do?" He said he repeated the question again and again over the next five minutes.

Bodies were laid out on the artificial turf installed in front of the stage, and people were screaming and crying. The sound of people running on the bleachers added to the confusion, and Schneider thought the concert was being invaded with multiple shooters.

"No one knew what to do," Schneider said. "It's literally running for life and you don't know what decision is the right one. But like I said, I knew we had to get out of there."

He eventually pushed his way out of the crowd and found refuge in the nearby Tropicana hotel-casino, where he kicked in a door to an engineering room and spent hours there with others who followed him.

The shooting had begun as Aldean closed out the three-day Route 91 Harvest Festival. He had just opened the song "When She Says Baby" and the first burst of nearly 50 shots crackled as he sang, "It's tough just getting up."

He wasn't finished with the first verse when he abruptly stopped singing and hustled off the stage.

Paddock apparently used a hammer-like device to smash out windows in his room and open fire. Muzzle flashes could be seen in the dark.

The crowd, funneled tightly into a wide-open space, had little cover and no easy way to escape. Victims fell to the ground while others fled in panic. Some hid behind concession stands. Others crawled under parked cars.

Couples held hands as they ran through the dirt lot. Faces were etched with shock and confusion, and people wept and screamed. Some were bloodied, and some were carried out by fellow concertgoers. Dozens of ambulances took away the wounded, while some people loaded victims into their cars and drove them to the hospital.

Some of the injured were hit by shrapnel. Others were trampled.

The dead included at least three off-duty police officers from various departments who were attending the concert, authorities said. Two on-duty officers were wounded, one critically, police said.

Las Vegas Mayor Carolyn Goodman said the Sunday night attack was the work of a “crazed lunatic full of hate.”

The sheriff said authorities believe Paddock acted alone. While Paddock appeared to have no criminal history, his father was a bank robber who was on the FBI’s most-wanted list in the 1960s.

As for why Paddock went on the murderous rampage, his brother in Florida, Eric Paddock, told reporters: “I can’t even make something up. There’s just nothing.”

Nearly every inch of the Las Vegas Strip is under video surveillance, much of it set up by the casinos to monitor their properties. That could yield a wealth of material for investigators as they try to piece together the attack.

Las Vegas Metro police offered a hotline for families who are looking for their loved ones. That hotline is at 1-866-535-5654.

Before Sunday, the deadliest mass shooting in modern U.S. history took place in June 2016, when a gunman who professed support for Muslim extremist groups opened fire at a gay nightclub in Orlando, Florida, killing 49 people.



An article by Brian Flood titled “CBS Fires Vice President Who Said Vegas Victims Didn’t Deserve Sympathy Because Country Music Fans ‘Often Are Republicans’ ” was posted at fownews.com on Oct. 2, 2017. Following are excerpts of the article.

CBS has parted ways with one of the company’s top lawyers after she said she was “not even sympathetic” to victims of the Las Vegas shooting because “country music fans often are Republican,” when discussing the mass shooting that unfolded in Las Vegas late Sunday night.

Monday night she issued a statement of apology.

A CBS spokeswoman told Fox News that Geftman-Gold, “who was with us for approximately one year, violated the standards of our company and is no longer an employee of CBS. Her views as expressed on social media are deeply unacceptable to all of us at CBS. Our hearts go out to the victims in Las Vegas and their families.”

Geftman-Gold took to Facebook after a gunman opened fire at the Route 91 Harvest Music Festival in Las Vegas, killing at least 59 people and sending more than 510 others to hospitals.

“If they wouldn’t do anything when children were murdered I have no hope that Repugs [sic] will ever do the right thing,” Geftman-Gold wrote in a now-deleted message that was first reported and captured by *The Daily Caller*.

Geftman-Gold continued: "I'm actually not even sympathetic bc [sic] country music fans often are Republican gun toters [sic]."

Geftman-Gold is presumably referring to Sandy Hook, which occurred in Newtown, Conn. back in 2012. A 20-year-old gunman, Adam Lanza, killed 20 children and six adults during the tragic event that sparked intense political debates regarding gun control.

Geftman-Gold did not work directly with the network's news division. According to her LinkedIn bio, Geftman-Gold worked at CBS since September 2016 and graduated from the prestigious Columbia University law school in 2000.



An article by Michael Brown titled "If You Fell Asleep in 1961 and Woke Up Today" was posted at townhall.com on Oct. 1, 2017. Following is the article.

It's been a beautiful spring day in the suburbs of Pennsylvania on this Thursday, June 7th, 1961. You just got home from work and your wife is almost finished preparing one of her typically delicious dinners. Your kids, a boy and two girls, aged 15, 13, and 9, have been out all day riding their bikes around the neighborhood and playing with friends. Now everybody's hungry and ready to sit down for the family meal.

Last night was game night, and you barely emerged with a victory in Monopoly. Your kids are getting good, and your wife, normally the more savvy player, had some bad luck. Tonight is TV night, and everyone is ready to enjoy Ozzie and Harriet and Leave It to Beaver. (The younger ones get to stay up a little later on TV night, and you know they're not going to miss a minute of the shows.)

Of course a live, in-person show is incredible—who could forget your family outing two weeks ago when you all drove into Manhattan and saw My Fair Lady on Broadway? But TV has its own unique appeal, especially with shows like Lassie and Andy Griffith and Walt Disney's Wonderful World of Color and Father Knows Best and The Flintstones. And they're all on at night so the whole family can enjoy them together.

