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Middle School Weekly

Emphasizing both News and Academics

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1) Name the island country off southern India that just celebrated its 60th anniversary of independence, having been known as Ceylon from 1798 to 1948 while controlled by Great Britain.

Answer: Sri Lanka.

2) Name the country whose famed Bolshoi Theater dating to 1825 is having emergency construction to keep it from collapse. It has showcased such native ballets as Tchaikovsky's *Swan Lake*.

Answer: Russia (restored theater is to reopen in November 2009).

3) Identify the country where for the 8th year residents celebrated "Clean Air Day" meaning a total ban on the use of private autos and trucks in Bogotá, the capital. It's named for an explorer.

Answer: Colombia.

4) Name the person whose pictures on Wikipedia taken from medieval manuscripts have drawn protests from Muslims in that Islam traditionally bans depictions of their prophet.

Answer: Muhammad (scholar says ban came about in 20th century).

5) Identify the oil-rich African country with a 4-letter name that says it has fought off rebels it believes were sent by neighboring Sudan to keep peacekeepers from being sent to Sudan's Darfur region.

Answer: Chad.

6) Identify both the word beginning with *C* that designates a rebel plot to topple a government, as in Chad, and the word beginning with *C* that designates a ban on being on the streets, such as that Chad has imposed from dawn to dusk to prevent further violence.

Answer: Coup and curfew.

7) Name either the city where, before the super-primary, John McCain campaigned at historic Faneuil Hall dating to 1742 or the state where Barak Obama campaigned at the Meadowlands, the suburban home of the NFL Giants and the NBA Nets.

Answer: Boston or New Jersey (Meadowlands Sports Complex is home to NFL Giants, NBA Nets).

8) What 2 words did the *New York Post* combine to create the caption "Bamalot" for its front page photo of a presidential contender and the senator who had just endorsed him?

Answer: Obama (Barak Obama) and Camelot (Sen. Ted Kennedy endorsed Obama, and his brother John Kennedy's administrations was referred to as Camelot).

9) On Super Bowl Sunday, New Orleans held the largest of its Mardi Gras parades, with 28 floats, 36 marching bands, and 1,000 riders. Identify the Greek god of wine for whom it is named, and who this year was portrayed by reality TV star Hulk Hogan.

Answer: Bacchus.

10) Identify either New Orleans' oldest black Mardi Gras parade named for the South African language beginning with *Z* or the King of Carnival parade named with the 3-letter Latin word for "king," as in the title of the ancient play *Oedipus* ____.

Answer: Zulu parade or Rex parade.

11) By what name is the kind of parade New York just held for the Giants known because of the source of the confetti used in the 1st such celebration in 1886?

Answer: Ticker-tape parade (1st confetti was ticker-tape giving stock quotes at brokerages).

12) Name the Bedloe's Island structure whose dedication on October 29, 1886, prompted New Yorkers to hold the 1st ticker tape parade honoring it and France, its donor.

Answer: Statue of Liberty (Bedloe's Island was officially renamed Liberty Island in 1956).

13) Identify the long awaited European Space Agency laboratory now headed to the International Space Station aboard *Atlantis*, having been intended for launching in 1992 on the 500th anniversary linked to its namesake.

Answer: Columbus.

14) What exactly are the devices known as the Giant Magellan, the Thirty Meter, and The European Extremely Large, whose names show the race to build the biggest and which are expected to yield results comparable to or better than the Hubble?

Answer: Telescopes (land-based telescopes, unlike the Hubble which was put in orbit in 1990).

15) China now says its scientists can prevent rain over the Olympic stadium during opening ceremonies. What word beginning with *M* designates such a scientist who specializes in the study of weather and its modification, or, those often called "weathermen"?

Answer: Meteorologist (China's bureau of weather modification is believed to be world's largest).

16) To prevent rain, the Chinese seed clouds with the compound symbolized as AgI, made of which 2 elements, the first of which is the metal for which Argentina is named?

Answer: Silver and iodine (silver iodide can break up rain drops; argentum is Latin name for silver).

HISTORICAL EVENTS - February 18-24 (Questions 17-24)

17) What name is given to the 3rd Monday in February, the day on which the birthdays of Lincoln and Washington are observed?

Answer: Presidents' Day (on February 18 this year).

18) Name the western Pacific Ocean island where U.S. Marines landed on February 19, 1945, for a 5-week battle, out of which came the photograph that was the model for the U.S. Marine Corps War Memorial in Washington, D.C.

Answer: Iwo Jima (the memorial shows Marines raising the U.S. flag on Iwo Jima).

19) On February 19, 1942, President Franklin D. Roosevelt issued the executive order for the legal detention of Americans of which national heritage?

Answer: Japanese(-Americans).

20) Which country not then diplomatically recognized by the U.S. did President Richard Nixon visit on February 21, 1972?

Answer: (People's Republic of) China.

21) Name the Mexican general whose demand for an immediate surrender of U.S. troops at the Battle of Buena Vista on February 22, 1847, allegedly prompted the U.S. leader to say, "General (Zachary) Taylor never surrenders."

Answer: Santa Anna.

22) In which state did Prussian soldier Baron von Steuben begin drilling General Washington's infantry on February 23, 1778, at Valley Forge?

