
Marathon Projects Ltd.

The World Almanac® Appoints Marathon Projects To Be Its Licensing Agent

(Midland Park, NJ - February, 2002) The World Almanac®, the #1 reference guide has appointed Marathon Projects as its licensing agent. Marathon Projects will oversee the whole licensing program and be responsible for further enhancing The World Almanac®, brand identity through various licensing opportunities, including board games, card games, puzzles, educational toys, computer software, collectibles, school supplies, office supplies and other information based products.

Craig Kalter, president of Marathon Projects said, “The World Almanac®, is the undisputed leader in the encyclopedia and reference guide market selling more books than all their competitors combined. They possess strong brand recognition with consumers with an unparalleled heritage going back over 100 years. For example, in 1961, a wire service photograph showed President Kennedy sitting behind his desk in the Oval Office and on his desk were 6 books, with the only reference book being The World Almanac®, Amazingly, almost 40 years later, a 1999 New York Times photo showed President Clinton in almost the exact same position, seated at his desk in the Oval Office. Clearly visible on the desk behind him are busts of Jefferson and Lincoln, pictures of his wife and daughter, a Bible, and a copy of The World Almanac®.

Kalter continued, “In 1963, following President Kennedy’s assassination, Lyndon Johnson was sworn in on Air Force One while flying from Dallas to Washington. The oath of office was read from a copy of The World Almanac®. Forty years earlier, Calvin Coolidge had been sworn in after President Warren Harding’s sudden death in 1923 by his father, a Vermont Justice, who also read the oath from a copy of The World Almanac®. This link with history and the fact that today, The World Almanac® still sells over 1,500,000 books per year, as well as is perennially ranked number 1 by The New York Times Best Seller list clearly illustrates the indelible mark that The World Almanac® has made on our society.”

James Keenley, VP of Sales & Marketing for The World Almanac® added, “The World Almanac® has served readers since the 19th century, but The World Almanac® icon is not just limited to North America, it can also be found in other parts of the globe, as it has been translated into Japanese and Italian, and a Hungarian edition is forthcoming imminently.”

Mr. Keenley commented further, “Over the years The World Almanac® has become a household name and has been featured in a number of Hollywood films. For example, Fred MacMurray talks about it with Edward G. Robinson in Double Indemnity; Bette Davis screams about it in All About Eve; Audrey Hepburn and Gary Cooper flirt about it in Love in the Afternoon; it is featured in Miracle on Thirty-Fourth Street when a trial is held to see if Santa Claus really exists; and Rosie Perez continually reads it in the film White Men Can’t Jump. The World Almanac® also makes frequent appearances on television. It was featured on an episode of Third Rock from the Sun, and it is regularly cited as a source for TV’s popular shows Who Wants to Be a Millionaire and Jeopardy, and as a source for contestants preparing for those shows.”

Kalter continued, “The World Almanac® sells all the major retail accounts including Barnes & Noble, Borders, Wal Mart, Target & K Mart. The World Almanac® books are everywhere. The World Almanac® is used in more schools, libraries, offices, and homes than any other information source. With this dominant presence they are a natural brand to be developed into selective licensed products.”

Inquisitive minds are constantly looking for the unusual facts to share with their friends, family members and colleagues and The World Almanac® provides its readers with this type of information. The following excerpts from the pages of The World Almanac® are just a few tidbits from their mountains of facts.

It's a Fact: The continent of Antarctica is about 1 ½ times the size of the United States, but 98% of the surface is covered by ice, with the rest of it barren rock. It is populated mostly by scientific researchers (an average of about 4,000 live there in the summer, and about 1,000 in the winter), from 29 countries, operating under an international treaty signed in 1959.

It's a Fact: The Danish monarchy stretches back to Viking times in an uninterrupted line of 50 kings and 2 queens, a record among the world's nations.

It's a Fact: Close to half of the 130 ships of the Spanish Armada of 1588 were destroyed – but only about 3 in battle with the British. The rest were wrecked or foundered in storms after the fleet was repelled and forced to sail northward around the British Isles.

It's a Fact: More than 1,000 people have succeeded in reaching the summit of Mount Everest since 1953, while more than 150 people have died in the attempt. Records were broken in May 2001, when the first blind person, the youngest (age 15), and the oldest (age 64) reached the top.

It's a Fact: The largest reported snowflake was discovered by a ranch owner at Fort Keogh, MT, on January 28, 1887. It measured 38 cm (15 in) wide and 20 cm (8 in) thick, or as its discoverer put it, was “larger than milkpans.”

