

OCTOBER 1: THE OPEN ROAD

Profile America — Thursday, October 1st. The first limited access, divided superhighway in America opened on this date 80 years ago — the Pennsylvania Turnpike. In 1940, the road extended 160 miles. It featured seven tunnels, 10 service plazas, and 11 interchanges. Now part of the Interstate Highway System, the turnpike has been improved and extended to 470 miles — nearly triple its original length. A passenger vehicle traveling the entire toll road today pays \$51.60 in cash for the 350 mile mainline length. Pennsylvania collects over \$100 million annually from turnpike tolls, while spending about \$9.4 billion on all of its roads. Nationally, states spend \$132 billion per year on their highways. You can find more facts about America from the U.S. Census Bureau online at <www.census.gov>.

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OCTOBER 2: MADE IN AMERICA

Profile America — Friday, October 2nd. Before the COVID virus hit our shores, domestic manufacturers received new orders every month worth close to a half-trillion dollars. To underscore the health and prospects of this economic sector in America's recovery, today is the 9th annual Manufacturing Day. The focus is a series of open houses to show the breadth and vitality of American manufacturing innovation and quality, and illustrate the employment opportunities. Through 2018, over 11.7 million Americans worked in this sector, which was on pace to generate nearly \$6 trillion of annual business. Economic censuses, currently at five year intervals, date back in several forms to the year 1810. The 2017 survey found 291,000 manufacturing establishments nationwide. You can find more facts about America from the U.S. Census Bureau online at <www.census.gov>.

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OCTOBER 3: AMERICAN PHARMACISTS MONTH

Profile America — Saturday, October 3rd. The art and science of mixing therapeutic compounds to assist medical practice goes back 4,500 or more years. Centuries ago, such specialized business was termed apothecary. Today, the familiar name is pharmacy — and the pharmacists behind the counter are continuously trained professionals. October is American Pharmacists Month, a time to appreciate the years of education and devotion to patient safety that distinguishes this ancient profession. The importance of the pharmacist increases, as new drugs are continuously approved by the Food and Drug Administration, with ever the chance of negative drug interactions. There are over 45,000 pharmacies and drug stores nationwide, in addition to those within our 7,100 hospitals. You can find more facts about America's people, places and economy, from the American Community Survey, at <www.census.gov>.

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OCTOBER 4: WORK FROM HOME WEEK

Profile America — Sunday, October 4th. Until earlier this year, weekday mornings usually have meant a routine of preparation, and then undertaking a commute to work.

This year's pandemic has altered the situation for millions of Americans. However redundant it may be nowadays, today begins National Work from Home Week. Available mostly to so-called white-collar occupations, employers are learning that technology has enabled grateful, motivated and sheltered employees to work without their physical presence in an office setting. In 2018, there were 155 million civilian workers nationwide. Around 5.3 percent, work at least one day per week at home, with a greater percentage of women taking this opportunity. A reported 30 percent of homeworkers do so while in pajamas. You can find more facts about America's people, places and economy, from the American Community Survey, at <www.census.gov>.

Sources:

National Work from Home Week, accessed 5/20/2020:

www.brownielocks.com/october.html#Weekly

Home-based workers' percentage, American Community Survey:

<https://data.census.gov/cedsci/table?q=S0801%3A%20COMMUTING%20CHARACTERISTICS%20BY%20SEX&hidePreview=true&tid=ACST1Y2018.S0801>

Pajamas, accessed 5/20/2020: <http://daysofyear.com/national-work-from-home-week/>

OCTOBER 5: FIRE PREVENTION WEEK

Profile America —Monday, October 5th. National Fire Prevention Week began yesterday, and runs until Saturday. It's a time to acknowledge the work of America's 21,000 fire inspectors. This week was chosen for the observance because two of the worst fires in our history broke out on this date in 1871. One was the famous fire in Chicago. The second fire that day was much worse, but has faded into history. A dry summer and high winds turned a forest blaze into a firestorm that jumped rivers, destroying the town of Peshtigo, Wisconsin, and 11 other communities, killing as many as 2,500 people. Nationwide, there are nearly 30,000 fire departments, and fully two-thirds of them are staffed by volunteers. The rest are filled by some 277,000 professional firefighters. You can find more facts about America from the U.S. Census Bureau online at <www.census.gov>.

