

The '100 Great Icons'

SLINKY – SPRING FLING

A STEEL SPRING THAT WOBBLLED OFF THE SHELF IN A NAVAL ENGINEER'S WORKSHOP SPAWNED ONE OF THE WORLD'S BEST-LOVED TOYS.

In the control rooms of US naval ships of the 1940s, keeping one's eye on the instruments during high-speed manoeuvres or rough seas was a challenge, as engine vibrations and ship movement wreaked havoc on sensitive equipment. Naval engineer Richard James was attempting to solve this problem in 1943 when he accidentally made a completely different discovery. Experimenting with various forms of springs, on which he planned to mount the ship's instruments for greater stability, he placed reject springs on a shelf above his workbench. One day, he knocked into his bench – many of the springs fell to the ground, but one 'walked' down, taking steps off the shelf, onto a pile of books, onto the bench and finally onto the floor, where it wobbled in a cute fashion before coming to a stop. Immediately recognizing the entertainment value of this spring, Richard rushed home to Betty, his wife and mother of their six children. Over the next two years, the couple finetuned the design and coil of the spring, eventually steeling on an 80-foot length of steel wire. After borrowing US\$500, they founded the James Spring & Wire Company and Richard invented a machine to manufacture the springs. Betty scoured the dictionary for a name for the toy, and when she came across the word 'slinky', meaning 'graceful and sinuous in movement', she knew she'd struck gold. In 1945 the first batch of 400 Slinkys went on sale in Gimble's Department Store, Philadelphia, for one dollar each. Richard and Betty were so nervous about the Slinky launch that they gave a friend some money to buy a few, but they didn't have worried. After a quick demonstration of the toy, the original batch sold out in less than ninety minutes. Since then, over 300 million Slinkys have been sold around the globe – using enough wire to circle the earth 126 times. The original design has been changed only once, in 1973, when it was decided the ends should be crimped to avoid any change of injury. As well as being an entertainment toy, Slinkys have been utilized for many other purposes during their sixty-year history. In Texas and Alabama, they've become a useful addition to pecan-picking devices. The unique shadows found inside Harrah's Casino in Las Vegas are created by Slinkys attached to lighting fixtures. They've been used as mail-holders and gutter-protectors, and, during the Vietnam War, US marines discovered that a Slinky thrown over a tree branch made an exceptional radio antenna.

FAST FACTS:

- 1946:** The Slinky is taken to the American Toy Fair, launching the toy onto the international market.
- 1960:** Richard James leaves his wife Betty and their six children to join a cult in Bolivia. Betty becomes CEO of the company, which is now called James Industries.
- 1974:** Richard James dies.
- 1990s:** Slinky appears in several films, including Ace Ventura: When Nature Calls, Demolition Man and Other People's Money. Slinky Dog stars in Toy Story.
- 1998:** With an extended toy line including Slinky Jr, Plastic Slinky, Crazy Eyes and Slinky Dog, the Slinky brand is sold, the Slinky brands is sold to Poof Toys.
- 2001:** Betty James is inducted into the Toy Industry Hall of Fame.
- 2006:** Slinky has been sold on every continent except Antarctica.

From Chris Sheedy & Jenny Bond

"The RULES of LIFE"

It doesn't hurt to be helpful

We said the previous Rule that the angry person you encounter may have had a bad day before they got to you. Let's try to make it a good day for all of them before they get to someone else. Let's spread a bit of goodwill around out there and then maybe, just maybe, mad cyclists won't be quite so ready to rear up and be abusive and aggressive. Perhaps no one had been kind to him that day. Perhaps no one had been kind to him for a very long time. See, it's all your fault. If only you'd been a bit nicer to him, he wouldn't have taken out his wet angst on the rest of us that day. Always offering a hand and being generally decent to everybody is really easy once we get into the mindset that it's what we are supposed to be doing. It can become your 'default' behaviour. So your first reaction becomes 'Yes, sure, I can show you how to do that, no problem', rather than 'I'm very busy, can't you ask someone else?' Try it as a different approach at work and see what it does for your reputation and career. Getting known as someone who is always ready to help does not get you known as a pushover. Quite the reverse in fact. If you see someone in trouble – even if it's only that they've split their shopping getting it into the back of the car, you can always go up and say, 'Can I help?' If they want you to they'll accept it and if not... well, you tried and that's the main thing. This is all about going into every day thinking the best people, being the first to smile, seeing where somebody might need a hand instead of bustling on past. It's about trying to see a situation from their viewpoint, being sympathetic if they have problems you don't have to solve them all. It means taking the time and trouble to make sure people around you are OK. And yes, this does mean strangers as well. If we all took trouble to smile occasionally at strangers, the world might start each day on a slightly less confrontational foot.

From Richard Templar

'Snippets'