Well, on this lovely spring night, you're a bit more tired than you realized, fighting to stay awake through the current Beaver episode, even though it's a bit more suspenseful than normal. In this show Beaver loses his haircut money and is afraid to explain the loss to his parents, Ward and June Cleaver. So he gives himself a ragged haircut with his brother Wally's help—and the two wear stocking caps to dinner, saying the caps are part of a secret club initiation. Later, Ward and June lift Beaver's cap while he sleeps and discover the truth, and the show ends with June explaining to the boys that they have no one but themselves to blame for the deception.

As always, there's a good moral conclusion to the show.

But this night, you doze off just before the end of the program, and when you wake up a few minutes later, everything has changed. The TV is still there, except it's gigantic now, flat and hanging on a wall, exploding with colors. And instead of the smiling Cleaver family, it's—no, this can't be real—a nude couple going on their first date together. What is happening?

In a panic, you look for another channel while quickly figuring out how to use the newfangled remote control you now hold in your hands. But your eyes can't believe what you're seeing: two men making out passionately while taking off each other's clothes.

This must be a dream—a really bad dream. You hit the button again, and to your relief it's a nice, old-fashioned show with a man and his family—a really big family, with lots of children—and five wives! What?

But wait. You discover that Walt Disney is still here. In fact, there's a whole Disney channel, and it's time for Good Luck Charlie—except that the show is celebrating a two-mommy family. Is this meant to be a joke?

You click once more, and this time it's two young moms with their daughters talking about the struggles of life. But the more you listen, the more you realize how young these single moms are—they're both 16 and unmarried—and their babies were born out of wedlock. This is now on TV? (And though you don't know it, one of these young moms would later release her own sex tape—a term you can't even imagine—in order to stay popular.)

You're now in a cold sweat, frantically switching channels as if somehow you could find a way out of the nightmare. Finally, you come across a show that looks a little like Bonanza—at least the people are carrying shotguns like they did in the old Westerns. But who are they shooting? Walking dead! Zombies, with their brains exploding on TV! (Don't switch to the next channel. There you'll see vampires having sex.)

"Did I wake up in hell?"

But something else is different when you look around the room. You're the only one there.

Your 15-year-old son is out with his best friend Robbie—who used to be called Robin back when he was a girl—along with Robbie's 17-year-old brother. All three went to see a new movie in the Hostel series, where people are tortured to death and mutilated for fun, but hey, at least he's out of the house. It's better than playing Grand Theft Auto for six straight hours where your boy simulates raping women and killing cops on his video screen.

As for your wife, she's at the psychologist's office with your 13-year-old daughter discussing whether they need to up her antidepressant medication. She's still cutting herself—she's been doing that for the last year, ever since her best friend at school killed herself after the "sexting" scandal when the girl's ex-boyfriend sent out her naked picture to all the kids in middle school. And what's more, your daughter's weight gain is out of control. (She's almost a hundred pounds overweight, and she's barely a teenager.)

Unfortunately, her new best friend at school is also fighting depression. It seems that things fell apart after her stepfather abused her (it was her mom's third marriage), but thankfully, she survived the drug overdose.

That was a real scare. And it's a good thing her mom never found out about the abortion. Her mother would not have been happy to find out that her 13-year-old daughter and her boyfriend weren't using protection.

As for your youngest girl, still so innocent at 9 years old, she's shut up in her room with her headphones on, dancing to Beyoncé's latest hit. She sure is a smooth dancer for such a little kid, although it's probably good that she's too young to know what the bumping and grinding is all about or what those suggestive lyrics actually mean.

But all is well, since she's just down the hallway, safe in her room. The neighborhood just hasn't been the same since two kids were abducted within twelve months, only for their abused bodies to turn up in the woods weeks later. The police still haven't found the sexual predator responsible for these inhuman acts.

Then, suddenly, you wake up with a start. This was all a dream, a very terrible dream, an absolute nightmare. With relief, you look around at your wonderful family, smiling at their dad who fell asleep in the middle of TV night. And you think to yourself, "Thank God this was only a bad dream. There's no way America—or my family—could ever look like that."



An article by Nicholas Bakalar titled "In the U.S., 110 Million Americans Have an S.T.D. Infection" was posted at nytimes.com on Sept. 29, 2017. Following is the article.

The incidence of chlamydia, gonorrhea and syphilis is increasing, according to a new report from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. At any given time, there are an estimated 110 million sexually transmitted infections in the United States.

Chlamydia is the most common S.T.D., and the number of cases rose 4.7 percent from 2015 to 2016. The increases occurred nationwide; rates were highest in the South and lowest in the Northeast.

Chlamydia is usually asymptomatic, and the number of reported cases may have grown in part because of newer, more sensitive screening techniques.

Adolescents and young adult women have the highest rates of chlamydia: one survey found that 9.2 percent of girls aged 15 to 19 were infected, as were 8.0 percent of women aged 20 to 24.

Rates declined 3.5 percent among African-Americans and 6.4 percent among Native Americans and Alaska Natives, but chlamydia still is most common in these groups. Rates rose among all other races and ethnicities.

From 2015 to 2016, gonorrhea infections increased 22.2 percent among men and 13.8 percent among women, the C.D.C. reported. Almost 92 percent of cases are in people 15 to 44 years old.

The only recommended treatment is to take two antibiotics simultaneously, ceftriaxone and azithromycin. Resistance to azithromycin is becoming more common, however, and there is some evidence of growing resistance to ceftriaxone, as well.

“Several drug trials are going on now that we hope will provide new treatments for gonorrhea,” said Dr. Gail Bolan, the director of sexually transmitted disease prevention at the C.D.C.

“But these treatment trials take years, and we don’t know if these new drugs will be safe and effective.”

The rate of primary and secondary syphilis in 2016 is the highest it has been since 1993, and it increased among both men and women from 2015 to 2016. Men account for almost 90 percent of cases, and most are among men who have sex with men.