Sources:

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OCTOBER 6: GERMAN-AMERICAN DAY

Profile America — Tuesday, October 6th. Today is National German-American Day, just one day in October's month long commemoration of German heritage in the American mosaic. Although Germans were among Jamestown's first settlers in 1609, the October 6 date harks to the arrival in 1683 in the Pennsylvania colony of 13 German families. Appropriately, their new home was named Germantown, and so it remains. In the following centuries, many thousands more Germans emigrated to America, introducing such cultural staples as Christmas trees, Santa Claus and Easter Bunnies, along with at least the nouns hamburger and frankfurter. In today's population of nearly 330-million people, the more than 41-million of German ancestry—over 12 percent—is the nation's largest ancestry group. *Profile America* is in its 24th year as a public service of the U.S. Census Bureau.

Sources:

German-American Day and Heritage Month and culture, accessed 5/29/2020:

<https://nationaltoday.com/german-american-heritage-month/>

Pennsylvania settlers, accessed 5/29/2020: www.wman.net/pastorius-and-the-founding-of-germantown/

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German ancestry, American Community Survey:

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OCTOBER 7: FIRST VETERINARY INSTRUCTION

Profile America — Wednesday, October 7th. "The greatness of a nation and its moral progress can be judged by the way its animals are treated." This quote is widely attributed to Mahatma Gandhi, but whatever the source, many people agree with the sentiment. One advance in such moral progress occurred on this date in 1868, when the first collegiate veterinary department in the nation began its instruction at Cornell University in Ithaca, New York. The country's first veterinary doctorate was awarded in 1876 to Daniel Salmon, best known as the discoverer of Salmonella. Cornell also granted the first veterinary degree to an American woman, Florence Kimball. Today, there are nearly 32,000 establishments providing veterinary services nationwide, and

employment for 357,000 two-legged animals. *Profile America* is in its 24th year as a public service of the U.S. Census Bureau.

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Mahatma Gandhi, accessed 5/28/2020: www.ivu.org/history/gandhi/

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OCTOBER 8: WOMEN'S PRISON

Profile America — Thursday, October 8th. On this date 137 years ago, a grim, sturdy building opened its doors to admit 17 long-term residents. Then it promptly closed and locked those doors. With the 1873 opening of the Indiana Reformatory Institution for Women and Girls in Indianapolis, the country had its first maximum-security penitentiary built for and managed by women. Formerly, female convicts were imprisoned in facilities with men. The reformatory is now named the Indiana Women's Prison. It houses around 720 of the approximately 111,000 women in federal and state prisons. Overall, there are around 1.28 million prisoners in state facilities. America's state governments spend over \$53 billion per year on their corrections systems. You can find more facts about America from the U.S. Census Bureau online at <www.census.gov>.

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State corrections spending:

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OCTOBER 9: LEIF ERICKSON DAY

Profile America — Friday, October 9th. By Congressional resolution and Presidential proclamation, although to somewhat muted public notice, today is Leif Erickson Day. Erickson was an Icelander who led an expedition around 1200 years ago that briefly landed in Newfoundland. This was nearly 500 years before Cristopher Columbus encountered the Western Hemisphere. Celebrating all Nordic heritage, Leif Erickson day is an official observance in seven states, including state holidays in Wisconsin and Minnesota. America's population of nearly 330-million includes 1.2-million who identify their ancestry as Scandinavian. More specific are the 1.2-million of Danish background, 4.4-million Norwegians, 3.6 million Swedes, and 48,000 Icelanders. You can find more facts about America's people, places and economy, from the American Community Survey, at <www.census.gov>.

Sources:

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Leif Erickson story, accessed 6/3/2020: www.lifeinnorway.net/leif-erikson/

State observances, accessed 6/3/2020: www.holidaycalendar.com/event/leif-erikson-day/

Scandinavian ancestry, American Community Survey:

<https://data.census.gov/cedsci/table?q=B04006%3A%20PEOPLE%20REPORTING%20ANCESTRY&hidePreview=true&tid=ACSDT1Y2018.B04006>

OCTOBER 10: CLEANING POWER

Profile America — Saturday, October 10th. The first household detergent — a Proctor and Gamble product named Dreft — came onto the market on this date in 1933, and is still in production after 87 years. The chemistry of making soap had changed little over hundreds of years, until shortages of fats for making soap during World War I stimulated research. Detergents really took off following World War II, and by 1953, their sales had passed those of traditional soaps. Now, detergents have all but replaced soap-based products for laundry, dishwashing and household cleaning, and most soaps for personal hygiene contain some detergents. Nationally, some 672 manufacturing establishments produce nearly \$25 billion worth of detergents and soaps each year. You can find more facts about America's people, places and economy, from the American Community Survey, at <www.census.gov>.