It's a Fact: The IRS web site www.irs.gov recorded more than 1.5 billion hits from Jan. 1, 2001, through April 16, 2001. This figure was up 57% from the previous year.

It's a Fact: Electronic fax filing hit a new high for the number of returns filed in 2001. As of April 16, 2001, the IRS had received over 39 million returns electronically. This was up more than 13% from 2000 and represents about one-third of all tax returns filed for the year.

It's a Fact: While Chicago is known as the “windy city,” Boston, Buffalo, Casper, Cleveland, Dallas-Ft. Worth, Des Moines, Honolulu, Kansas City (MO), Milwaukee, Minneapolis-St. Paul, and Omaha all had higher average wind speeds in 2000.

It's a Fact: The real Macbeth did not murder Duncan in bed, as Shakespeare's villain did, but killed him on the battlefield. When Macbeth was slain in turn, he was buried in a place of honor on the island of Iona.

It's a Fact: The “conference handshake” has been a Supreme Court tradition since it was introduced in the late 1800s by Chief Justice Melville W. Fuller. Every day before they go to the bench, and at the start of their private conferences where they jointly discuss impending cases, each justice shakes hands with the other 8. Justice Fuller started this practice as a reminder that, despite differences of opinion, the justices all share a harmony of purpose.

It's a Fact: The U.S. POPClock at the Census Bureau keeps a running estimate of the total U.S. population. Taking the 2000 Census as a starting point, the clock assumed the following standards as of Aug. 31, 2001: one birth every 8 seconds; one death every 14 seconds; a net gain of one international migrant every 34 seconds; a net gain of one U.S. citizen returning every 3,202 seconds.

That results in an overall net gain of one person every 11 seconds. To find out the projected current population, visit www.census.gov/main/www/popclock/html

It's a Fact: The gap in numbers between males and females in the U.S. narrowed during the 1990s, as immigration and falling death rates boosted the male population. The number of males grew by 14%, the number of females by 13%, leaving a ratio of 96.3 males for every female in 2000. Alaska had the most males per female (107 per 100), followed by Nevada (103.9); the District of Columbia had the fewest (89.0), followed by Rhode Island (92.5).

It's a Fact: Austin is home to North America's largest urban bat population; up to 1.5 million Mexican free-tail bats fly there at night.

It's a Fact: Baltimore was home of the first U.S. umbrella factory (1828) and first ice cream freezer (1848); the Ouija board was invented there (1892), and the first U.S. stage coach route ran from Baltimore to Philadelphia (1773).

It's a Fact: E-mail is the Internet's most widespread application – about 80% of Internet users use email. The fastest growing Internet activities in 2000 were shopping and bill-paying.

It's a Fact: Eight million blood cells are produced in the body every second. They replace eight million blood cells that die every second.

It's a Fact: The Cambodian alphabet is the world's largest, with 74 letters. The world's shortest, used in the Solomon Islands, has only 11.

It's a Fact: The word “bee,” as in “spelling bee,” refers to a community gathering focused on a single activity. The word in this usage may be derived from the Middle English “bene,” meaning “prayer” or “favor.”

It's a Fact: At nearly 7,000 feet above sea level, Santa Fe, New Mexico, is the highest capital city in the U.S. The Palace of Governors, built there in 1610, is the oldest government building in the U.S.

It's a Fact: The YMCA, which celebrated its 150th anniversary in 2001, can take credit for at least three modern sports that were invented under its auspices: basketball (by Dr. James Naismith, at a YMCA training school in Springfield, MA, in 1891, volleyball (by William Morgan at a Holyoke, MA, Y in 1895), and racquetball (by Y member Joe Sobek at a Greenwich, CT, YMCA facility in 1950).

It's a Fact: In 2000, 57% of school-age children (ages 6 to 17 years) had access to a computer both at home and at school, while 23% had access only at school and 10% only at home.

It's a Fact: NASA astronauts Thomas Jones and Robert Curbeam Jr. conducted America's 100th spacewalk on Feb. 14, 2001, outside the space shuttle *Atlantis*.

It's a Fact: The term “United Nations” was coined at the White House on New Year's Day, 1942, when Pres. Franklin D. Roosevelt approached his house guest British Prime Minister Winston Churchill as the latter was taking a bath; FDR suggested it as the name for the wartime alliance being forged against the Axis powers. Later that day, Great Britain and the U.S., with the Soviet Union and China, signed a “United Nations” pact to fight on and avoid agreeing to a separate peace.

It's a Fact: The first official U.S. postage stamps were a 5-cent stamp, picturing Benjamin Franklin, the nation's first U.S. postmaster general, and a 10-cent stamp picturing George Washington. They were both issued July 1, 1847.