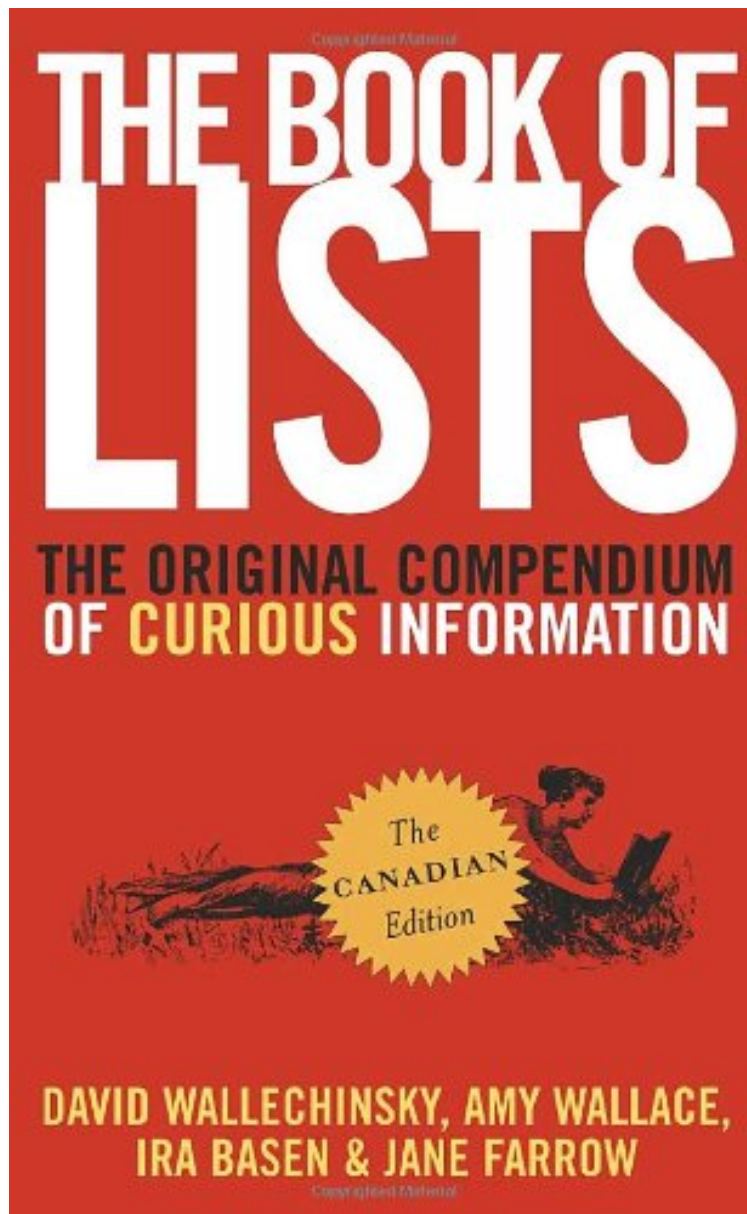


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The Book of Lists: The Original Compendium of Curious Information

David Wallechinsky, Amy D. Wallace, Ira Basen, Jane Farrow
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0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. but still good stuff. By Timothy J. Hunter It's highly Canadianized, so usable content (for what I do) is limited, but still good stuff. 2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. *Book of Lists* By Judy Blackburn I probably didn't research this product enough to realise that much of the content, however interesting, is Canadian based and some of the facts do not mean much to me. 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Worth the money! By Walker Johnson YEARS ago when I was a morning radio person I bought David's books the second they came out. There were the bible! Found this one again on and grabbed it for my K Fire. Get it!

