



All Facts Considered: The Essential Library of Inessential Knowledge

Kee Malesky

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For the bestselling miscellany market, an NPR librarian's compendium of fascinating facts on history, science, and the arts

How much water do the Great Lakes contain? Who were the first and last men killed in the Civil War? How long is a New York minute? What are the lost plays of Shakespeare? What building did Elvis leave last? Get the answers to these and countless other vexing questions in a *All Facts Considered*. Guaranteed to enlighten even the most seasoned trivia buff, this treasure trove of "who knew?" factoids spans a wide range of intriguing subjects.

Written by noted NPR librarian Kee Malesky, whom Scott Simon has called the "source of all human knowledge"

Answers questions on history, natural history, science, religion, language, and the arts

Packed with valuable nuggets of information, from the useful to the downright bizarre

The perfect gift for every inquiring mind that wants to know, *All Facts Considered* will put you at the center of the conversation as you show off your essential store of inessential yet irresistible knowledge.

All Facts Considered: The Essential Library of Inessential Knowledge Details

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Donna says

Filled with so many facts about things that were totally interesting to me and others that I didn't care about but were interesting to read about anyway. It was a great read and fun to share with others too.

Michelle says

This is a compendium of trivia and other assorted facts from a fact checker/librarian at NPR. The book is organized into sections and has a nice flow between items, each of which gets a short, descriptive section, from 1-2 paragraphs to 1-2 pages. Some of the facts were new to me (Emily Dickinson was in fact a redhead), while others were more well known to me, particularly in the science and nature categories. The book is easy to pick up and read piece by piece and is obviously well researched with a good index. Kee Malesky's writing is fun and humorous and I enjoyed picking up some new trivia tidbits.

David Ward says

All Facts Considered: The Essential Library of Inessential Knowledge by Kee Malesky (John Wiley and Sons Inc. 2010) (001) is the kind of trivia book I enjoy - useless but interesting true facts and back stories. Here is an example: "We all learned that there are three) states of matter--solid, liquid, and gas--but there is actually a fourth [plasma]...Plasma is an ionized gas whose atoms have released electrons due to the influence of heat or another form of energy, which thus alters the electrical charge...Of the four states of matter, plasma is by far the most common, accounting for 99 percent of the visible universe." (p.102). Here's another: "The entire region of New England, which is 71,992 square miles--Maine (35,385), New Hampshire (9,350), Vermont (9,614), Massachusetts (10,555), Connecticut (5,543), and Rhode Island (1,545)--could fit inside the state of South Dakota (77,116 square miles), with more than enough space to include Delaware (2,489 square miles), too.(p. 114).My rating: 6/10, finished 7/24/11.

Megan Richardson says

Normally I like books like this, but this one fell short. Some of the information was interesting, but it wasn't organized in any sort of way. Might be a good coffee table book, but other than that...

Teresa says

"I Love FACTS! This was full of great information!"

This was a terrific book and I would definitely listen to 'All Facts Considered: The Essential Library of Inessential Knowledge' again. It was an eye-opener. I love learning the origin of things, their meanings and the thought and history behind things. There were several moments and facts that I particularly liked in this

book. I like the meaning behind the names of Italian food. That was great. I also love the fact that quarks come in flavors! Who knew? I enjoyed Tom Dheere's performance in this book. It had nice flow and was well paced for me. Each section had a nice segue to the next. I really like the inessential knowledge. I find knowledge essential. This book was very refreshing and I would have loved to have had this when I was a kid. Good stuff!

Carmen says

I love to learn! And I learned some interesting things:

- Thousand Island salad dressing is actually named for a thousand islands - more precisely, the 1,864 islands in the St. Lawrence River between the United States and Canada.

- Saltimbocca: jump into the mouth
Linguini: little tongues
Arrabbiata: angry style
Tiramisu: lift me up
Orecchiette: little ears
Puttanesca: in the style of a prostitute
Vermicelli: little worms
Strozzapreti: strangled or choking priest

- Within Christianity, for example, the doctrines of the Trinity (God in three persons) and of the nature of Jesus (both human and divine) seem to contradict the single God concept.

- Originally, deadline's meaning was even more literal. It was a term used in POW camps in the Civil War. A Confederate officer described one in 1864: "A railing round the inside of the stockade, and about 20 feet from it, constitutes the "dead line," beyond which the prisoners are not allowed to pass," or they could expect to be shot by the guards."

- SIN AND VIRTUE
Humility opposes pride.
Generosity opposes covetousness.
Chastity opposes lust.
Meekness opposes anger.
Temperance opposes gluttony.
Brotherly love opposes envy.
Diligence opposes sloth.

- A curse on people who steal books:

German: 1172: If anyone take away this book, let him die the death; let him be fried in a pan; let the falling sickness and fever seize him; let him be broken on the wheel, and hanged.

- Coyotes (canis latrans) are wild dogs, so they can breed with domestic dogs, producing either a coydog (male coyote x female dog) or a dogote (male dog x female coyote). Such hybrids are rare, especially since the wild coyote population is declining.

- Watermelons are fruits, but also vegetables belonging to the gourd family.

And a lot more!

However, there WERE a lot of facts in here that I just didn't have any interest in. Also, the book is very random and not organized very well.

Charity says

My husband and I used to keep a book of jokes and funny anecdotes on the back of the toilet. This book could take its place.

(Received as an Advanced Reader Copy from Goodreads.)