This has been in before and is claimed to be John Cleese's "Letter to America". I have no idea if it is but it is a 'good read' and deserves a repeat. Dear Citizens of America, In view of your failure to elect a competent President and thus to govern yourselves, we hereby give notice of the revocation of your independence, effective immediately. Her Sovereign Majesty, Queen Elizabeth II, will resume monarchical duties over all states, commonwealths and other territories (except Kansas, which she does not fancy), as from Monday next. Your new prime minister, Gordon Brown, will appoint a governor for America without the need for further elections. Congress and the Senate will be disbanded. A questionnaire may be circulated next year to determine whether any of you noticed. To aid in the transition to a British Crown Dependency, the following rules are introduced with immediate effect: 1. You should look up "revocation" in the Oxford English Dictionary. Then look up "aluminium," and check the pronunciation guide. You will be amazed at just how wrongly you have been pronouncing it. 2. The letter 'U' will be reinstated in words such as 'colour', 'favour' and 'neighbour.' Likewise, you will learn to spell 'doughnut' without skipping half the letters, and the suffix "ize" will be replaced by the suffix "ise." 3. You will learn that the suffix 'burgh' is pronounced 'burra'; you may elect to spell Pittsburgh as 'Pittsberg' if you find you simply can't cope with correct pronunciation. 4. Generally, you will be expected to raise your vocabulary to acceptable levels (look up "vocabulary"). Using the same twenty-seven words interspersed with filler noises such as "like" and "you know" is an unacceptable and inefficient form of communication. 5. There is no such thing as "US English." We will let Microsoft know on your behalf. The Microsoft spell-checker will be adjusted to take account of the reinstated letter 'u' and the elimination of "-ize." 6. You will relearn your original national anthem, "God Save The Queen", but only after fully carrying out Task #1 (see above). 7. July 4th will no longer be celebrated as a holiday. November 2nd will be a new national holiday, but to be celebrated only in England. It will be called "Come-Uppance Day." 8. You will learn to resolve personal issues without using guns, lawyers or therapists. The fact that you need so many lawyers and therapists shows that you're not adult enough to be independent. Guns should only be handled by adults. If you're not adult enough to sort things out without suing someone or speaking to a therapist then you're not grown up enough to handle a gun. 9. Therefore, you will no longer be allowed to own or carry anything more dangerous than a vegetable peeler. A permit will be required if you wish to carry a vegetable peeler in public. 10. All American cars are hereby banned. They are crap and this is for your own good. When we show you German cars, you will understand what we mean. 11. All intersections will be replaced with roundabouts, and you will start driving on the left with immediate effect. At the same time, you will go metric immediately and without the benefit of conversion tables... Both roundabouts and metrification will help you understand the British sense of humour. 12. The Former USA will adopt UK prices on petrol (which you have been calling "gasoline") – roughly \$8/US per gallon. Get used to it. 13. You will learn to make real chips. Those things you call French fries are not real chips, and those things you insist on calling potato chips are properly called "crisps." Real chips are thick cut, fried in animal fat, and dressed not with catsup but with malt vinegar. 14. Waiters and waitresses will be trained to be more aggressive with customers. 15. The cold tasteless stuff you insist on calling beer is not actually beer at all. Henceforth, only proper British Bitter will be referred to as "beer," and European brews of known and accepted provenance will be referred to as "Lager." American brands will be referred to as "Near-Frozen Gnat's Urine," so that all can be sold without risk of further confusion. 16. Hollywood will be required occasionally to cast English actors as good guys. Hollywood will also be required to cast English actors as English characters. Watching Andie MacDowell attempt English dialogue in "Four Weddings and a Funeral" was an experience akin to having one's ear removed with a cheese grater. (N.B. This is wrong. She played an American. Ed.) 17. You will cease playing American "football." There is only one kind of proper football; you call it "soccer". Those of you brave enough, in time, will be allowed to play rugby (which has some similarities to American "football", but does not involve stopping for a rest every twenty seconds or wearing full kevlar body armour like a bunch of Jessies – English slang for "Big Girls Blouse"). 18. Further, you will stop playing baseball. It is not reasonable to host an event called the "World Series" for a game which is not played outside of America. Since only 2.1% of you are aware that there is a world beyond your borders, your error is understandable and forgiven. 19. You must tell us who killed JFK. It's been driving us mad. 20. An internal revenue agent (i.e. tax collector) from Her Majesty's Government will be with you shortly to ensure the acquisition of all monies due, backdated to 1776. Thank you for your co-operation. John Cleese

FROM THE EDITOR

May was a mix of pain and pleasure.

The pleasures included on the eve of 19th May we celebrated the inauguration of President Francisco "Lu-Olo" Guterres and congratulations to outgoing President Taur Matan Ruak. At the stroke of 12 midnight, the function changed to the 15th Anniversary of the Restoration of Independence.

Governor General of Australia Sir Peter Cosgrove visited for both occasions.

Later on in the eve of 20th, a statue of the first President of Timor-Leste Mr. Francisco Xavier do Amaral, was unveiled in a formal but moving ceremony at the roundabout near the old market which is now the Expo Centre. It was fitting that the man who proclaimed the Nation's Independence back in 1975 be honoured on the 15th anniversary of the restoration of Independence.

There were several birthdays and MEGA Tours celebrated 15 years since opening. The owner, Eduardo Massa also celebrated his and wife Carla's 39th wedding anniversary.

On the 'pain' side of the month, we grieve the passing of Mr Mário Viegas Carrascalão. A terrible loss to family, friends and Timor Leste.

As per usual, if you are going somewhere, safe travelling.

Till next time. **Cheers ! Leith Carroll**

EMBASSIES

Australia (also representing Canada)	358	3322111	Mexico (Consulate Honorary)	32U	3313304 / 78572595	
Brazil	1L	3324203 / 3321728	New Zealand	1M	3310087 / 77321015	
Brunei Darussalam	908	3310225	Polish	30R	3312263 / 77230943	
China	97U	3325163 / 77231718	Portugal	8M	18H	3311520
Cuba	21P	3322246	Philippines	32C	3310408	
European Commission	13	3311580	South Korea	36T	3321635 / 77290519	
Indonesia	97T	3317107 / 3311109	Thailand	39T	3310609 / 3310601	
Japan	33U	3323131 / 3323132	United States of America	33U	3324684 / 3313160	
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