Sources:

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Manufacturers, Economic Census, NAICS 325611:

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Value of soap and detergent, Annual Survey of Manufacturers, NAICS 325611:

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OCTOBER 11: ITALIAN-AMERICAN HERITAGE MONTH

Profile America — Sunday, October 11th. October is Italian-American Heritage Month, a celebration concurrent with commemorations of German and Polish ancestry groups. October is significant for Italian-Americans because it is the birth month of Christopher Columbus. It's merely happy coincidence that it's also National Pizza Month. Although the very continents of the Western Hemisphere are named for Italian explorer Amerigo Vespucci, Italians were sparse in emigrating here. A few Italian craftsmen arrived in the Jamestown colony in 1610, but were followed by few others. In 1838, three Italians were recorded as immigrants. By 1914, that number peaked at over 283,000. Today, some 16.4-million people—about 5 percent—out of our population of 327-million claims Italian ancestry. *Profile America* is in its 24th year as a public service of the U.S. Census Bureau.

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OCTOBER 12: AMERICAN CHEESE MONTH

Profile America — Monday, October 12th. October is American Cheese Month, a celebration of the many varieties of the dairy product. America is the world's cheese superpower, producing about a quarter of the world's supply. The nations of the European Union combine to produce 10.3 million kilotons of cheese annually. However, American production of about 6 million metric tons exceeds that of the combined

second to fourth place producers — Germany, France and Italy. America's annual cheese consumption averages 39 pounds per capita. Big Cheese is formed in America by 561 production establishments. Employing around 50,000 workers, cheese captures about a \$48 billion a year slice of the economy. You can find more facts about America's people, places and economy, from the American Community Survey, at <www.census.gov>.

Sources:

Cheese Month, accessed 5/27/2020: www.cheesesociety.org/i-heart-cheese/american-cheese-month/

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Breakdown, accessed 5/27/2020: www.statista.com/statistics/195809/cheese-production-in-selected-countries-2009/

European Union cheese production, accessed 5/27/2020:

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Cheese manufacturing establishments and employment, County Business Patterns, NAICS 311513:

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OCTOBER 13: BIRTH OF CELL PHONES

Profile America — Tuesday, October 13th. With the national median age being 38.2 years, only about half of the country's population experienced life in what might strike young people as a bleak, dark and difficult age. Practically unimaginable today, there was a time when cell phones didn't exist. The first modern cell phone was introduced on this date 37 years ago in Chicago. It was demonstrated in a call to Alexander Graham Bell's grandson, in Berlin, Germany at the time. The 1983 phone's price was \$3,995. In 1990, there were just over 5 million people in the country with cell phones. By 2000, that number was nearly 110 million. Now, 96 percent of Americans have cell phones or smart phones. You can find more facts about America from the U.S. Census Bureau online at <www.census.gov>.

Sources:

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Cell phone demonstration call, accessed 5/26/2020:

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Growth in cell phone usage:

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Percent of population with mobile phone, accessed 5/26/2020:

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OCTOBER 14: NATIONAL DISABILITY EMPLOYMENT AWARENESS MONTH

Profile America — Wednesday, October 14th. Among many observances, October seeks to encourage a community of Americans who face some of life's greatest challenges. This is National Disability Employment Awareness Month, a campaign that raises awareness about disability employment issues and celebrates the contributions of America's workers with disabilities. Its roots go back to 1945, when Congress declared the first week in October "National Employ the Physically Handicapped Week." In 1962, the word "physically" was removed. In 1988, Congress expanded the week to a month and resulted in the current name. The leading types of disabilities among those employed are ambulatory, hearing and cognitive issues. You can find more facts about America's people, places and economy, from the American Community Survey, at www.census.gov.

Sources:

Occasion, accessed 6/3/2020: www.dol.gov/odep/topics/ndeam/index-2018.htm

Disabilities among the employed, American Community Survey:

www.census.gov/library/visualizations/2019/comm/types-of-disabilities.html

OCTOBER 15: HISPANIC ORIGINS

Profile America — Thursday, October 15th. National Hispanic Heritage Month winds up today. The annual commemoration, beginning every September 15, can often treat Hispanics as a single, undifferentiated population. But the roughly 60 million Hispanic residents in America hail from a great variety of nations and cultures in the Caribbean, or south of the Rio Grande River. It's well known the greatest number come from

Mexico — nearly 37 million. But 5.8 million are of Puerto Rican origin, and another 2.4 million trace their roots to Cuba. About the same number are from El Salvador. Colombia and Guatemala are claimed by over 1 million residents each. The Hispanic nation with the fewest migrants to the United States is Paraguay, with just over 25,000. You can find more facts about America's people, places and economy, from the American Community Survey, at <www.census.gov>.