Answer: Pennsylvania.

23) Which country launched the ground war called "The Mother of All Battles" on February 23, 1991, in leading the Allies against Iraq?

Answer: United States.

24) Which calendar did the Pope issue on February 24, 1582, to correct the Julian Calendar, then 10 days in error?

Answer: Gregorian calendar (Pope Gregory XIII; it took effect 10/4/1582, setting next day as 10/15).

25) If Phil's weight decreased from 250 pounds to 200 pounds, what % weight loss did he experience?

Answer: 20%.

26) What point is $\frac{2}{5}$ of the distance from -20 to 20 on the number line?

Answer: -4.

27) What is the radius of a circle whose circumference is 15.5π meters?

Answer: 7.75 meters.

28) Given the regular hexagon $ABCDEF$, what type of quadrilateral does $ABCF$ form?

Answer: Trapezoid.

29) Based on the meaning of the prefix *hema-*, what aspect of the human body does a hematologist study?

Answer: Blood (and its disorders).

30) What scientific field beginning with *G* are you studying when you talk about Watson and Crick, the double helix, and DNA?

Answer: Genetics (Crick and Watson discovered that the double helix is the structure of DNA).

31) What 4-letter word completes the term ____ 6 to designate the speed of the Air Force's proposed hypersonic air-craft capable of traveling 6 times the speed of sound?

Answer: Mach (equivalent to the speed of sound, named for a late 19th-century physicist).

32) Name the measure needed to determine how many hours it would take a hypersonic aircraft to travel around the world at an average speed of 6,000 mph.

Answer: Circumference of earth (which is 24,900 miles at the equator).

33) What term names a long uninterrupted speech, such as the stand-up comic routine Jay Leno is using to fill his "Tonight" show, having agreed to use no writers in the strike?

Answer: Monologue (mono- means "one," *logue*, means "speech"; Leno is using his own material).

34) What 5-letter word designates the written form of music, as in the first edition sheet music in the vast collection of a 91-year-old New Yorker who recently died?

Answer: Score (his collection includes a 1609 edition of "Three Blind Mice").

35) Name the European Jewish dialect that grew out of German and is the source of *glitch*, used to designate minor malfunctions, like those in voting machines on Super Tuesday.

Answer: Yiddish.

36) Identify the 2008 Kate Hudson/Matthew McConaughey film whose title is a 2-word synonym for the mineral *pyrite*, which early gold miners sometimes mistook for gold.

Answer: Fool's Gold (film involves a search for shipwrecked treasure).

37) Name the building opened in 1931 and for over 40 years the world's tallest whose last original tenant just died at age 98, having often told people he welcomed King Kong.

Answer: Empire State Building (about 3.7 million people visited it last year).

38) A German man just won the 2008 Empire State Building Run in 10 minutes, 8 seconds, meaning he ran up how many steps, the equivalent of the Roman numeral MDLXXVI?

Answer: 1,576 (in 86 flights of stairs; 235 people competed).

39) In which state bordering Texas is the Sierra Club's Rio Grande chapter urging a 1% tax on TVs and video games to fund a No Child Left Inside program for outdoor education?

Answer: New Mexico.

40) Name the U.S.'s 5th largest river, which Georgia legislators are trying to tap into by moving GA's boundary 1.1 miles northwest. It shares its name with this bordering state.

Answer: Tennessee (GA legislators cite a centuries-old misplaced survey marker as cause for the move).

TICKER-TAPE TRIUMPHS (through 1950s)*

Spanish American . . . War whose hero Admiral Dewey was honored by a ticker-tape parade on his return from Manila in 1899

Theodore Roosevelt . . Former President honored upon his return from an African safari in 1910

General Pershing . . . Commander of the American Expeditionary Force in WWI honored upon his return on September 8, 1919

Olympic athletes . . . U.S. group honored on August 6, 1924, upon their return from Paris for the annual event with the motto "Faster, Higher, Stronger"

Richard Byrd Commander honored along with Floyd Bennett in 1926 after their flight over the North Pole

Bobby Jones Georgia golfer honored in 1926 for winning the British Open

Gertrude Ederle Woman honored in 1926 as 1st woman to swim the English Channel

Charles Lindbergh . . Aviator honored in 1927 after his 1st ever solo trans-Atlantic flight

Amelia Earhart Aviator honored in 1932 as 1st woman to fly solo across the Atlantic

Jesse Owens African-American honored after winning 4 gold medals at the 1936 Berlin Olympics

Dwight Eisenhower . . Commander of Allied Expeditionary Forces honored along with returning vets in June 1945, at the end of WWII

Winston Churchill . . . British prime minister honored in 1946 for leadership during WWII

Althea Gibson Tennis star honored in 1957 after becoming the first African American woman to win the women's singles at Wimbledon

Van Cliburn American pianist with initials V.C. honored in 1958 after winning the Moscow International Tchaikovsky Competition

Nautilus Ship whose crew and commander, Admiral Rickover, were honored in 1958 for making the first ever voyage in a nuclear submarine

***Inscribed plaques commemorating the parades are imbedded in the sidewalk on Broadway, the last 2 of which were added for the Yankees' World Series victory in 2000 and the Giants' Super Bowl victory in 2008.**