Rates of syphilis increased in every age group and all races, and they were highest among people in their twenties. The number of babies born infected with syphilis increased to 628 cases in 2016, from 492 in 2015—each case, in Dr. Bolan’s words, “a needless tragedy.”

“The enormity of the S.T.D. epidemic requires everyone play a role in reversing these trends,” Dr. Bolan said.



An article by Douglas MacKinnon titled “NFL Players and Owners Have Bet America Will Cave” was posted at townhall.com on Oct. 2, 2017. Following is the article.

The NFL has at least paid attention to the most critically important two-part lesson in the never-ending debate on values. The first part of that lesson being that there is no line—none—many on the far-left won’t cross in their “win at any cost” battles waged against “traditional” thought and values. The second part is that Republicans, conservatives, and Christians eventually cave.

Every single time.

With regard to current “controversy” pitting those Americans who rightfully don’t believe NFL players—and the copycats now popping up in other sports and on the floors of Congress—should ever “take a Knee” during the playing of our national anthem in protest over fill-in-blank issue, the leadership of the NFL and the owners know they simply have to wait a few weeks at the most before Republicans, conservatives, and Christians roll over and go silent.

That’s what Republicans, conservatives, and Christians do.

Precisely because they do believe in the rule-of-law, decency, morality, respect for authority and a higher-calling in life, there are many lines they will not cross in protest against the left or against conduct they feel is disrespectful to our nation, our flag, or their values.

They also work harder than any people on earth. Unlike many on the left, they don't have the luxury to wake up in their mommy's basement whenever they feel like it and then go out to protest or deface and destroy that built with the blood, sweat, and tears of others. They are too busy paying the taxes which are then misappropriated to entitle the entitled.

That has always been the secret weapon of the left. They not only know that but have calculated that hard work and decency into every protest they have waged and every movement they have started over the last few decades.

The leadership of the NFL and the owners of the teams also know that liberals and the far-left control the media, entertainment, and academia and that those three largest megaphones of our nation are now being used 24/7 in support of the "take a Knee" movement.

The most glaring example of that being far-left "sports" network ESPN bashing President Trump on all of its programs and various channels. Apparently, a player taking a knee has a right to his opinion, but not the President of the United States.

Even if the leadership of the NFL and the owners did want to side with the majority of Americans offended by these players taking a knee during our national anthem, they know it would be a losing cause simply because ABC, CBS, NBC, CNN, MSNBC, NPR, *The New York Times*, *The Washington Post*, *USA Today*, *The Los Angeles Times*, almost every major newspaper and most local television stations are populated by liberal, politically-correct hires who side with the "courageous" NFL protestors.

Players don't even know what they are protesting anymore or how long the protest should go on. The only thing they know for sure is that they are "winning."

They need only look at those protesting against "Confederate" symbols for inspiration. Every week, the list of monuments which should be torn down because they offend the far-left has grown because of each previous success.

"No matter how outrageous, ignorant, or dangerous our demands," the far-left thinks, "Republicans, conservatives, and Christians—along with various mayors, city and town councils—simply give it. What can we tell them next which must be eradicated from American history?"

The NFL players, their union, and the copycats are now using that template to expand the list of that which offends them.

■ If the NFL players truly wanted to be "courageous," they would take a knee in protest over the 4,000 people a year being shot in Chicago. Many women and children.

■ They would take a knee in protest over the fact that millions of inner-city children are being denied an education and any hope of a life free from poverty.

■ They would take a knee in protest against the public employees and unions which have bankrupted almost every city, county and state in our nation and taken billions of taxpayer dollars which could have been used to help the poor.

They could take a knee against those things but they won't because that would involve thinking for themselves. Most would rather protest in ignorance than speak out against policies which truly are decimating communities and destroying lives.

In the meantime, the "take a Knee" protests will grow, the fans will come back, and Republicans, conservatives, and Christians will lose—again.



An article by Michael W. Chapman titled "NFL's Shannon Sharpe: U.S. Flag Just 'A Piece of Cloth,' Like Pants, 'Nobody Fights for a Piece of Cloth' " was posted at cnsnews.com on Oct. 2, 2017. Following is the article.

Commenting on the NFL protests sparked by the politically leftist quarterback Colin Kaepernick, three-time Super Bowl winner and NFL Hall-of-Famer Shannon Sharpe said people need to stop complaining because the Star-Spangled Banner apparently is racist and the U.S. Flag, Old Glory, is just "a piece of cloth and nobody fights for a piece of cloth."

Sharpe, 49, is a former NFL tight end who played for the Denver Broncos and the Baltimore Ravens in the 1990s. He retired in 2003 and is now a co-host of the Fox Sports program, Skip and Shannon: Undisputed, also co-hosted by Skip Bayless.

During the Sept. 29 show, Shannon Sharpe said, "The flag, see, to a lot of people, with symbols, patriotism but what does that symbol actually mean? What does, okay—you keep telling me that the flag means so much and it's opportunity and freedom and liberty. Okay. Can you honestly say that everybody in America has freedom and liberties and opportunity?"

Skip Bayless then said, "no," and Sharpe continued, "Well, if you can't answer that then we'll have a problem and we would like to have it addressed. And stop trying to sweep it under the rug."

"But, see, as long as you paint that narrative, oh, it's the anthem, I can't, no—anybody that does something to the anthem—well, we know what the anthem was originally written for and who it was written by, okay?" said Sharpe.

U.S. Marines raise Old Glory on a mountain on the island of Iwo Jima during World War II. (legendsrevealed.com)

"The flag, okay?" he said. "We understand what the flag—what does it represent? When did this narrative come to be that the military and the police own the flag and only them? I can go buy a flag and I can hang it up in my backyard.