Sources:

Population and countries of origin, American Community Survey:

<https://data.census.gov/cedsci/table?q=B03001%3A%20HISPANIC%20OR%20LATINO%20ORIGIN%20BY%20SPECIFIC%20ORIGIN&hidePreview=true&tid=ACSDT1Y2018.B03001>

OCTOBER 16: INN VOGUE

Profile America — Friday, October 16th. Hotels and motels have long competed for customers on the comfort and amenities of their rooms. Long before cable, Wi-Fi, coffeemakers and hair dryers entered the picture, more basic things were offered as lures. On this date in 1829, the 170-room Tremont hotel in Boston opened. It was the first in young America to be considered a modern, first-class lodging. It was distinguished by the availability of single rooms, with keys for the guests, and plumbing in the basement bathrooms. Uniquely, the Tremont was gas-lit and provided washbowls, pitchers and bars of soap in each room. Before the hospitality stresses of this year, there were nearly 54,000 hotels and motels across the country, providing free guest soap as a most trifling amenity. You can find more facts about America from the U.S. Census Bureau online at <www.census.gov>.

Sources:

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Hotels and motels, Economic Census, NAICS 72111:

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OCTOBER 17: AND NOW A TOAST

Profile America — Saturday, October 17th. Thanks to the inventiveness of Charles Perkins Strite of Iowa, when sliced bread first became available in 1928, Americans had access to just the thing to make toast quickly, easily and safely. On this date in 1921,

Strite received a patent for his breakthrough pop-up toaster. Toast had long been made by various contrivances, and sometimes by simply suspending the bread over open flames. And there already existed electric toasters, but they heated just one side at a time, and the lack of timers meant burnt toast, or burnt toasters. Strite's pop-up solution became available to the public in 1926. Manufacturing small household appliances such as toasters is a \$23.5 billion annual business for some 300 establishments nationwide. You can find more facts about America from the U.S. Census Bureau online at <www.census.gov>.

Sources:

Patent, accessed 6/4/2020: www.uspto.gov/about-us/news-updates/patent-bread-toaster-issued-october-18-1921

Strite and making toast, accessed 6/4/2020: <https://lemelson.mit.edu/resources/charles-p-strite>

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OCTOBER 18: NATIONAL CHEMISTRY WEEK

Profile America — Sunday, October 18th. Today is the start of National Chemistry Week, an annual event held to raise public awareness of chemistry in the modern world. Coordinated by the American Chemical Society, the effort involves businesses, schools and individuals in communicating the importance of chemistry to our quality of life. This year's theme is "Glues and Adhesives, Sticking with Chemistry" focusing on the properties of bonding compounds. The Chemical Society's efforts extend beyond a single week, through outreach and lesson plans for students at all levels of schooling. The social gain comes after such education, as the chemical manufacturing industry in the nation employs some 785,000 people in its 13,400 establishments. Annual revenues come to nearly \$765 billion. You can find more facts about America from the U.S. Census Bureau online at <www.census.gov>.

Sources:

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OCTOBER 19: WIND POWER

Profile America — Monday, October 19th. Throughout the decades, increasing research and development has gone into renewable sources of energy. Some of the results are seen atop windswept hills and plains across America — large electricity generating windmills. The first practical wind turbine generator goes back 79 years. It was on this date in 1941 that Palmer Putnam of Vermont demonstrated his device. In over 700 hours of operation, it produced almost 300,000 kilowatt hours. In America today, there are over 3,300 electric power-generating establishments producing 4.1 trillion kilowatt hours. The 58,000 wind turbines nationwide account for 7.3 percent of the country's electricity production. You can find more facts about America's people, places and economy, from the American Community Survey, at www.census.gov.