Lola says

I love fiction with all my heart, I really do, but at the end of the day I believe the best stories lie in history. That being said, I like to know things others don't really care about. How many children did our 10th president John Tyler have? 15. Richest man on the Titanic? John Jacob Astor IV. When was the modern bikini first introduced? Post WWII. Now you can see my curse. That being said, any book titled The Essential Library of Inessential Knowledge is going to grab my attention.

This was a pretty interesting collection of facts overall. While I do prefer history and the arts, some of the geography and science facts interested me. It is clear that the author is very comfortable with doing research (which I am sure was very extensive for this book). It is more of a book to be skimmed than read, but still enjoyable nonetheless.

Bill says

Meh. As a rule, I like collections of inessential knowledge, but this one didn't quite do it for me. Perhaps it was because I bristle at statements like "Most Librarians - and other well-organized types - consider lists to be an essential element of life, without which everything would descend into chaos." I'm not sure we're that much more into lists than other white collar professions. Of course, I am writing this on goodreads, so perhaps she has a point..

Blog on Books says

Plastic Soup? Fullerenes and Buckyballs? Giant Meat Flowers? Talk about useless knowledge, this book is full of it! Resting somewhere between the Guinness Book of World's Records and Ripley's Believe It or Not, comes "All Facts Considered: The Essential Library of Inessential Knowledge," a lightweight compendium of oddities and curiosities that will alternatively bore you or boggle the mind (depending on the topic) if you're not careful.

In dividing this 'knowledge' into three sections (Memory and History, Reason and Science, and Imagination, Poetry and Art), Malesky, an NPR research librarian, has assembled answers to questions you may have

never thought to ask. For instance, do you know the difference between i.e. and e.g.? Or when National Dog Bite Prevention Week occurs? Or when Elvis last 'left the building'? All this as well as zip code trivia, Shakespearian obscurities and the fact that the U.S. Army once used camels in the desert Southwest when horses and mules couldn't take the heat, are all here for the taking – or leaving.

Of course, most people are able to live their lives without worrying about such mundane and trivial matters, but if you need an inventory of some unusual info-morsels before your next cocktail party outing, you may want to bone up on a few of these juicy trivial tidbits. At 206 pages, it shouldn't take long.

Mommooshka says

Interesting, well researched and written short pieces about a wide variety of subjects and facts makes for good reading when you have snippets of time. Many are surprising or entertaining.

Janel says

This book is written by my colleague Kee Malesky who patiently answered my question about 'how the book writing was going' every time I saw her at work. I really enjoyed reading the introduction to the book. Kee highlights main reasons on why us librarians are librarians. Often times Kee's name is the librarian named on the air, but she was gracious in the introduction and acknowledgments to recognize the team of librarians that NPR has.

Instead of pulling out facts included in the book that I found interesting, I'm going to post some questions that were asked of Kee for the DC/SLA chapter newsletter. Read the book - it's witty and interesting and you'll learn something. But I want to share more about the great librarian and person behind the book as well.

You've been a librarian at NPR for over 20 years can you tell us how NPR has changed over the decades and how that's affected your job?

I've seen NPR evolve from land lines and typewriters to satellites and computers. NPR has always been on the cutting edge of technological developments, and the library has been an integral part of that -- creating in-house databases to document our programs and make the material easily available, providing desktop research tools to the staff, maintaining current awareness of changes in commercial and primary sources so we are constantly improving the service we provide.

In all your years at NPR what's the assignment or accomplishment you're most proud of?

I would probably say I'm most proud of the briefing books we produce for national elections and other events. They used to be massive 800+ page volumes, and now we can provide the same info on our News Wiki in ways that are even more flexible and useful than the print editions. I'm currently starting a project that could make me very proud -- creating an Audio Pronunciation Guide.

Can you walk us through the process of writing the book? After you thought of writing it what happened next? What was the most challenging part of the process?

I wrote a brief proposal, which included an essay about facts and what they mean and how they change (that became the Introduction to the book). Once it was accepted by the publisher, I arranged to take some time off

from NPR and started on the research. Most of the facts in the book are not from actual questions I have answered at the NPR Reference Desk, but I did look through dozens of my old reference desk notebooks for queries that involved interesting facts. I carried a little notebook and pencil everywhere I went, to write down ideas as I found them. Much of the research was done online -- using commercial databases; government, academic and association websites; and online library resources. I also made several visits to the DC Public Library and to the Library of Congress. I collected as many reputable sources as I needed to compile the essential details of each fact, then I tried to tell its story in a couple of paragraphs. It took about six months to research and write. Once the editor accepted the manuscript, I worked with production and copy-editors until we were all satisfied with the final product. I turned in the final Index at the beginning of September.

Check out Kee's website for more interviews and listings of her sources for the book as well.

Abby says

This book is like reading Jeopardy. The longest that any chunk is a page and a half and some are only a paragraph or two. But this is a collection of some of the most odd and interesting facts ever. I laughed, I was amazed, I got teary... A perfect book for when you don't have lots of time. And for people who love odd and obscure pieces of information.

Nikita N. says

This is hands down one of my top favorite books. This book has information about anything you can possibly read, and is an invigorating interest. I struggled to put this book down constantly and I keep rereading it because it has so much information that you would never think of.

Kevin Hodgson says

Not just the facts, m'am, but the history and stories behind the facts. Fun stuff.