“We need to stop this, Skip,” said the three-time Super Bowl winner. “We need to—the flag is a piece of cloth and nobody fights for a piece of cloth.”

At that point, Bayless said, “Yeah, they do. Don’t say that. That’s the symbol of this country, what it represents.”

Shannon: “So they’ll fight for a pair of jeans? They’ll fight for a pair of jeans?”

Skip: “If that’s what we had chosen in 1776 to represent our nation, you better believe they would.”

Shannon: “Skip, the symbol, the symbol.”

Skip: “It’s the symbol of our country. What are you talking about?”

Shannon Sharpe played professional football with the Broncos and Ravens for 14 years. He has an estimated net worth of \$12 million.



An article by Rick Moran titled “High School Football Team Runs on Field Carrying American Flags” was posted at americanthinker.com on Oct. 2, 2017. Following is the article.

A North Georgia high school football team ran onto the field prior to the start of their game carrying and waving American flags.

The demonstration was in response to so many football players at all levels who have disrespected the flag by refusing to stand while the anthem is being played.

The superintendent of schools called it “a unifying moment.”

WSB TV noted the following.

- Superintendent Michael Gwatney said the “patriotic display” was organized by the team, coaches and parents.
- “It was an awesome and unifying moment for the audiences on both sides of our stadium and reminded us that no matter what team we support, we are all Americans,” he said.
- Gwatney said that while Fannin County may have lost the game, “our players certainly won the hearts of our community with the display of patriotism.”
- The superintendent said the players ran out with the flags particularly as a sign of support for veterans and those currently serving in the armed forces.
- He said the team is especially proud of one of their members who has already joined the military.

NFL teams who link arms as a show of “unity” may want to take a look at how these high school kids expressed their unity. The flag itself is a symbol of unity. Those disrespecting it are injecting disunity into the community.

It really is that simple, and the high school football team carrying flags into the stadium should be commended and emulated.



An article by Lauren Hamer titled "Sneaky Ways Costco Gets You to Spend More Money (You Fall for It Every Time)" was posted at cheatsheet.com on Sept. 9, 2017. Following is the article.

Many first-time Costco visitors find themselves in awe of the sheer production these warehouses make out of grocery shopping. It's surely a sight to behold with an expansive food court, trampolines hanging from the ceiling, and aisles after aisles of bulk buys you likely won't fit in your car. Then, your eyes fall on the biggest toilet paper display known to man, and your mind is blown.

It's hard not to abandon all control at a store that promises big savings, but that only makes you more susceptible to the endless ways Costco tricks you into spending money. Even seasoned members can fall victim to these sneaky tactics, as most of them are employed without your knowledge. Unless you know what to look for, you'll continue to waste countless dollars during every trip.

Here are 15 ways Costco tricks you into spending more money.

■ **Free samples**

Much has been said about the psychology behind Costco's notorious free samples offered throughout the store. People love free food, but retailers especially love its money-making impact. Studies show providing free samples can boost sales by at least 30%, swaying people to buy things they never planned on purchasing.

"When we compare it to other in-store mediums ... in-store product demonstration has the highest [sales] lift," Giovanni DeMeo of the product-demonstration company Interactions, which handles Costco's samples, tells *The Atlantic*. So enjoy the smoked sausage bite while you can. It won't be long until you're coerced into buying a pound of it.

■ **Fear of missing out**

Costco is infamous for constantly rotating store items. This helps ensure customers have access to seasonal goods, but it's also a driving factor in influencing buying power. The fear of missing out on rotating inventory drives a lot of irrational buying—and might cause you to pull the trigger on an unnecessary purchase with a "just in case" mentality.

Even the overall feeling that you're about to score a good deal at one of the nation's most cost-effective grocery outlets is enough to encourage a bit of impulse buying. The likely outcome: "Will this reasonably priced trampoline still be here when I return? Best to get it while I can."

■ **Carefully chosen warehouse decor**

Walk into any Costco, and you'll notice exposed beams, concrete floors, pallets used as storage, and plain metal shelving. This is a Costco trick aimed at influencing consumers. Minimalist advertising makes us believe Costco's products are cheaper than anywhere else—especially because it doesn't waste money on fancy lighting and other typical retail decor.

This may be true, but avoid abandoning all common sense at Costco just because your surroundings make you think you're getting a good deal.

■ **Big-ticket items at the front**

As soon as you enter Costco, look down. In fact, look anywhere but at the expensive items bombarding your field of vision. Do not be distracted by the big-screen televisions, smartphones, and other pretty, but irrelevant, toys by the entrance. Costco is attacking your muster yet again and silently urging another impulse buy.

But it's not just Costco that's perfected this ploy. Grocery stores do the same by putting the brightest and shiniest produce at the front of the store, luring customers in with lightly misted lettuce and perfectly yellow bananas at their weakest shopping moment: the start.

■ **The loss leader (Costco is willing to gamble)**

Because the deals are noteworthy in certain areas of the store, it's common practice for shoppers to believe everything is a good deal. But baiting you with one sale and intermingling a few products that aren't good deals is one subtle way Costco urges you to spend more money.

Researchers have studied how retailers, drugstores, and grocers use a strategy known as a "loss leader" to get customers in the door. In other words, Costco will lure you in with cheap baby formula and batteries and then tempt you with things, such as books and DVDs, which are historically bad buys at the warehouse giant. It's more than willing to take a loss on certain items if it ensures you'll buy other things.