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OCTOBER 20: POLISH-AMERICAN HERITAGE MONTH

Profile America — Tuesday, October 20th. October is Polish-American Heritage Month, celebrating a people that numbered among America's first settlers, years before the Plymouth Pilgrims. The first Polish migrants joined the Jamestown, Virginia, settlement in 1608, and worked as glassmakers. One of the nation's Revolutionary War heroes was a Polish officer, who is also honored this month. General Casimir Pulaski served

under George Washington, organizing and leading the American cavalry. There are over 8.8 million people claiming purely or mixed Polish ancestry in America today, and some 534,000 speak Polish at home. The largest Polish-American communities are in New York City and Chicago. You can find more facts about America's people, places and economy, from the American Community Survey, at <www.census.gov>.

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OCTOBER 21: SHEDDING LIGHT

Profile America — Wednesday, October 21st. An invention was demonstrated on this date in 1879 that lit the way for a dramatic change in the rhythm of Americans' daily lives. At his Menlo Park, New Jersey, laboratory, Thomas Edison set up the first incandescent light bulb, which burned for almost 14 hours. Within a few years, some cities had installed electric streetlights. Nationwide, the number of homes with electricity grew steadily, but even in 1940, more than 1 in 5 houses was without power. Today, 100 percent of the country has access to electricity. American homes on average consume nearly 11,000 kilowatt hours of electricity each year. The national average bill for this power is about \$118 per month, but over \$168 in Hawaii. You can find more facts about America from the U.S. Census Bureau online at <www.census.gov>.

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OCTOBER 22: THE FIRST OF BILLIONS

Profile America — Thursday, October 22nd. “10 – 22 – 38 Astoria.” That cryptic sequence indicating date and place was the very first photocopied image, created on this date in 1938 in Astoria, New York. A man named Chester Carlson developed a method of making dry copies of documents on plain paper, known as xerography — which we take for granted in using photocopiers today. Before his invention, copies were made either by using carbon paper when typing, or by a mimeograph machine for large numbers of copies. The first commercial copiers became available in 1959. Now, 82 years to the day after the first photocopy, making copiers and other photo imaging equipment is a \$1.5 billion a year domestic business. You can find more facts about America from the U.S. Census Bureau online at <www.census.gov>.

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OCTOBER 23: NATIONAL SEAFOOD MONTH

Profile America — Friday, October 23rd. October is National Seafood Month, celebrating a nutrient-rich food that is a good source of protein, vitamins and minerals. Because it really does turn out to be brain food, government and health organizations recommend eating two seafood meals each week. Seafood used to be mostly confined to the coastal regions, but with advances in frozen food and the speed of distribution, just about every kind of fish and shellfish is available throughout the country. Americans eat an average of 16.1 pounds of seafood annually, dining on the fishing industry’s

annual catch of about 10 billion pounds. There are 552 seafood product preparation and packaging establishments nationwide, employing over 33,000 people in a \$13.5 billion a year business. You can find more facts about America's people, places and economy, from the American Community Survey, at <www.census.gov>.

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OCTOBER 24: AMERICAN PIE

Profile America — Saturday, October 24th. A great many Americans would name pizza high up among their favorite foods, month in and month out. But for the 34th time, October is designated as National Pizza Month. No one knows the exact origin of pizza, but ancient Mediterranean cultures enjoyed flatbreads with various toppings and seasonings. An Italian immigrant named Gennaro Lombardi opened the first pizzeria in the United States in New York City in 1905. American soldiers who served in Italy returned from World War II with a taste for pizza and helped its climb to nationwide popularity. Now, about 3 billion pizzas are sold annually. Before this year's turmoil, there were some 78,000 pizzerias nationwide, among the country's 572,000 sit-down and limited-service restaurants. You can find more facts about America from the U.S. Census Bureau online at <www.census.gov>.

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OCTOBER 25: MAKING WAVES

Profile America — Sunday, October 25th. A melted candy bar led to the invention of one of today's most-used kitchen appliances. Percy Spencer of the Raytheon Company was working on a radar device in the mid-1940s when he noticed that his snack had gotten soft. Intrigued, he experimented with irradiating some kernels of popcorn, which promptly burst. Further work led to the first microwave ovens. On this date in 1955, the first consumer models were introduced, but they required installation and cost almost \$1,300, which would be almost \$12,400 today. Now, 65 years on, most homes nationwide have microwave ovens, and just 863,000 have only the microwaves for cooking. Manufacturing microwave ovens and other cooking appliances is a \$4.8 billion a year business. *Profile America* is in its 24th year as a public service of the U.S. Census Bureau.