A new edition of the classic bestseller from the original authors, with additional material specifically prepared for Canadian readers by long-time *This Morning* CBC producer, Ira Basen, and Jane Farrow, the author of *Wanted Words*. In 1977, a publishing sensation was born. *The Book of Lists*, the first and best compendium of facts weirder than fiction, was published. Filled with intriguing information and must-talk-about trivia it has spawned many imitators but none as addictive or successful. For nearly three decades since, the editors have been researching curious facts, unusual statistics and the incredible stories behind them. Now the most entertaining and informative of these have been brought together in a long-awaited, thoroughly up-to-date new edition that is also the first Canadian edition. Ira Basen and Jane Farrow have augmented the existing lists with fascinating homegrown material, and compiled lists specifically of relevance to Canadian readers. So if you've always wanted to find out how porcupines really mate, how comedy can kill and that most essential piece of knowledge how long the longest recorded nose was, this is the book for you. With contributions from a variety of celebrities and experts including Margaret Atwood, Mike Myers, Michael Ondaatje, Dave Eggers, Phillip Pullman and Charlotte Gray, this anthology has something for everyone and more than you ever suspected you wanted to know. A list of lists from *The Book of Lists*: 10 Notable Film Scenes Left on the Cutting Room Floor 10 Afflictions and Their Patron Saints 14 Nations with More Sheep Than People 5 Trips to the Canadian Wilderness That Ended in Disaster 10 Really Bad Canadian Sports Teams 14 Last Words of Famous Canadians Kurt Brownings 9 Turning Points in Figure Skating History 7 Trial Verdicts That Caused Riots 12 Museums of Limited Appeal 10 Unusual Canadian Place Names That Start with a B 7 Well-Known Sayings Attributed to the Wrong Person 10 Celebrated People Who Read Their Own Obituaries Sloan's Jay Fergusons 10 Perfect Pop Songs 13 Possible Sites for the Garden of Eden 9 Canadian Sports Stars Who Became Politicians First Sexual Encounters of 13 Prominent Canadians

About the Author David Wallechinsky is the author of numerous books including *The Peoples Almanac Presents the Twentieth Century: History with the Boring Parts Left Out* and *The Complete Book of the Olympics*. Amy Wallace is the co-author of four previous volumes of *The Book of Lists*, as well as several other popular reference books. She also wrote the bestselling memoir *Sorcerers Apprentice: My Life with Carlos Castaneda*. Ira Basen is a long-time CBC Radio producer. He worked together with Jane on *Workology*, and has also produced *This Morning*, *Quirks Quarks* and *Sunday Morning*. His book *Spin* will be published by Penguin Books in 2006. Jane Farrow is the author of *Wanted Words* and *Wanted Words 2*. She has hosted the CBC Radio One programs *The Omnivore*, *Home* and *Workology*. Excerpt. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved. Introduction As Oscar Wilde observed, the only sin is to be bored. We believe it is an equal sin to be boring, and if the great wit was correct, then the authors and millions of *Book of Lists* readers are quite unblemished by sin: for we place a high value on curiosity. The original 1977 volume of *The Book of Lists*, and its all-new sequels, inspired nearly 200 imitation volumes. These have included books of lists about movies, rock n roll, Judaism, the Bible, general sports, and countless other subjects. The books spawned games, toilet paper with lists on it, CD-ROMs, calendars and television shows. We had no idea that *The Book of Lists* would become a bestseller, let alone a phenomenon. We thought we were just having fun. *The Book of Lists* rose to number 1 on the bestseller lists, and was published all over the world. Young readers wrote to tell us they'd bought our book for fun, and were using it to spice up their schoolwork. Older readers locked themselves in bathrooms, curled up in bed, took the book to parties and demanded more editions. We invited their contributions, which came pouring in, and we featured many of them in the editions that followed. Although we are pleased to have popularised a genre that so many people enjoy, we do not pretend to have been its founders. That honour goes to the Reverend Nathaniel Wanley, author of *Wonders of the Little World*, a book of lists first published in 1678. We didn't know about the Reverend Wanley when we wrote our own *Book of Lists*, but a glance through his table of contents shows striking similarities: Of such People and Nations as have been scourged and afflicted by small and contemptible things, Of such as having been extremely Wild, and Prodigal, or Debauched in their Youth, have afterwards proved excellent Persons, Of such as have been seized with an extraordinary joy, at what hath followed there-upon. The trend never died down, and in recent years has had a dazzling renaissance. We appear to live in an age in which the volume of information available to us is far too overwhelming for our minds to process. The everyday lists we all make are a balm to a cluttered mind; list-making puts things in order, it clarifies, it helps coax truth from the cracks of the universe, and it invites our favourite question: What if . . . ? In the present volume, we have updated our readers