■ **Tricky layouts (to help you slow down)**

Costco makes customers enter on the right of the store, which is smart considering shoppers tend to turn right unconsciously upon entering. So it's no surprise that it uses layouts to create a high-impact impression from the beginning. But as you proceed to make your way, it's only natural to feel slightly disoriented. In what's known as the "Gruen Transfer"—named after mall architect Victor Gruen—stores incorporate a crazy layout that disorients customers, slows them down, and makes them forget what they came to buy, thus increasing the odds of extraneous spending.

Costco has painstakingly crafted a layout designed for confusion. Then, of course, it hits you with the food court scents upon exit. How convenient. All that bulk shopping is bound to work up an appetite.

■ **Items that go together aren't in the same place**

Ever notice that some popular Costco items aren't where you'd expect them to be? Beer is nowhere near the wine, and the pharmacy, a popular Costco perk, sits all the way in the back of the store. But other superfluous items are conveniently displayed together, such as reading glasses and magazines or batteries and electronics. It's like an expensive, mildly exciting treasure hunt across the aisles to find what you need.

And by the end of your excursion, Costco has tricked you into hitting almost every square inch of the store.

■ **The membership promotes exclusivity**

The very fact that Costco promotes an annual membership is one of its sneakiest—and most effective—marketing ploys. People love feeling like they're part of an exclusive group.

And the Costco membership promotes exclusivity as consumers feel privy to perks others aren't aware of, thus strengthening their support and loyalty to the brand.

■ **The pressure that comes with a membership**

Building on membership effectiveness, people want to justify the annual fee by getting the most bang for their membership buck. There's an inherent hesitation that comes with paying to grocery shop while the same could be done elsewhere for free.

And while many justify this need claiming the membership will pay for itself, there's corresponding pressure to make your admission worthwhile.

■ **Generous return policies**

You're more likely to buy things if you think you can return them.

According to The New York Times, 91% of customers believe a store's refund policy will influence their purchasing decision. Costco expertly removes self-doubt from the equation by offering one of the most flexible return policies in the industry. Not only is your membership fully refundable, but most items can be returned, no questions asked.

This surely promotes impulse buys and reckless spending—nevermind the fact that most people never actually get around to returning items they say they will.

■ **Strategic pricing (a carefully chosen price tag)**

Costco emerges a hero offering consumers low prices, but it's not all that saintly when considering low prices only encourage consumers to buy more than they normally would. The left-digit effect explains how 1 cent can seal the deal, and it is a key Costco trick used to persuade additional spending. For instance, research states that shoppers are more inclined to purchase something listed at \$10.99 rather than \$10, simply because the higher priced item looks cheaper than the lower priced item.

Most Costco prices incorporate odd numbers, such as 7 and 9, for this very reason. But if you see something listed in “.00” it’s your time to pounce. That item has been significantly marked down and can be your best shot at saving money, according to Little Things.

■ **Reusable totes with Costco’s logo on it**

Environmentally friendly totes are effective marketing strategies in more ways than one. Not only are they greener alternatives to plastic bags, but they offer additional square footage for brands to display their logos to potential customers. Costco seems to be joining other popular stores, such as Ikea, Whole Foods, and Aldi, in employing this sneaky marketing tactic.

These reusable totes are sought-after Costco finds for loyal shoppers. But what customers don’t know is they’ve fallen prey to a ploy that ensures they arrive with a large empty bag to fill with more items than they need.

■ **It’s all about the experience**

Employees are impeccable at selling the Costco experience to consumers, whether it be the unmatched food court, aisles filled with intriguing toy displays, or insightful product demonstrations any wandering customer just can’t miss.

These demonstrations and other extra services evoke a feeling of reciprocity. The concept “if we do something for you, you do something for us” is highly influential in increasing consumer spending, and it’s something Costco does quite well.

Stores can easily manipulate these types of feelings with a small giveaway or simple acts of kindness. Put simply, it’s a shameless guilt tactic stores love to impose on harmless customers.

■ **Shop while you rest (with rest areas designed to get you to spend more money)**

Be wary of any store that offers you a place to put your feet up—say, the Costco food court or the furniture section. Waiting areas filled with benches and seats only encourage customers to spend more time in a store. It’s no mistake that those chairs are often facing merchandise. Stores view this spot as a last-ditch opportunity to unload merchandise they prefer to sell quickly.

So, by all means, take a load off, but know you’re being baited in the process.

■ **Gift card decoys**

Costco offers insanely valuable deals on gift cards. For the consumer, that’s a welcomed benefit. They’re practical, no-hassle gifts, perfect for all occasions. But these seemingly convenient gifts are also an ingenious money maker for Costco. Not only does this product bring new and old customers to the store, but it encourages customers to spend more.

When shoppers arrive with gift cards in hand, they’re likely to spend 20% more than the value of the card, according to Investopedia. What was a total

win for Costco is only a slight win for the person with the gift card, who fell victim to yet another sneaky Costco marketing trick.



An article titled “10 Things That Will Soon Disappear Forever” was posted at kiplinger.com on Oct. 1, 2017. Following is the article.

Ten years ago, thousands of Blockbuster Video stores occupied buildings like this all over the country, renting DVDs and selling popcorn. Today, all but a handful are closed. The company’s shares once traded for nearly \$30. Now Blockbuster is gone, scooped up (and then erased) by the DISH Network in a bankruptcy auction.

Obsolescence isn’t always so quick or so complete, but emerging technologies and changing practices are sounding the death knell for many familiar items. Here are 10 for which you should say your goodbyes . . . and, as a bonus, seven that have defied the odds and refuse to die.

■ **Keys**

Keys, at least in the sense of a piece of brass cut to a specific shape, are going away.

At the office, most of us already use a card with a chip embedded to get access. But for getting into your house (and your car), the technology that will kill off the key is your smart phone. Connecting either via Bluetooth or the Internet, your mobile device will be programmed to lock and unlock doors at home, at the office and elsewhere. The secure software can be used on any mobile device.