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OCTOBER 26: WASHING MACHINES

Profile America — Monday, October 26th. Doing laundry was a wearying, time-consuming chore for many centuries. The industrial revolution and American inventiveness attacked the ancient chore on this date in 1858, when Hamilton Smith patented a rotary washing machine. It was hand-driven, with a crank turning a perforated shell within a wooden tub. This creation was scarcely a labor-saving device. People continued to use the tub and washboard, even after the first electric washer came along in 1908. A few years later, the agitator-type machine appeared and gained immediate popularity. Finally, in the 1930s, the fully automatic washer with a spin cycle went on sale. Today, over 78 percent of the nation's households have a washing machine. You can find more facts about America's people, places and economy, from the American Community Survey, at <www.census.gov>.

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OCTOBER 27: NATIONAL CRIME PREVENTION MONTH

Profile America — Tuesday, October 27th. Everyone is a potential crime victim, and October is when government agencies, civic groups, schools, businesses and youth organizations join in trying to reduce the threat. This is National Crime Prevention Month, with special awareness and education events planned across the country. During this time, we are all encouraged to help reduce violence, drugs and property crimes with efforts at three levels — family, neighborhood and community. Suggestions include setting up a neighborhood watch program, making sure streets and individual homes are well lighted, and locking your car. Such efforts supplement the work of the nation's 809,000 police officers and detectives, and the 752,000 employees of the nation's 9,400 security guard and patrol services. You can find more facts about America's people, places and economy, from the American Community Survey, at <www.census.gov>.

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OCTOBER 28: BRUSHING UP

Profile America — Wednesday, October 28th. October is Dental Hygiene Month. Perhaps there is a seasonal prompting for this observance, given the sugary infusions into our diets beginning with Halloween at month's end. The modern, nylon bristle toothbrush dates back only 80 years, but the human use of tools to clean teeth extends into very ancient history—around 5,000 years ago. Versions of toothpaste date back even earlier, though the paste in a tube appeared in the late 19th century. Today, there are many brands of anti-bacterial toothpastes and carefully designed and angled toothbrushes. All this gives a head start to the labors of America's 168,000 dentists, 193,000 dental hygienists, and 307,000 dental assistants, working in about 136,000 dental offices. *Profile America* is in its 24th year as a public service of the U.S. Census Bureau.

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OCTOBER 29: THE WRITE STUFF

Profile America — Thursday, October 29th. The scene on this date 75 years ago at Gimbel's department store in New York City was shopping chaos. Big ads the day before had trumpeted the first sale in the nation of a new writing instrument that guaranteed it would write for two years without refilling — the ballpoint pen. By the end of that day in 1945, the store had sold its entire stock of 10,000 at \$12.50 each. The idea of the ballpoint pen was first patented in 1888 by John Loud of Massachusetts, who never made any pens. One version was developed in Europe, and used by the

British military in the Second World War. Now, ballpoints are the standard. Vast selections are offered by the nation's 5,600 office supply stores, which employ some 71,000 workers. *Profile America* is in its 24th year as a public service of the U.S. Census Bureau.

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OCTOBER 30: INTERNET BIRTHDAY

Profile America — Friday, October 30th. A technological breakthrough in the waning months of the Hong Kong flu pandemic led to further developments that now allow many to work at home during the current crisis. The event occurred 51 years ago today ... or yesterday, depending on your location. While Americans in the Eastern and Central time zones entered October 30, 1969, it was around 10:30 p.m. Pacific time on October 29 that the first connection was made on what would become the internet. The first two computers linked were at UCLA and the Stanford Research Institute — part of a Defense Department program called ARPANET. Within a year, 10 sites were connected. Today, nearly 92 percent of American households have computers, and about 85 percent have internet access at home. You can find more facts about America from the U.S. Census Bureau online at <www.census.gov>.

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OCTOBER 31: CRUNCHING NUMBERS

Profile America — Saturday, October 31st. The month now ending is special in the history of handling data. In a month that holds the anniversaries of the first adding

machine and the tentative birth of the internet, October is also when the first all-electronic calculations were performed on an experimental computer. John Vincent Atanasoff was an associate professor in mathematics and physics at Iowa State College. Beginning in September 1939 with a \$650 grant from the school, he created the first electronic digital computing device. The computer was no laptop model: it was about the size of a desk and weighed more than 700 pounds. In America today, there are over 12,000 establishments manufacturing computers and related electronic products, with a value of nearly \$325 billion. You can find more facts about America from the U.S. Census Bureau online at <www.census.gov>.

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