favourite lists, prepared an array of new material, and included lists from a wide variety of notables and celebrities. We owe much of the inspiration for this volume to our father, Irving Wallace, who always hoped we'd continue to compile new editions. Whenever possible, we have concentrated on lists that cause readers to laugh out loud, gasp, shake their heads in wonder, or call out Wait until you hear this! To quote Mark Twain's introduction to *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*: Persons attempting to find a motive in this narrative will be prosecuted; persons attempting to find a moral in it will be banished; persons attempting to find a plot in it will be shot.

INTRODUCTION AND ACKNOWLEDGMENTS FROM IRA BASEN AND JANE FARROW

It was hard not to feel intimidated about joining forces with the Wallace and Wallechinsky list machine. The first *Book of Lists*, by David, Amy and their father, Irving, was brilliant. David and Amy have subsequently spent several decades filing away obscure pieces of information to be included in future books of lists. And here we were, two CBC radio producers, whose brains gear more towards finding interesting people to talk to on the radio than to trying to find a Canadian who had died laughing. Sometimes we got lucky. We hadn't really expected to be able to add Canadian content to a list of famous events that happened in the bathtub, until we stumbled across the fact that former prime minister R.B. Bennett had died in his. It also turns out that you can actually learn a few things about the differences between Canada and the United States by working on a book of lists such as this. We realized that our showbiz celebrity culture is not nearly as developed as theirs; our stars aren't larger than life. We could find no examples of a public kiss that equalled the buzz created by Britney and Madonna, or scenes left out of Canadian films that could rise to the level of the lost production number from *The Wizard of Oz*. So we started looking in different places. Our mobsters don't have nicknames as colourful as their American counterparts, but our athletes do. And while the American version of the book had a list of 15 Actors Who Became Politicians, we flipped it around to suit our needs: 12 Canadian Sports Heroes Who Became Politicians. Finally, we couldn't find an instance of Canadians rioting after a trial verdict, but we had no trouble finding fans going wild after Stanley Cup games and rock concerts.

We want to thank our experts who took us deep into their areas of specialization to come up with some truly wonderful lists. Two whose names are not attached to their lists are Robert Williams, the Director of the Centre for Election Studies at the University of Waterloo, who contributed a list on the highs and lows of Canadian elections, and our CBC buddy Nick Purdon who, luckily for us, happens to have a fascination with wilderness expeditions that ended in disaster. We are grateful for the assistance of the brilliant and patient library staff at the CBC and the University of Toronto libraries. We also want to thank some close friends and colleagues who generously indulged our needling inquiries about Canadian law (Debra Parkes and Pam Shime), rowdy rock fans (Greig Dymond) and all things environmental (Lorraine Johnson). Our trusted editor, Michael Schellenberg, did a wonderful job of keeping us focused and motivated. He could be depended on for encouraging words at the right moment, and more importantly, came through with a few steak dinners at critical junctures. Most of all, we thank Michael for being organized, driven and infallible in other words, the editorial equivalent of a border collie. Thanks to Kate Cassaday for compiling the first round of the manuscript; our copy editor, Sue Sumeraj, for sticking to the facts and crossing the ts; Deirdre Molina, Knopf Canada's capable managing editor, for grace under pressure; Martha Magor, for her able assistance; Bao-Nghi Nhan, our intrepid photo researcher; and finally, the always elegant executive publisher Louise Dennys, for giving us a shot at the big time.

Jane would like to single out her own guiding light, Sophie Hackett, for all the love and support on the home front, and Ira would like to acknowledge the names on his most important list: Lynn, Joanna, Andrea, Rochelle and Nathaniel. We spent many hours in libraries and on the Internet researching these lists, knowing all the while that our greatest resource will ultimately be you, the reader. That's why we really are looking forward to hearing from you, even if your letters begin I can't believe you missed . . . So if you know about a cat who covered hundreds of miles to come home, or a noteworthy Canadian who hated his or her portrait, or a famously naked Canadian woman, please get in touch. That's why they've invented second editions.

Ira and Jane