So if your phone runs out of juice, you’ll be able to borrow someone else’s device and log in with a fingerprint or facial scan. Phone stolen? Simply log in and change the digital keys. Kwikset, a brand of Spectrum Brands (SPB), offers the Kevo, and lock veterans Yale have partnered with Nest, now owned by Alphabet (GOOGL), to create the Yale Linus.

For the car, a variety of “connected car” services such as Audi Connect and GM’s OnStar already let you unlock and lock the car remotely and even start it with a phone app—but you still need your keyfob to drive off. Next up: Allowing you to drive without even the keyfob, just your phone. Volvo is testing this capability in a pilot program in Los Angeles.

■ **Blackouts**

Frustrating power outages that leave people with fridges full of ruined food are on their way out as our electrical grid becomes increasingly intelligent—and resilient.

Two factors are at work: slow, incremental “smart grid” improvements to the system that delivers electricity, and the rapidly expanding use of solar energy in homes and business.

The breakthrough product here is the home battery. Developed by electric-car maker Tesla (TSLA) and others, by 2020, batteries will be cheap enough to store surplus solar power during the day and discharge it overnight, helping to better balance electricity supply and demand—and run a home for up to days during a blackout. LED lighting and more efficient appliances are helping, too, by reducing load on the system, whether the grid is or a backup system is running.

Utilities are also deploying huge banks of batteries, from suppliers like AES (AES), in storm-prone areas to make sure the power stays on for everyone.

■ **Fast-food workers**

Burger-flippers have targets on their backs as fast-food executives are eager to replace them with machines, particularly as minimum wages in a variety of states are set to rise to \$15.

Diners will notice reduced staffing up front as outlets such as Panera (PNRA) turn to touch-screen kiosks for order placing. Behind the scenes in the kitchen, industry giants like Middleby Corp. (MIDD) and boutique startups like San Francisco's Momentum Machines are all hard at work for devices that will take on tasks like loading and unloading dishwashers, flipping burgers, and cooking french fries.

Humans won't be totally out of the picture—the machines will require supervision and maintenance, and dissatisfied customers will need appeasing. But jobs will plummet.

■ **The clutch pedal**

Every year it seems that an additional car model loses the manual transmission option. Even the Ford F-150 pickup truck can't be purchased with a stick anymore.

The decline of the manual transmission (in the U.S.) has been decades in the making, but two factors are, ahem, accelerating its demise:

Number one: Automatics are getting more efficient, with up to 10 gear ratios, allowing engines to run at the lowest, most economical speeds. Many Mazdas and some BMWs, among others, now score better fuel mileage with an automatic than with a stick.

Number two: Among high-performance cars, such as Porsches, "automated" manual shifts are taking hold. They use electronics to control the clutch instead of your left foot. You can select the gears with paddles, or just let the computer take care of that, too. The result: The computer shifts faster than even the most talented clutch-and-stick driver, improving the cars' acceleration numbers. Plus, the costs on these are coming down, and they can now be found in less-expensive sporty cars, such as the Golf GTI.

Even the biggest of highway trucks are abandoning the clutch and stick for automatics, for fuel-efficiency gains and to attract drivers who won't need to learn how to grind their way through 18-plus gears.

Some price-leader economy models, such as the Nissan Versa and Ford Fiesta, will list manuals on their cheapest configurations (though few will actually

sell), and a segment of enthusiast cars, such as the Ford Mustang and Mazda Miata MX-5, will continue to offer the traditional three-pedal arrangement for some years to come. "It will be reserved for the 'driver's vehicle,'" says Ivan Drury, an analyst for Edmunds.com. But finding one will be a challenge—those holdout drivers had better be prepared to special-order their clutch cars.

■ College textbooks

By the end of this decade, digital formats for tablets and e-readers will displace physical books for assigned reading on college campuses, The Kiplinger Letter is forecasting. K-12 schools won't be far behind, though they'll mostly stick with larger computers as their platform of choice.

Digital texts figure to yield more bang for the buck than today's textbooks. Interactive software will test younger pupils' mastery of basic skills such as arithmetic and create customized lesson plans based on their responses. Older students will be able to take digital notes and even simulate chemistry experiments when bricks-and-mortar labs aren't handy.

This is a mixed bag for publishers. They'll sell more digital licenses of semester- or yearlong usage of electronic textbooks as their customers can't turn to the used-book marketplace anymore. On the other hand, schools are seeking free online, open-source databases of information and collaborating with other institutions and districts to develop their own content on digital models, cutting out traditional educational publishers such as Pearson (PSO), McGraw-Hill and Scholastic (SCHL).

■ Dial-up Internet

If you want to hear the once-familiar beeps and whirs of a computer going online through a modem, you will soon need to do that either in a museum or in some very, very remote location.

According to a study from the Pew Foundation, only 3% of U.S. households went online via a dial-up connection in 2013. Thirteen years before that, only 3% had broadband (Today, 70% have home broadband). Massive federal spending on broadband initiatives, passed during the last recession to encourage economic recovery, has helped considerably.

Some providers will continue to offer dial-up as an afterthought for those who can't or don't want to connect via cable or another broadband means. But a number of the bigger internet service providers, such as Verizon Online, have quit signing up new dial-up subscribers altogether.

■ The plow

Few things are as symbolic of farming as the moldboard plow, but the truth is, the practice of "turning the soil" is dying off.

Modern farmers have little use for it. It provides a deep tillage that turns up too much soil, encouraging erosion because the plow leaves no plant material on the surface to stop wind and rain water from carrying the soil away. It also requires a huge amount of diesel fuel to plow, compared with other

tillage methods, cutting into farmers' profits. The final straw: It releases more carbon dioxide into the air than other tillage methods.

Deep plowing is winding down its days on small, poor farms that can't afford new machinery. Most U.S. cropland is now managed as "no-till" or minimum-till, relying on herbicides and implements such as seed drills that work the ground with very little disturbance. Even organic farmers have found ways to minimize tillage, using cover crops rather than herbicides to cut down on weeds. Firms like John Deere (DE) offer a range of sophisticated devices for these techniques.

■ **Your neighborhood mail collection box**

The amount of mail people are sending is plummeting, down 57% from 2004 to 2015 for stamped first-class pieces. So, around the country, the U.S. Postal Service has been cutting back on those iconic blue collection boxes. The number has fallen by more than half since the mid 1980s. Since it costs time and fuel for mail carriers to stop by each one, the USPS monitors usage and pulls out boxes that don't see enough traffic.

Some boxes will find new homes in places with greater foot traffic, such as shopping centers, public transit stops and grocery stores. But on a quiet corner at the end of your street? Better dump all your holiday cards and summer-camp mail in them, or prepare to say goodbye.

■ **Your privacy**

If you are online, you had better assume that you already have no privacy and act accordingly. Every mouse click and keystroke is tracked, logged and potentially analyzed and eventually used by Web site product managers, marketers, hackers and others. To use most services, users have to opt-in to lengthy terms and conditions that allow their data to be crunched by all sorts of actors.

The list of tracking devices is set to boom, as sensors are added to appliances, lights, locks, HVAC systems and even trash cans. Other innovations: Using Wi-Fi signals, for instance, to track movements, from where you're driving or walking down to your heartbeat. Retailers will use the technology to track in minute detail how folks walk around a store and reach for products. Also, facial-recognition software that can change display advertising to personalize it to you (time for a mask?). Transcription software will be so good that many businesses will soon collect mountains of phone-conversation data to mine and analyze.

And think of this: Most of us already carry around an always-on tracking device for which we usually pay good money—a smart phone. Your phone is loaded up with sensors and GPS data. Is it linked to a FitBit perhaps? Now it has your health data.

One reason not to fret: Encryption methods are getting better at walling off at least some aspects of our digital lives. But living the reclusive life of J.D. Salinger might soon become real fiction.

■ The incandescent lightbulb

No, government energy cops are not coming for your bulbs. But the traditional incandescent lightbulb that traces its roots back to Thomas Edison is definitely on its way out. As of January 1, 2014, the manufacture and importation of 40- to 100-watt incandescent bulbs became illegal in the U.S., part of a much broader effort to get Americans to use less electricity.

Stores can still sell whatever inventory they have left, but once the hoarders have had their run, that's it. And with incandescent bulbs burning for only about 1,000 hours each, eventually they'll flicker out.

The lighting industry has moved forward with compact fluorescents, halogen bulbs, and most recently and successfully, bulbs that use light-emitting diodes (LEDs), and General Electric (GE) and Sylvania have found themselves sharing shelf space with newer firms like Cree (CREE) and Feit.

Soon, the only places you'll still see the telltale glow of a tungsten filament in a glass vacuum will be in heavy-duty and appliance bulbs, and some decorative items—and even for those, LEDs may ultimately take over.



An article titled "7 Things That Refuse to Die" was posted at kiplinger.com on Oct. 1, 2017. Following is the article.

Here are seven items that refuse to die.

■ Parking meters

Along with the pay phone and a cup of coffee, the parking meter was once one of the main reasons people carried around coins. The pay phone is gone, and a regular coffee now costs two bucks a cup, but meters are still standing on their stanchions, awaiting your quarters, in cities and towns across America.

New technologies are nibbling at the meter base: Many municipalities have installed machines (usually one per block) that let parkers buy a slip of paper to display on their windshield. Systems such as MobileNOW and Pango, which allow parkers to pay for parking by cell phone, are being enabled all over the country. Some experts see a future where the GPS in your car will link up with a municipal parking network, let you know where a spot is available nearby, and allow you to pay for it, all at once.

But don't wave good-bye to Rita the meter maid yet; parking meters still have decades left on many streets and lots. For one thing, meter makers have introduced innovations of their own, such as new tops that accept credit cards, are powered by the sun and can relay through wireless connections to parking authorities how often spots are being used.

Plus, there's a familiarity factor, says Casey Jones, a former chairman of the International Parking Institute. A city that has used meters in one place is likely to stick with that technology even when adding new metered spaces.

■ **The cassette tape**

In the beginning, there was the LP record. When the compact disc arrived, many forecast the LP's demise. It never happened; there's still a vigorous niche market for vinyl, even in the era of streamed downloads.

In between those two technologies came the cassette. Remember those ratty little plastic boxes full of tape? They were designed for dictation but pressed into service to deliver music to millions, particularly during the 1980s, when they were the only way to take tunes with you, whether with a Walkman, boombox or in your car's tape deck.

They're still around, actually. And not just as a last-gasp way to hear music when borrowing Granny's Buick Century. New music is being released on cassettes, kept alive by punk rockers, lo-fi artists and their labels. Sale numbers are generally small—a few hundred here and there for many promoters, although Burger Records, a Fullerton, Calif.-based label, estimates that it has sold upward of 300,000 tapes over the last eight years.

Cassette culture today thrives on the medium's low production cost—at least compared with vinyl records. And being able to hold music right in your hand can also be a revelation to younger generations, for whom music is something you get online. "It's just something great to walk away from a show with," says Matt Stuttler, a St. Louis musician, publisher and producer who puts out cassettes under the label Eat Tapes. "A stack of cassettes is a reminder of specific shows, and they're a whole lot cooler to look at than a few loose scraps of download cards."

■ **Ethanol-based flex fuel**

You may have seen E85 fuel at the pump—it's the one with the yellow nozzle. Perhaps you've been tempted by a price per gallon that's lower, sometimes much lower, than unleaded. Maybe you've even bought some, if you owned one of the millions of cars in North America capable of running on "flex fuel."

E85, a blend of mostly ethanol (a type of alcohol) with a just a splash of gasoline, is one of a number of efforts by farmers (and the federal government, among others) to get you burning more corn in your car. (Oil companies are opposed—it's one of those classic Washington battles).

Here's the hitch: Running your car on E85 usually means a 15% to 30% mileage penalty, since ethanol produces less energy than petroleum gasoline. If the price discount isn't bigger than the loss of fuel mileage, you're probably spending more. The plummeting price of petroleum is making it harder and harder to find a discount that makes economic sense.

So why does E85 continue to sell? Enough folks like the up-front discount but aren't doing the math. The National Association of Convenience Stores dug deep into the prospects for E85 in a study last year. Among their conclusions:

“Consumers are focused on the absolute price differential, not the percent change, and that price discount need not be equal to the energy differential.”

Or, as one analyst of the renewable fuels market gently put it, “The consumer is a strange animal.”

■ **The penny**

A penny for your thoughts isn't much of a bargain these days. Not only is a penny worth less than ever thanks to inflation, but the cost of minting each Lincoln has been more than its face value for almost a decade.

Canada, Australia, New Zealand and other countries have deep-sixed their smallest coin, but the U.S. penny endures, as the U.S. Mint continues to churn out millions per year to replace the coins vanishing into change jars, vacuum cleaner bags and your car's floorboards.

Noted economists and the editorial pages of major national newspapers and journals continue to call for the penny's retirement. But it has been years since anyone in Congress made a bid to kill the penny. One reason: While penny opponents are a diverse bunch, one group that's deeply interested in its continuance is the zinc industry (a penny is actually 97.5% zinc and only 2.5% copper). And yes, Washington has a penny lobby, in the form of Americans for Common Cents (which is largely funded by zinc manufacturers).

But it's not just lobbyists. As an article in the Harvard Political Review put it, Americans' “general apathy and resistance to change” is also keeping the penny around.

■ **The fax machine**

Ask not for whom the fax machine whirrs—it whirrs for thee. With e-mail, file-sharing, cloud services, collaborative office applications and more, who's still using fax machines?

Folks (such as lawyers and real estate agents) who want your actual signature, for starters. Then there are offices communicating with far-flung branches that don't have broadband, as well as mom-and-pop businesses. Finally, there are “non-technical users,” which Ross Rubin, principal analyst at Reticle Research, defines as people for whom sticking a sheet of paper in the fax and dialing a phone number is easier than scanning that document and attaching it to an e-mail.

The Consumer Electronics Association stopped measuring the sales of stand-alone fax machines in 2013, but that year, it estimated that 456,000 of them sold at about \$100 each. That spells tweet-tweedle-tweet sounds for some time to come. What will eventually do in the fax (which is now over 50 years old)? Rubin thinks the smartphone will finish the job that e-mail started, with apps that let you sign documents using the phone's touch screen and your finger.

■ **The paper check**

We now have credit cards, debit cards, prepaid cards, PayPal, ApplePay, Venmo, Bitcoin and who knows what else. But the woman ahead of you in the grocery store checkout line just pulled out her checkbook!

Electronic means have displaced checks as the primary alternative to cash, particularly among businesses paying consumers (automatic deposit for paychecks, for example.) But Americans cling to their checkbooks, more than in other developed nations.

Just as there are early adopters of new ways to pay, there are resisters. For businesses, the ability to delay payment for a day or two while the check is in the mail is an opportunity to make money on the interest—the “float.”

And for consumers? “Old habits die hard,” says Gareth Lodge, a senior analyst with Celent, a research consultancy. Plus, he notes, “some of the alternatives aren’t really alternatives. Can you imagine your grandmother using PayPal? Can you use Venmo to pay your utility provider? Can you use Bitcoins at Walgreens? All of them will take checks.”

■ The CB radio

The citizens band radio (CB) was one of the biggest fads of the 1970s, when millions of people around the country hopped onto the airwaves while driving to chat with truckers and others about road conditions (and traffic enforcement). Movies and TV shows such as “Smokey and the Bandit,” “BJ and the Bear” and “Convoy” glorified the medium.

The dilettantes faded away, of course, and a number of technologies have taken bites out of CB’s relevance: GPS navigation, big trucking companies’ satellite networks and, of course, the cell phone.

But you can still pick up a CB radio online (or better yet, at a truck stop) and join the chatter on channel 19. The technology is still popular with truckers, who face considerable cell phone dead zones as they travel across the country. And preppers—people who are making plans to survive a breakdown in society—are buying them along with batteries and freeze-dried food. Unlike a cell phone, the CB radio requires no towers or network that could go down if the you-know-what hits the fan.



Isaiah 55:6-11—“Seek you the LORD while He may be found, call upon Him while He is near. Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts; let him return to the LORD, and He will have mercy on him; and to our God, for He will abundantly pardon. ‘For My thoughts are not your thoughts, nor are your ways My ways,’ says the LORD. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways, and My thoughts than your thoughts. For as the rain comes down, and the snow from heaven, and do not return there, but water the earth, and make it bring forth and bud, that it may give seed to the sower and bread to the eater, so shall My word be that goes forth from My mouth; it shall not return to Me void, but it shall accomplish what I please, and it shall prosper in the thing for which I sent it.”